

Labour abandons hope

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After what appears to have been an eternity of dithering today, [Labour is finally announcing](#) that it has abandoned its pledge to spend £28 billion a year on the climate transition that we know must take place if this country is to have any chance of meeting its own legally set obligation to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

This action on Labour's part is politically incomprehensible. Announcing this today, when the Tories are in complete mayhem after yesterday's debacle from Sunak at Prime Minister's Questions, is extraordinary.

Conceding this point the day after the Tories had civil servants prepare a report on this plan, suggesting it to be unaffordable in the Tories' opinion, is to imply that Labour has no clue what it is talking about, and that the Tories really are masters of this issue. That is a staggeringly politically incompetent thing to do.

And, let's be clear, that abandoning this proposal is economically illiterate, as I suggested in the Guardian a few days ago. Not only would this plan pay for itself out of the economic multiplier effects that it would generate, which would give rise to significant further private sector investment and private spending, and so tax paid, it is also massively less than the expenditure that we know is actually required if net zero is to be achieved. Abandoning this commitment is, then, an act of gross irresponsibility that can only lead us to think that further similar acts on other issues should be what we must expect from a Labour government.

That has enormous political consequences. When Labour has said almost nothing about what it will do in office that is of any consequence, this was the one cause that Labour seemed to be championing that people might believe in. As far as I can see, after abandoning it, Labour now stands for nothing except more austerity. As electoral offerings go, that has to be about the most dismal that any party could present, yet that is what Labour wants to put to the people of this country.

The right-wing of Labour often likes to claim that the left-wing manifestos that it has, very rarely, presented to the public have been the longest suicide notes in its history.

They have always been wrong to say so, but this abandonment of hope by Labour, which is what today's announcement will represent, will undoubtedly be the shortest suicide note in its history.

Any party seeking power without a vision or plan and without any hint of hope being on offer does not deserve to be elected. That is where Starmer is putting Labour.

Politics rarely witnesses something quite as incompetent as this, unless it was Sunak's performance at PMQs yesterday.