

2024 Manifesto Commitments: Net Zero, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Labour

- 'Clean power by 2030' – double onshore wind, triple solar power, quadruple offshore wind
- New nuclear reactors
- 'Phased and responsible transition' in the North Sea – maintaining a strategic reserve of gas power stations – not revoking existence licenses but also not issuing new licenses
- Create a new publicly-owned energy company Great British Energy (£3.8 billion initial funding)
- Investing in local power generation
- £6.6 billion to upgrade five million homes
- Moving towards a circular economy
- Establish nine new National River Walks and three new National Forests
- Put water companies under 'special measures' and block payment of bonuses to polluting executives
- Pledge to 'improve access to nature, promote biodiversity, and protect our landscapes and wildlife'
- Meet Environmental Act targets
- Create a new Clean Power Alliance, 'bringing together a coalition of countries at the cutting edge of climate action'
- Restore international development spending to 0.7% of national income

Overall Labour pledges to make Britain a 'clean energy superpower', saying:

'The climate and nature crisis is the greatest long-term global challenge that we face. The clean energy transition represents a huge opportunity to generate growth, tackle the cost-of-living crisis and make Britain energy independent once again. That is why clean energy by 2030 is Labour's second mission.'

The Conservatives have failed to grasp opportunities in this area for two related reasons. First, because they simply do not accept that economic growth, energy security, lower bills, and addressing climate change can be complementary. Second, because they are ideologically opposed to using the role of the state, including public investment, to guarantee that they are.'

Conservative

- Pledge to pass the OPL bill to legislate new oil and gas licensing rounds
- New gas power stations
- Trebling offshore wind capacity
- Investment into nuclear with the aim to become a net exporter of electricity
- Reduce green levies on household energy bills and ruling out creating further energy levies
- Maintain the energy price cap
- No solar on agricultural land
- Abolishing nutrient neutrality rules
- 'Plan for Water' – banning executive bonuses if a water company has committed a serious criminal breach and using fines to invest in river restoration projects#
- Keep the 2050 net zero

The Conservatives label their plan as a 'affordable and pragmatic transition to net zero', saying *'The UK has led the world on tackling climate change, having cut our emissions more than any other major economy. We will get to net zero on the fairest possible path and in a way that brings people with us. We will seize the opportunities created by the transition, opening up whole new sectors and creating hundreds of thousands of good jobs in all corners of the country. Our approach leverages the innovation and investment of the private sector to unleash technologies that cut costs for households. This has enabled us to overachieve on our targets, become a powerhouse in clean technologies, and continue to support households. We reject Labour's dogmatic, top-down approach that will burden households with higher bills.'*

Liberal Democrats

- Net zero by 2045
- Ten year 'emergency upgrade programme' – free insulation and heat pumps for those on low incomes, and all new homes zero-carbon
- 90% of the UK's electricity generated from renewables by 2030
- Appoint a 'Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury' and a 'Net Zero Delivery Authority'
- Establish a citizens' assembly on climate change
- Restore international development spending to 0.7% of national income
- Decouple electricity prices from the wholesale gas price
- Reduce access costs for grid connections and reform the energy network to permit local energy grids
- Introduce a general duty of care for the environment for businesses
- Require pension funds and managers to show their portfolio investments are consistent with the Paris Agreement
- Replace Ofwat with a new regulator with new powers
- Ban bonuses for water bosses until discharge and leaks end and introduce a Sewage Tax on water company profits
- 'Double nature' by 2050 – double the size of the Protected Area Network, the most important wildlife habitats, species abundance and wildlife cover
- Plant at least 60 million trees a year
- Pass a Clean Air Act
- Provide more funding for the Environment Agency and National England
- Ban the use of horticultural peat

The Liberal Democrats say their manifesto is a 'fair deal on climate change and energy' saying '*Climate change is an existential threat. Soaring temperatures leading to wildfires, floods, droughts and rising sea levels are affecting millions of people directly, and billions more through falling food production and rising prices. Urgent action is needed – in the UK and around the world – to achieve net zero and avert catastrophe.*

We will take the bold, urgent action needed to tackle climate change, cut energy bills and create hundreds of thousands of secure, well-paid new jobs. Together with innovative British businesses, we will make the UK the world leader in the clean technologies of the future. We will help households meet the cost of the transition to net zero and make sure everyone benefits from it, leaving no one behind.'

The Green Party

The Green Party says "The Climate Emergency is the greatest issue of our time. It is a global crisis demanding a global response. The UK should play a leading role by strengthening international agreements and rapidly reducing its own emissions" and are aiming for the UK to target eliminating all carbon dioxide emissions within 10 years.

- £250bn over ten years to insulate 10 million homes funded by taxes on the biggest polluters
- £9bn over five years for low-carbon heating systems
- £40bn per year in 'the shift to a green economy'
- Bring the railways, water companies and Big 5 retail energy companies into public ownership
- 70% of the UK's electricity from wind by 2030
- Cancel recent fossil fuel licenses (such as Rosebank) and stop all new fossil fuel extraction projects in the UK
- Phase-out of nuclear energy
- Introduce a Rights of Nature Act
- Meet the 30x30 pledge to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030
- A new English Right to Roam Act

- Objective of 50% of trips in England's towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030
- Increase international aid to 1% of GNI by 2033
- Pass a Clean Air Act

Overall, aside from the Green Party, no party made the environment the centrepiece of their manifesto launch, with the Conservative's labelling Labour's plan as 'eco-zealotry'. Although the Great British Energy company is one of Labour's main five pledges it does not appear any of the main parties will be holding the environment as a major part of election campaigning, although both the Conservative and Labour Party appear to be trying to use it as a fault line between parties – for example, in regards to new licensing rounds in the North Sea.

However, all parties have included responses to river and sea pollution from water companies, and have kept a net zero target. The three main parties all include pledges to expand nuclear power, and focus heavily on energy security in their rhetoric.

Compiled by Rachel Sowerby, The Bishop of Norwich's Environmental Research Officer 13/06/2024