

What politicians think about Net Zero and the Green Economy

June 2022

Key findings



Political battle lines

Battle lines are being drawn between the major political parties over Net Zero. 84% of Labour MPs will make Net Zero a campaign issue at the next General Election, compared to just a third of Conservative MPs.



Regional disparities

MPs from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are significantly more likely to campaign for achieving Net Zero at the next General Election, when compared to their English counterparts. Among councillors, it is those in the North East and Midlands that are most likely to campaign against the prioritisation of Net Zero.



Paths to Net Zero

The majority of MPs see clean energy supply and generation as the key to the UK reaching Net Zero by 2050. Councillors, in contrast, see a broader range of issues as being key to the UK reaching Net Zero by 2050.



Climate, environment and the planning process

45% of councillors and 30% of MPs see climate and the environment as more important to the planning process following COP26.



COP and environmental concerns

Around half of MPs are now more supportive of nuclear as a result of COP26. Support for onshore wind splits opinion between Conservative and Labour MPs.



Confidence in Net Zero by 2050

Six months on from COP26, 40% of MPs are still not confident of meeting the UK's 2050 Net Zero commitment. Similarly, around half of all councillors are still not confident the UK will reach Net Zero by 2050.



Limited impact of COP26

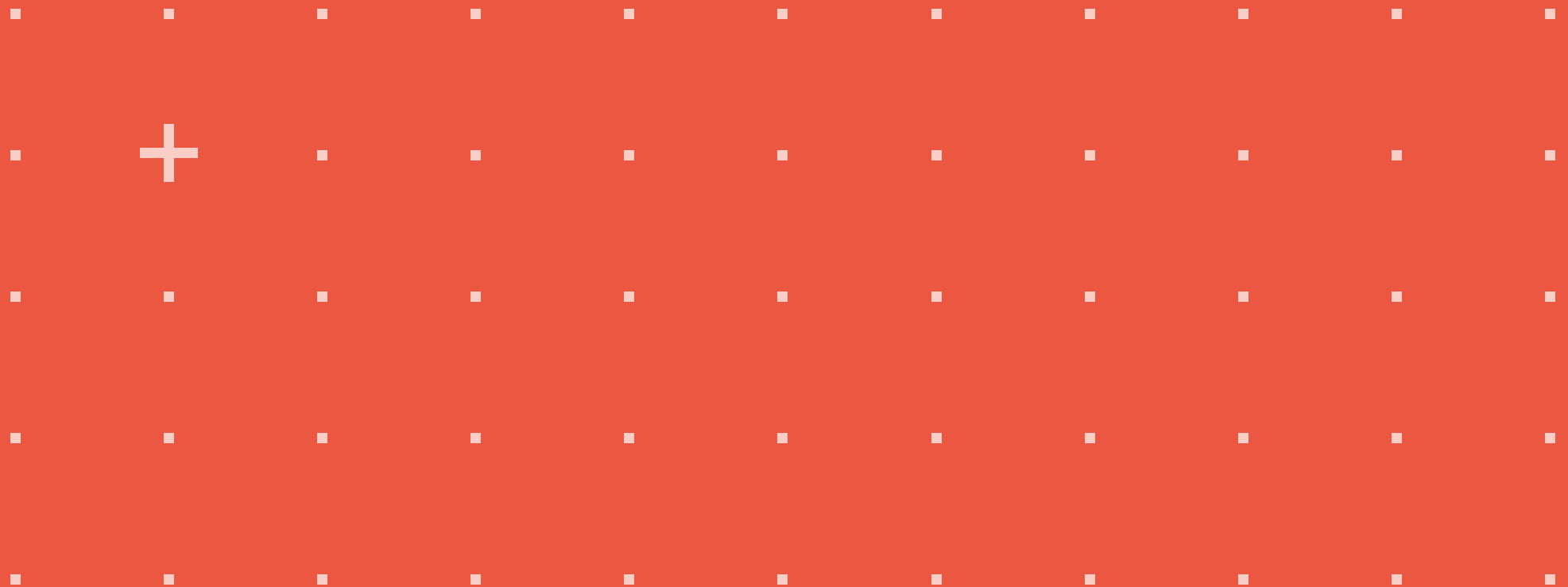
Just 3% of MPs and 5% councillors think their constituents will be more supportive of renewable energy projects as a result of COP26.



Progress against the 10-Point Plan

On average, around one fifth of MPs and councillors think key elements of the Government's 10-Point Plan are on track.

Growing divides over Net Zero



84% of Labour MPs will be campaigning on Net Zero at the next General Election

A General Election battleground?



