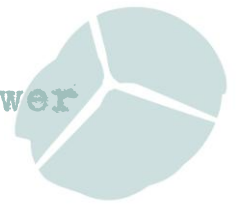


No.100 October 2017

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1. Time to Cancel Hinkley Point C

Offshore wind costs as low as £57.50/MWh were announced in September. (1) *The Guardian's* editorial said the precipitous drop in the price of electricity from offshore wind turbines, from around £150/MWh in 2014, should “blow away” the UK’s nuclear plans. It described Hinkley Point C as “like a dinosaur even before it arrives on earth”. Ministers should “open the door to a greener, cleaner future where Britain meets greenhouse gas targets without more expensive nuclear plants.” (2)

A new report by Emeritus Professor of Energy Policy, Steve Thomas, says it is time to cancel Hinkley Point C. EDF and the French and UK governments may try to suggest that it’s too late to stop and will talk up the costs which have already been incurred. But the start of construction, when the first structural concrete is poured, is still between 2 and 4 years away. Preliminary works are conspicuous but relatively cheap. EDF Energy will have incurred expenses since signing the deal with the UK Government in October 2016 and some of these may be compensatable. But these costs would be dwarfed by the costs of going ahead

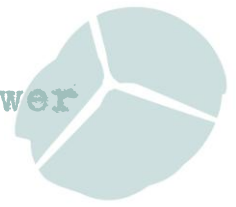
If wholesale electricity prices do not rise, the extra cost to consumers over the 35 years from opening the plant would be about £50bn. If the wholesale price rises to, say £70/MWh, the cost would be about £27bn. (3)

Thomas says it would be surprising if there aren’t further delays and cost increases. EDF’s claim it will take the risk of cost increases does not seem credible, so further costs could fall on electricity consumers and taxpayers.

Thomas continued “*Hinkley Point C would use a technology unproven in operation – the EPR - which has run into appalling problems of cost & time overruns in the 3 projects using it. It would be supplied by Areva NP, which is in financial collapse and might not be saveable and has been found to be falsifying quality control records for safety critical items of equipment for up to 50 years – a bizarre situation.*”

Meanwhile, electricity demand continues to fall. When the government first endorsed Hinkley Point C, (HPC) it was projecting an increase in electricity consumption of 15% by now, whereas in practice we are consuming 15% less than a decade ago. In other words it made a 30 % error. Further energy efficiency improvements could reduce the average householders bill by £270 a year and save the equivalent to the output of six Hinkley Point Cs”. (4)

Gillian Martin MSP, who is Parliamentary Liaison Officer to Scotland’s Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform – Roseanna Cunningham - said the Tories’ “*wrong-headed*” energy policy had been shown up. “*This is excellent news for Scotland’s flourishing and world-leading renewables sector - and shows how misguided the Tories are on energy policy. The price of offshore wind energy has been falling for years - yet the Tories insisted on pushing ahead with their expensive white elephant project at Hinkley Point. Renewable energy is the future - offering sustainable jobs, economic growth and helping us tackle climate change and meet our environmental targets. The Tory obsession with nuclear power is frankly bizarre.*” (5)



Drew Hendry MP – the SNP’s Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) spokesman - attacked the Government’s “*nuclear obsession*”, claiming it will result in people paying higher bills. He asked the Minister for Energy and Industry Richard Harrington to “...confirm that he’s happy for people to pay higher bills for his Government’s nuclear obsession.” Mr Harrington said the Government was “...in favour of a mix of energy which includes nuclear” adding it had “ensured energy security and continuity of supply that everybody enjoys”. (6)

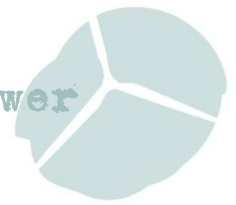
Former MSP Kenny MacAskill said “*This Tory Government is prepared to throw £20 billion at a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point that has been caustically assessed by the National Audit Office, never mind the safety implications from Fukushima and elsewhere. It’s also privately fretted over by the security services, given China’s involvement in its construction. This aspect seems particularly absurd given alleged recent cyber-attacks, never mind the ongoing industrial, if not military, espionage. In ancient civilizations, it was sometimes claimed that decline began when the empire was unable properly to defend itself. The Tories are shamefully dissipating our natural asset for their nuclear folly.*” (7)

Vince Cable, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, said the breakthrough in offshore wind costs should prompt a rethink of the government’s energy plans, which have pencilled in atomic plants at Wylfa in Wales, Sizewell in Suffolk and Bradwell in Essex. “*The spectacular drop in the cost of offshore wind is extremely encouraging and shows the need for a radical reappraisal by government of the UK’s energy provision,*” he said. (8)

