

STOP USING GAS AT HOME

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Gas boilers could be banned to meet green targets

Minister backs initiative to 'decarbonise' homes as part of commitment to make UK carbon neutral by 2050

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HOMEOWNERS could be forced to replace their gas boilers to ensure the UK meets its target to be carbon neutral by 2050, ministers are warning.

The Government will publish a White Paper later this year which will set out the "bigger decisions" that the UK has to make to meet the target.

Lord Duncan of Springbank, the climate change minister, said that the White Paper would consider whether the Government should ban gas central heating altogether from homes.

It is not clear if homeowners will have to pay for the strategy, which is planned to be introduced incrementally over the next decade, or whether there are enough engineers to carry out the work.

It comes after Ofgem, the gas regulator, said last week that Britain would have to change "the way homes and businesses are heated" to ensure it can reach its target.

The Government will set out the radical plans in the months leading up to the COP26 environmental summit in Glasgow later this year.

Last June the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. Lord Duncan said that to hit this target the Government was now looking at a "domestic decarbonisation approach" to hit the target. He said: "There will be an overarching energy White Paper that will look at the bigger decisions that we have to take. Decarbonising domestic heating will be a real challenge. Shall we electrify the entire grid? If we do so, bearing in mind that electricity tends to be more expensive, we need to

address fuel poverty head-on. Or are we looking at putting hydrogen into the grid in a hybrid or pure form?

"We will resolve that question this year. We will make a decision to determine that and to support the way forward. There is no point in decarbonising while making people cold and sick."

The disclosure comes after hybrid car owners were given a "kick in the photographed half a dozen Government departments in London, including the Department for Education, right, and the National Audit Office, left, with lights blazing after 9pm at night.

Most galling of all for motorists will be the lights on at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, below right, which is leading the UK's efforts to become net zero by 2050.

A Cabinet Office spokesman said: "Many government buildings are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Lights are often automatic, and will need to be on if staff are in the building."

A spokesman for the National Audit Office, which regularly criticises civil servants for wasting public money, said: "24/7 access and usage of our building is required to perform our duties, however we have smart lighting that turns off after five minutes of sensing no movement." face" by ministers, motoring bodies have said, as they warned that the surprise decision to ban the vehicles from sale in 2035 will "backfire".

Lord Duncan told peers: "Most people do not have an electric car, and we are nowhere near the tipping point where that car will become affordable.

“Again, we need to find that tipping point and we have a strategy coming out in order to help us deliver that.”

A source at the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy department said that ministers would publish this year a “road map for heat policy which will set out the steps required to make key decisions on heat decarbonisation the 2020s”.

“No one solution can provide the best option for everyone – a mix of technologies and customer options will need to be available,” they added.

Last week Jonathan Brearley, chief executive of Ofgem, said: “To meet netzero, Britain will see changes to the way homes and businesses are heated.

“This might include using hydrogen boilers or electricity to power heat pumps and may see more customers connected to heat networks. “Ofgem will work closely with government as it develops its strategy.”