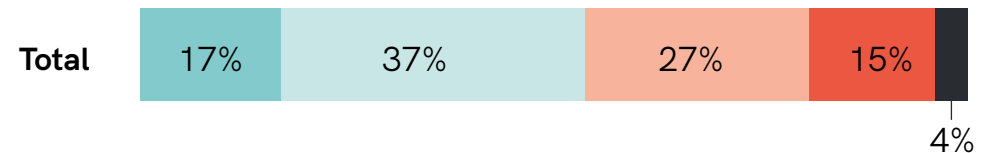
84% of Labour MPs said achieving Net Zero will be a campaign issue for them at the next General Election, to some extent



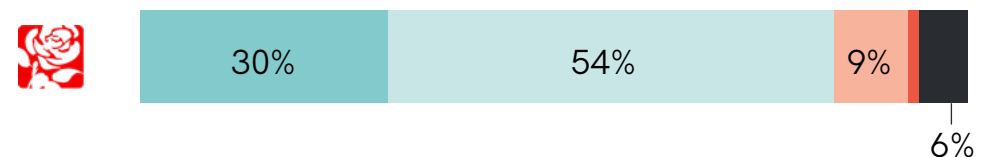
33% of Conservative MPs said achieving Net Zero will be a campaign issue for them at the next General Election, to some extent

- Achieving Net Zero will be a key campaign issue for me at the next General Election
- Achieving Net Zero will be a campaign issue for me at the next General Election, but not a key one
- Achieving Net Zero will not be a campaign issue for me at the next General Election
- I will be campaigning against prioritisation of Net Zero over other issues
- Don't know

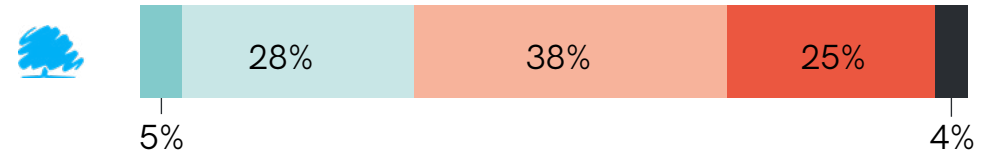
Net: A campaign issue 54%



Net: A campaign issue 84%

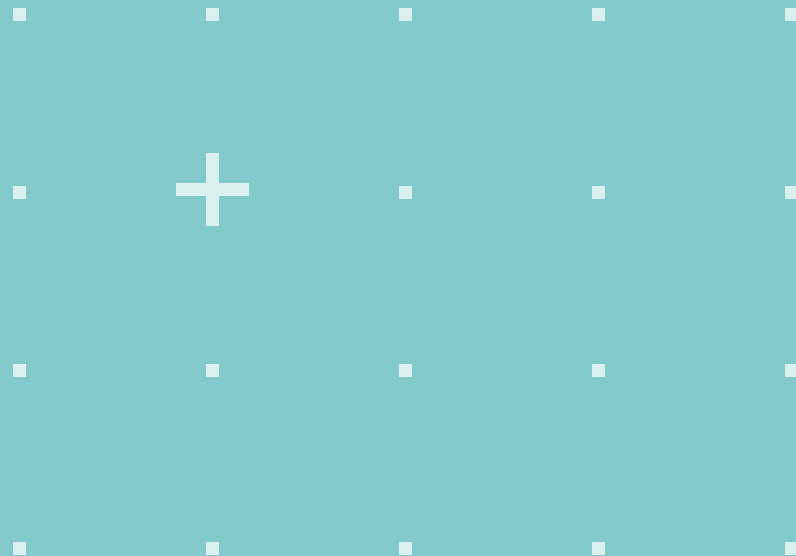


Net: A campaign issue 33%



Labour MPs are significantly more likely to say that Net Zero will be a campaign issue for them at the next election, and significantly more Conservative MPs say they will be campaigning against the prioritisation of Net Zero over other issues.

Net Zero a greater issue at the local level



A notable proportion of all MPs (27%) said that achieving Net Zero is not a campaign priority for them at the next General Election.

Overall, 42% of all MPs said they either plan to campaign against the prioritisation of Net Zero, in favour of other issues, or do not see it as an issue on which to campaign.

In contrast, the majority of councillors (70%) said achieving Net Zero would feature as a campaign issue, to some extent, at their next Local Elections.

% of politicians that said achieving Net Zero will be a campaigning issue for them at their next election

■ 54% MPs ■ 70% Councillors

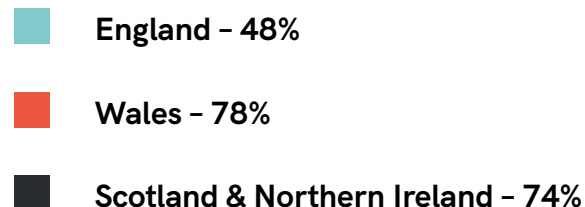


Net Zero a greater issue for MPs in Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland

MPs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were more likely to have said achieving Net Zero will be a campaigning issue for them at the next General Election, when compared to their English counterparts.

English MPs were divided in terms of saying they would campaign in favour of achieving Net Zero (48%) and either campaigning against the prioritisation of Net Zero, in favour of other issues, (19%) or saying it that it would not be a campaign issue for them (28%).

