



UK General Election 2015: Manifesto digest of the main political parties highlighting areas of interest for the Energy Centre

Key differences between the manifestos

- All the main parties support **meeting the UK's existing climate change commitments** with all main parties also supporting having a **broad energy mix** (aside from some opposition to onshore wind and fracking), promoting **energy efficiency** measures and securing a **strong global deal at COP21**.
- The Conservatives will end the public subsidy for **onshore wind farms** and allow local people to have the final say on wind farm applications; the other main parties continue to support onshore wind.
- The SNP are the only party offering a moratorium on **fracking**.
- Labour and the Lib Dems want to set a **target for decarbonising the UK's electricity supply** by 2030 in line with advice from the Committee on Climate Change. No such target is included in either the Conservatives' or SNP's manifestos with the Conservative manifesto stating that they "*will not support additional distorting and expensive power sector targets*".
- **Green Investment Bank**: Labour, the Lib Dems and the SNP want it to be given more powers. Giving more powers to the bank is not specifically mentioned in the Conservatives' manifesto.

Conservatives (see [here](#))

- Will meet climate change commitments, "*cutting carbon emissions as cheaply as possible*".
- Continued support for the UK Climate Change Act and will push for a strong global climate deal at COP21, with goal of limiting global warming to two-degrees;
- Will not support "*additional distorting and expensive power sector targets*";
- Seek to halt the spread of onshore wind farms, ending any new public subsidy for them and changing the law so that local people have the final say on wind farm applications.
- New renewable technologies and research: will provide start-up funding but will only give significant support to those that clearly represent value for money;
- Back significant expansion in new nuclear and gas along with developing shale gas (promising to create a "*Sovereign Wealth Fund for the North of England*" from proceeds of shale gas);
- Support low cost energy efficiency measures, aiming to insulate 1 million homes over next 5 years;
- Aim for almost every car and van to be a zero emission vehicle by 2050. They will invest £500 million in this over next 5 years.

Labour (see [here](#) and [here](#))

- At COP21, want a global, legally-binding agreement:
 - Ambitious emissions targets for all countries strengthened every 5 years on the basis of a scientific assessment of progress towards the two degrees goal;
 - A goal of net zero global emissions in the second half of this century;
 - Transparent, universal rules for measuring, verifying and reporting emissions;
 - Richer countries to provide support to poorer nations in combating climate change.
- Domestic carbon reduction targets, including a legal target to decarbonise UK's electricity supply by 2030 (consistent with advice from the Committee on Climate Change).
- Energy efficiency measures including promising to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to 5 million homes over 10 years and to work with industry to implement the zero carbon homes policy.
- Green Investment Bank to be given more powers.
- Will create an Energy Security Board to plan and deliver an energy mix, including renewables, nuclear, green gas, carbon capture and storage, and clean coal.
 - Support for onshore wind;
 - Will ask the Committee on Climate Change, with National Grid, to advise on the measures needed to maximise green gas;



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- CCS is a priority. Green Investment Bank to be used to drive investment in CCS and CCS projects brought forward through Contracts for Difference.
- For shale gas, will establish a robust environmental and regulatory regime.
- Want to develop an active green industrial strategy to create a million green jobs.
- Support the development of community energy (including through new green bonds).

Lib Dems (see [here](#))

- Will push for a 50% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and the greater use of EU funds to support low-carbon investments.
- Secure agreement on a global climate treaty at COP21, supported by a well-financed Green Climate Fund to assist poorer countries to tackle and adapt to climate change.
- Zero Carbon Britain Act: This will include:
 - New legally-binding target for Zero Carbon Britain by 2050;
 - 2030 power sector decarbonisation target of 50-100g per kWh;
 - The manifesto states that this can largely be achieved by expansion of renewables (indicative target of 60% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030). Support for investment in energy storage and smart grid technology to enable reliance on renewables;
 - Emission Performance Standards for existing coal power stations, designed to ensure electricity generation from unabated coal will stop by 2025; and
 - Full borrowing powers for Green Investment Bank (to invest in low carbon technologies).
- Resource Efficiency and Zero Waste Britain Act including the implementation of recommendations from a 'Stern Report' on resource efficiency, which the Natural Capital Committee will conduct.
- A Green Buildings Act: This will include: a Council Tax discount and other measures to achieve significant improvements in energy efficiency in homes; a new legal framework to facilitate the development of deep geothermal heat, large scale heat pumps, waste industrial heat and energy storage systems; and new powers for government to introduce new energy efficiency and heat saving regulations to reduce heat and energy use.
- A Green Transport Act: This will include: a requirement that every new bus and taxi is Ultra Low Emission from 2030 and every car on the road meets that standard by 2040.
- Increase R&D and commercialisation support in four key low-carbon technologies: tidal power, carbon capture and storage, energy storage and ultra-low emission vehicles.
- CCS: require any new gas stations built after 2030 to use CCS technology and will implement a second phase of CCS projects by 2020.
- New nuclear power stations (without public subsidy for new build) have a role to play;
- Support for biomass for heating and small-scale power generation and want to encourage the wider use of biogas. However, want to reform EU policies on biofuels and biomass, including ending all support for food-crop based biofuels after 2020.
- Shale gas:
 - Establish a Low-carbon Transition Fund using 50% of any tax revenues from shale gas to fund energy efficiency, low-carbon innovation and renewable heat;
 - When a shale gas well is finished, must be offered at no cost to geothermal heat developers.
- Want to encourage onshore wind in appropriate locations.
- Stimulate at least £100bn more private investment in low-carbon energy infrastructure by 2020.

SNP (see [here](#))

- Want the UK Government to adopt Scotland's ambitious carbon reduction targets (these targets are a 42% reduction in emissions by 2020 and a 53% reduction by 2025 compared to UK targets of 34% by 2020 and 50% by 2025 (against 1990 levels)).
- Support a moratorium on fracking.
- Green Investment Bank: Will support increasing capital and providing new borrowing powers.



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- Want transmission arrangements to support production of renewable energy in the most favourable locations (i.e. Scottish islands that are far from markets in south England).
- Want to maximise support for offshore wind, including by seeking alterations to the current Contracts for Differences regime.
- Want onshore wind to continue to receive support.
- Want to remove barriers limiting growth in the hydro sector and provide additional support for pump hydro and CCS;
- Want to expand community heating schemes (want Renewable Heat Incentive to continue beyond 2015) and community energy generation – Scottish government provide support for community generation through its £20 million local energy challenge fund; aim is to deliver 500MW of locally owned renewable generation by 2020.

Wales: The Silk Commission recommends the devolution of all energy planning consents below 350MW to the Welsh Assembly. Labour, the Conservatives and the Lib Dems have said they will take forward these proposals. Labour are currently in power in Wales.