

Net Zero Review summary

To: All APSE main contacts

Executive Summary

In October 2022, APSE Energy responded to the Net Zero Review call for evidence, with the views of APSE Energy members from across the UK. This consultation ran from 29 September 2022 to 27 October 2022 and received over 1800 responses. This briefing looks at key points and relevant recommendations from the review and refers to comments made in the APSE Energy response. In the coming weeks we will publish further briefings that provide a more in-depth look at specific areas of the review that are particularly relevant to local authorities.

The full Net Zero Review: Mission Zero report can be accessed [here](#).

Background

The Net Zero Review aimed to look at how the UK's path to net zero can be delivered in a way that is pro-business and pro-growth, with questions aimed at the general public, businesses, local government, local organisations and academics & innovators. Questions aimed at local government looked at barriers, what has worked well, the planning system and how policies and funding schemes could be improved in relation to net zero.

Overall, Mission Zero is a 340-page document which makes 129 recommendations which span a variety of different areas. However, the wide-ranging nature of the report means that not all are directly related to the work of local authorities.

The executive summary, outlines ten priority "missions" which are:-

- (1) Grid and Infrastructure;
- (2) Solar;
- (3) Onshore Wind;
- (4) Nuclear;
- (5) Energy Intensives and Industry;
- (6) Circulate Economy and Waste;
- (7) Net Zero Local Big Bang;
- (8) Energy Efficiency for Households;
- (9) Net Zero Nature;
- (10) Research & Development and Innovation.

The review also recommends 25 key actions for the government to act upon before 2025.

Below are some of the 25 key recommendations that are most relevant to local authorities.

- **Cleaner, greener homes:** “Provide certainty by 2024 on the new and replacement gas boiler phase out date to drive industry and investor confidence. The Review recommends bringing the proposed date of 2035 forward and legislating for 2033. Set a legislative target for gas free homes and appliances by the same date, to contribute to a gas free grid in future. Legislate for all homes sold by 2033 to also have an EPC rating of C or above, with exclusions around certain properties (e.g. listed properties, on grounds of affordability). Government should mandate landlords to include ‘average bill cost’ alongside EPC (and possible NZPC) rating, when letting out a property. This will help renters understand what costs to expect, while also helping to put a premium on energy efficient homes.”
- **Cleaner, greener homes:** “Bring forward all consultations and work to mandate the Future Homes Standard by 2025 to prevent further delays by ensuring standard applies to all developments. This should include a consultation on mandating new homes to be built with solar and deliver the Net Zero Homes Standard, ensuring that the planning system is flexible enough to enable this.”
- **Long term funding certainty:** “At the next Spending Review, review options for providing longer-term certainty to a small number of major priorities for net zero – where we know that long-term policy commitment will be essential for success and provide long-term opportunities to save money.”
- **Accelerating renewables:** “Set up taskforce and deployment roadmaps in 2023 for solar to reach up to 70GW by 2035 and onshore wind to reach required deployment levels for 2035 net zero grid.”
- **Hydrogen:** “By the end of 2023, develop and implement an ambitious and pragmatic ‘10 year’ delivery roadmap for the scaling up of hydrogen production. Government should deliver hydrogen business models as soon as legislation allows and confirm the long-term funding envelope available for hydrogen revenue support, to incentivise timely investment.”
- **Transport:** “Swift delivery of ZEV mandate to apply from 2024 while maintaining regulations and funding to support EV/ZEV uptake and continuing to drive emission reductions from internal combustion engines.”
- **Local and regional:** “Fully back at least one Trailblazer Net Zero City, Local Authority and Community, with the aim for these places to reach net zero by 2030.”
- **Local and regional:** “Reform the local planning system and the National Planning Policy Framework now. Have a clearer vision on net zero with the intention to introduce a net zero test, give clarity on when local areas can exceed national standards, give guidance on LAEP, encourage greater use of spatial planning and the creation of Net Zero Neighbourhood plans, and set out a framework for community benefits.”
- **Individuals:** “Publish a public engagement plan for England by 2023, to ramp up public engagement on net zero.”

The report highlights that local authorities currently face “a lack of clarity over their role, a disjointed and short-term approach to funding, and require further support to build the capacity and capability needed locally to deliver a successful transition”. To address this issue, the report calls for a statutory duty for local authorities to acknowledge the UK Government’s net zero commitments, however recommends that this should be accompanied by a clear framework of local roles and responsibilities.

One of the key issues raised in the responses to APSE Energy’s call to evidence was that the lack of long-term government funding opportunities means that local authorities are not able to plan future projects, whilst others criticised the competitive nature of applying for government funding meaning that smaller councils are not able to compete. The review acknowledges that current government funding schemes are currently acting as a barrier to local authorities, in relation to funding issues and the need to catalyse local action, the review states:

“Local authorities are a key partner in delivering net zero, but current central government funding arrangements are standing in the way of effective local action. Stakeholders told us that the funding landscape is disjointed, unfair, and expensive for local authorities to navigate. The Review recommends wholesale simplification of local net zero funding, including consolidation of different pots and a reduction in competitive bidding. These changes will save both central and local government time and money, as well as do more to encourage a systems-wide approach to delivering net zero”

A further issue that was frequently raised by member authorities was that they find that it is difficult to engage with the community on issues surrounding climate change and net zero. The review acknowledged these difficulties stating:

“There is widespread support for net zero, but often this is undermined by a lack of information, cost, and opportunities we cannot access. The Review sets out how the government can change that by putting public engagement at the heart of its work on net zero.”

One of the questions on the consultation referred to how the planning system impacts upon the ability of local authorities to decarbonise, members responded to state that the current planning system is not adequate for addressing net zero. Issues surrounding the fact that houses are currently being build that will need to be retrofitted in the coming years and the planning system being contradictory in relation to net zero. The consultation recommends that there are “wide-ranging local planning reform – from the introduction of a net zero test to a rapid review of bottlenecks in the system – to ensure that it is fully aligned with our net zero future”. Issues regarding buildings being build that will need to be retrofitted in the future and Local Area Energy Plans have also been addressed through recommendations, with the review recommending that:

“Government to bring forward all consultations and work to mandate the Future Homes Standard by 2025 and for all homes sold to be EPC C by 2033. A Net Zero Homes Standard should be considered for the future, as homes that have taken the appropriate steps to be as efficient as possible through a mixture of fabric and low carbon heating measures will be more financially desirable to live in, buy, and sell”

“Central government should reform the local planning system and the NPPF now. Have a clearer vision on net zero with the intention to introduce a net zero test, give clarity on when local areas can exceed national standards, give guidance on LAEP, encourage greater use of spatial planning and the creation of Net Zero Neighbourhood plans, and set out a framework for community benefits.”

APSE Comment

APSE Energy will be producing further briefings on elements of the review over the coming weeks.

A range of topics relating to the Net Zero Review will be covered at the APSE Energy Big Energy Summit which will be held in Warwickshire on 1st and 2nd March. APSE Energy members receive 2 free places for officers or councillors at the Summit. If you would like more information on the Summit or would like to be sent previous APSE Energy briefings, please email James Jefferson at jjefferson@apse.org.uk

APSE also offers its members the opportunity to join the APSE Climate Change and Renewables Network. This network is free to APSE members and you can join [here online](#).

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Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national advisory groups include:-

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- Catering
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- Environmental Health
- Commercialisation network: Local authority trading, charging and income generation
- Housing, construction and building maintenance
- Parks, horticultural and ground maintenance
- Renewables and climate change
- Roads, highways and street lighting
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