

Grant Shapps MP: Going green isn't to blame for rising prices

Speaking to Bright Blue, the independent think tank for liberal conservatism, the Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps MP, has challenged those who blame the rise in energy prices and the cost of living on green measures to transition to net zero.

Bright Blue interviewed the Transport Secretary as part of the new edition of its *Centre Write* magazine, released today, on the theme of delivering and building on the decarbonisation commitments made at COP26 to get to net zero. In the interview, Mr Shapps commented:

“We need to combat the idea that it costs you money to go green. It doesn't need to, and in fact, it can actually be good value for money as well.

“There's a lot of pressure at the moment on energy bills and we know they're very high. When you shift your tariffs to a zero-carbon tariff, you might think it is going to cost you more. In fact, it's very easy to find some of the best and cheapest tariffs on the market which happen to be the ones that come from renewables and nuclear, not from fossil fuels.”

He pointed to the example of electric cars:

“They are still a bit more expensive to buy, but I was out looking at cars the other weekend with my wife, and the price differential is really coming close. Once you factor in relatively little servicing as well, EVs compete. I've had my car for two and a half years, it's never been in for service. I've had no engine oil changes, no petrol, far fewer parts to go wrong, no road tax, no Ultra Low Emission Zone charges in London, or wherever else new schemes are coming into place.”

The Transport Secretary attributed the broad cross-party consensus on climate action to the UK's greater acceptance of scientific evidence compared to other countries:

“One of the things we do pretty well in the UK is actually following the scientific evidence! I don’t know if this is because we’re perhaps the most pluralist country in the world or, because we’ve always had a very strong science base since the Enlightenment... We’ve just been more willing to accept the scientific evidence than other countries that are less science-oriented. Extraordinary numbers of Americans believe that there’s mystical power in crystals, or trees, or those kinds of things. There are genuine powers in trees, of course: they suck up carbon dioxide. British people might read their horoscopes, but they understand that there isn’t actually a connection between the horoscope and what happens in your real life.”

He continued:

“I don't believe that China and other countries are going to sit on their hands. China is going great guns with the electrification of cars, because they never led in internal combustion engine vehicles, they jumped at it and they're starting to export ... Batteries come from there, and they are going to be doing their bit on this faster than most people appreciate.”

In his article for *Centre Write*, Jonathan Gullis MP, Co-Chair of the Coalfield Communities APPG, explained why levelling up and net zero are complementary agendas:

“To enable development of these technologies and deliver our net zero target, we need a workforce that has the necessary skills. Net zero industries, like the offshore wind sector, offer opportunities for job creation and industry growth, but it won’t be possible without the right training schemes in place now. By 2030 the UK will need 170,000 more workers to qualify for jobs in these industries each year.

“This jobs boom could be transformational for Red Wall areas that have historically been affected by factory closures, and been dependent on carbon-intensive industries. For places like Stoke-on-Trent, the transition to a new low-carbon model could require not just new training, but extensive retraining. Government-backed ‘skills bridges’ that support retraining through targeted programmes, apprenticeships, and short-term work placements would help those who have been affected by the transition to find new work. This would complement the welcome steps the Government is already taking by including net zero and nature as priorities for local skills plans in the Skills Bill.”

In his article for *Centre Write*, Sir Robert Buckland QC MP, former Lord Chancellor, emphasised the conservative tradition of government intervention in the market:

“Where necessary, government should intervene if that has the effect of rebalancing things in favour of us, the citizens. The market, like government, should be our servant, not our master. We should remind ourselves that as Conservatives, our traditions descend from Shaftesbury and Disraeli, not from Gladstone. Our long history of success emanates from intervention aimed at protecting the individual from unrestricted forces; the elevation of the condition of the people, to use Disraeli’s famous phrase.”

This edition of Bright Blue’s *Centre Write* magazine also includes contributions from the Chair of the Climate Change Committee, Lord Deben, the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, Frances O’Grady, the Director of the Centre for Labour & Social Studies, Ellie Mae O’Hagan, the Director of Corporate Affairs at Legal & General, John Godfrey, and many more.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

To arrange an interview with a Bright Blue spokesperson or for further media enquiries, please contact Joseph Silke at joseph@brightblue.org.uk or on 07948 420 584.

- [Bright Blue](#) is an independent think tank and pressure group for liberal conservatism.
- This interview with Bright Blue is part of the new edition of the Bright Blue *Centre Write* magazine edited by Joseph Silke, released today.
- Bright Blue’s Board includes Sarah Sands (Chair), Rachel Johnson, Diane Banks, Philip Clarke, Alexandra Jezeph, Richard Mabey, and Ryan Shorthouse.
- Our advisory council can be found [here](#). We also have about 194 [parliamentary supporters](#). Members of our advisory council and our parliamentary supporters do not necessarily endorse all our policy recommendations, including those included in this press release.