% of MPs said they plan to campaign (to a greater or lesser extent) on achieving Net Zero at the next General Election

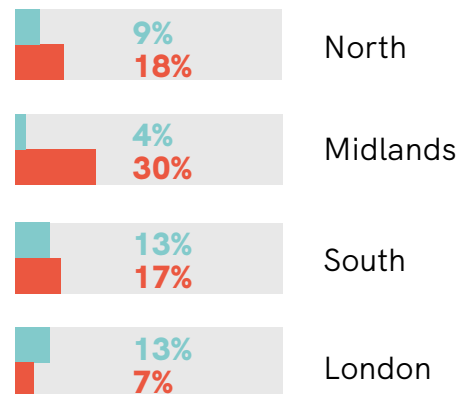


MPs in the Midlands less supportive of the Net Zero agenda

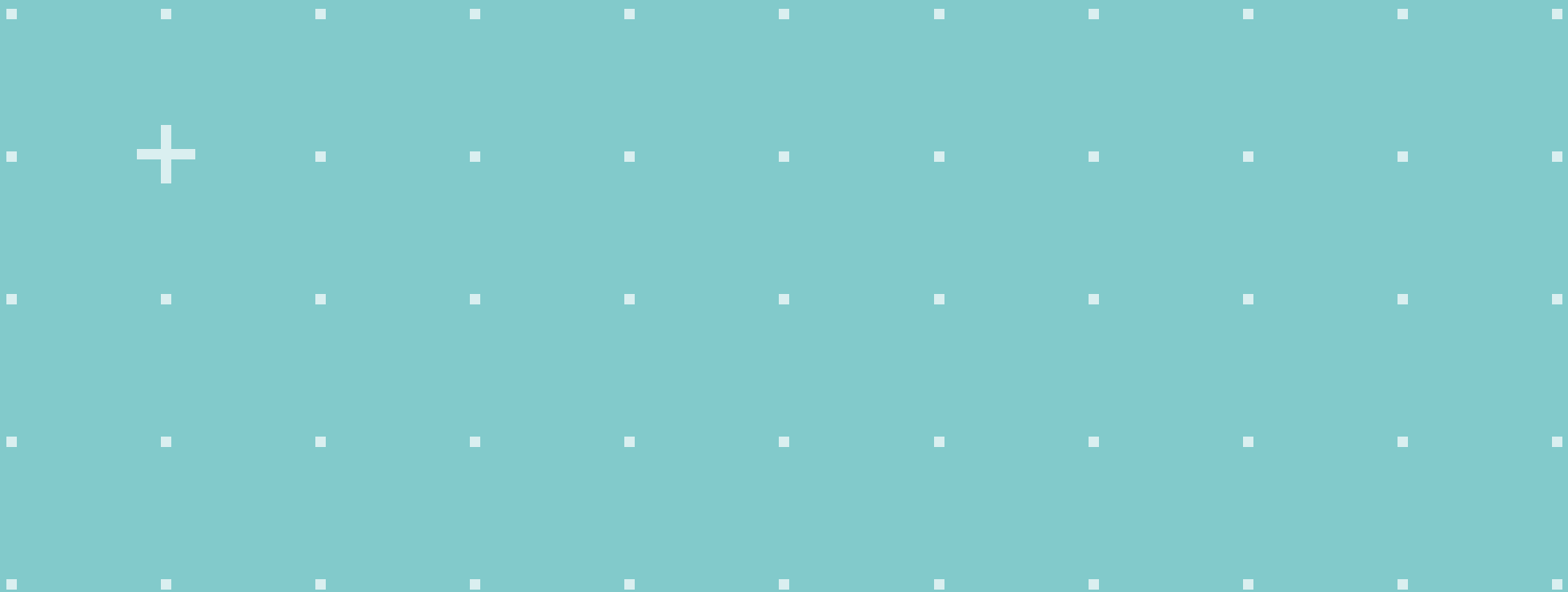
Focusing on England, it was MPs in the Midlands that are most likely to campaign against the prioritisation of Net Zero at the next General Election, in favour of other issues.

% of English MPs that said they plan make Net Zero a 'key' campaign issues at the next General Election vs. % of English MPs that said they plan to campaign against the prioritisation of Net Zero, in favour of other issues, at the next General Election

■ Net Zero as a 'key' campaign issue
■ Against the prioritisation of Net Zero, in favour of other issues



