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Scrap net zero targets to win election, Liz Truss urges Sunak

Conservatives must change course to 'deliver policies the public actually want', former prime minister tells The Telegraph

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Liz Truss has urged **Rishi Sunak** to ditch all net zero targets to win the general election.

In an interview with The Telegraph, the former prime minister called on her successor to change course on green issues, migration and human rights laws to “deliver the conservative policies the public actually want”.

The intervention comes as the Conservatives continue to trail Sir Keir Starmer’s Labour Party by around 20 points in the polls, just over five weeks ahead of election day on July 4.

Mr Sunak has taken a more pragmatic approach to climate change policy than former prime ministers Boris Johnson or Theresa May, having delayed or diluted a number of objectives last summer, although remains committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

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Ms Truss was speaking on the day before the general election was called, but her comments indicate the appetite of many on the Tory Right and among the grassroots for a change of direction in the weeks to come.

‘Tory party needs to change’

Reflecting on the current state of the Tories, Ms Truss said: “I do think the Conservative Party needs to change and be much clearer on what we need to do to dismantle the Leftist state, so we can deliver conservative policies.”

She added: “We need to change the way we are governed. And the contention in my book is unless we do that, we are not going to be able to deliver the conservative policies the public actually wants such as controlling immigration, such as getting rid of the impacts of net zero.”

Asked whether it was time for the Government to abolish all of its net zero targets, she replied: “I believe so, yes.”

Ms Truss was ousted from Downing Street by mutinous Tory MPs in October 2022 after just 49 days.

The mini-budget she unveiled alongside Kwasi Kwarteng, her chancellor, included a wide range of sweeping tax cuts but lost her the confidence of the markets, prompting higher mortgage rates for millions of homeowners and a significant fall in pension funds.

But Ms Truss rejected suggestions that her fiscal event was responsible for a collapse in the Tories’ polling fortunes in the autumn of that year, from which Mr Sunak has

struggled to regain ground.

‘Mistake to get rid of Johnson’

“First of all I think it was a mistake for the Conservative Party to get rid of Boris, who had been our election winner, so we weren’t stepping into a great situation given that there had been the regicide,” she said.

“But the public responded to what had happened with the financial markets but also the political shenanigans – in other words, Conservative MPs attacking what I was doing.

“So am I responsible for other people attacking my policies? Am I responsible for the Bank of England’s failure to do its job of financial stability?

“What I won’t do, and I’m very clear about this, is I won’t take responsibility for things that I don’t have power over. This goes to the heart of what I think the problem we have in Britain now is that politicians are often held responsible for things they can’t control.”

She added that Westminster had ceded a “huge amount of decision-making power” to institutions including the Bank of England, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) and quangos including Natural England, as well as the wider Civil Service.

‘Farage and Tice welcome to join Conservative Party’

Taking questions from readers of The Telegraph’s Politics Newsletter, Ms Truss also argued the Conservatives should pivot to the political Right to neutralise the electoral threat posed by Richard Tice’s Reform party.

Support for Reform is projected to cost the Tories dozens of battleground seats at the election and is currently polling at around 10 per cent of the popular vote.

“I want the Conservative Party to be much clearer on issues like leaving the ECHR, binning the Human Rights Act, getting rid of our net zero targets, so that we can deliver the dynamic, successful country that people want to live in,” she said.

“And if we do that there will be no need for a Reform Party because people will see their aspirations being delivered through the Conservative Party.”

She also revealed she would welcome Mr Tice and Nigel Farage, Reform’s honorary president, into the fold, adding: “I would like them to join the Conservative Party.”

Ms Truss went on to indicate her support for capping net migration at around 100,000, echoing a commitment made in previous Conservative manifestos.

“I’m in favour of immigration being around that level. I’m also in favour of more public say on what our levels of immigration should be. I think it should be debated in

Parliament. I think there should be an annual discussion about it.”

Despite previously claiming to have “unfinished” business in the Conservative Party, Ms Truss ruled out running for leader again even if Mr Sunak lost the general election.

Challenged on whether she was considering another run in the future, she said: “I am not. I am not planning to do that, no.”

Asked for her message to disillusioned Tory supporters, Ms Truss said: “Vote Conservative, join the Conservative Party, help us deliver popular conservative policies.”

Jonathan Ashworth, Labour’s shadow paymaster general, said: “While Rishi Sunak spends today hiding away in his mansion, Liz Truss is yet again reminding voters that he has no control over his party, and desperate Jeremy Hunt is making more completely unfunded promises.

“Five more years of the Tories will mean more of this chaos – with the British public left paying the price every single day.”

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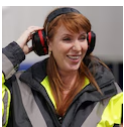
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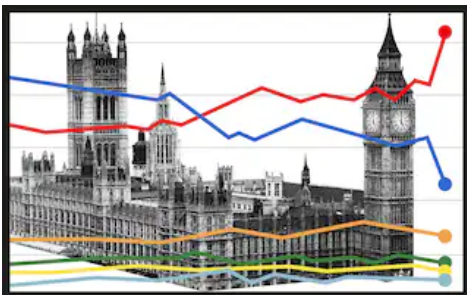


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