

Written by Ned Haluzan
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By 2050, the UK is planning to cut its greenhouse gas emissions to zero and become the cleanest country across the world.

On a yearly basis as of October 2018 though, an estimated 500 million tonnes of CO₂ were being emitted in the UK. Guidance from the Committee on Climate Change has been formally sought by the government about how and when the UK could bring this number down to zero though, with the move prompted from the release of a UN report which warned that CO₂ emissions must be entirely stopped if dangerous climate disruption is to be avoided.

The climate minister for the UK, Claire Perry, commented to BBC News: "The report was a really stark and sober piece of work — a good piece of work. Now we know what the goal is, and we know what some of the levers are.

"But for me, the constant question is: what is the cost and who's going to bear that, both in the UK and in the global economy. The question is: what does government need to do, where can the private sector come in, and what technologies will come through?"

Here, [Audi dealership](#) Vindis highlight just how much of a challenge the UK has set itself, by focusing on just three things that must change throughout the nation if the target is to be achieved.

UK homes must be better insulated

In a [BBC News article](#) which was published in February 2017, it was detailed that the UK has to reduce carbon emissions by 80 per cent from the date that the piece was published and 2050. What's more, a third of those carbon emissions had been recorded from heating draughty

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buildings across the nation.

One key issue though is that 25 million existing homes will fail to meet the insulation standards which are being enforced from 2050. This is according to a report that was sent to Parliament by experts from the Green Building Council — a group of leading construction firms — with the solution being that the affected properties will need to be refurbished to the highest standards. According to calculations, these findings mean that the rate of refurbishment stood at a rate of 1.4 homes needing to be worked on every minute as of the beginning of 2017.

Carrying out this work provides more benefits than just reducing carbon emissions, however. The Green Building Council's head Julie Hirigoyen explains: "People will have warmer homes and lower bills; they will live longer, happier lives; we will be able to address climate change and carbon emissions.

"We will also be creating many thousands of jobs and exporting our best skills in innovation."

Fuel-efficient vehicles need to become more appealing

In an effort to make the UK's roads cleaner, the UK government has already announced that all new petrol and diesel cars and vans will be banned throughout the nation starting 2040. While we may be a couple of decades away from seeing this ban come into force, it appears that an increasing number of British motorists are already exploring what's available when it comes to alternative-fuel vehicles.

The number of new registrations for plug-in cars increased from 3,500 units in 2013 to more than 195,000 models at the end of January 2019, reports [Next Green Car](#). Furthermore, figures released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders highlighted that electric car sales across the UK has shifted from only close to 500 being registered each month in the early part of 2014 to an average of 5,000 per month throughout 2018.

Sustained government and private investment has seen improvements being made when it comes to the infrastructure to more alternative-fuel vehicles being used on roads across the UK too. While the UK's network of electric vehicle charging points was recorded in at just a few hundred units as of 2011, there had been more than 5,800 charging locations, 9,800 charging

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devices and 16,700 connectors installed by June 2018.

The day when all vehicles on UK roads are run on alternative fuels may be in the distant future yet. After all, the [latest vehicle data from the SMMT](#) has stated that the car registrations market share for January 2019 was 64.08 per cent petrol, 29.08 per cent diesel and 6.84 per cent alternative-fuel vehicles, for example. However, it at least appears that things are moving in the right direction.

Increase the use of low-carbon fuels

If the UK is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to zero, the nation could also really benefit from businesses and people using low-carbon fuels more.

On this matter, it seems that quite a few individuals are already providing a helping hand. In figures compiled by Imperial College London and reported on by [The Guardian](#), the capacity of renewable energy in the UK surpassed that of fossil fuels for the first time. With the amount of renewable capacity trebling in the same five-year period that fossil fuels decreased by one-third, the capacity of biomass, hydropower, solar and wind power hit 41.9 gigawatts and the capacity of gas, coal and oil-fired power plants recorded in at 41.2 gigawatts between July and September.

The research for Imperial College London was conducted by Dr Iain Staffell, who stated: "Britain's power system is slowly but surely walking away from fossil fuels, and [the quarter between July and September] saw a major milestone on the journey."

Just last year, the UK set a record in that the nation was able to be powered without the use of coal for three consecutive days. The official time stood at 76 hours. This was before a report from Imperial College London which was commissioned by Drax suggested that coal supplied only 1.3 per cent of Britain's entire use of electricity during the second quarter of 2018 — furnaces based at coal-fired power stations throughout the country were completely unused for 12 days in June last year too.

Without a doubt, the UK has given itself quite a significant challenge in attempting to cut its greenhouse gas emissions to zero come 2050. Fortunately, some of the examples covered in

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this article does at least suggest that efforts are being made to ensure the nation reaches its goal.

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