

Sustainable Scotland?

A summary of political party Manifesto commitments with regard to energy efficiency and energy in buildings ahead of the Scottish Parliament election, 5th May 2016

The 2014 referendum on Scottish independence may have resulted in a 'remain' vote; it also underlined the devolutionary process going on within the United Kingdom. Some people on these islands like their elected representatives do things a little differently.

This is the reason the Scottish Parliamentary election on the 5th of May matters. Whilst energy policy largely remains a reserved power at Westminster, further powers have been recently allocated to the Edinburgh administration on the subject of the design and implementation of supplier obligations in relation to energy efficiency and fuel poverty and a formal consultative role for renewable energy incentives.

The 'main' Holyrood parties – namely the SNP, Labour, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens- have put forward a number of notable proposals which they consider would improve the supply and provision of energy in the UK's most Northerly constituent country.

Underneath are detailed manifesto proposals most directly aimed at energy in buildings and with the intention of promoting a low-carbon economy.

SNP

- *a new target to reduce emissions by more than 50 per cent by 2020.*
- *a “New Energy strategy” which will take a “whole system view” and encompass demand reduction, energy efficiency, a balanced energy generation mix, a role for storage, and the requirement for a low carbon transition in transport and heat use.*
- *we will also explore the creation of a Scottish Renewable Energy Bond in order to allow savers to invest in and support Scotland’s renewable energy sector*
- *we will ensure that by 2020, at least half of newly consented renewable energy projects will have an element of shared ownership. And we will argue for Scottish control of our share of feed-in tariffs to help promote community ownership schemes.*
- *we will take forward the actions set out in ‘Cleaner Air for Scotland’ – Scotland’s first distinct air quality strategy – to further reduce air pollution, with the first low emission zone put in place by the end of 2018”*

Scottish Labour

- *pursue a major drive for energy efficiency and remove the carbon from Scotland’s electricity needs.”*
- *introduce a Warm Homes Act to bring clean and affordable warmth to thousands of households and businesses in Scotland, supporting the growth of district heating, renewable heating and investment in energy efficiency.”*
- *move ahead with the low-carbon investment and support needed to develop new skills, new jobs and green workplaces, with the public sector taking the lead.*
- *ensure that the Scottish Government’s budgets, regulations and legislative programme are compatible with Scotland’s Climate Change Act.*
- *support businesses and communities, in islands and rural areas, in towns and cities, including those people currently off-grid, to reduce their energy demand, stimulating the development of commercially viable energy production.*
- *to underline our ambition to green our energy use, a Scottish Labour Government will aspire to generate 50% of our electricity, heat and transport demand from renewables by 2030.*

Scottish
Conservatives



- *protect the existing nuclear capacity long-term*
- *incentivise the expansion of energy storage capacity*
- *focus heavily on expanding district heating across the country, in both urban and rural areas*
- *increase the energy efficiency budget to 10% of Scottish Government's capital budget allocations = capital infrastructure rise (from £80m 2016/17) to £340m in 2020/21*
- *introduce a target of an EPC C rating or above for all houses by 2030*
- *ensure energy efficiency improvements are reflected in council tax/LBTT discounts or business rates system*
- *protect winter fuel and cold weather payments, however consider changes to when paid.*

