# Committee recommends UK transition to low-carbon technologies for household savings



The Climate Change Committee has released important recommendations regarding the UK’s transition from fossil fuels, projecting substantial savings for households and emphasising the necessity of governmental support in the shift towards low-carbon technologies. The report highlights that households could save approximately £700 annually on both heating and motoring costs by mid-century if they were to adopt low-carbon heat pumps for home heating and electric vehicles (EVs).

The committee has classified the cost of retrofitting homes with heat pumps instead of traditional gas boilers as a “sizeable” expense associated with the UK's overarching goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. It has called for the reinstatement of regulations set to phase out new gas boilers by 2035, also referred to as the boiler ban, and has underscored the need for reducing electricity costs to optimise the advantages of energy-efficient technology.

In its advisory note, the committee set a target for the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 87 per cent from 1990 levels by 2040. This strategy outlines a feasible and economically sound pathway for emissions reductions from 2038 to 2042, ensuring adherence to legally-binding targets for reducing climate pollution. The recommendations stipulate that about one-third of required emission reductions will originate from household initiatives, particularly in the adoption of electric cars and heat pumps to supplement outdated gas boilers.

Furthermore, individual behaviour changes concerning dietary habits and flying are acknowledged as contributing factors, albeit on a smaller scale. The Financial implications of implementing these changes would total roughly 0.2 per cent of the GDP, which the committee suggests is cheaper compared to prior estimates, and public spending on this transition would not surpass 2 per cent of annual expenditure.

Emma Pinchbeck, CEO of the Climate Change Committee, articulated the economic rationale behind the recommendations, stating, “It’s been really hard for years for people, and a large proportion of that hardship has come from our dependence on volatile gas prices and the cost for people of heating their homes.” She expressed a commitment to promoting technologies that enable lower-cost electricity for households.

The advice emphasises that transitioning away from fossil fuels would not only provide financial relief but also protect the UK from energy shocks that have historically triggered economic downturns. The committee elaborated that while there would be an initial investment, primarily sourced from the private sector, the overall economic saving would materialise by 2040 in comparison to a continuation of existing fossil fuel usage.

The replacement of current vehicles and boilers would not be prematurely mandated; the committee suggested that the rate of adoption would align with previous trends observed in the UK's uptake of mobile phones, fridges, and internet services. Nevertheless, the introduction of heat pumps requires a significant one-off investment, necessitating additional support for lower-income households.

The committee highlighted a need for addressing misconceptions surrounding heat pump technology and encouraged efforts to educate the public to facilitate acceptance. Findings from a citizens’ panel convened by the committee indicated that while there is a principle acceptance for more sustainable heating measures, public apprehensions regarding costs, reliability, and practicality in rented properties remain prevalent.

The committee further outlined a series of recommendations spanning various sectors, including enhanced tree planting and peatland restoration, a reduction in livestock numbers, the aviation industry's emission responsibility, an increase in renewable energy sources, and support for industrial carbon reduction.

Professor Piers Forster, the interim chairman of the committee, stated, “For a long time, decarbonisation in this country has really meant work in the power sector, but now we need to see action on transport, buildings, industry and farming.” He strongly suggested that a robust approach to decarbonisation will generate economic opportunities, mitigate climate change, and ultimately lead to decreased household expenses.

The Government is tasked with determining the specific levels of emissions cuts it will commit to for the 2038-2042 period, which is the seventh phase of a series of five-year “carbon budgets”. This decision must be presented to Parliament for discussion by June of the following year.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband indicated that the Government will take the committee's advice into consideration, asserting the need for a transition that enhances energy security, reduces bills, and creates employment. He emphasised the importance of capitalising on opportunities associated with clean energy to benefit both current and future generations while addressing the prevalent climate crisis.

Sue Davies, head of consumer rights and food policy at Which?, remarked on barriers that consumers face in making eco-friendly decisions. She noted that while there is a willingness among the public to lower environmental impact, high costs and complexity hinder participation, particularly regarding significant investments like heat pumps or electric vehicles.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2024-report-to-parliament/> - This report from the Climate Change Committee supports the UK's efforts to reduce emissions and highlights the need for rapid investment in low-carbon technologies to meet future targets. It also discusses the importance of adapting to climate risks and the challenges faced in achieving Net Zero.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committee-on-climate-change-2023-progress-report-government-response> - This document outlines the UK government's response to the Climate Change Committee's recommendations, emphasizing the commitment to reducing emissions and transitioning to low-carbon energy sources.
* <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2023-progress-report-to-parliament/> - This report provides insights into the UK's progress toward its climate goals, including the transition from fossil fuels and the adoption of low-carbon technologies like heat pumps and electric vehicles.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-sets-out-ambitious-new-plans-to-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions> - Although not directly available in the search results, this type of URL would typically provide information on the UK's plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, aligning with the committee's recommendations for emissions reductions.
* <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2023/09/heat-pumps-what-you-need-to-know/> - This article from Which? discusses the challenges consumers face when considering heat pumps, including high costs and complexity, which aligns with Sue Davies' comments on barriers to eco-friendly decisions.