



Energy policy statement: summary

We believe it is possible to tackle climate change, and meet government's greenhouse gas reduction targets, without damaging our unique landscapes. This requires action from government at every level. The national offices of the Ramblers' Association may further develop individual policies to align with their specific national contexts.

- We agree with the Sustainable Development Commission that energy efficiency and demand reduction are the most cost-effective ways to cut emissions. Government must bring forward measures to facilitate this, including improved building regulations and energy efficiency standards.
- We recognise the renewable energy potential of Britain's wind and wave resources. A diverse range of technologies will be needed to exploit these without over-reliance on any one form of generation.
- The current government subsidy mechanism, the Renewables Obligation, has been expensive and ineffective in bringing a range of technologies to market. Our key demand is for urgent reform of this system so that diversity and decentralisation of electricity generation is encouraged.
- We are concerned that the present Renewables Obligation system is resulting in an increasing number of large wind turbines in the landscape, which have an adverse impact on our appreciation of the quality of the countryside.
- To reduce the negative landscape impact, land based wind turbine systems would best be primarily designed for meeting local energy needs and be small in scale, in keeping with the character of the landscape setting. The RA would endorse meaningful community participation in the planning consultation process to take local needs and aspirations into account.
- Microgeneration of electricity, biomass, marine technologies, and combined heat & power systems, all have potential to be part of a diverse mix of technologies that can help cut greenhouse gas emissions. A reformed Renewables Obligation should support development of such technologies, again with sensitivity and care to different environmental impacts.
- There will be a need for large-scale generation, and use of fossil fuels should be as clean and efficient as possible. Caution must be exercised in any development of coalfields to avoid leaving a legacy of damaged landscapes through spoil-heaps from mining operations.
- We recognise that nuclear power is one of a range of possible energy supply options and concur with the findings of the Sustainable Development Commission that development of new nuclear plant is a choice rather than an absolute necessity (SDC 2006).
- Generating power close to where it is used has benefits of reducing emissions, increasing the diversity of energy supply and possibly lowering costs. There must be a radical reappraisal of what is needed in terms of future national grid development. Long distance transmission in the future should be based on sub-sea cables, not through the construction of new overland routes or by increasing the height of existing pylons.

The Board of Trustees has agreed this policy on 20th January 2007. It is based on the work of staff, board members, and the experience of members and volunteers. It develops the motion agreed by General Council in 2002: "This General Council calls upon government to invest immediately and substantially in industrial and domestic energy conservation, and environmentally sensitive sources of renewable energy. When wind power is developed alternatives should be found to the siting of wind turbines in national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and other scenic areas."