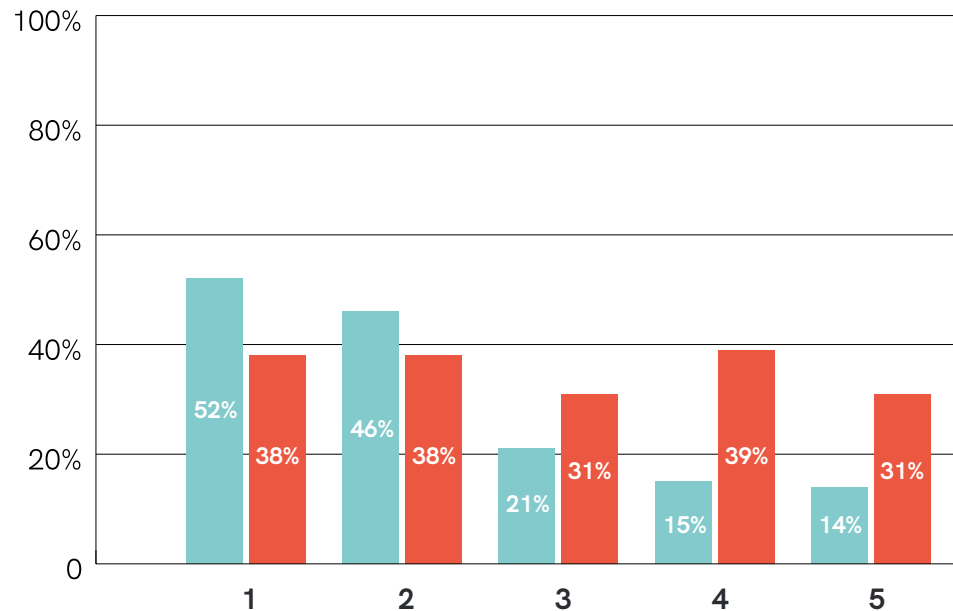
The path to Net Zero



The majority of MPs (52%) said they see clean energy supply and generation as the key to the UK reaching Net Zero. MPs also placed importance on supporting households to invest in low carbon technologies for their homes (e.g. insulation, solar panels, heat pumps). Councillors, in contrast, said they see a broader range of issues as being key to the UK reaching Net Zero.

Councillors' greater exposure to planning matters is also evidenced in this data, with councillors significantly more likely to identify factors such as ensuring the delivery of new homes which minimise carbon emissions and encouraging people to use more sustainable forms of transport as important.

% of MPs and councillors said they see the following as key to achieving Net Zero in the area they represent



■ MPs ■ Councillors

1. Ensuring the generation and supply of energy from clean and renewable sources
2. Supporting households to invest in low carbon technologies for their homes (e.g. heat pumps, solar panels, insulation)
3. Balancing the need for new homes with the preservation of the natural environment
4. Ensuring the delivery of new homes which minimise carbon emissions
5. Encouraging people to switch from cars to more sustainable methods of transport

Almost half of MPs now more supportive of nuclear following COP26

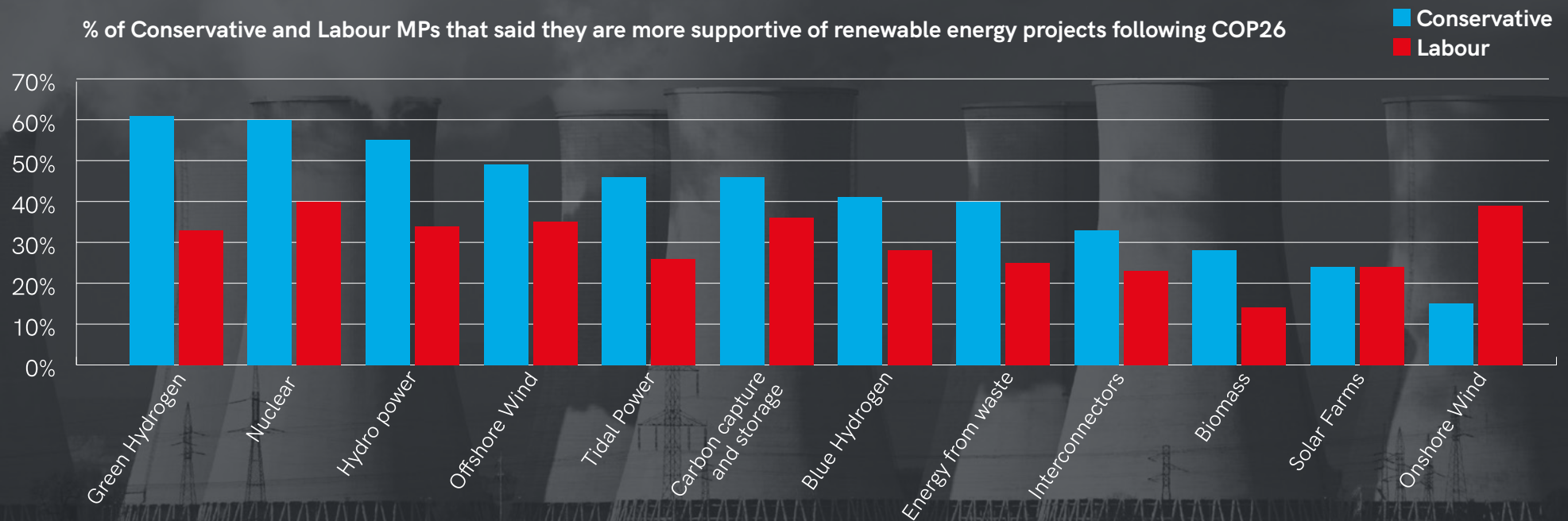
MPs said their views on renewable energy projects were largely unchanged as a result of COP26, although nuclear, hydro power and green hydrogen all enjoy greater support from MPs following COP26.

Interestingly, support for solar farms and onshore wind is now greater among councillors than for MPs, despite the perceived local impacts associated with these types of projects.

Following COP26, support from Conservative MPs has risen most sharply for nuclear, offshore wind, green hydrogen and hydro power. Among Labour MPs, support has risen most sharply for onshore wind, nuclear and carbon capture and storage.

