

# How the Green Agenda Hijacked the Need for Energy Efficiency for Businesses

## **Executive Summary**

Over the past decade, UK businesses have faced mounting pressure to decarbonise, driven by ambitious government targets and evolving legislation. While the intention behind the green agenda was to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy, the enforcement of decarbonisation policies has often overshadowed the natural, commercial drive for energy efficiency. This white paper explores how shifting political priorities, inconsistent regulation, and the risk of investing in misaligned technologies have undermined the business case for efficiency. It also examines how Hawley Energy's independent, ROI-focused consultancy model—reinforced by its sister company's impartial procurement expertise in energy and water—offers a resilient path forward. This dual approach is especially valuable as political uncertainty, such as the rise of Reform UK, threatens to destabilise the sustainability sector.

## **The Enforcement of Decarbonisation: Overshadowing Natural Efficiency**

Historically, businesses have sought to improve energy efficiency as a means to reduce operating costs, enhance competitiveness, and boost profitability. However, the UK's green agenda—manifested through a patchwork of decarbonisation targets, incentives, and regulatory mandates—has shifted the focus from pragmatic efficiency to compliance with externally imposed carbon metrics.

Government initiatives such as the Green Deal and Energy Companies Obligation were intended to catalyse emissions reductions. Yet, as noted by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment, these schemes often delivered fewer results than previous policies and introduced uncertainty through mixed messages and shifting requirements. The emphasis on headline carbon targets, rather than on the underlying business case for efficiency, has led many firms to prioritise compliance over cost-saving innovation.

Hawley Energy's approach, which places operational efficiency and ROI at the centre of its recommendations, stands in contrast to this compliance-driven mindset. This philosophy is further supported by its sister company's impartial advice on the procurement of energy and water—two sectors where businesses face their own unique regulatory and market challenges. The synergy between efficiency consultancy and unbiased procurement guidance ensures clients are not only optimising usage but also sourcing resources on the best commercial terms, regardless of shifting policy landscapes.

## **Legislative Uncertainty and the Chilling Effect on Investment**

Frequent changes to energy and Decarbonisation legislation have made it increasingly difficult for businesses to plan and invest with confidence. Sudden adjustments to feed-in

tariffs, delays in updating building regulations, and unclear guidance on zero-carbon standards have all contributed to a climate of uncertainty.

This has had several negative consequences as investment is often delayed or cancelled as end users are concerned about selecting the wrong solution and falling foul of future legal requirements that require further investment. This results in missed opportunities and lost savings as businesses halt investments that would have improved their bottom line.

Even worse, the erosion of trust in the sector causes instability. Long term policy frameworks erode confidence in government schemes and discourage proactive investment in both efficiency and renewables.

Hawley Energy's model, complemented by its sister company's expertise in navigating complex procurement markets, provides clients with a holistic and future-proofed strategy. By combining robust efficiency measures with impartial procurement advice, businesses are better equipped to avoid costly missteps and ensure their investments remain sound, even as regulations evolve.

#### Hawley Energy: Prioritising ROI and Efficiency

Amidst this uncertainty, Hawley Energy has consistently advocated for an independent, data-driven approach to energy management. As a consultancy, Hawley Energy places return on investment (ROI) and operational efficiency at the heart of its recommendations, treating green benefits as a valuable byproduct rather than the primary objective.

At Hawley Energy, we believe our independence truly sets us apart when coupled with our ownership structure. This ensures that all our advice is tailored to the unique needs and constraints of each client, without external influence.

All our advice is driven by data analysis, using proprietary processes such as Enerylse so operational data drives the identification of efficiency opportunities that will always deliver measurable financial returns.

This leads to a more pragmatic investment development process that steers clients away from large capital expenditure on unproven or misaligned technologies until a thorough audit of their energy use and infrastructure (today and in the future) is completed.

This approach ensures stakeholder engagement throughout, supported by clear, actionable reports that help businesses of all sizes understand the impact of energy use and engage in energy efficiency initiatives.

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This philosophy is mirrored in the approach of Hawley Energy's sister company, which delivers impartial procurement advice for energy and water. By ensuring that businesses are not only efficient in their use but also strategic in their sourcing, the partnership empowers clients to maximise value across the entire utility lifecycle. This dual focus on efficiency and procurement is particularly powerful in sectors—like water—where legislative and market challenges are evolving rapidly and could be the subject of future analysis.

### The Risks to the Sustainability Sector if Reform UK is Elected

The political landscape is shifting rapidly. Reform UK, which has gained significant ground in local elections, is openly hostile to the net zero agenda.

The party has pledged to scrap net zero targets, block or delay planning for renewable energy projects, remove client related roles in local authorities and increase the planning costs for green infrastructure.

If Reform UK were to win national power, the risks to the sustainability sector are wide ranging.

Policy is likely to be rolled back or become fragmented and national decarbonization policies would undermine investor confidence and stall clean energy projects.

We could also see Reform controlled Councils could use every available legal and planning lever to frustrate renewable energy developments, creating a patchwork of hostile local environments.

The combination of the above ultimately leads to an erosion of capacity as the removal of climate related roles in local government would weaken the delivery of sustainability initiatives and reduce access to grant funding.

### Why Hawley Energy's Model Offers Protection

Hawley Energy's consultancy model is uniquely resilient to political and regulatory upheaval:

Their ROI-Driven Strategy prioritises cost savings and efficiency and recommendations remain relevant regardless of the prevailing political climate. Clients benefit from lower operating costs and improved competitiveness, even if green mandates are weakened or repealed.

The advice given is independent and flexible. The consultancy's independence ensures clients are not locked into technologies or strategies that may become obsolete or non-compliant under new legislation.

They couple their efficiency advice with a Procurement Synergy, adding a dimension of impartial procurement advice from Hawley Energy's sister company Baseline Power. This means clients are protected not only in how they use energy and water, but also in how they buy it, making them more agile and resilient to both regulatory and market shocks.

At it's core, a focus on fundamentals and Hawley Energy's emphasis on robust data analysis and tailored solutions means it's clients are equipped to adapt to changing circumstances, protecting their investments and progress of sustainability in their organisations.

In contrast, consultancies and clients whose strategies are heavily dependent on government incentives or compliance with specific carbon targets may struggle to adapt if the policy environment shifts dramatically. The integrated approach of Hawley Energy and Baseline Power ensure that it's clients' interests are safeguarded across the full spectrum of energy and water management.

## Conclusion

**The UK's green agenda, while well-intentioned, has often overshadowed the natural business case for energy efficiency, leading to missed opportunities and investment paralysis. As political uncertainty grows, exemplified by the rise of Reform UK, the need for independent, ROI-focused energy consultancy, paired with impartial procurement advice, has never been greater.**

Hawley Energy's data-driven, efficiency-first approach, combined with its expertise in energy and water procurement, ensures that clients are protected from policy shocks and can continue to reap the benefits of lower costs and improved sustainability, whatever the future holds.

Other consultancies and businesses would do well to adopt similarly resilient strategies to navigate the uncertain road ahead.

The evolving challenges in utility procurement will be the focus of our next white paper, continuing our commitment to delivering independent, actionable advice for UK businesses.

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*If you'd like to find out more, you can check out the Hawley Energy Website and click on the Contact Me page, call them on +44 (0) 01484 929545 or email [hello@hawleyenergy.co.uk](mailto:hello@hawleyenergy.co.uk)*