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Climate Crossroads: What's next for the Conservatives on Net Zero and Nature?



Monday, 6 October



13:30 to 14:30



Central 6, Secure Zone,
Manchester Central



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Scotson (Chair)**

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**Toni
Pearce**

WWF
UK



**John
Flesher**

Conservative
Environment Network



**Harriet
Cross MP**

MP for Gordon &
Buchan

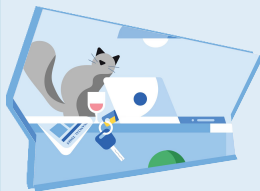
Progressive Activists



Incrementalist Left



Established Liberals



Sceptical Scrollers



Rooted Patriots



Traditional Conservatives



Dissenting Disruptors



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise, and believes the system broadly works

...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

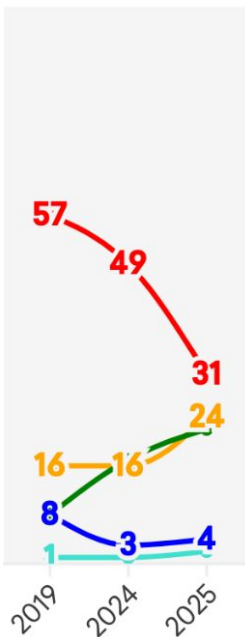
... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

How would the seven segments vote?

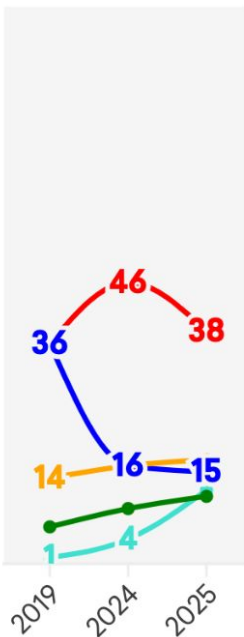
Progressive Activists

"Corbynites"



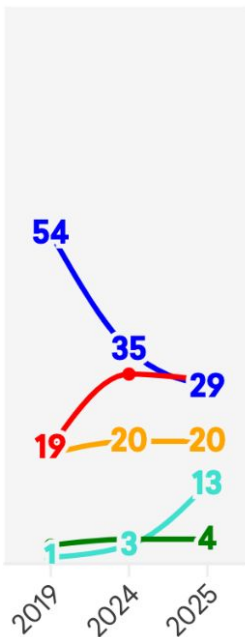
Incrementalist Left

"Social democrats"



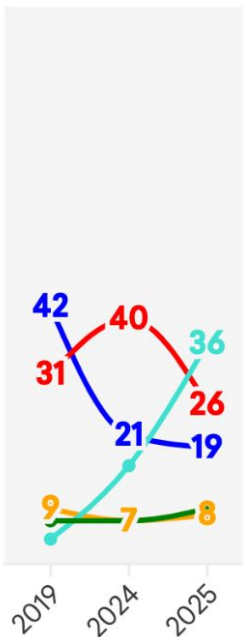
Established Liberals

"Blue Wall"



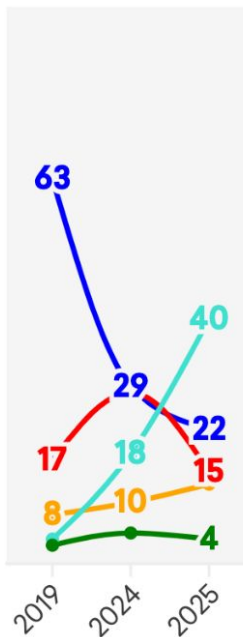
Sceptical Scrollers

"Online Disengaged"



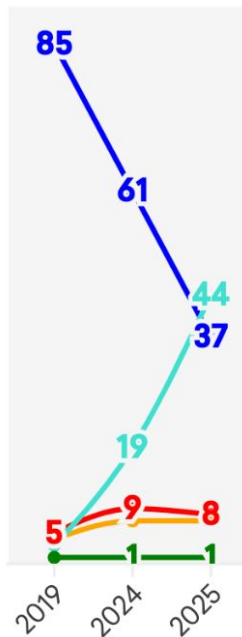
Rooted Patriots

"Red Wall"