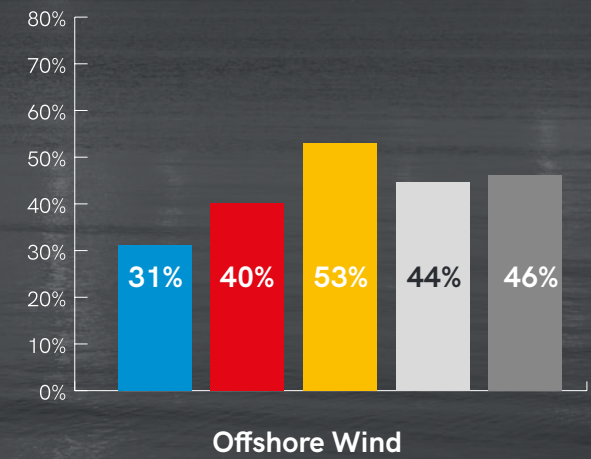
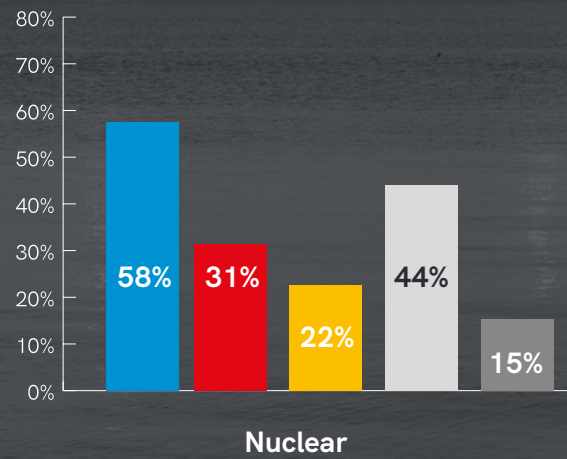
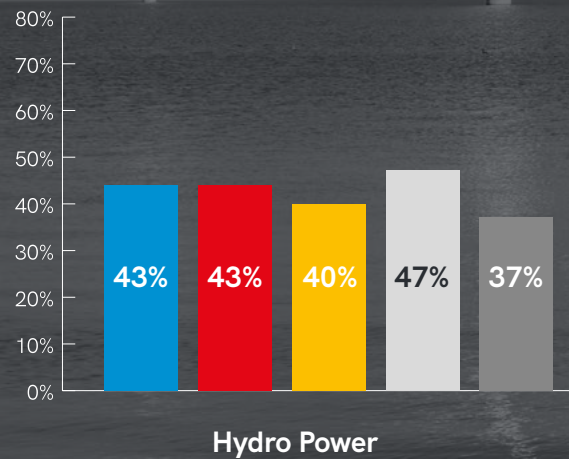
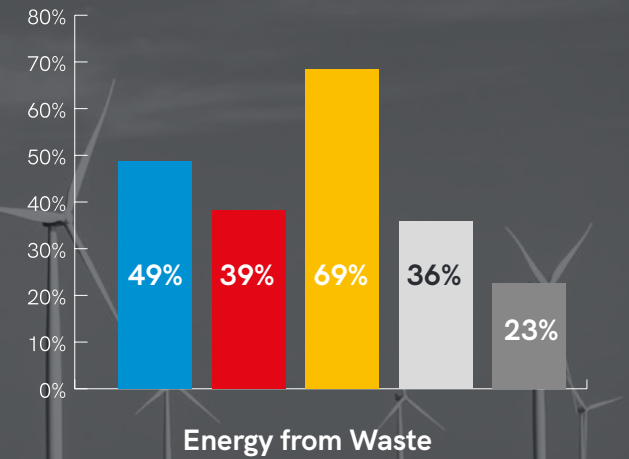
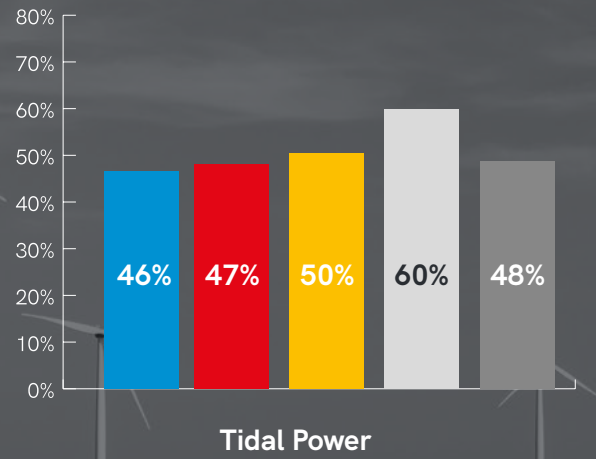
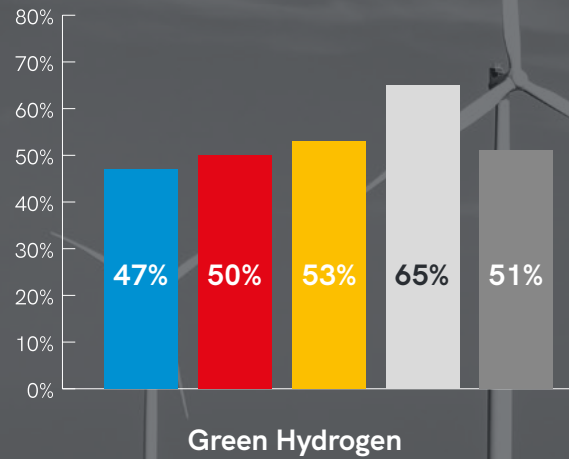
Certain renewable projects divide opinions among Conservative and Labour MPs, most notably onshore wind which enjoyed a much greater rise in support from Labour MPs following COP26, when compared to Conservative MPs.

