

‘We’re not going to save the planet by bankrupting Britons,’ says home secretary – as car makers hit out at government

The home secretary has said that “we’re not going to save the planet by bankrupting the British people” in response to reports the government is looking at watering down some of its key green pledges

[Among the changes being considering](#) are the pushing back of a ban on the sales of new vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICE) from 2030 to 2035 – and a weakening of plans to phase out gas boilers by 2035.

After calling an emergency meeting of his cabinet this morning, Rishi Sunak is set to outline his next steps in a news conference at 4.30pm today.

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Suella Braverman told Sky News that, while the government remains committed to the goal of achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, “we need to put economic growth first”.

“We need to put household costs and budgets first. We need to put the cost of living first,” she added.

“And we’re only going to achieve that [net zero](#) target whereby people and the British people can go about their daily lives using their cars, using the facilities that are available.”

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The chair of Ford UK says a delay to the 2030 deadline for selling ICE vehicles would undermine the “ambition, commitment and consistency” they need from the UK government.

The 2030 ban on ICE vehicles is considered a key plank of the government’s goal of achieving net zero because experts say it will encourage people to switch to zero-emission electric vehicles sooner.

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Climate scientists say that [urgent cuts are needed to the world’s greenhouse gas emissions](#) if we are to stop temperatures rising to a potentially catastrophic extent.

The reported change in stance has led at least one Tory MP to “seriously” consider putting in a letter of no confidence in Mr Sunak’s leadership.

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In a statement, Mr Sunak said: “No leak will stop me beginning the process of telling the country how and why we need to change.

“As a first step, I’ll be giving a speech this week to set out an important long-term decision we need to make so our country becomes the place I know we all want it to be for our children.”

Conservative MPs are particularly angry at the potential delay to the ending of the sale of internal combustion engines to 2035.

One branded the move “anti-business” given how much has been invested into electric vehicles (EV) and the associated infrastructure.

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Could watering down net zero pledges trigger Tory civil war?



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An unusual late-night statement from the prime minister triggered by leaks to the media regarding the government's plans to water down its net zero pledges: Rishi Sunak is continuing to draw the battlelines for the next general election.

Green policy is a contentious topic for both main parties – Keir Starmer, like Sunak, has been heavily criticised for

abandoning his green pledges.

But as politicians struggle to balance the cost of going green with boosting the UK's recovering economy, how much political pain could this really inflict on the prime minister?

Despite a vocal group of critics, behind the scenes many Tory MPs are keen on the climbdown.

One Tory backbencher told Sky News that being "pragmatic and outcome-focused beats virtue signalling every time".

And Marco Longhi, a Tory MP with a red wall constituency, told me the PM's decision was extremely welcome.

He said: "While fully behind efforts to deliver a greener planet I am not going to support policies that are only affordable by the richest."

And at a time when the Conservative party is 19 points behind in the polls – with Labour on 44 points and the Tories lagging on 26 points – Rishi Sunak is keen to make some bold policy decisions in an attempt to close that gap.

However, it remains to be seen whether this is the smartest policy area in which to do that.

According to a YouGov poll from August, 33% of those surveyed said they believe the government should be spending more on the environment and climate change, and 49% believe Sunak's government isn't doing enough to reduce carbon emissions.

So, with tentative public support for a green economy, Sunak's predicted climbdown is an electoral gamble he will be hoping pays off at the ballot box.

They told Sky's deputy political editor Sam Coates that a push back on the petrol and diesel ban would mean breaking a promise the prime minister made to Conservative MPs privately.

One minister said they would be “staggered” if the ban was delayed, telling Sky News: “Every automotive company is investing in EV, we’ve just [given Tata all this money](#) to make batteries, it’s bonkers.”

He was referring to [plans by the owner of Jaguar Land Rover to build an electric car battery factory](#) in the UK.

Tory MPs Chris Skidmore, Alok Sharma and Sir Simon Clarke all complained publicly about the potential watering down of the pledges.

One senior Tory MP told Sky News this morning that the change in policy “has absolutely nothing to do with protecting the British public”, but rather the “sign of a government that’s desperately trying to cling onto power through dangerous and disingenuous rhetoric”.

They added: “It is an outright lie that tackling the climate crisis has to be at the cost of ordinary people, while letting off the hook the rich and powerful fossil fuel companies that are overwhelmingly responsible for the climate crisis the world is already experiencing.”

Lisa Brankin, the chair of Ford UK, highlighted that her company had invested £430m in UK development and manufacturing facilities, with more cash to come to fit the 2030 timeframe.

Explained: [What are Rishi Sunak’s policies on net zero?](#)

Ms Brankin said: “This is the biggest industry transformation in over a century and the UK 2030 target is a vital catalyst to accelerate Ford into a cleaner future.

“Our business needs three things from the UK government: ambition, commitment and consistency. A relaxation of 2030 would undermine all three.

“We need the policy focus trained on bolstering the EV market in the short term and supporting consumers while headwinds are

strong: infrastructure remains immature, tariffs loom and cost-of-living is high.”

A spokesperson for Jaguar Land Rover said: “We are committed to and on track to offer pure electric variants across our brands by 2030 and welcome certainty around legislation for the end of sale of petrol and diesel powered cars.

“We are investing £15bn over the next five years to electrify our luxury brands, which is key to JLR reaching net zero carbon emissions across our supply chain, products, and operations by 2039.”

Stellantis, the owner of Vauxhall, Fiat, Alfa Romeo and DS said: “Clarity is required from governments on important legislation, especially environmental issues that impact society as a whole.”

BMW MINI, which announced plans to construct its electric Mini in Oxford, said it “neither sought or was made any promises” about the timings of an ICE ban when the decision was made.

Asked about the EV industry, Ms Braverman said: “I’m not going to prejudge what the prime minister is going to set out in detail.

Read more:

[Second-hand electric vehicle sales hit record levels](#)

[BMW to make new electric Mini in Oxford](#)

“But I would say I do commend him for taking difficult decisions, long-term decisions in the national interest and in the interest of the British people.”

Asked about the concerns raised by her Conservative MPs, Ms Braverman said “everyone should just wait until they hear the detail from the prime minister himself”.

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Darren Jones, Labour's shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, said we will need to wait for the reaction of the car companies to the anticipated policy change.

He told Sky News that "part of the problem" is Mr Sunak's "weak leadership", and the way in which the changes first surfaced through a leak and with a "late night press release from the prime minister's bunker".