

Net Zero Council

Summary of Meeting on 5th Feb 2025

Location: London

Co-chairs:

- Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State, DESNZ
- Shirine Khoury-Haq, CEO, The Co-operative Group

Members in attendance:

- Minister McCarthy, DESNZ
- Carl Ennis, CEO Siemens
- David Thomas, CEO, Barratt Redrow
- Fintan Slye, CEO, NESO
- John Scanlon, CEO, Suez
- Richard Watson, UK CEO, Nestle
- Bev Cornaby, Director, UK Corporate Leaders Group
- Chris Hulatt, Co-Founder, Octopus Investments
- Ian Simm, CEO Impax Asset Management
- Ian Stuart, UK CEO, HSBC
- Sue Ferns, Deputy General Secretary, Prospect (representing TUC)
- Minnie Moll, CEO, Design Council
- Sue Pritchard, Chief Executive, Food Farming and Countryside Commission
- Jabeer Butt, Chief Executive, Race Equality Foundation (representing Everyone's Environment Coalition)
- Joanna Killian, CEO, Local Government Association (remote)
- Catherine Pettengell, Executive Director, Climate Action Network UK (remote)
- Tanya Steele, CEO, WWF-UK (remote)
- Matt Hammerstein, Chief Executive of the UK Corporate Bank, Barclays (remote)
- Mark Versey, CEO, Aviva Investors (remote)

Other government ministers:

- Minister Zeichner, Defra

Guests:

- Kirsty Saddler, Director of Sustainability and Health Programmes, Institute for Grocery Distribution (IGD) (remote)
- David Kennedy, Partner: Corporate Sustainability, EY (remote)
- Emma Keller, Nestle

With support from the Council's Secretariat and Delivery Group: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Co-operative Group, Broadway Initiative, Green Finance Institute, Aldersgate Group, FSB and the Confederation of British Industry.

Summary

1. DESNZ Secretary of State Ed Miliband opened, welcoming new and returning members to the first meeting of the relaunched Net Zero Council. He reiterated the government's commitment to its mission to make the UK a Clean Energy Superpower and emphasised the importance of working in partnership to deliver the significant opportunities the transition provides.
2. Minister McCarthy welcomed the expansion of the Council's membership and highlighted the importance of civil society, local government and trade union voices and ensuring a cross-sector approach.
3. Shirine Khoury-Haq highlighted the many benefits the transition presents and reinforced the Council's focus on delivering action.
4. Members agreed to the Council's Terms of Reference, subject to a small amendment to reflect the breadth of groups that will need to be engaged on the transition.
5. The Council agreed to focus its work in 2025/26 around four workstreams:
 - A new focus on providing expert input to inform government strategies relating to net zero
 - Supporting the development and delivery of sector roadmaps, helping businesses to develop transition plans and investors to identify opportunities
 - Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises to decarbonise while maximising the benefits of the transition
 - Informing the government's approach to public engagement and developing products to support public participation with net zero.
6. Members highlighted the need to identify and address cross-cutting barriers and dependencies across its work. The importance of considering public engagement on net zero across all of the Council's work was agreed.
7. The Council discussed the government's commitment to delivering a credible plan for meeting Carbon Budgets 4-6 and noted the importance of clearly communicating the benefits of the net zero transition.
8. The Council reviewed the UK Food System Transition Plan developed by the Institute for Grocery Distribution and EY. They welcomed the roadmap and the lessons it can provide for wider sector decarbonisation work, while noting that further progress is needed in some areas.