

## Briefing

12 November 2020



## Why the government's decarbonisation plans are off track

This briefing outlines why the UK's status on the global stage, as hosts of the 2021 Glasgow climate summit, and the government's 2050 net zero carbon target are in jeopardy, unless urgent action is taken.

This analysis is based on research conducted by Green Alliance in October and November 2020. It reflects the most up-to-date figures on government progress against its long term climate targets.

### Summary

- In June 2019, the UK became the first major economy to set a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for 2050.
- To meet this goal, additional action to reduce emissions must start as early as possible. The later action is left, the harder it will be to achieve the target set.
- Green Alliance analysis shows that there is a significant gap between the UK's stated emissions reduction plans and the trajectory needed to meet the government's own net zero carbon emissions by 2050 law. At the start of 2020, the gap to being on track to net zero over the fifth carbon budget period (2028 – 2032) was of 251MtCO<sub>2</sub>e .
- UK government decarbonisation plans announced this year, only meet a fifth of the emissions reductions required to close the gap and put the UK on track for net zero over the fifth carbon budget. As hosts of the Glasgow climate conference in November 2021 the UK must show exemplary leadership through its domestic climate action. This conference will be the most significant global climate summit since the Paris Agreement in 2015, when countries agreed to limit warming to 2°C.

## Emissions

### What is the government doing?

- This year, the government announced a set of policies that reduce emissions by 47MtCO<sub>2</sub>e over the fifth carbon budget period.
- This is only 17 per cent of the total additional emission reductions needed to be on track for net zero over the fifth carbon budget period
- Closing the emission gap is crucial to keep the UK on track to meet the long term, net zero legal target for 2050.
- This is equal to removing nine million diesel cars off the road by 2030.

- The reductions promised by the government mostly come from recent announcements to expand onshore wind and solar power, and programmes to encourage industry to switch to more sustainable fuels.

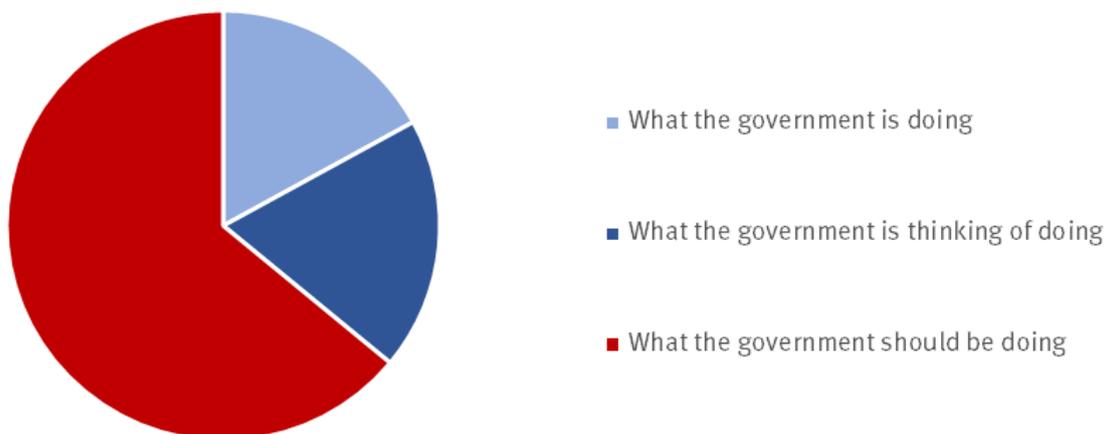
### What else is the government considering?

- In addition to the announced policies, there are consultations underway that could reduce emissions by an additional 53MtCO<sub>2</sub>e over 2028-2032.
- This would account for a further 19 per cent of the total emissions reductions required to be on track for net zero over the fifth carbon budget period . If achieved, this would bring total additional emissions savings to 36 per cent of what is needed over that period.
- Government proposals under consultation include bringing forward the phase out date for petrol, diesel and hybrids from 2040 to 2035.
- Another policy under review is to increase the minimum energy efficiency standards of privately rented homes by 2030.

### What else should the government be doing?

- Even with current government policy, and the policies under consultation, there is still a gap of 173MtCO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions cuts needed to be on track to meet net zero over the fifth carbon budget period..
- There are significant gaps in the plans for further emissions savings in the housing, transport, waste and land management sectors, all of which have much greater potential to bring emissions down.

