

**CAVENDISH**

# Power brokers.

## Who's who:

The politicians, advisers and officials  
shaping UK energy policy.

March 2026





At the start of 2026,  
**energy**

was at the forefront  
of the Government's  
communications.

**The shift towards tackling the cost-of-living crisis, with a clear pledge to cut energy bills following the November budget, set the tone.**

This was followed by Ed Miliband's announcement of the latest Contracts for Difference for offshore wind, which included larger and longer-term financial commitments than ever before. These announcements were intrinsically linked, presented in a narrative of solving the energy trilemma of security, affordability and sustainability.

The interplay of these three themes and the Government's approach to achieving all of them will be a key theme of this year.

# Energy security.

**Geopolitics has always been a feature of the UK's energy market, something that is currently playing out with the war in the Middle East.**

Governments since Russia's invasion of Ukraine four years ago have increasingly spoken about the impact of energy security on energy bills, with volatility overseas leading to price spikes at home. While nearly all politicians support "home-grown" energy as the solution, the type of energy is up for considerable debate.

For the Government, "home-grown" means primarily boosting the capacity of onshore and offshore wind, solar and battery storage in the short term, while supporting nuclear on a longer timeframe. To opponents, however, the UK should prioritise exploiting fossil fuels in the North Sea, retaining industrial jobs in places like Aberdeen and Grangemouth. Likewise, the opposition set out to the Warm Homes Plan put emphasis on the technology supply chains necessary to access renewables, with the vast majority of solar panels currently coming from China.





# Affordability.

**This year, the Government has pivoted to prioritise affordability for consumers above nearly every other consideration. To date, this has involved some initial moves on non-commodity costs to announce an average bill cut of £150 from April this year – or one half of what was promised in Labour’s manifesto.**

Non-commodity costs were a returning talking point in 2025 as the debate about electricity infrastructure developed, with major energy companies warning MPs that even if the wholesale price of electricity halved, prices for a typical customer would be 20% higher by the end of this decade. The Government will be searching for levers to address these seemingly inescapable increases and, ideally, to reverse them altogether to deliver the decreases in energy bills that were promised.

The Government has already shown a more interventionist approach, responding to Middle East-driven price spikes with targeted support for heating oil users and a warning from the Chancellor that she will not tolerate companies profiteering from the crisis. With the next Ofgem price cap announcement on the horizon, we can expect more robust public exchanges between the Government and energy sector on why bills might rise.



# Sustainability and climate impact.

**Public polling on the environment has seen its salience decrease as a top three issue over the last few years, falling from a 40% peak in 2021 to 16% in January 2026.**

Similarly to housing, many in the energy-intensive sectors will be watching how far the Government is willing to go to unblock new infrastructure, generation and demand projects - even where there are perceived environmental impacts. Eyebrows will have been raised by the recent Government U-turn on a data centre in Buckinghamshire over issues with requiring an environmental impact assessment ahead of approval by MHCLG. Balancing these priorities will continue to prove challenging.

The Prime Minister

is fighting

for his  
political survival.



**All of the Government's decisions will be under increased scrutiny this year.**

Energy will be no exception as all three points of the trilemma come under pressure – increasing global instability with the war in the Middle East threatening energy security, climbing prices hitting affordability, and political arguments over whether to go faster or slower on climate impacts.

The actions affecting the energy and infrastructure sectors this year will not be decided by the Prime Minister or Ed Miliband alone – there's a whole network of decision makers, advisers, officials and critics that are constantly impacting the direction and speed of policy making. This document sets out some of the key ones.

# Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

**The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero is responsible for UK energy policy. Its focus is on energy security, protecting billpayers and reaching net zero.**

Under Labour, the Department's priorities are to achieve clean power by 2030, and bring down energy bills by £300 a year.



## **Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP**

**Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero**

As Energy Secretary, Ed Miliband has overall responsibility for the Department. He was previously Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change from 2008 to 2010 under Gordon Brown's Premiership.



## **Lord Vallance**

**Minister for Science Innovation Research and Nuclear**

Lord Vallance is responsible for nuclear, fusion, science and innovation for climate and energy, AI in the energy sector and research and development within DESNZ.



## **Michael Shanks**

**Minister for Energy**

The Minister is responsible for the UK's energy systems, the grid and networks including renewables, biomass, oil, gas and hydrogen as well as energy security, resilience, market reform and Clean Power 2030.



