****

**Scottish Renewables member briefing
General Election 2019**



The SNP would press for the UK Government to set the same target that the Scottish Government has set through its Climate Change Act: a 75% reduction in emissions by 2035; net-zero carbon emissions by 2040; net-zero all emissions by 2045. The transition to net zero would be put at the heart of the work of the Scottish National Investment Bank.

The SNP has established a Just Transition Commission to advise the Scottish Government on how to maximise the economic and social benefits of decarbonising Scotland. It will launch a Climate Emergency Skills Action plan to support workers with skills and will press for the UK Government to fund the new Scotland office of the Committee on Climate Change.

On renewables:

* A Green Energy Deal would be launched to ensure that green energy schemes would get the long-term certainty needed to support investment;
* Resources for emissions-reducing investment would be unlocked through a Green Growth Accelerator combining public and private investment;
* A £3 billion portfolio of green projects would be brought to market which would include renewables for green finance investment;
* Greater support would be provided for less mature technologies such as floating offshore wind and tidal stream generation;
* The UK Government would be pressed to fully support the renewables sector in Scotland or devolve the powers to do so. This would include ensuring that support for renewables takes into account wider considerations than just price, such as supply chain benefits, and allowing onshore wind and large solar PV to bid for Contracts for Difference support.

On oil and gas:

* The OBR’s forecast of £8.5 billion oil and gas revenues over the next five years would be used to transition to a greener future through the creation of a Net Zero Fund, ring-fencing these oil and gas receipts;
* The Fund would invest in renewables, electric vehicles and carbon capture and storage;
* 12% of the Fund would go to diversifying the local oil hubs of Aberdeen, Falkirk and Shetland (£1 billion over 5 years);
* The UK Government would be pressed to decarbonise the gas grid and accelerate the deployment of carbon capture and storage.

On shale gas:

* No licences for fracking would be granted.

On nuclear:

* New nuclear power stations would be opposed.

On electricity connectivity and storage:

* The transmission charging regime that discourages investment in Scotland would be reformed;
* A timescale would be introduced for the delivery of interconnectors to Scotland’s islands.

On domestic energy policies:

* A greener tax deal would be supported for heating and energy efficiency in homes and businesses;
* From 2024 all new homes would have renewable or low-carbon heat;
* VAT would be reduced on energy efficiency improvements in homes.

**Analysis**

This is probably the manifesto that sets the most ambitious but specific range of policies, particularly on funding the journey to net-zero.

While the vast majority of SNP commitments are in non-devolved areas, and therefore are areas which would be campaigned for at Westminster, rather than delivered at Holyrood, the party does start to set out the basis on which an agenda for any future independent Scottish government would address the energy sector.

In that context, the creation of a Net Zero Fund, built up using oil and gas tax revenues, is a striking and imaginative new contribution to future Scottish energy thinking. It is also not impossible that this kind of proposal could be the subject of negotiations with the Labour Party, if a minority Corbyn administration emerges out of polling day on Dec 12.

This is a manifesto that is very secondary to the headline campaigning points on Indyref2 and Brexit. In that context, the main consequence of it will be to inform the future prospectus for independence, rather than any deliverable items at Holyrood.



The Conservative Party has pledged that the UK would be carbon net zero by 2050. The environment would be made the priority in the first budget of the new government, with investments in the infrastructure, science and research that would be needed to decarbonise the energy system.

The manifesto is clear that the free market would be used to drive innovation in clean energy and energy storage.

On renewables:

* The government would work with the market to deliver two million new jobs in clean energy over the next decade;
* A £1 billion Ayrton Fund would be used to develop affordable and accessible clean energy;
* The Fund would be used to kickstart private investment in research and development;
* The offshore wind industry would reach 40GW by 2030;
* New floating wind farms would be enabled.

On oil and gas:

* The North Sea oil and gas sector would have a key role to play towards the net-zero target;
* A transformational sector deal would be introduced for the oil and gas sector in the first parliament of the new government.

On shale gas:

* The moratorium on fracking would continue unless science shows that it can be carried out safely.