The government's planned and proposed policies will only deliver about a third of the additional emission reductions needed between 2028 - 2032



## Spending

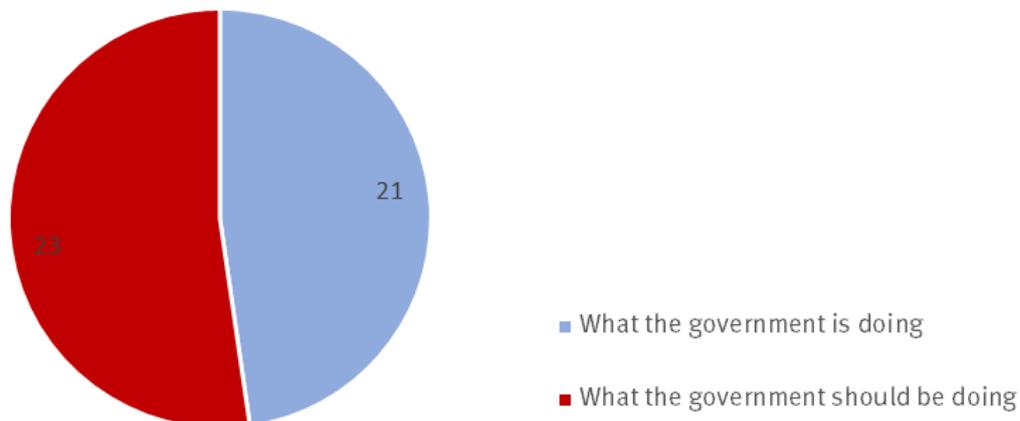
### What is the government doing?

- The government is currently spending £20.9 billion per year on climate and nature programmes.

## What should the government be doing?

- Our analysis shows that the government needs to spend a total of £44.8 billion per year over the next four years on climate and nature programmes to tackle the nature and climate crises.
- Therefore, we estimate there is a spending shortfall of £24 billion per year (more than half of what is needed).
- This gap includes: £9.3 billion on low carbon transport, £3.5 billion on buildings and £6.8 billion on natural infrastructure per year.
- This spending would also unlock new employment opportunities and help the government to achieve a green economic recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, as it has promised.

Government is investing less than half of what is needed per year to address the climate and nature crises (£bn per year)



## What we want to see in the government's ten point plan

- The ten point plan announcement is expected to include investment in low carbon technologies, such as hydrogen, carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), and small nuclear reactors.
- Investment in innovation and nascent technologies is needed but, to achieve carbon reductions in the near term, investment in proven measures should be prioritised.

## Phase out petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles by 2030

- The government has a target to phase out ICE (internal combustion engines) by 2040, but it has consulted on bringing forward the phase out date to 2035 or earlier.
- Our analysis shows that a [2030 phase out date](#) that also includes all plug-in hybrids is needed to achieve the 2030 target.

- The earlier ban could deliver 90MtCO<sub>2</sub>e of greenhouse gas emission reductions and reduce the health impacts of poor air quality in our towns and cities much sooner.

### **Target better product design and reuse**

- There has been little progress on [improving resource efficiency](#): through reuse, repair, remanufacturing and recycling materials. Ecodesign standards for appliances, for example, is estimated to cut eight million tonnes of carbon emissions and save households £100 per year on their energy bills.
- The government is bringing in extended producer responsibility rules for packaging, but is failing to target the huge emissions reduction potential that exists in [five major sectors of the economy](#), ie construction, textiles, food and drink, electronics and vehicle manufacturing.

### **A more ambitious home energy efficiency programme**

- The government has introduced the Green Homes Grant and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Programme, which is providing £3 billion for public building energy efficiency.
- These plans are a good start, but need to be followed by a longer term, fully funded programme to be able to meet the government's targets for energy efficiency, which could save 96MtCO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions by 2030.

### **Plant more trees, restore peatlands and wetlands, and manage soils better**

- There has been some progress on this, with the government promising to plant 30,000 hectares of trees every year by 2025.
- But our analysis shows this is insufficient. An average of 42,000 hectares of new woodland must be planted every year to 2030. As well as this, 25 per cent of lowland peatlands must be rewetted and 50 per cent of upland peatlands should be restored.

**Updated on 18 November 2020 to clarify that the savings emissions for this period are for 2028-2032**

### **For more information, contact:**

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