## **Lord Whitehead**

**Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero**

Lord Whitehead is responsible for departmental business in the House of Lords. He is widely respected in the energy industry for his expertise and experience; pushing for cleaner energy since his time as Leader of Southampton City Council in the 1980s.



**Katie White OBE**  
**Minister for Climate**

Katie White is responsible for international climate and energy policy, international climate finance, green finance and methane emissions.



**Martin McCluskey**  
**Minister for Energy Consumers**

Martin McCluskey is responsible for tackling fuel poverty, domestic energy efficiency, and the decarbonisation of homes and businesses.



**Chris McDonald**  
**Minister for Industry**

Chris McDonald is responsible for clean energy jobs, green growth sectors and skills, industrial decarbonisation and energy infrastructure investments.



# DESNZ Special Advisers.



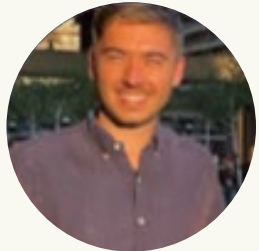
**Jonty Leibowitz**  
Special Adviser

Jonty Leibowitz provides policy advice on energy, net zero financing, and the green transition, and has a close working relationship with Ed Miliband, having served as his political adviser for four years, with earlier experience at the Centre for Local Economic Strategies.



**Eleanor Salter**  
Special Adviser (Joint with Defra)

Eleanor Salter is a Special Adviser working jointly between DESNZ and Defra on energy policy and water regulation, with a background in climate journalism and activism.



**Olly Nicholson**  
Special Adviser

Nicholson is a long-serving member of Ed Miliband's team, having progressed from Parliamentary Assistant and Office Manager to Special Adviser, after beginning his political career in 2019 as an intern for Luke Pollard MP.



**Tobias Garnett**  
Special Adviser

Tobias Garnett has worked at DESNZ since 2024, following over five years working for the Labour Party he is a trustee of the Labour Climate and Environment Forum, and is most publicly known for his involvement with Extinction Rebellion.



**Tim Bliss**  
Special Adviser

Tim Bliss joined DESNZ after Louise Haigh's resignation as Secretary of State for Transport, where he had served as her Special Adviser, and previously as Parliamentary Assistant to Kerry McCarthy during her time as Shadow Minister for Climate Change.

# DESNZ officials.

Supporting Ministers at DESNZ is a team of civil servants helping them to implement their vision for the UK's energy system.



**Jonathan Mills CB**

**Director General, Energy Markets and Supply**

Jonathan Mills CB is Director General responsible for energy supply, markets, affordability, strategy, and analysis.



**Ben Rimmington**

**Director General, Net Zero Buildings and Industry (NZBI)**

Ben Rimmington CBE is Director General responsible for heat and business energy, home and local energy, and smart metering implementation.



**Ben Golding**

**Director of the Clean Power 2030 Unit**

Ben Golding is leading the implementation of the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.



**Paro Konar**

**Director General, Major Decarbonisation Projects**

Paro Konar is Director General responsible for hydrogen, CCUS, and greenhouse gas removal.



**Lee McDonough**

**Director General, Net Zero, Nuclear and International**

Lee McDonough CB is Director General responsible for net zero strategy, international net zero, climate and energy science and innovation, and nuclear protection, development, and decommissioning.



**Ashley Ibbett**

**Director General, Energy Infrastructure**

Dr Ashley Ibbett is Director General responsible for energy systems and networks, renewable electricity, CCUS, energy development and security, and offshore oil and gas regulation.

# DESNZ officials.



**Jane Walker**  
**Director of Energy Affordability  
and Consumers**

Jane Walker is responsible for policies on energy costs and consumer protection.



**Ben Holley**  
**Deputy Director for Gas Systems**

Ben Holley is Deputy Director for Gas Systems, overseeing the operation and security of the UK's gas networks.



**Dan Micklethwaite**  
**Director of Energy Security  
and Resilience**

Dan Micklethwaite is responsible for ensuring the security and resilience of the UK energy system and energy supply now and in the future.



**Dan Osgood**  
**Director of Electricity Security  
& Market Reform**

Dan Osgood leads government policy on energy markets, including major programmes to reform electricity and retail energy markets.



**Emma Floyd**  
**Director for Clean Energy Investment**

Emma Floyd is Director for Clean Energy Investment, as well as a Non-Executive Director at Great British Energy.