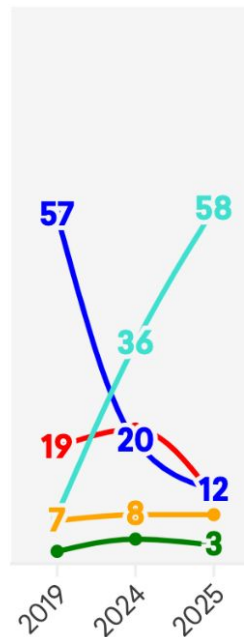
Traditional Conservatives

"Shire Tory"



Dissenting Disruptors

"Populist Right"



The Conservatives' core segments

Established Liberals

'Cameronite Tories' who have left the party in recent years for Labour and the Liberal Democrats. For many, changes in direction after the EU Referendum caused them to leave the Conservative party, even though they are closely aligned with Conservative values on the economy.



Rooted Patriots

Socially conservative voters living in places that feel left-behind and overlooked. They have voted for Labour and Conservatives in the past and many are now attracted to Reform having been let down by the main parties. They are more risk averse than Reform's core voters.



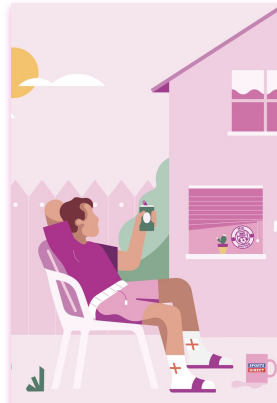
Traditional Conservatives

Traditionally the Conservatives' core voter base, they value respect, tradition and authority more than any other voter group. However they are increasingly attracted by Reform UK as many of them say the Conservative party has not learned their lesson from the last election.



Dissenting Disruptors

A politically disengaged group who tend not to vote in elections unless there is a chance to cause meaningful change. This group feel disparaged by elites and believe diversity is undermining Britain. Given this, they are extremely attracted to Reform UK and the opportunity to 'tear down the system' with a completely new party.





Overview

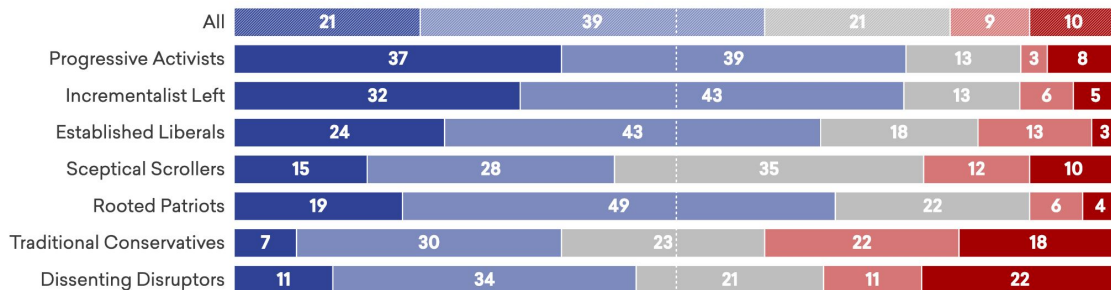
Across the country Britons worry about climate change

In every British constituency, there is a majority of people who are worried about climate change, from 52 per cent concern in Dundee Central to 80 per cent in Islington North.

Overall, 74 per cent think climate change is an important issue. More than a third say they've been doing more to protect the environment over the last year.

How worried are you about climate change?

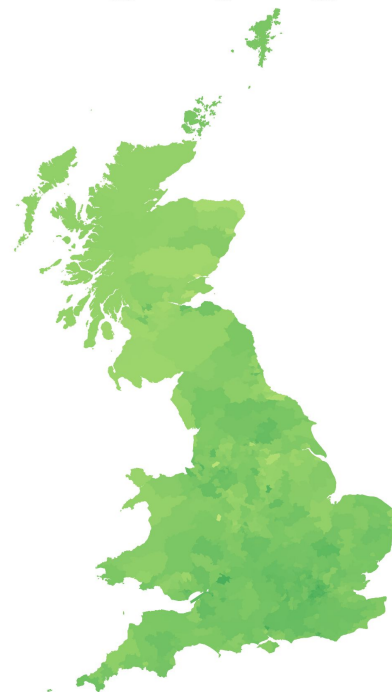
- Very worried
- Somewhat worried
- Neither worried nor unworried
- Somewhat unworried
- Very unworried



How worried are you about climate change?

