

UK off track for Net Zero, say country's climate advisors

2 years ago



The [Climate Change Committee](#)'s assessment is that only a third of the emissions reductions required to achieve the country's 2030 target are currently covered by credible plans. Our 2030 target is the first one set in line with a Net Zero trajectory.

This news comes against the backdrop of a more positive story – that the country's emissions are now less than half the levels they were in 1990. This is largely due to the phase out of coal and the ramping up of renewables. This project has been a huge success – but to continue to decarbonise the UK we will now need to see ambitious action not just in the energy sector, but also across transport, buildings, industry and agriculture. The plans in place from the previous Government will not deliver enough action.

“The country's 2030 emissions reduction target is at risk. The new Government has an opportunity to course-correct, but it will need to be done as a matter of urgency to make up for lost time. They are off to a good start. Action needs to extend beyond electricity, with rapid progress needed on electric cars, heat pumps and tree planting.

“The transition to Net Zero can deliver investment, lower bills, and energy security. It will help the UK keep its place on the world stage. It is a way for this Government to serve both the people of today and the people of tomorrow.”

Professor Piers Forster, interim Chair of the Climate Change Committee

The Committee has written a priority list of ten recommendations. Top among these are to make electricity cheaper, reverse recent policy rollbacks, and ramp up rates of tree planting and peatland restoration.

Much of the low carbon technology needed is already available. Yet almost all our indicators for the scale up and roll out of that technology are off track, with rates needing to significantly ramp up. By 2030:

- Annual offshore wind installations must increase by at least three times, onshore wind installations will need to double and solar installations must increase by five times.
- Approximately 10% of existing homes in the UK will need to be heated by a heat pump, compared to only approximately 1% today.
- The market share of new electric cars needs to increase from 16.5% in 2023 to nearly 100%.

Confusing messaging

The Committee has drawn attention to the damage done by the previous Government's policy rollbacks. These have increased the gap between the UK's plans and its targets, leaving us further off track. The broader messaging, both domestically and internationally, also caused significant uncertainty about the country's commitment to Net Zero. The Committee urges the new Government to address this, with a clear commitment to the Net Zero transition, backed with rapid policy action and a sharp-eyed focus on removing barriers.

Polling shows that the UK public has no appetite for climate division. Until last year, as well as showing domestic leadership, successive UK Governments had played a leading role in international climate diplomacy and could fairly claim to have accelerated action worldwide. The Committee hopes the new Government will take the opportunity of COP29 in November to re-establish UK leadership on the global climate stage.