

Speech: Launch of the Clean Growth Strategy

Good morning all.

It is such a pleasure to be here today to launch our new [Clean Growth Strategy](#). Not only because I am required to, under the Climate Change Act.

But also because I am genuinely proud of what we have achieved so far in the United Kingdom and incredibly excited about the huge opportunities for us ahead.

You may wonder why we have asked you to come to this iconic venue, scene of so much national success, this morning.

Well there are two reasons.

The first is because we are benefiting in this building from one of the UK's biggest low-carbon combined heating, cooling and power facilities – brilliant technology that we want to see deployed much more widely.

And the second reason is... well you will have to wait for that.

Before I begin to detail all the steps we are taking, I want to thank a few people.

First, I want to thank my Secretary of State Greg Clark for his longstanding commitment to action on climate change.

From his time as Shadow Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change before the 2010 election, to his work across government, he has continued to champion the urgent need to cut emissions and seize the opportunity of clean growth and he deserves a huge amount of credit for this Strategy.

Second, I want to thank Nick Hurd, my predecessor in the department.

Nick put a massive effort into developing the policies in this plan, and I was really delighted I could take the baton from him [not just to steal all the glory] but because when I took on the Strategy, he had got it to a great place.

Thanks also to my amazing team at BEIS who have been working so hard for so long to put this Strategy together.

I also want to thank the Committee on Climate Change and their tireless chairman, Lord Deben.

You don't realise until you sit in this ministerial chair, what a brilliant piece of legislation the Climate Change Act has proved to be, holding our feet to the fire as we consider every policy choice and empowering the

Committee to keep us moving forward despite the short term political cycle.

Finally, I also want to thank all of you here today for your work cajoling, prodding, challenging, sometimes praising and, yes, criticising what we do.

We are not going to tackle the risks of climate change, nor grasp the opportunities of doing so unless we work together and I thank you for your commitment to this most important of issues.

You will know the gestation of our Clean Growth Strategy has been long, at times difficult and sometimes frustrating.

But we finally have a Strategy that is ambitious, broad and binding...

Sets out clear targets...

Harnesses the power of national innovation...

And re-affirms this government's commitment to lead the way to a low carbon future.

So, today, in launching the Clean Growth Strategy I want to focus on three things:

First, to celebrate the extraordinary success the United Kingdom has achieved in delivering clean growth over the past two decades...

Second, as Greg said, to underline the enormous industrial opportunity for us that is emerging from the global transition to a low carbon economy – and how it will benefit us right across the UK.

And third to set out why this Clean Growth Strategy is distinctive and how it helps us meet the challenges we face.

As I said to start, the reason we are all here is the 2008 Climate Change Act, which had cross-party support and was a totemic piece of legislation. Because of that legislation we have to set out our strategy to meet the upcoming carbon budgets.

But we are also here because we want to be.

As the Prime Minister said in her foreword to our new strategy: "Clean growth is not an option, but a duty we owe to the next generation."

And I think the UK should be very proud of our record in fulfilling that duty.

We were one of the first countries to recognise both the economic and security threats posed by rising sea levels and rising high temperatures.

And we have followed the guidance provided by that scientific understanding with action.

As Greg said, since 1990, we have cut emissions by more than 40 per cent

while our economy has grown by two thirds over that time.

On a per person basis, this means that we have reduced emissions faster than any other G7 nation.

And not by sacrificing growth and competitiveness – we have led the G7 group in growth in national income over that period.

Let me just repeat that – we lead the G7 group of countries in cutting our emissions and growing our economy

Proving as false the view that we couldn't protect the planet and raise prosperity at the same time.

Our world-first 2008 Climate Change Act set the pace for change, committing us to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least eighty per cent by 2050.

And I'm pleased to tell you we are on track.

We over-performed against our first carbon budget, and are on track to do the same for the second and third. This is a fantastic achievement.

Our action at home is matched by our ambition to see action across the world.

This saw us playing a leading role in securing the agreement of 195 countries to sign up to the now historic Paris Climate Agreement...

It commits us to being among the largest contributors of international climate finance.

And it means that from the Prime Minister, Theresa May, downwards we continue to work across the world to ensure the Paris agreement and climate action are delivered and at the forefront of international action – UK leadership that has never been more needed than now.

I know many of you in this room are responsible for this incredible success.

A success which I don't think we celebrate enough.

Well I promise to keep talking about it and to champion it on your behalf at every opportunity, home and abroad.

The commitments made by 195 countries in Paris also present an unparalleled economic opportunity.

We are seeing the start of a global shift toward clean solutions...

Low carbon ways to get from A to B...

...power and heat produced in way that helps the planet and helps people struggling with their bills...

...and heavy industry going carbon-light.

This shift offers UK businesses and innovators huge potential to shape the future of clean growth.

Because part of the reason why the UK is considered a leader in tackling climate change, is that we don't just see it as a problem to be solved...

We see it is an opportunity, too.

So, by focusing on clean growth, we are presented with a win-win situation...

We can cut the cost of energy...

Drive economic growth...

Create high value jobs right across the UK...

And improve our quality of life.

This is precisely what our Clean Growth Strategy is about.

You will see a list of 50 major policies and plans in the Strategy Document today, with many supporting ones in the text behind them, and when implemented there will be real change

To give you just a few examples:

For businesses, the largest pool of contributors to emissions, we will help them improve how they use their energy, aiming to increase their energy productivity by at least twenty per cent by 2030, saving businesses £6 billion...