Similarly, support for solar farms, onshore wind and interconnectors enjoyed a much smaller rise in support from Conservative councillors following COP26, when compared to councillors from other political parties.



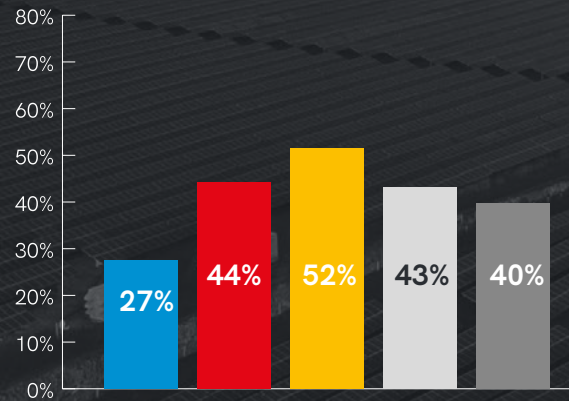
% of councillors that said they are more supportive of renewable energy projects following COP26

Conservative Labour Lib Dem
Independent Other

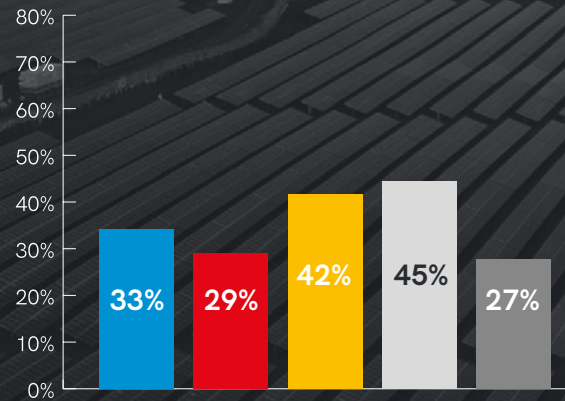


% of councillors that said they are more supportive of renewable energy projects following COP26

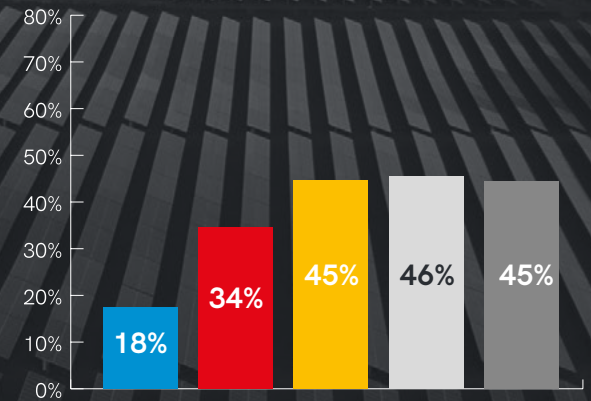
Conservative Labour Lib Dem
Independent Other