% worried minus % not worried

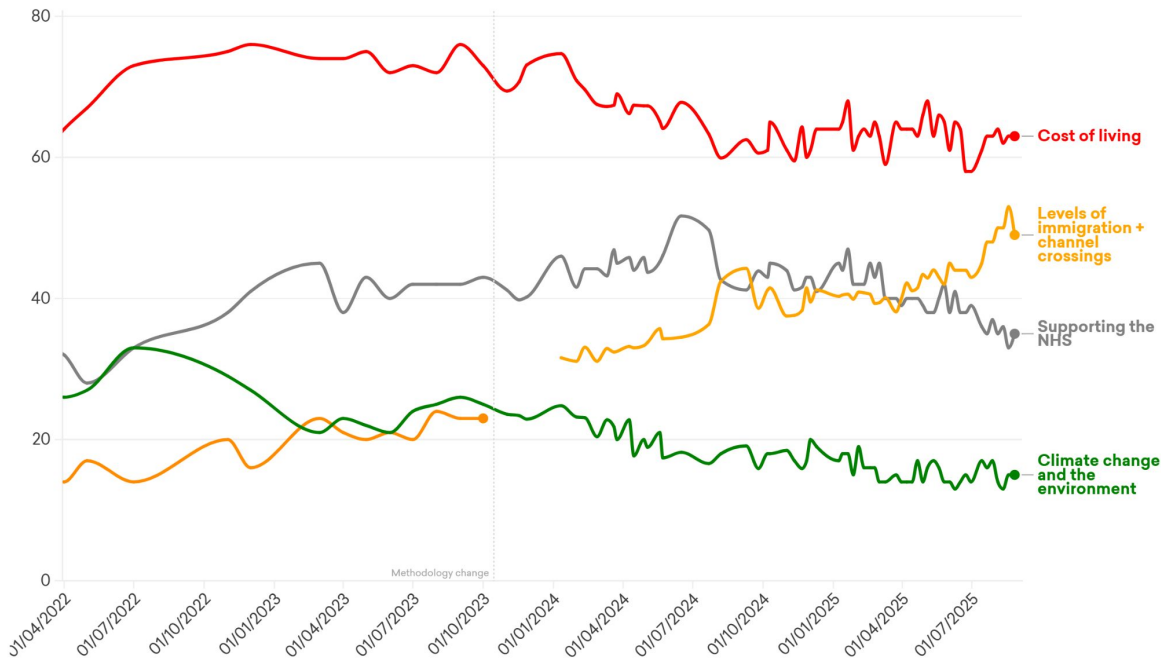
-100% 0% 100%



But climate change is just one of many worries...

Britons' big issues over time

In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Please select up to three



Climate change is seen as the 8th biggest issue facing the country today - down from a peak in 2022 - 13 per cent of the population say it is one of the most important issues now in 2025.

Climate change concern has given way to more immediate issues in people's day to day lives such as the cost of living crisis and immigration.

