

Must do better

It's that time of the year when the joy of the impending summer holidays can be tempered by the fear that a school report may not be quite what elders and betters were expecting. That's certainly the case for the Government with its efforts on climate change this past year being judged as can and must do better.

According to the [Climate Change Committee](#) (CCC), the independent advisor monitoring how the Government is progressing on its stated green aims, the UK has lost its clear global climate leadership and is being left behind by other nations.

In a withering assessment delivered last week (June 28) to the Prime Minister by CCC Chair Lord Deben, confidence in the UK of meeting its Net Zero goal and no longer adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by 2050 is now markedly less than it was one year ago.

The image of the Prime Minister in the corner receiving a dressing down from the head is a far cry from the A* and wide applause the Government gained following the COP26 conference in which it made a series of strong commitments including:

- generating all electricity from clean sources by 2035, including wind, solar and nuclear projects
- banning new petrol and diesel cars from 2030
- installing 600,000 heat pumps a year by 2028 to replace gas boilers
- using carbon capture to remove 20-30 million tonnes of CO2 a year by 2030

Now the watchdog wants to see urgent actions replace well-meaning words, including a coherent public engagement strategy to empower and inform households and communities to make low-carbon choices.

This needs to be supported by a planning system with an overarching requirement that all planning decisions must have full regard to the imperative of Net Zero.

And whilst pushing forward strongly with new low-carbon industries is vital, the CCC believes Net Zero also makes it necessary to move away from high-carbon developments.

The report recognises that replacing domestic fossil fuel heat systems with clean energy heat pumps is vital to meeting Net Zero aims and to achieve that energy market distortions need to be removed. This would make heat pumps not only more affordable to more of the public but also cheaper to run than gas boilers.

Lord Deben, whose report can be found [here](#) concludes by urging the Prime Minister to act now, warning:

"Our children will not forgive us if we leave them a world of withering heat and devastating storms where sea level rises and extreme temperatures force millions to move because their countries are no longer habitable. None of us can avoid our responsibility."