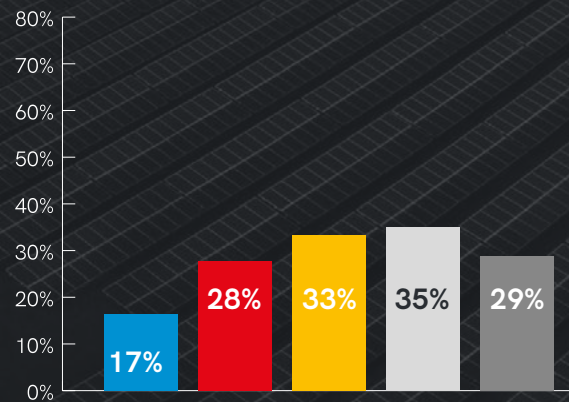
Solar Farms



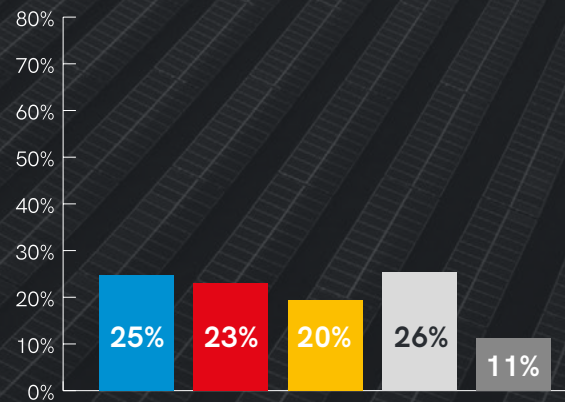
Carbon Capture and Storage



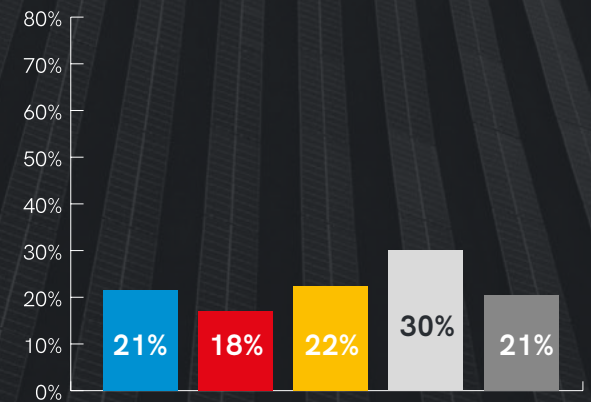
Onshore Wind



Inteconnections

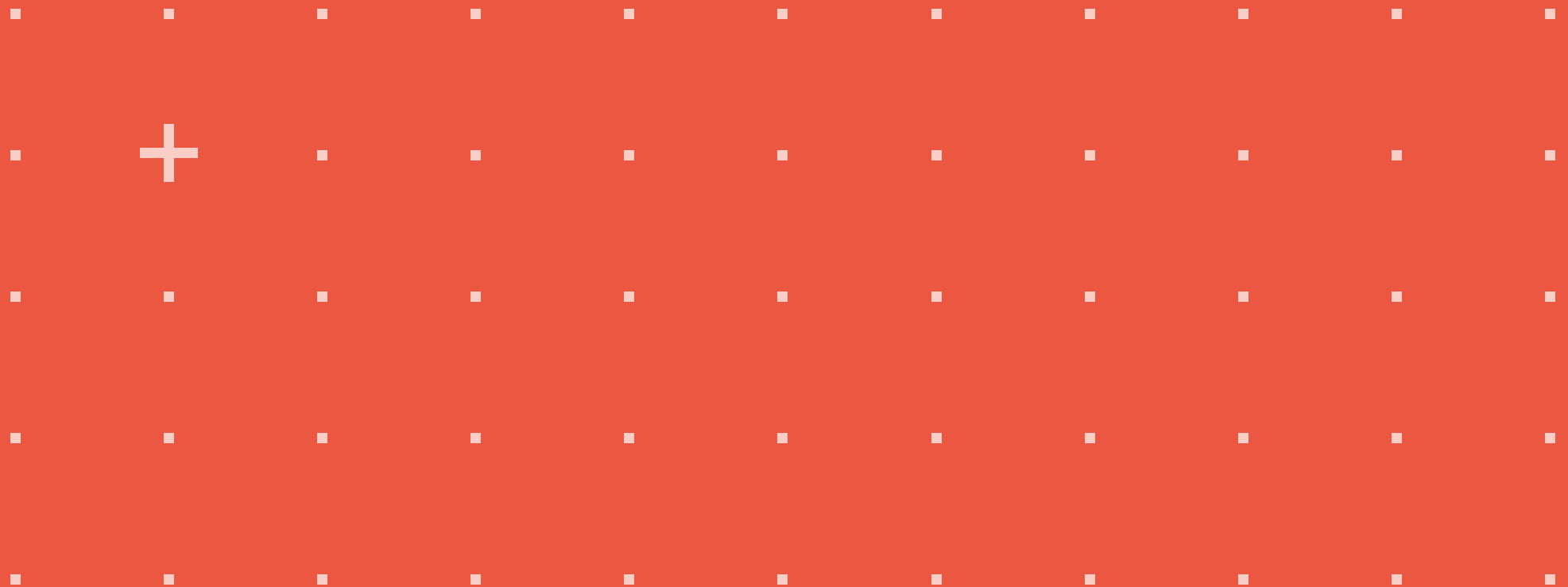


Blue Hydrogen



Biomass

Climate, environment and the planning process



Climate and the environment of increasing importance to planning

Both MPs and councillors said they see climate and the environment as more important to the planning process following COP26.

45% of councillors said they view climate and environmental matters as more important to the planning process following COP26.