**Emily Bourne**  
**Director of Energy Systems  
and Networks (ES&N)**

Emily Bourne leads work on the UK's energy systems and networks.

# DESNZ officials.



**Sarah Redwood OBE**  
**Director of Renewable Energy Deployment**

Dr Sarah Redwood OBE leads the deployment of renewable energy across the UK.



**Chris Stark**  
**Head of Mission Control, Clean Power 2030**

Chris Stark is a climate and energy expert appointed to lead Mission Control for Clean Power 2030, a Government initiative aimed at accelerating the UK's transition to clean, homegrown energy. He is the former chief executive of the Climate Change Committee, where he helped establish the UK's net zero target, and previously served as Director of Energy and Climate Change in the Scottish Government.





# Across Whitehall.

Energy policy isn't just decided at DESNZ, it touches a number of Departments across Government.

# No. 10.



## Hannah Bronwin

### Expert Adviser on Energy and Net Zero

Hannah Bronwin is the Prime Minister's Expert Adviser on Energy and Net Zero. She supports Ministers while working across the No10 and Government energy teams, having already worked with Government as an expert adviser to the Clean Power Commission.



## Varun Chandra

### Business Adviser and Special Envoy to the United States

Varun Chandra is a Business Adviser at No.10, acting as a conduit between Government and business, with a background at corporate intelligence firm Hakluyt and involvement in high-profile business and trade issues.



## Kate Webb

### Housing and Infrastructure Special Adviser

Kate Webb works closely with the Prime Minister on strategic policy for housing, infrastructure, and urban development, having previously led housing strategy at the Greater London Authority and held roles in HM Treasury, the Prime Minister's Implementation Unit, and Shelter.

# Department for Business & Trade.



**Jaec Samant**  
**Director General, Business Group**

Jaec Samant is responsible for a range of priority sectors including energy, energy-intensive industries, manufacturing, infrastructure, and science and technology.

# Office for Investment.



**John Edwards**  
**Director of Investment**

John Edwards is Director of Investment at the Office for Investment, working to secure inward investment that supports the UK's energy transition, net zero goals, and future industries.

# Department for Transport.



**Dave Buttery**  
**Director of Low Carbon Fuels**

Dave Buttery is the Director of Low Carbon Fuels, leading on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in transportation and driving the adoption of sustainable fuels for transport.



**Joe Delafield**  
**Deputy Director, Aviation Decarbonisation**

Joe Delafield is the Deputy Director of Aviation Decarbonisation, leading Government efforts to reduce carbon emissions in the aviation sector in line with "Jet Zero" ambitions.



# National Energy System Operator & Ofgem.

**The National Energy System Operator (NESO) and Ofgem have an increasingly important role in the UK's energy system: from protecting consumers to system planning.**

NESO was created as a result of the 2023 Energy Act to take a bird's eye view of the UK's energy system, ensuring it is fit for the future. Recently, Ofgem's role has been under increasing scrutiny, with critics arguing it has become overly political.

# NESO.



## Fintan Syle

**CEO**

Fintan Syle is Chief Executive Officer of the National Energy System Operator (NESO), overseeing the UK's independent energy system planning and operation to support Net Zero, security of supply, and efficient whole-system coordination.



## Julian Leslie

**Strategic Energy Planning Director and Chief Engineer**

Julian Leslie is Strategic Energy Planning Director and Chief Engineer at NESO, leading planning and technical oversight of the UK's energy system.



## Matt Magill

**Director of Engineering and Customer Solutions Transformation**

Matt Magill leads on connections reform, looking to prioritise viability and ensure only ready-to-deliver projects proceed.



## Claire Dykta

**Head of UK Strategy**

Claire Dykta leads strategy and policy, guiding planning and decision-making across the energy system.



# Ofgem.



## **Tim Jarvis**

**Acting CEO**

Tim Jarvis joined Ofgem in September 2023. He is currently Acting CEO while Jonathan Brearley's replacement is appointed. Before being appointed Acting CEO, he was the Director General for Markets, ensuring fair pricing and high customer service standards.



## **Akshay Kaul**

**Director of Infrastructure**

Akshay Kaul leads infrastructure at Ofgem, overseeing the development and regulation of the UK's energy networks.