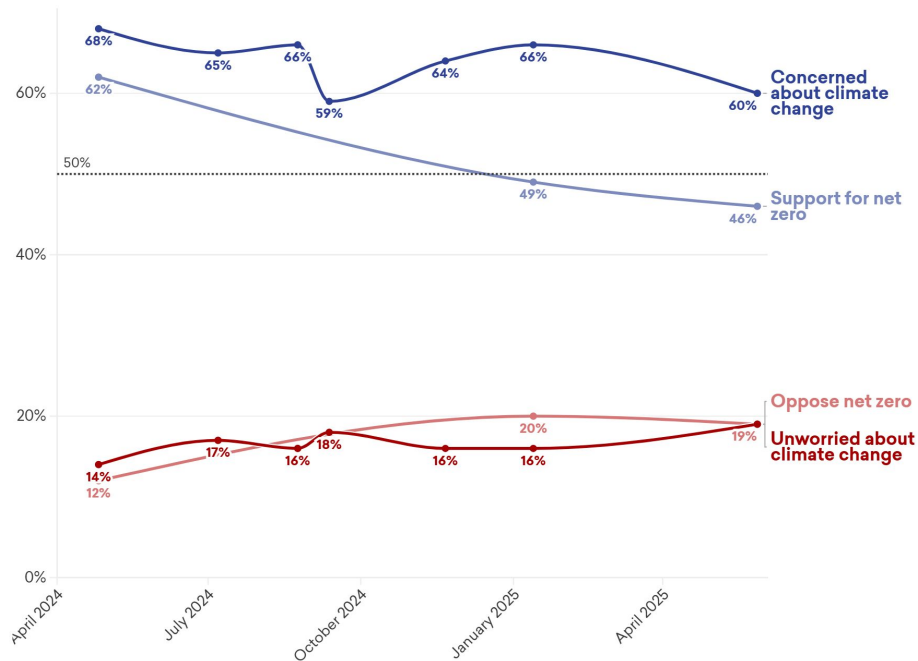
Unpopular governments make unpopular policies

There has been a decoupling between climate concern and support for Net Zero.

While support for Net Zero has decreased this is largely driven by people shifting to 'don't know'. Opposition has been much more stable, hovering around 18 per cent over the past year

In focus groups participants struggle to name any benefits that they have had from Net Zero policy, but readily point to perceived costs that they have had to bear. In other words, the costs feel very real but the benefits are abstract and far away.

Concern about climate change remains stable, but support for Net Zero has dropped

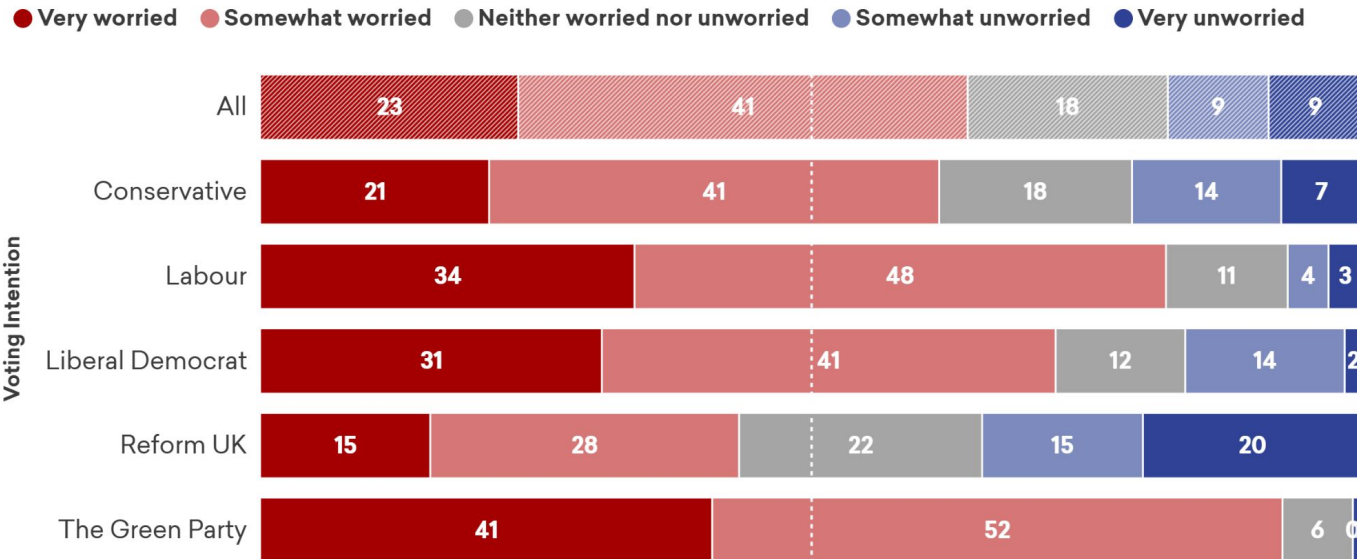




Conservative voters on climate

The majority of remaining Conservative voters are worried about climate change

How worried are you about climate change?