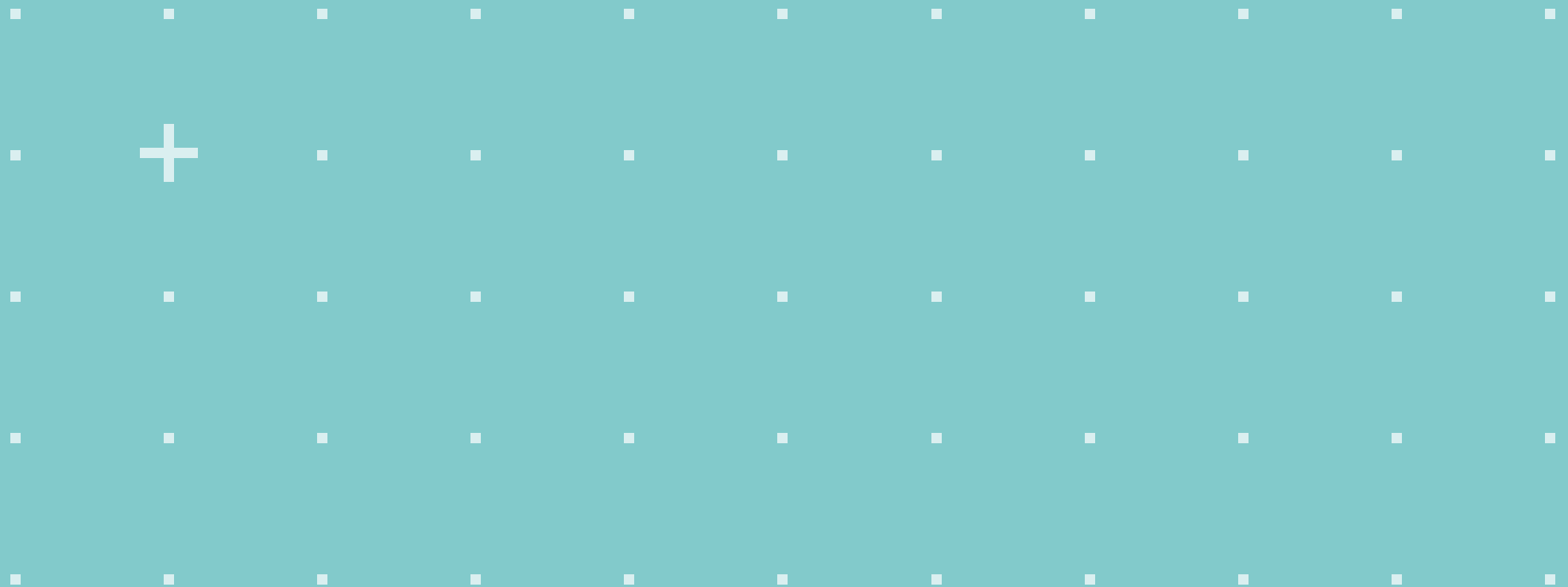
30% of all MPs said they view these matters as more important to the planning process following COP26.

% of MPs and councillors that said they view climate and environmental matters as more important to the planning process following COP26

■ MPs ■ Councillors



Government strategy & the 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution



40% of MPs not confident of meeting 2050 Net Zero commitment

Despite the Government's focus on COP26, 40% of all MPs said they are still not confident the UK will reach Net Zero by 2050.

Confidence in the UK reaching Net Zero by 2050 only increased by 2 percentage points among all MPs as a result of the climate summit.

Similarly, 49% of all councillors said they are still not confident the UK will reach Net Zero by 2050.

Confidence among councillors about the UK reaching Net Zero by 2050 actually dropped by 8 percentage points as a result of COP26.

The impact of COP26 on public attitudes to renewable energy projects is also limited according to MPs and councillors.

Just 3% of MPs and 5% councillors said they think their constituents will become more supportive of renewable energy projects as a result of COP26.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

MPs and councillors sceptical about progress of 10-Point Plan

MPs believe that few elements of the Government's 10-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution are on track. The same is true of councillors; advancing offshore wind is the only element of the 10-Point Plan where more councillors see it as on track than not on track.

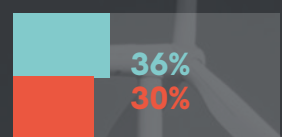
Councillors are more sceptical than MPs about the Government's progress against 9 out of 10 elements of the Plan, the exception being accelerating the shift to zero emissions vehicles where councillors are more confident about the Government's progress.

There is also a political disparity between Conservative and Labour MPs in terms of views on the Government's progress on the 10-Point Plan. Advancing offshore wind is the only element of the Plan where more than 10% of Labour MPs think the Government is on track, compared to 50% of Conservative MPs.

% of MPs and councillors that said they think the following elements of the 10-Point Plan are on track

■ MPs ■ Councillors

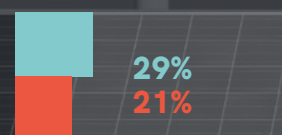
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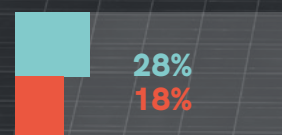
Advancing offshore wind



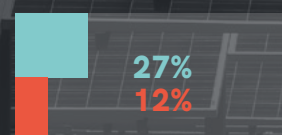
Delivering new and advanced nuclear



Green public transport, cycling and walking

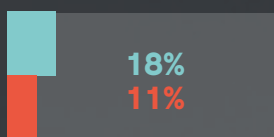


Protecting the natural environment

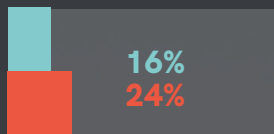


Green finance and innovation

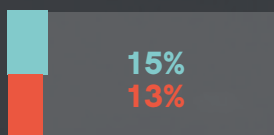
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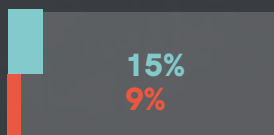
Driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen



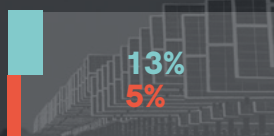
Accelerating the shift to zero emissions vehicles



Green buildings



Investing in carbon capture and storage



Jet zero and green ships

Methodology

During January - March 2022, we commissioned Savanta ComRes to conduct a survey of MPs and councillors from across the UK to help us understand their views on a range of issues relating to Net Zero.

Our representative sample included:



Over 100 MPs from
across the UK



Over 400 councillors
from across England



Views from all major
political parties



Get in touch

To find out more and discuss how the net zero agenda could impact your projects in the built environment, please contact:

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