

# UK sets path to 'clean power'

The government today unveils the most ambitious reforms to the country's energy system in a generation, to make Britain energy secure, protect households from energy price spikes, reindustrialise the country with thousands of skilled jobs, and tackle the climate crisis.

In a major milestone to deliver on the Prime Minister's Plan for Change which aims to drive economic growth and rebuild Britain with mission-driven government, Energy Secretary Ed Miliband will today (Friday 13 December) set out a detailed plan for achieving the target of clean power by 2030.

The plan will provide the foundation for the UK to build an energy system that can bring down bills for households and businesses for good. The independent National Energy System Operator (NESO) set out pathways to a clean power system in 2030, and confirmed it was deliverable, more secure, and could see a lower cost of electricity, and lower bills.

For too long, there has been no plan for building new energy infrastructure based on an assessment of what the country actually needs for the long term. As a result, billions of pounds of clean energy projects have been held up by a clogged-up planning system, and a dysfunctional power grid queue that means renewables projects cannot get online.

The government will now plan an energy system based on what the country needs. The plan sets out bold measures to get more homegrown clean power to people. These include: cleaning up a dysfunctional grid system by prioritising the most important projects and ending the "first-come-first served" system; speeding up decisions on planning permission by empowering planners to prioritise critical energy infrastructure; and expanding the renewable auction process to stop delays and get more projects connected.

Delivering these reforms will unleash £40 billion a year of mainly private investment in homegrown clean power projects and infrastructure across the country, creating good jobs across the country including engineers, welders and mechanics.

Every family and business in the country has paid the price of Britain's dependence on foreign fossil fuel markets, which was starkly exposed when Putin invaded Ukraine and British energy customers were among the hardest hit in Western Europe, with bills reaching record heights.

The government's clean power mission is the solution to this crisis; by sprinting to clean, homegrown energy, including renewables and nuclear, the UK can take back control of its energy and protect both family and national finances from fossil fuel price spikes with cleaner, affordable power.

This action plan sets out how the government will build the generation and infrastructure needed to deliver that system. Over this Parliament the government will be working relentlessly to translate the much cheaper wholesale costs of clean power into lower bills for consumers.

It follows the signing on Tuesday this week of the Final Investment Decision for the UK's first Carbon Capture project in Teesside – delivering thousands of new, skilled jobs in the North East of England. The East Coast Cluster – which will capture and store carbon emissions from industries in the region – is set to start construction in mid-2025. On Thursday, Orsted announced up to £100 million worth of contracts for its Hornsea 3 offshore wind farm, supporting jobs across three supply chain companies in the North of England.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said, "A new era of clean electricity for our country offers a positive vision of Britain's future with energy security, lower bills, good jobs and climate action. This can only happen with big, bold change

and that is why the government is embarking on the most ambitious reforms to our energy system in generations.

“The era of clean electricity is about harnessing the power of Britain’s natural resources so we can protect working people from the ravages of global energy markets.

“The clean power sprint is the national security, economic security, and social justice fight of our time – and this plan gives us the tools we need to win this fight for the British people.”

Greg Jackson, CEO, Octopus, “We welcome the prospect of slashing red tape for grid connections, overturning the onshore wind ban in England and allowing more special offers to slash energy bills. Britain’s high energy prices stem from years of bad rules that don’t allow us to build renewable energy in the places it’s needed, or make use of cheap wind when it’s abundant, so these are positive steps.”

Fintan Slye, Chief Executive, NESO, “We welcome the publication of the Government’s Clean Power Action Plan. We are pleased that our independent advice on how Britain can achieve clean power by 2030 has formed such an integral part of the Plan set out by the Government today.

“We look forward to continuing to work with the Government, the energy regulator and wider industry to overcome the delivery challenges that we have identified, and unlock the benefits of clean, secure power to consumers, the economy and society as a whole.”

Jon Butterworth, CEO of National Gas, said, “National Gas welcomes the Government’s Clean Power Action Plan, which firmly recognises the critical role of the gas transmission system – ensuring a secure transition for households and businesses across the country.

“Gas will continue to play an essential role as the nation’s

strategic power reserve when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine, as demonstrated this week when we saw the need for gas hit a record high – with more gas supplied to power stations than at any point in the last five years.

“We are proud to play our role in securing Britain's energy and unlocking clean power, as the backbone keeping our country's large gas power stations and heavy industry running.”

Sarah Mukherjee MBE, CEO for IEMA said, “Investment in 300 new planning officers is a good start – but if we want to speed up the planning system you need to mandate the use of competent experts across the board – not just local planning officers, but also environmental impact assessors and other professionals who are central to ensuring evidence-based practice in the consenting process.

“The planning system can only move as fast as its slowest moving part.

“Sensible planning reform can unlock the potential of the green economy, accelerating low carbon infrastructure and the development of new homes that are consistent with Net Zero carbon reduction targets under a Future Homes Standard.”