## **Neil Lawrence**

**Director of Delivery and Schemes**

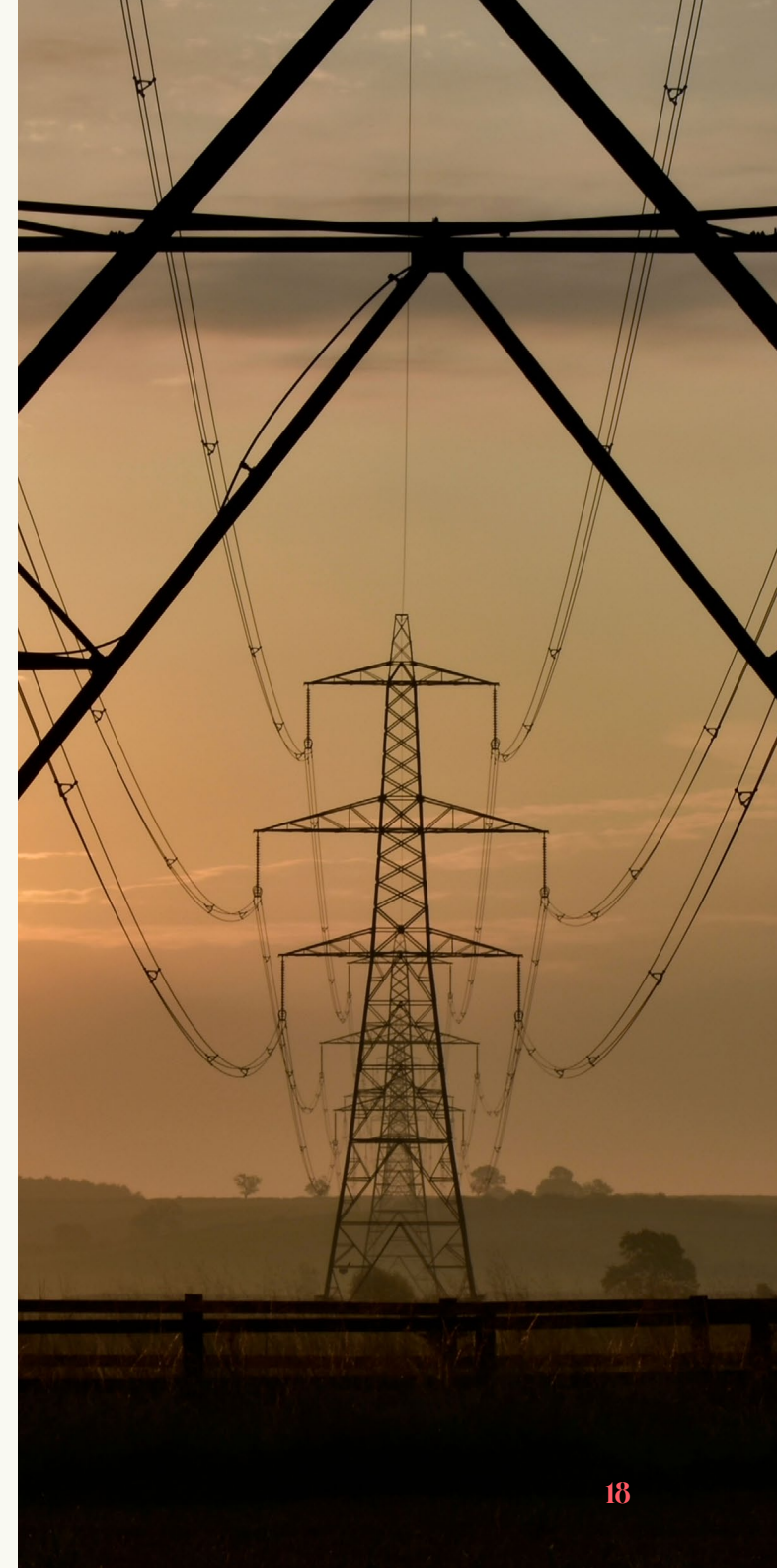
Neil Lawrence leads delivery and schemes at Ofgem, managing the rollout of regulatory programmes and initiatives across the energy sector.



## **Cathryn Scott and Sinead Murray**

**Director of Energy Systems Management and Security**

Cathryn Scott and Sinead Murray lead energy systems management and security at Ofgem, overseeing the operation, resilience, and stability of the UK's energy networks.



An aerial photograph of London, England, showing the River Thames flowing through the city. The Houses of Parliament and the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) are prominent on the right bank. The London Bridge is visible in the foreground, crossing the river. The city skyline is filled with various buildings, including modern skyscrapers and historic structures. The sky is overcast with soft, diffused light.