...we will establish an industrial energy efficiency scheme to help large companies cut their bills...

...and we will demonstrate international leadership in carbon capture, usage and storage, that we need to decarbonise and improve how we do business, including substantial new investment in leading edge innovation.

Our strategy will make a positive change to how we live.

We will make it easier for homeowners to make home improvements that can reduce their energy use...

...we will invest around £3.6 billion to upgrade around a million homes through the Energy Company Obligation by 2020, and extend that support to 2028...

...we will continue to support RHI (Renewable Heat Incentive)...

... we will work towards our aspiration that every home in the country will be rated Energy Performance Certificate as Band C by 2035...

And we will aim to upgrade as many private rented homes as possible where practical and affordable – helping many of those living in severe fuel poverty.

And, our Clean Growth Strategy will change the way we travel and make our air cleaner.

We have already said and reconfirm today we will end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040...

...it will invest £1 billion supporting the take-up of ultra-low emission vehicles, including helping consumers to overcome the upfront cost of an electric car...

...and we will make sure that those cars are powered by developing one of the best electric vehicle charging networks in the world.

Indeed you may have seen the hydrogen bus outside and we will continue to support different types of low carbon transport.

I get asked all the time – so what's the magic bullet today?

And my answer is – we don't have one. There is no one lever we can pull.

Instead we go through every major part of our economy and every part of government to set out ways to cut the emissions and drive innovation

Whether that's investing in research and innovation for energy efficiency...

Or building new heat networks across the country to drive down the cost of keeping homes warm...

Whatever it takes, we are determined to make a difference.

And any set of actions that hopes to combat climate change has to cover all parts of the economy

And be focused on the next few decades, not the next few years, that is why the Clean Growth Strategy is a Strategy.

It has far-reaching goals and priorities, and sets the scene for other long-term plans government will be bringing forward like the upcoming 25 year plan from my colleagues at DEFRA, the DfT's Road to Zero and our Industrial Strategy and its Sector Deals.

Our message is clear: this needs to be a priority for our government and the country for the years ahead, for future generations and not just us today.

And now is the right time to make these decisions because the benefits are huge.

The most recent research shows that the UK's low carbon economy could grow over 10 to 12 per cent per year up to 2030 – four times faster than the growth of the UK economy as a whole.

By that estimate that would mean – in just 13 years – the UK's low carbon economy would support up to 2 million more jobs and export up to £170bn low carbon goods and services each year.

And I'm not just talking about jobs in London and the South East...

This impact will be felt all over the country. We've already seen this happen, whether it's the Siemens wind turbine blade factory in Hull or Nissan confirming that their Leaf electric car will be produced in Sunderland.

Like I said: a win-win situation right across the country, one that we are exploiting.

You may ask: what is different about this plan?

Well, it focuses areas of action where we get clear joint benefits:

cleaner air from low emissions vehicles...

...lower energy bills from improved energy efficiency...

... reducing waste and using resources efficiently...

...and creating a more biodiverse, resilient natural environment.

It is also a true cross-government approach – with real actions from buildings to transport, and from the natural environment to power generation.

And at the heart of our Strategy is a targeted focus on innovation.

Because I fundamentally believe that it is only through innovation that we can bring down the costs of low carbon technologies.

We want low carbon to mean low cost.

Because we need low cost to protect our businesses and households from high costs, including energy costs.

But – just as important – if we can develop the low cost, low carbon technologies here, we can capture the industrial and economic advantage from the global transition we are starting to see.

Finally, if we want to see other countries, particularly developing countries, follow our lead, we need low carbon technologies to be cheap.

So we have a new triple test to help us decide how to support new technologies:

First, does this deliver maximum carbon emission reduction?

Second, can we see a clear cost reduction pathway for this technology, so we can deliver low cost solutions?

And third, can the UK develop world-leading technology in a sizeable global market?

Of course, we can't predict every technological breakthrough – if we'd have done that a few years ago, we would have been wrong – and not all of the

choices we make will be the right ones.

That is the nature of working with such fast moving technologies.

But we are determined to create the best possible ecosystem for the private sector to invest and innovate.

If we get it right, we can see the benefits, just as we have on offshore wind, and the remarkable cost reduction we have seen where the costs have plummeted 50 percent in just two years.

And we have installed the biggest offshore wind base in the world.

To achieve these sorts of wins going forward and deliver the clean growth we need, it will require everyone to play their part.

This is not a job for central government alone.

It is a job for our devolved nations, local authorities, businesses and civil society working together; ambition and drive from every part of society and government is as important as diktats from Whitehall.

That is why we are delighted to celebrate in our document some of the amazing work that is taking place across the country.

And it is why we are setting up an annual 'Green Great Britain' Week, to celebrate the progress we have made, showcase UK technology and leadership, and inspire and motivate us to keep going, no matter the challenges, to deliver low carbon technology.

To meet our goals, we are going to need the full ingenuity, enterprise and determination of the British people working together.

So that answers the second question as to why we are here today.

Because we want to capture the spirit of cooperation and enterprise that gave us such an amazing performance at the 2012 Olympics from Team GB...

And use it to deliver a Green GB...

There won't be medals on offer...

But the prize for all of us will be driving and capturing the benefits and opportunities for Britain and the world of our low carbon future.

I think that's a race we all want to win.

Thank you.