# Conservatives propose roll-back of green policies to cut household energy bills amid net zero controversy



The Conservative Party has unveiled a fresh strategy to reduce household energy bills by scrapping key elements of the UK’s green energy framework, framing this move as part of a broader economic pitch amid intensifying election battles over the cost of living. Shadow Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho announced the policy at the party's annual conference in Manchester, asserting that abolishing the post-Brexit carbon pricing system and ending long-term wind farm subsidies could slash energy bills by approximately £165 annually for the average household. The Conservatives attribute about 20% of electricity costs to these schemes, which they describe as costly and ineffective, marking a significant departure from their previous endorsement of the net zero carbon emissions target.

This policy pivot comes in the wake of party leader Kemi Badenoch’s controversial announcement that the 2050 net zero target, championed by her predecessor Theresa May, is "impossible" to achieve. Badenoch’s remarks have sparked considerable criticism, both from environmental groups and members within her own party, accusing her of abandoning previously held green commitments. Despite these criticisms, Badenoch and her team argue that the net zero legislation has fostered an "inequality in government," with carbon reduction strategies legally prioritised over efforts to reduce energy bills, a balance they now seek to recalibrate. Coutinho herself has recounted resistance within the energy department to reforms such as halting fines on boiler manufacturers for missing heat pump sales targets — a policy dubbed the "boiler tax" by detractors.

The Conservatives’ approach contrasts sharply with other political parties’ promises on energy bills. Labour pledges a £300 annual saving on energy costs through decarbonising British electricity, while Reform UK advocates for an even more radical scrapping of "net zero madness," promising savings as high as £1,000 a year. Coutinho dismissed Reform UK's proposals as unrealistic, likening their £1,000 saving claim to Jeremy Corbyn’s 2019 election promise of free broadband, arguing instead that voters consider the credibility of policies carefully due to widespread anxiety over energy affordability.

Financially, the Conservatives place much of the blame for inflated gas power costs on government-imposed carbon taxes rather than fuel expenses. According to Coutinho, over 30% of gas power unit costs stem from these taxes, which she seeks to eliminate to ease the burden on consumers. The scrapped green energy certificates, initially introduced under Labour Energy Secretary Ed Miliband and designed to support renewable energy over a 20-year span, would also cease, with the Conservatives describing these as "rip-off wind subsidies." They claim the combined abolition of carbon pricing and green energy certificates could reduce bills by around 20%.

Experts and fact-checkers contest some of the Conservative claims regarding the impossibility of the net zero target, pointing to studies and government projections that suggest while there are upfront costs—estimated between 1% and 2% of GDP annually—long-term savings, including annual £19 billion benefits by 2050, are anticipated. Critics warn that abandoning legally binding climate commitments risks not only environmental backlash but also the UK’s energy policy credibility in the international arena.

As the Conservatives seek to reframe the net zero agenda as a costly and unachievable policy, they are betting that the electorate, anxious about soaring energy bills, will prioritise immediate cost relief over long-term climate goals. Whether this gamble resonates with voters remains to be seen, especially as opposition parties continue to offer contrasting visions of tackling the energy crisis.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-government-ed-miliband-conservatives-tories-government-b1251458.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/mar/17/conservative-party-to-ditch-commitment-to-net-zero-in-uk-by-2050), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/kemi-badenoch-says-uk-target-to-reach-net-zero-by-2050-impossible-13331102), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/mar/23/kemi-badenoch-accused-of-breaking-pledge-to-tory-mps-of-net-zero-by-2050)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-government-ed-miliband-conservatives-tories-government-b1251458.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss), [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-government-ed-miliband-conservatives-tories-government-b1251458.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/mar/17/conservative-party-to-ditch-commitment-to-net-zero-in-uk-by-2050), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/mar/19/factcheck-kemi-badenoch-conservative-leader-claim-that-net-zero-is-impossible-by-2050), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/kemi-badenoch-says-uk-target-to-reach-net-zero-by-2050-impossible-13331102)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce32r5k43vwo?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss> - The Conservative Party has pledged to reduce household energy bills by 20% by eliminating carbon taxes and wind farm subsidies. Shadow Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho announced this policy at the Conservative Party Conference, claiming it would save the average family £165 annually. Coutinho criticised Labour's carbon tax on electricity generation, arguing it unnecessarily inflates costs across the energy system. She stated that over 30% of gas power costs are due to government-imposed carbon taxes rather than fuel expenses. The proposed changes aim to make energy more affordable for consumers.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/mar/17/conservative-party-to-ditch-commitment-to-net-zero-in-uk-by-2050> - The Conservative Party has announced plans to abandon its commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Party leader Kemi Badenoch stated that the target is 'impossible' and that current policies are failing to reduce energy costs. This decision marks a significant shift from the party's previous stance and has sparked criticism from environmental groups and some party members who view it as a retreat from climate commitments.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/mar/19/factcheck-kemi-badenoch-conservative-leader-claim-that-net-zero-is-impossible-by-2050> - A fact-checking analysis examines Kemi Badenoch's claim that achieving net zero by 2050 is 'impossible'. The analysis highlights that while the initial costs of reaching net zero may be between 1% and 2% of GDP annually, savings are projected from 2040 onwards. The Office for Budget Responsibility projects a £19 billion annual saving by 2050. The article also addresses other claims made by Badenoch regarding the net zero target.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-government-ed-miliband-conservatives-tories-government-b1251458.html> - The Conservative Party has pledged to cut energy bills by 20% by scrapping the carbon tax and ending wind farm subsidies. Shadow Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho claimed these measures would save the average family £165 annually. She criticised Labour's carbon tax on electricity generation, stating that over 30% of gas power costs are due to government-imposed carbon taxes rather than fuel expenses. The proposed changes aim to make energy more affordable for consumers.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/kemi-badenoch-says-uk-target-to-reach-net-zero-by-2050-impossible-13331102> - Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, has declared the UK's target to reach net zero by 2050 'impossible'. She stated that achieving this goal would require a significant drop in living standards or could bankrupt the country. Badenoch's remarks have been criticised by environmental groups and some members of her own party, who view it as a retreat from climate commitments.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/mar/23/kemi-badenoch-accused-of-breaking-pledge-to-tory-mps-of-net-zero-by-2050> - Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, has been accused of breaking a pledge to Tory MPs regarding the net zero by 2050 target. During her 2022 party leadership campaign, she promised MPs that she was committed to green targets. However, her recent statements declaring the 2050 target 'impossible' have led to criticism and accusations of inconsistency.