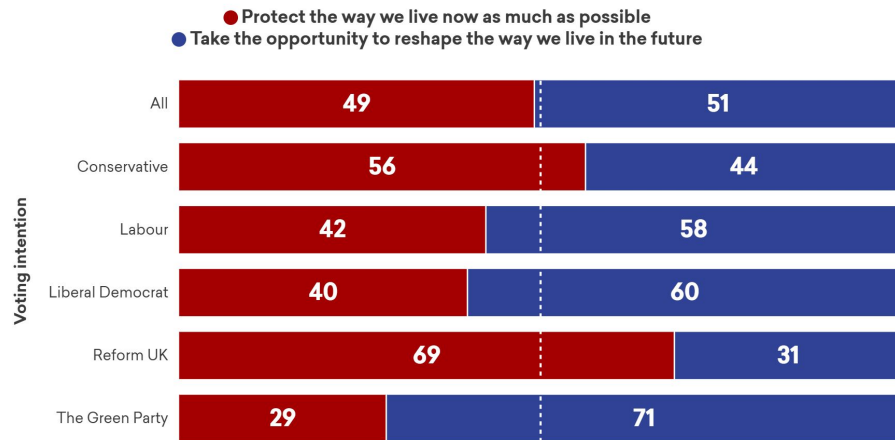
The majority of current Conservative party voters are concerned about climate change.

Almost two-in-three remaining Conservative party voters are worried about climate change.

A further 8 in 10 Conservative voters say that climate change is an important issue.

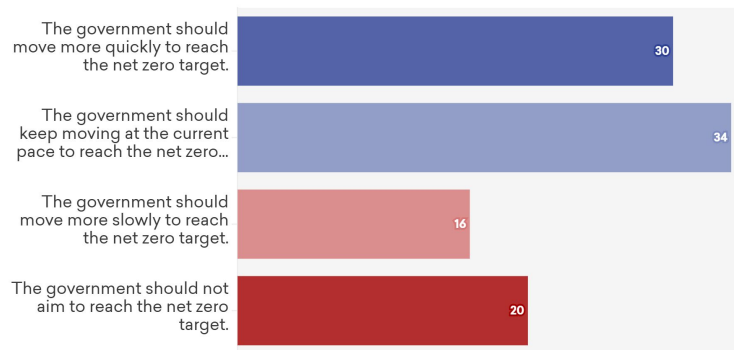
Conservative voters want policy to feel measured and protect the British way of life

Which should be the priority of the government...



Britons more likely to say the government should go faster rather than slower to reach Net Zero

Thinking about the government's target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which comes closest to your view?



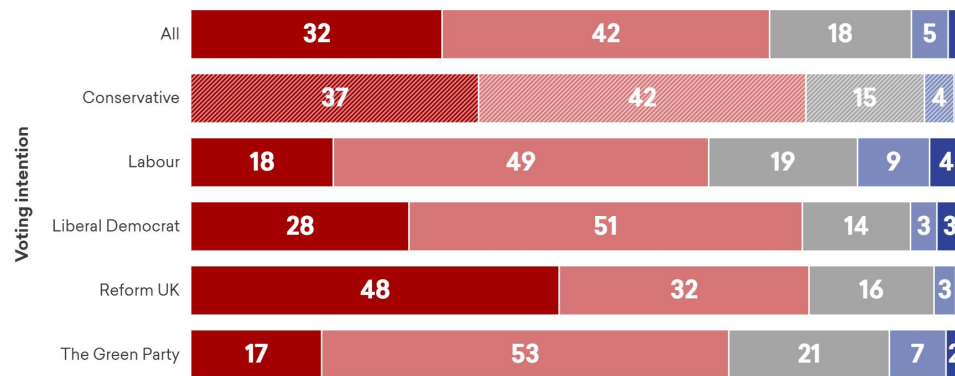
Conservative voters, want the government to prioritise protecting our way of life when it comes to Net Zero and the transition - on the whole Britons are split on this.

