

# Actions, not words, are needed for the UK to tackle climate change

As we welcome the “back to [work](#)” days of autumn, we now bask in unseasonal 30-degree [heat](#).

Throughout summer, we have seen or experienced the effects of [climate change](#). [Europe](#) has experienced threat-to-life floods in [Italy](#) and extreme heat in [Greece](#) within the same week. We all talk about how “crazy” the [weather](#) seems to be.

The business case for transitioning to net zero should be a priority at the next election. Small [businesses](#) are desperate to play their part but have no idea how to and no guidance from the [Government](#) regarding how to measure their progress.

In June, the shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves killed the Labour party’s flagship Green Prosperity Plan.

The plan called for increasing the [UK](#) national debt by an extra £140 billion to commit to “climate-friendly investments” (whatever they are exactly?).

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## Extrem collection

Labour argued that the Tories had busted the country, making that commitment challenging at the £28 billion a year for five years proposed.

The Tories said the Labour proposal would drive up inflation and borrowing costs, hurting households, and the Green Party argued reneging on the plan would see thousands of jobs lost.

So, lots of mature consensus on an attempt for the UK to contribute to saving humanity, then. In July, Lord Hammond, the former Chancellor, went on a bizarre rant about Conservative Prime Ministers being “systemically dishonest” about the cost of achieving net zero, which he estimated to be £1 trillion.

The Office of Budget Responsibility crushed his argument, countering that the net costs of net zero would be much smaller, and the benefits would outweigh those costs.

According to the British Chamber of Commerce, small businesses comprise 99% of all UK companies, provide 60% of the UK’s private workforce, and turnover some £2.3 trillion annually. Shockingly, more than 40% want to achieve net zero and have no idea how to do so, according to a recent survey by Ecologi.

It’s alarming that very few understand how to achieve net zero and have been fed contradictory, alarmist information and outright lies by parties making their respective tribal cases.

Big business is also asking for political commitment and cross-party collaboration. Tesco CEO Ken Murphy yesterday called on political parties to unite to give businesses the confidence to invest and stand by their net zero pledges.

Net zero isn’t about removing all carbon emissions; that’s currently impossible .It’s about reducing and eliminating emissions to achieve “net” zero.

More than 50% of UK companies would measure their carbon footprint if the Government adopted a uniform standard to do so.

The absence of one means there is no fundamental platform on which all else can be built. It would also be an easy and significant win for the Government.

If the UK reached net zero, the reduction in carbon emissions globally would only be 0.9%.

For context, China emits 27%, USA 11%, and the EU 6.4%.

But a transition from a fossil fuel economy to a net zero economy would improve businesses' resource efficiency – making them more competitive – lower household costs, and have wide-ranging health benefits – oh, and it would reduce global emissions by less than 1%.

I know which message I'd campaign on.

Small businesses have been given next to no assistance in understanding what's required to achieve net zero – and what it may mean for them. It requires fundamentally changing business models and operating practices.

The 2019 commitment enshrined in law for the UK to reach net zero requires the next government to stop making “tackling climate change” speeches and start establishing uniform measurement processes for businesses to follow.

An all-party department (war cabinet style) should be created to agree and convey clear information on how companies can benefit from “doing the right thing” and show the world the practical benefits of achieving net zero.

If we do, our sub-1 % impact will be much higher as others follow our example.

Without adopting a measurement standard against which to

benchmark progress, the UK's climate fight will become a farce.