On nuclear:

* The nuclear industry would be supported, including nuclear fusion, as an important part of the energy system.

On industrial energy policies:

* Gas for hydrogen production would form part of the energy system;
* £800 million would be provided to build the first fully-deployed carbon capture storage cluster by the mid-2020s;
* £500 million would be provided to help energy intensive industries move to low-carbon techniques.

On domestic energy policies:

* £9.2 billion would be invested in the energy efficiency of homes, schools and hospitals;
* New build homes would need to have low energy bills to support the environmental target.

**Analysis**

This was never going to the most radical manifesto, not least of all because of the decline in fortunes that befell the Party after the launch of the radical social care manifesto in 2017.

This document is effectively a “safety first” manifesto. That said it does strike a different tone from others issued to date, with a greater focus on market solutions, and a much more measured approach than Labour on direct government investment.

In truth, the unfolding direction of travel for the next Conservative Government remains open to interpretation. The appointment of Kwarteng and Leadsom as Energy Minister and BEIS Secretary of State respectively was a discouraging one for the renewables sector, and the absence of any direct statement on onshore wind allows for some remaining uncertainty on direction of travel.

The major question they face is to what degree does an expected major swing in support from the South East to the North East of England mean there is space for a building of their environmental credentials, or make that change unlikely.

Put simply, that uncertainty remains after this document’s launch.

****

The Liberal Democrats would introduce a 10-year programme to ensure that 80% of electricity generated in the UK comes from renewable sources by 2030.

This plan would also aim to reduce energy consumption by all UK buildings. To achieve this £5 billion of public funding would be made available by a new Green Investment Bank and this would be used to attract private investment. The Liberal Democrats would then seek to make the UK carbon neutral by 2045.

On renewables:

* The deployment of renewable power sources would be accelerated;
* Restrictions on solar and wind energy would be removed;
* Investment and innovation would be supported in tidal and wave power, energy storage, demand response, smart grids and hydrogen;
* More Catapult Innovation centres would be built focusing on zero-carbon and environmental innovation;
* A National Skills Strategy would include skills for zero-carbon technologies;
* A statutory duty would be placed on councils to produce a zero-carbon strategy, and they would be supported to develop local electricity generation.

On shale gas:

* Fracking would be banned.

On fossil fuels:

* The G7 pledge to end fossil fuel subsidies would be implemented;
* Funding would be provided to assist local communities affected by this removal.

On electricity connectivity and storage:

* More interconnectors would be built;
* Carbon capture and storage would be developed;
* The UK would continue to take part in the EU’s internal energy market.

On domestic energy policies:

* All new homes would be fitted with solar panels;
* The Renewable Heat Incentive would be reformed to require the phased installation of heat pumps in buildings off the gas grid.

**Analysis**

The almost complete focus of the Lib Dem campaign has been a call to “Stop Brexit”.

The launch of the party’s manifesto has marked a change of electoral strategy, widening out its policy platform and recognising that its likely role after the election is that of being the party holding the balance of power.

That being the case, its manifesto will be analysed for potential negotiating points over the formation of a future minority or coalition government.

This manifesto is formed from the pen of Sir Ed Davey, former UK Government Energy Minister (particularly the interconnector issue, which has been a major focus of his for some time) and will be one of the most fully-formed of the expected slate of energy manifestos for this election.



The Labour Party would launch a Green Industrial revolution to create one million jobs. To fund this it would introduce a National Transformation Fund worth £400 billion; of this, £250 billion would go to a Green Transformation Fund for renewable and low-carbon energy.

Labour would ensure that 90% of electricity and 50% of heat came from renewable and low-carbon energy sources by 2030 and would ensure a net-zero carbon energy system within the 2030s. The energy and water systems would be brought back into public ownership.

On renewables:

* 7,000 new offshore and 2,000 new onshore wind turbines would be installed;
* A trial would be launched to expand tidal energy;
* Investments would be made to reduce the production costs of renewable and low-carbon energy.

On oil and gas:

* A windfall tax would be levied on oil companies;
* A strategy would be introduced to safeguard the jobs of offshore workers.