On government action to reach Net Zero, two thirds of voters want the government to continue at the current pace and a third to speed up. One in five voters do not think the Net Zero target should be pursued at all.

Conservative and Reform UK voters are the most concerned about the cost of tackling climate change

In your view, how much money do you think government policies to tackle climate change will cost or save you in the long run?

- It will cost me a great deal of money
- It will cost me a bit of money
- It won't make a difference to me
- It will save me a bit of money
- It will save me a great deal of money



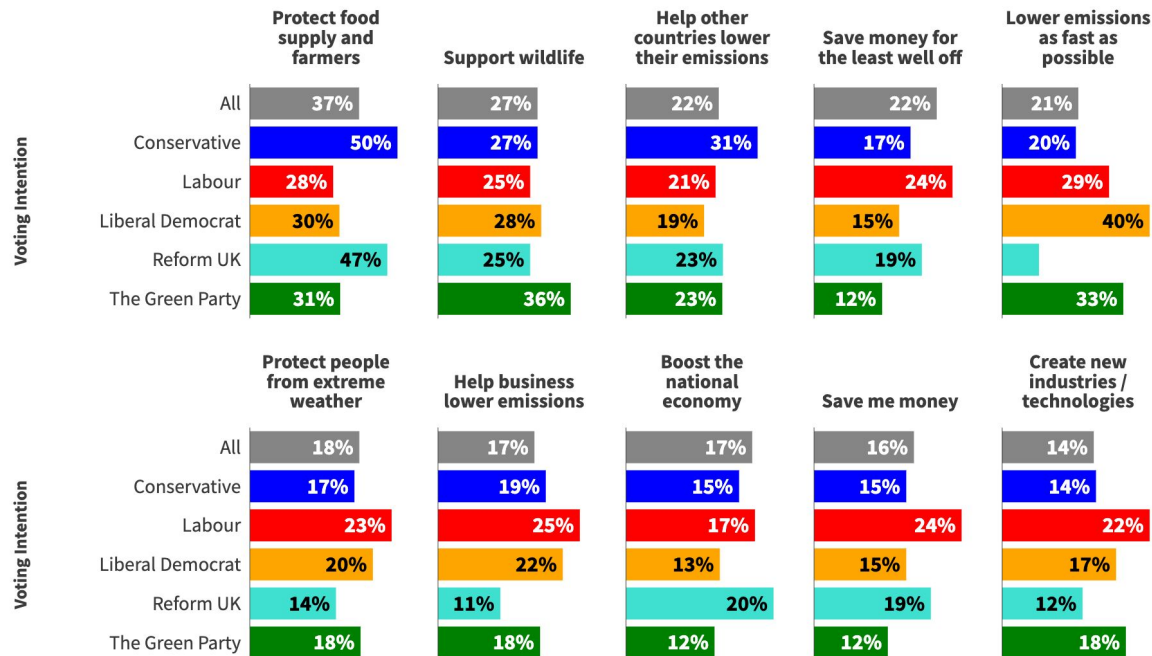
Balancing the need to reduce emissions with economic pragmatism is perhaps the Conservative party's chance to influence climate policy in the UK.

Current Conservative Party supporters are more likely than the British public to say that they think the current government policies on climate change will cost them a lot personally.

"That's something we're looking into at the moment because we're doing some renovations on the house to make it sustainable energy. So like solar panels and heat pumps and the grants that you can get on those. I mean it's still hugely more costly to install it in the first place, but yeah, there is some help there. Not enough, but some..." - Beth, Conservative voter, Maidenhead, Established Liberal

Conservative voters' priorities when it comes to environmental policy

What are your top priorities for government policies to respond to climate change?



Conservative voters are the most likely to prioritise helping other countries to lower their emissions.

