

## Climate Change, the Environment and Global Development

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons), Chair, Liaison Committee

Has the hon. Lady's Committee looked at the issue of three-phase electricity supply to homes? One of my constituents is keen to invest in solar and Tesla-style wall plugs so that they can recharge vehicles and so on, but the cost of installing the necessary three-phase electricity supply is a problem. Does she feel that that would be a better area for the Government to invest in and allow us to expand renewables?

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Rachel Reeves Chair, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee

Electric vehicles have been discussed quite a bit already today, and much more could be done to encourage people to buy them and to make it easier for people to charge them, as well as to get the charging infrastructure in all communities, including more rural ones.

Our Committee has produced several reports over the last few years on practical things that the Government could do. It has been disappointing at times that our recommendations and suggestions are often rejected by Ministers, when if they had accepted them, we might be a little closer to meeting some of our objectives. On electric vehicles, our Committee recommended that the target of 2040 be brought forward to 2032, and that was before the Government committed to net zero.

The Committee on Climate Change today said:

"The 'Road to Zero' ambition"â€” which the Minister is obviously proud ofâ€”

"for a phase-out of petrol and diesel cars by 2040 is too late and plans to deliver it are too vague. A date closer to 2030 would save motorists money, cut air and noise pollution and align to the net-zero challenge."

I urge the Minister to look at the evidence from the Committee on Climate Change, and the evidence that our Committee took, which points resolutely to the need to bring forward the date for phasing out the internal combustion engine.

While we welcome decisions by companies such as Jaguar Land Rover to invest in a new fleet of electric vehicles, we need to do more to work with our car manufacturing industry to turn the Faraday Institution's ideas and research into practical applications that can revive our British car industry and keep more jobs here, while not polluting the planet in the way that the car industry has in the past.

Everybody who gave evidence to our Committee said that there is no way that we would meet even our previous targets without the roll-out of carbon capture and storage. But we are still waiting for Government decisions on investment in that industry, so that we are not just doing the research and development in labs, but are trialling it and piloting it in some of

our communities. That goes back to the point that Derek Thomas made earlier about communities all over the country. The communities that stand to benefit most from carbon capture and storage are in the north-east, Humber, Merseyside, south Wales and Fife, for example—“all areas that desperately need jobs and investment. If the Government unlocked the funding, which they have previously cut, they could ensure more good-quality jobs all over the country while contributing to reducing our carbon emissions.

Our Committee has also just concluded a report on energy efficiency, which we will publish soon. Without giving away the findings—“my Clerk might be watching—“we heard a lot of evidence that the homes we are building today will need to be retrofitted in years to come because they are not of a high enough energy efficiency standard. It seems nonsensical that we know we are building homes today that will have to be retrofitted in future. Those who got planning permission on a development five or 10 years ago only have to meet the energy efficiency rules and regulations from when they got that planning permission, not those in place today. If we just fixed those things, we would be building homes that do not contribute to global warming in the way that they do today.

The Committee also heard evidence that since the Government scrapped the green new deal, improvements to existing housing stock are just not happening. They are not happening in social housing, the private rented sector or the owner-occupied sector. Unless that happens, we have no chance of meeting the net zero commitments. I urge the Government to look at that when our report is published, and not reject our conclusions and recommendations, which happens far too often, but engage with them, adopt them and put them in place. Only by doing that do we have any chance of meeting the targets that we all say we want to achieve.

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