# Shaping the debate.

**Energy and Net Zero are some of the most polarising debates in politics. Historically, land use, boiler bans and zero emission vehicle mandates dominated headlines, but issues that may have previously been considered niche such as zonal pricing, grid connections and infrastructure, and curtailment costs have found their way to centre stage.**

We've mapped out the Parliamentarians pushing the Net Zero consensus, who are broadly supportive of the Government's approach, vs. those on the other side of the debate, who either want to repeal Net Zero targets or advocate for a more radical approach to Net Zero than the Government is taking.

# The Consensus.



**Luke Murphy**  
(Labour, Basingstoke)

Luke Murphy MP is a prominent parliamentary advocate for clean energy - chair of the Climate and Net Zero APPG, former head of IPPR's Fair Transition Unit and energy team lead, and a vocal proponent of a "just" transition to renewable deployment.



**Polly Billington**  
(Labour, East Thanet)

Polly Billington MP is a Labour MP and a leading advocate for clean energy and net zero policy, co chairing the Renewable and Sustainable Energy APPG, serving on the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee, and previously founding the climate and clean energy network UK100, a network for locally-elected leaders pledging to switch to 100% clean energy by 2050.

# The Challengers.



**Claire Coutinho**  
(Conservative, East Surrey)

Claire Coutinho MP is Shadow Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and a prominent critic of ambitious net zero policies, arguing they have increased energy costs, driven emissions overseas, and should be replaced with a focus on lowering bills and expanding UK oil and gas production in the North Sea.



**Richard Tice**  
(Reform, Boston and Skegness)

Richard Tice MP is Reform UK's "Shadow" Business, Trade and Energy spokesperson. He is a vocal critic of net zero and large scale renewable energy policies, campaigning to scrap net zero targets, oppose subsidies for wind and solar, and prioritise traditional energy sources and lower bills.



## **Baroness Young of Old Scone** (Labour)

Baroness Young of Old Scone is a senior House of Lords peer and environmental advocate with a long track record in conservation and climate policy, including leadership of the Environment Agency and RSPB and chairing the Labour Climate and Environment Forum, speaking on energy, net zero and sustainable development in parliamentary debates.



## **Baroness Worthington** (Crossbench)

Baroness Bryony Worthington is a life peer and influential climate and energy advocate who helped shape the UK's original Climate Change Act, served as Shadow Spokesperson for Energy and Climate Change during the coalition years, and has consistently pressed for ambitious, evidence-based clean energy and net zero policy in the House of Lords, drawing on extensive experience across government, NGOs, and the energy sector.



## **Wera Hobhouse** (Liberal Democrat, Bath)

Wera Hobhouse MP is a prominent advocate for climate and energy action in Parliament, championing renewable energy, electrification, and energy efficiency, and using her role on the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee to push for faster, fairer decarbonisation and cross-party consensus on the energy transition.



## **Graham Stringer** (Labour, Blackley and Middleton South)

Graham Stringer MP is a long-serving backbencher known for his scepticism of net zero policy and criticism of renewable energy targets and climate modelling, advocating a more cautious, cost-focused approach to UK energy policy. He has been a director since 2015 of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, a group established to challenge mainstream climate science and oppose policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



## **Nick Timothy MP** (Conservative, West Suffolk)

Nick Timothy is a Conservative MP known for criticising renewable energy subsidies and Net Zero policy as impractical and costly, arguing that renewables require paying for “two energy systems” and that refusing to drill risks impoverishing the UK. He is also Shadow Justice Secretary and former Chief of Staff to Theresa May.



## **Clive Lewis MP** (Labour, Norwich South)

Clive Lewis advocates radical energy policies, opposing new fossil fuel projects and market-based energy solutions, while pushing for public ownership, a National Energy Guarantee, and a Just Transition to green jobs.



The UK's

energy

debate

can be polarising.

**With policymakers and MPs from across the political spectrum shaping the future of climate and energy in the UK, but the conversation does not stop here.**

In our next document, we will turn our attention to the journalists who are at the heart of reporting, analysing, and influencing public understanding of energy issues. Stay tuned as we uncover the leading voices in energy journalism; who they are, what they cover, and why their perspectives matter.

# Get in touch.

**For further information, or to discuss how your organisation can engage effectively,  
get in touch with our team today.**

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