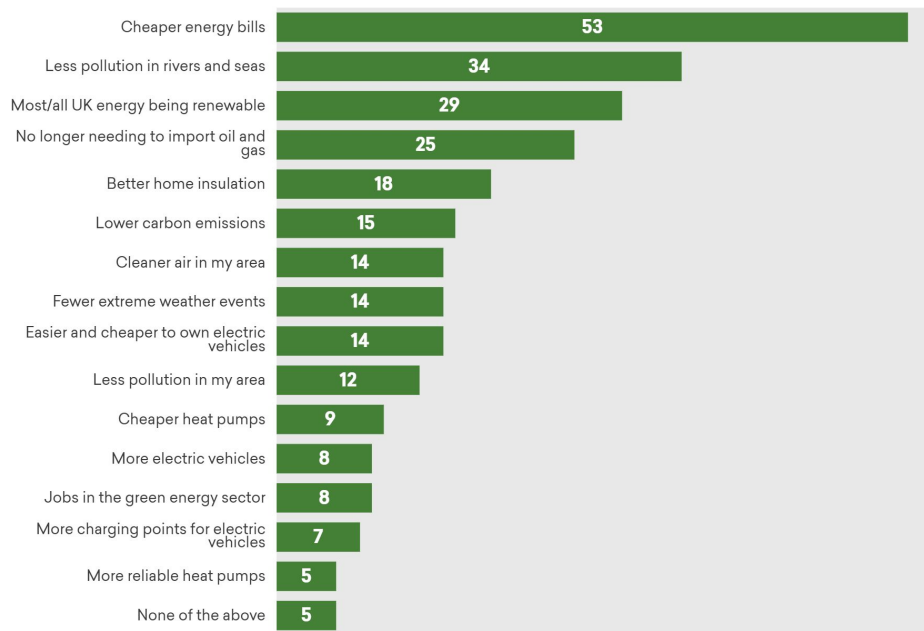
Alongside Reform UK voters, they also place a high premium on climate change policy working to protect farmers and food supply.

"So I think again, politicians should be doing more, not necessarily turning everything green because that's not practical, but just even the small things - do away with so much plastic. There's just so much plastic rubbish everywhere." - Josie, Conservative voter, Oxfordshire, Traditional Conservative

Britons will judge climate policies on tangible impacts

What do Britons most want to see from climate policies?

Thinking about the government's climate and energy policy, which of the following results would you most like to see? Select up to three.



Britons will judge the success of climate policies on the impacts they can see and feel.

Asked what results they would most like to see from the Government's climate and energy policies, 'cheaper energy bills' is the top answer (53 per cent), followed by less pollution in rivers and seas.

A third of voters want to see action on water pollution - the second most important outcome of climate policy.

Linking climate policies to wider environmental benefits build public support more than focusing on climate alone.

Britons are supportive of renewable energy projects, opposition is stronger to projects with a larger visual impact

Almost all Britons would welcome a nature reserve in their local area.

In general, there is stronger opposition to development that blights the visual landscape.

However only 15% of people said they generally don't like seeing wind turbines and a majority of Britons are supportive of a wind farm in their area. Fracking is, however, deeply unpopular.

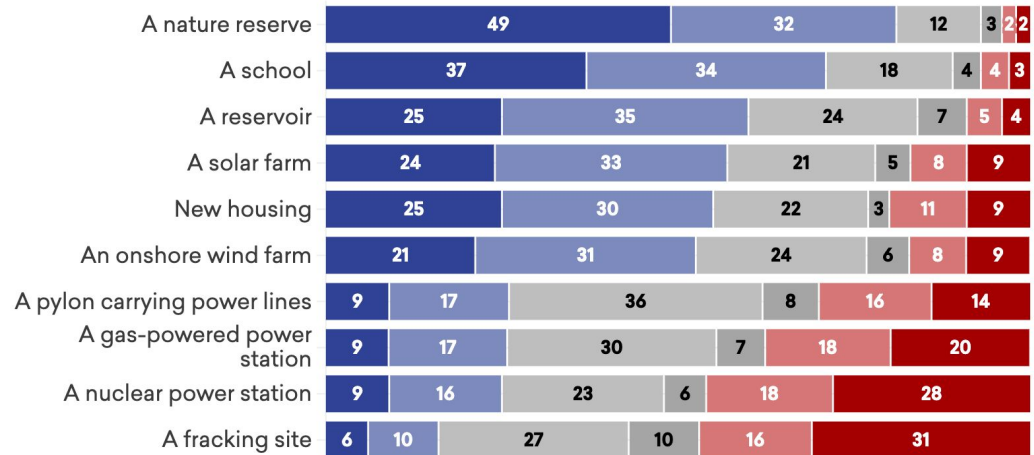
"Once those pylons are up, those scars, they're going to be there forever."

