

Westminster Update

How will the new government take sustainability and climate change matters forward?

James Jefferson, Principal Advisor, APSE Energy

Key priorities set out by DESNZ

- Delivering the mission to boost energy independence and cutting bills through clean power by 2030;
- Taking back control of energy with Great British Energy;
- Upgrading Britain's homes and cutting fuel poverty through the Warm Homes Plan;
- Standing up for consumers by reforming the energy system;
- Creating good jobs in Britain's industrial heartlands, including a just transition for the industries based in the North Sea;
- Leading on international climate action, based on domestic achievements.

Great British Energy

- The Great British Energy bill outlines that its objectives will be to facilitate, encourage and participate in –
 - a) the production, distribution, storage, and supply of clean energy;
 - b) the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from energy produced from fossil fuels;
 - c) improvements in energy efficiency;
 - d) measures for ensuring the security of the supply of energy.
- GB Energy will involve £8.3 billion of public money to be invested over the parliament, including £600m in further funding for local authorities.

Local Power Plan

- The Local Power Plan makes up one of Great British Energy's 5 functions.
- It will partner with and provide funding to support local and combined authorities and community energy groups to rollout small and medium-scale renewable energy projects.
- It will aim to crowd in investment, with a focus on ensuring that project benefits flow directly back into local communities.
- Further support will also be provided in the form of commercial, technical and project-planning assistance, to increase the capacity of local authorities.

Planning

- Moving quickly with the lifting of the ban on onshore wind in England, opening up the possibility for council owned wind turbines.
- Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework, including chapter on “Supporting green energy and the environment”
- Approval of 3 new solar farms and talk of a ‘solar rooftop revolution’.
- The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is expected to accelerate upgrades to the grid and streamline the planning process for major infrastructure projects such as solar and onshore wind.
- Mandatory housing targets will be restored, with the target of building 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament.

Warm Homes Plan

- £6.6 billion in government investment over the next parliament.
- Aim to reduce fuel poverty through to upgrading five million homes to cut bills for families.
- In collaboration with local authorities, the Warm Homes Plan will: “offer grants and low interest loans to support investment in insulation and other improvements such as solar panels, batteries and low carbon heating to cut bills.”

Biodiversity

- Establish three new National Forests in England, whilst planting millions of trees and creating new woodlands
- Labour will expand nature-rich habitats such as wetlands, peat bogs and forests

Skills

- Government will establish Skills England - new partnership with employers via Skills England Bill and reform of the apprenticeship levy.

Key comments from APSE Energy's post-election roundtable

- How will future funding for technologies be delivered?
- When will GB Energy be operational?
- What will be the scope for the Warm Homes Plan? Will it cover social housing and if so, how will this funding be delivered?
- Will the Warm Homes Plan have an impact upon the Local Authority Retrofit Scheme?
- Are there any plans for changes to the allocation of future funding opportunities? Is there potential for combined authorities to play a role in distributing at the local level?
- How can local government ensure that central government appreciates the level of expertise and experience in the sector and how the sector can bring that to bear at government level? Is there potential for local authority representatives to be included in government technical working groups?

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