

End of coal power to be brought forward in drive towards net zero

- Britain's reliance on coal for electricity has dropped from 70% in 1990 to less than 3% today
- government announces its intention to consult on bringing forward the deadline for removing coal power altogether by 2024
- Prime Minister sets out intention at a speech launching a Year of Climate Action ahead of COP26, attended by Sir David Attenborough and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte

The deadline for the phase-out of coal from Britain's energy system is planned to be brought forward a year to 1 October 2024, the Prime Minister has announced today (4 February 2020) in a [speech to launch COP26](#).

The government will consult on bringing the deadline for ending unabated coal forward from 2025 to 2024, part of its drive to go further and faster on decarbonising the power sector, as it works towards net zero by 2050.

New statistics released today show the UK's greenhouse gas emissions fell by 2.1% between 2017 and 2018, thanks in large part to the rapid decline of coal-powered electricity generation. Last year more than half of the UK's electricity came from low-carbon sources.

This means the UK has cut its emissions by 43% since 1990 while growing the economy by more than two thirds – the best performance of any G7 nation.

Business and Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

The UK has a proud record in tackling climate change and making the most of the enormous economic potential of clean technologies. This is my number one priority, and we will raise our ambition in this year of climate action.

Coal-generated energy will soon be a distant memory as we plan to decarbonise every sector of our economy, enabling a greener future for all our children.

The Prime Minister today set out the UK's position as a world leader in the response to climate change and called on all nations to strive towards net zero emissions.

The government will also bring forward [an end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans](#) to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition is feasible, subject to consultation, as well as include hybrids for the first time.

Coal is the most carbon intensive fossil fuel and is responsible for harmful air pollution. Last year Great Britain went 3,700 hours without using coal

for power, nearly 5 times more than the whole of 2017. There are currently 4 active coal generators, one of which has announced closure in March 2020.

Britain was one of the first countries in the world to commit to ending unabated coal generation. Existing policies are already cutting our reliance on coal from around 40% in 2012 to less than 3% in 2019. The contribution of renewables is now at record levels, standing at 33%.

Read the [Prime Minister's full speech](#), delivered at the Science Museum.

The announcement comes as [statistics released today](#) show the UK's greenhouse gas emissions fell by 2.1% between 2017 and 2018.

In November 2015, the government announced its [intention to consult on proposals to end unabated coal generation](#) in Great Britain by 2025. The [government response to that consultation](#) was published in January 2018.

The plan to bring forward the date of phasing out unabated coal will be subject to a public consultation. Unabated means that the plant has not invested in abating technology, such as carbon capture and storage.

The [contribution of renewables to the UK electricity system](#) in 2018 is available.

Last year Britain went for more than 5 months in total without using coal to produce electricity. In May it went for over a fortnight in one stretch – the longest coal-free period since the 1880s.