On shale gas:

* Fracking would be banned permanently.

On nuclear:

* New nuclear power stations would be built.

On electricity connectivity and storage:

* The National Grid would be owned by a new public National Energy Agency;
* 14 regional energy agencies would have responsibility for de-carbonising energy;
* The supply arms of the Big Six energy companies would be brought into public ownership;
* 3% of GDP would be spent on research and development into technologies like hydrogen and carbon capture and storage;
* Grid enhancements and interconnectivity would be improved;
* District heat networks would see investment;
* Power storage would be expanded.

On domestic energy policies:

* Solar panels that would cover 22,000 football pitches would be installed;
* A zero-carbon new homes standard would be introduced;
* Heat pumps, solar hot water and hydrogen would be rolled out.

**Analysis**

This is a manifesto like none we have seen in 50 years. Given the devolved nature of renewables in Scotland, the major development is likely to be the very substantial Barnett Formula consequential that would accrue to the Scottish Government. At a high level, that is likely to amount to over £50bn additional to spend in Scotland over the lifetime of the next Parliament, over and above expenditure by the UK Government in Scotland directly. That is a significant windfall with which to transform environmental policy in Scotland should the Sturgeon administration choose to use it that way.

The overtly pro-turbine tone in the Labour document is useful in pushing local elected representatives across Scotland in that direction. However, it will be for the quantum, rather than the specifics, for which this manifesto will attract attention.



The manifesto of the Green Party of England and Wales covers its UK-wide policies.

The Green Party would launch a Green New Deal (a 10-year plan) to:

* Meet most of the UK’s energy needs through the domestic production of renewable energy;
* Ensure the transition to a net-zero carbon economy.

This would be achieved through the injection of public sector investment to kickstart private sector investment to accelerate the transformation of energy supply. A carbon tax would be applied to all fossil fuel imports and domestic extraction based on greenhouse gas emissions when the fuel is burnt. The tax rate would be raised progressively over a decade to render coal, oil and gas financially unviable.

On renewables:

* Communities would be enabled to develop their own renewable energy projects;
* New support and incentives would be provided to accelerate wind energy development, aiming for 70% of UK electricity to be generated by wind by 2030;
* Support would then be given for solar, geothermal, tidal, hydro to provide much of the remainder by 2030;
* The planning system would be transformed to support a massive increase in wind power;
* The UK coastline would be opened up to wind and marine energy by working with the Crown Estate.

On oil and gas:

* Subsidies for the oil and gas industry would be removed;
* Preparations would be made for the rapid de-commissioning of North Sea oil rigs.

On shale gas:

* Fracking would be banned.

On nuclear:

* The construction of nuclear power stations would be prohibited.

On electricity connectivity and storage:

* The UK’s electricity supply would be more closely connected to European countries to allow exporting when there is a surplus;
* Sub-sea connections to Norway and Iceland would be encouraged;
* The capacity of the electricity grid would be doubled through greater efficiency;
* Short-term capacity of energy storage would be expanded so that electricity from peak periods of renewable energy generation could be stored.

On domestic energy policies:

* One million households per year would be given the means to generate electricity (e.g. solar panels);
* Natural gas boilers would be replaced with heat pumps, biomass, solar thermal and geothermal.

**Analysis**

Recent years have seen a gradual evolution of green politics from environmental to social policy campaigning. This 2019 manifesto sees a return to a much more environmentally-driven agenda, aimed at taking advantage in the limited number of seats being targeted as part of the “Unite to Remain” initiative.

The Green Party in Scotland has been an active voice in driving a return to a more traditional Green agenda, not least through its new co-convener (Lorna Slater) who is a former renewables industry engineer. They remain a powerful voice within the Party structure and have high hopes of securing ground prior to the 2021 Scottish Parliament poll. That having been said, the manifesto commitments presented could be argued as being long on ambition and slightly short on detail or financial analysis.

In truth, unless the election results in a very even result, this manifesto is unlikely to feature in any coalition negotiations.

**This briefing was prepared for Scottish Renewables by** [**Message Matters**](https://messagematters.co.uk)