Jason, Established Liberal, Waveney Valley

Britons are supportive of many developments, but strongly against damaging landscapes

For each of the following, would you support or oppose them being built in your local area?

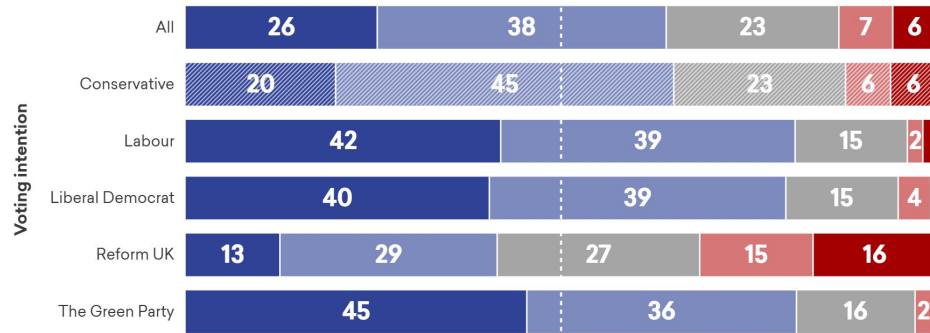
● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



When the local benefits are made clear, there is majority support for emission reducing policies

To what extent would you support your council setting a target of reaching net zero emissions by 2045, implementing policies to provide a cleaner and more reliable energy supply, improve public transport, and create new jobs?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



When the benefits of green policies are made clear, there is majority public support for action towards achieving net zero.

Two-thirds of Conservative voters support a target of reaching Net Zero emissions when the other benefits such as improving transport, local air pollution and energy supply are made clear.

It is the job of politicians and communicators to turn these abstract concepts and policies into other concrete benefits - beyond simply the prospect of lower emissions.

The Seven Segments' views on climate and the environment

	Progressive Activists	Highly committed to ambitious climate action and often support a more radical approach than the wider public.
	Incrementalist Left	They want Britain to be a leader on climate but are less rigid about timescale and setting targets, like Net Zero, in stone.
	Established Liberals	Optimistic and comfortable, this group welcomes green tech, but their satisfaction with the status quo makes radical action seem unnecessary.
	Sceptical Scrollers	Focused mainly on reducing energy bills, this group tends to prioritise policy that benefits them financially.
	Rooted Patriots	This group is worried about the threats of climate change, but is more concerned that the transition to renewables and Net Zero is fair to all.
	Traditional Conservatives	Dislike radical change, this group is hesitant to support government spending on climate initiatives, preferring market based solutions.
	Dissenting Disruptors	This group is sceptical of Net Zero and the need for immediate action on climate, even if most are not denialists.



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UK



**John
Flesher**

Conservative
Environment Network



**Harriet
Cross MP**

MP for Gordon &
Buchan

Later today...



Conservative Thinking at the Cross-roads: Where Next for the Right?

Monday, 6 October

15:00 to 16:00

Central 6, Secure Zone,
Manchester Central



Alex
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Marc
Stears
UCL Policy
Lab



Esther
McVey MP
MP for
Tatton



Penny
Mordaunt
Former Leader, House
of Commons



Luke
Tryl
More in
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David
Davis MP
MP for Goole &
Pocklington



This Place Matters: Social Cohesion for a New Age

Monday, 6 October

16:30 to 17:30

Central 6, Secure Zone,
Manchester Central



Kate Ferguson
(Chair)
The Sun on
Sunday



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More in
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Sunder
Katwala
British
Future



Miriam
Cates
Centre for
Social Justice



Greg
Stafford MP
Member, Health &
Social Care Committee



Kelly
Fowler
Belong



Katy
Bourne
Sussex Police & Crime
Commissioner