

United kingdom energy conservation

Consolidate policy, strategy and development plans across sectors to provide simple, clear investment signals to industry. Accelerate actions needed to implement strategies, including clarity on technology pathways.

Prioritise planning reforms to kickstart the major infrastructure buildout required to meet carbon budgets, including clarifying locations, business models and transition strategies across sectors.

Monitor the cost of the transition and its funding base, ensuring that existing and future policies do not lead to unintended outcomes across competing decarbonisation priorities. Continuously assess impacts on vulnerable consumers.

The current energy policy of the United Kingdom is the responsibility of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), after the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy was split into the Department for Business and Trade and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology in 2023. Energy markets are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).

Areas of focus for energy policy by the UK government have changed since the Electricity Act 1989 and the Gas Act 1986 privatised these utilities. The policy focuses of successive UK governments since the full liberalisation of gas and electricity markets in 1998 and 1999¹ have included managing energy prices, decarbonisation, the rollout of smart meters, and improving the energy efficiency of the country's building stock.

The 2007 white paper: "Meeting the Energy Challenge" set out the government's international and domestic energy strategy to address the long term energy challenges faced by the UK, and to deliver four policy goals:

The scope of energy policy includes the production and distribution of electricity, transport fuel usage, and means of heating (significantly Natural Gas). The policy recognises: "Energy is essential in almost every aspect of our lives and for the success of our economy. We face two long-term energy challenges:

The policy also recognises that the UK will need around 30-35¹⁶⁰GW of new electricity generation capacity over the next two decades as many current coal and nuclear power stations, built in the 1960s and 1970s, reach the end of their lives and are set to close.

The January 2008 Energy Bill updated the legislative framework in the UK to reflect government policy towards the energy market and the challenges faced on climate change and security of supply. Key elements of the bill addressed nuclear, carbon capture and storage, renewables, and offshore gas and oil. A framework to encourage investment in nuclear power within a new regulatory environment was simultaneously published in the January 2008 nuclear white paper.

In October 2008, the government created the Department of Energy and Climate Change to bring together energy policy (previously with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform), and climate change mitigation policy (previously with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

Though energy policy is an area reserved to the UK government under the Scotland Act 1998 that established devolved government for Scotland, the Scottish Government has an energy policy for Scotland at variance with UK policy, and has planning powers to enable it to put some aspects of its policy priorities into effect.

In November 2015, it was announced by the UK Government that all coal fired power stations would be closed by 2025.

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