Scottish
Liberal
Democrats

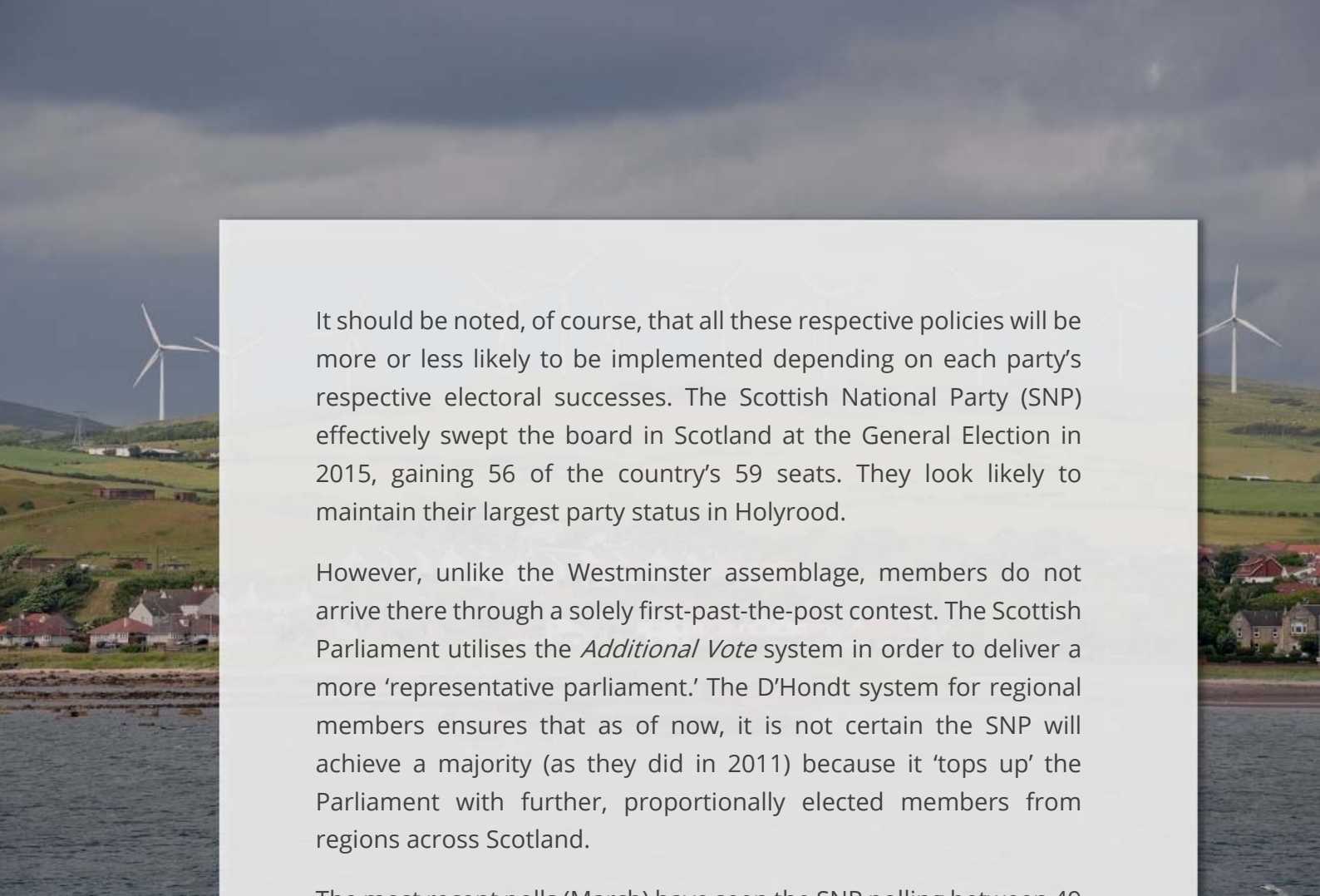


- *streamline planning and licensing rules for small-scale hydro power schemes*
- *support the development of carbon capture and storage at Peterhead*
- *support the continued development of infrastructure for electric vehicles*
- *incentivising remote areas/island communities to use electric vehicles powered by renewables to cut import of expensive hydrocarbons*
- *introduce "scrappage" grants for islanders to convert to hybrid vehicles*
- *support diverse renewable energy technologies, including research into hydrogen technology and energy storage at Scottish universities alongside support for solar, micro-hydro, bio-energy and anaerobic digestion*
- *challenge UK government on withdrawal of support for renewable technologies and tackle the associated barriers:*

- **wind:** amend planning regs to make it easier to re-power existing wind farms; support expansion of Scottish Government's Wind Benefit scheme
- **heat:** negotiate increased support for biomass and AD from Green Investment Bank; introduce permitted rights for ASHPs to bring Scottish regs in line with rest of UK; require developers to justify not installing CHP systems before planning permission considered for alternative heat systems
- encourage community ownership of energy generation projects by splitting the existing target for ownership beyond 500MW.



- the Scottish Green party believe that Scotland need to generate 50% of all energy use from renewables by 2030.
- champion increased research and development to enable a smooth transition to renewables, including alternative bio-based feedstocks at Grangemouth
- invest in domestic energy storage systems to balance variable generation with household demand
- resist UK government subsidy cuts
- establish socially-owned municipal utility companies under public control to drive investment in energy efficiency and low carbon energy, with opportunities to invest profits back into public services
- extend the Scottish government target for renewable energy capacity to 1GW provided by community renewables and 1GW from locally owned, by 2030
- support communities setting up new renewable energy schemes with loans, grants and advice, and assist them in connecting to the national grid
- support community buy-outs of renewable energy schemes and recognise need for associated further legislation
- prioritise CHP systems particularly in new builds
- coordinate a whole-house approach to increasing energy efficiency and combating fuel poverty.



It should be noted, of course, that all these respective policies will be more or less likely to be implemented depending on each party's respective electoral successes. The Scottish National Party (SNP) effectively swept the board in Scotland at the General Election in 2015, gaining 56 of the country's 59 seats. They look likely to maintain their largest party status in Holyrood.

However, unlike the Westminster assemblage, members do not arrive there through a solely first-past-the-post contest. The Scottish Parliament utilises the *Additional Vote* system in order to deliver a more 'representative parliament.' The D'Hondt system for regional members ensures that as of now, it is not certain the SNP will achieve a majority (as they did in 2011) because it 'tops up' the Parliament with further, proportionally elected members from regions across Scotland.

The most recent polls (March) have seen the SNP polling between 49 and 60 percent, with Labour following on around 20 percent and the Conservative party following in the mid-teens. Polling for the regional, second vote sees the SNP standing between 42 and 55 percent and a closer contest between the Labour and Conservative parties, both standing just short of 20 percent. The regional route is also likely to see a smattering of Parliamentarians returned from the smaller parties; the Greens, the Liberal Democrats and other smaller, left wing parties.

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