

Sunak will retreat on climate change, with Labour's tac...

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As the [Guardian has noted](#):

Rishi Sunak is planning to row back on some of the government's net zero policies that impose a direct cost on consumers as the Conservatives attempt to create a dividing line with Labour before the next election.

The Guardian understands that the move, expected to be announced in a major speech this Friday, could include delaying a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and watering down the phasing out of gas boilers.

They added:

The prime minister is also expected to drop plans for new energy-efficiency targets for private rented homes after ministers considered imposing fines on landlords who failed to upgrade their properties.

The details of what is planned are not known precisely as yet, but it is likely that commitments on phasing out fossil fuel-powered cars and gas boilers, and to changing tax on air travel, as well as other straightforward mechanisms that might reduce carbon output, will all be watered down. Bizarrely, despite this, it is claimed that the commitment to net-zero in 2050 will remain intact when it is already obvious that the chance of achieving this is very limited.

Deep down, I suspect that I always expected this to happen. The chance that Tory politicians would, when faced with a short-term economic crisis, retain their commitment to what is necessary for the long-term good was always going to be remote.

Let me also be honest and suggest that it is Labour's failure to commit to its own £28 billion a year investment programme for a green transition that has given the Tories the opportunity to water down their own commitments. It is as if the two parties were coordinating their activities so that they might, in combination, maintain the current unsustainable status quo. Their common premise is that we cannot afford to survive.

Why are they doing this? The answer is quite straightforward. Most of those who have influence in and on these parties are in the second half of their lives. They don't only suffer the problem of imagining anything very different to their comfortable lives to date. They also take the conceited view that climate change will not impact them and is a problem for someone else, which is the perpetual neo-liberal politician's excuse for inaction. That the someone else in question will be their children, if they have them, seems to be something they cannot comprehend.

That is because we are living with a generation of politicians, political advisors, journalists, and others with influence for whom nothing has ever really gone wrong. The boomers, or at least those at the top of the boomer pile, have lived lives that were predicted by Harold Macmillan: they have never had it so good. To imagine that this might have negative consequences, or that it might even end, is something that they cannot do. The result is their weak commitment to change, as will be evidenced by Sunak in the speech that he will be making, whenever it happens.

As I see it, there is only one answer to this problem, and that is for younger people to make their opinions clear. They are not only the people now paying the cost of boomers having it so good. They are also the people who will be around to face most of the impact of climate change and its consequences. It is time for them to shout, very loudly, and to demand the changes that we need.

I am aware that this is a big ask when that same generation is also facing most of the burden of the current economic crisis, as they are. Unfortunately, I do not have an alternative.