The latest government auction handed out power-purchase contracts worth £176 million a year, to build offshore wind farms and other renewable technologies. All of the 11 selected projects, which will total 3 gigawatts of capacity, were cheaper than the price fixed for the controversial nuclear plant at Hinkley Point. The most expensive was 19 percent cheaper and offshore wind is now over a third less. (9)

The falling cost of offshore wind won’t change Britain’s nuclear plans, according to a spokesperson for the U.K. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy: “*We need a diverse energy mix to ensure that demand for energy can always be met, and both nuclear and renewables will play an important role in this for many years to come,*” he said. (10)

Tom Greatrex of the Nuclear Industry Association says it doesn’t matter how low the price of offshore wind is because renewable energy is heavily intermittent. That £57.50 strike price looks very impressive compared to Hinkley’s price, but it doesn’t take into account the periods of time when the wind isn’t blowing hard enough to move the turbines - or when it’s blowing too hard. *The Telegraph* says even this fight is a mark of how far the renewables industry has come. Only 10 years ago, the debate over the viability of renewables was not about intermittency or the problems it posed for the power grid. Instead, it was about the sheer cost of generating the power. That phase of the debate is now passing. Onshore wind is already cost competitive. Some solar farms are already operating in the UK without subsidy. These costs are forecast to fall even further in the coming years. Some estimates have suggested that the cost of building new wind and solar plants will fall by about 60% in the next 20 years. Just as the cost of renewable generation has come down, the technology for other associated infrastructure like power storage is also likely to drop dramatically in the coming years. (11)



1. For instance even the Spectator says “Hinkley Point C was the best idea available when it was first mooted seven years ago, but time and technology are inexorably overtaking it.” Spectator 16th Sept 2017 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/09/the-city-still-leads-the-financial-world-but-it-faces-a-fight-on-all-fronts/>
2. Guardian 13th September 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/13/the-guardian-view-of-offshore-wind-cheaper-and-greener>
3. Steve Thomas’ report “Time to Cancel Hinkley” is available at:
<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Time-to-Cancel-HinkleyFinal.pdf>
4. UK Energy Research Centre 6th Sept 2017 <http://www.ukerc.ac.uk/news/unlocking-britains-first-fuel.html>
5. The National 12th Sept 2017
http://www.thenational.scot/news/15528850.Offshore_wind_power_now_cheaper_than_nuclear/
6. Press and Journal 12th Sept 2017 <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/news/world/1324008/snp-attacks-governments-nuclear-obsession/>
7. Herald 19th Sept 2017
http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/15542606.Kenny_MacAskill__It_is_time_to_turn_the_tide_and_b_ack_renewables_to_the_hilt/
8. Guardian 11th Sept 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/11/huge-boost-renewable-power-offshore-windfarm-costs-fall-record-low>
9. Bloomberg 11th Sept 2017 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-11/u-k-offshore-wind-costs-fall-to-record-in-latest-auction>
10. Green Tech Media 29th Sept 2017 <https://www.greentechmedia.com/articles/read/cheap-offshore-wind-wont-make-uk-give-up-on-nuclear>
11. Telegraph 11th Sept 2017 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/09/11/renewables-flourish-uk-needs-predictable-energy-policy/>



2. UK Nuclear Policies: Recent Changes and Likely Developments

Steve Thomas, Emeritus Professor of Energy Policy at the University of Greenwich, says many of the issues that arise with Hinkley Point C (HPC) that might derail it apply equally to the whole Government programme. He says we are probably at the point where we are looking at a public spending disaster. Financing HPC will stretch EDF Energy to the limit and maybe beyond. He thinks there is no possibility of Sizewell C being built on the timetable that the Government is looking at. We are in a surreal situation where we are planning the two largest construction projects ever built on UK soil – HPC and Moorside – and we are contemplating buying the equipment from bankrupt and disgraced companies using technologies that have abjectly failed wherever they have been built. None of the three consortia (excluding Bradwell which is further off in the future) are financeable in their present state. (1)

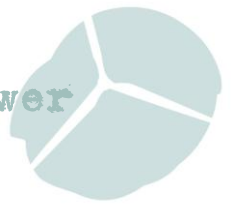
A new Nuclear Free Local Authorities briefing looks at the evidence presented by Steve Thomas and others which questions whether any of these projects will ever be successfully completed. Continuing with these projects will seriously damage renewable and energy efficiency programmes and delay real action to combat climate change.

HPC has some very serious problems, and it is very hard to see how Moorside and Wylfa Newydd can go-ahead without major Government intervention. UK Government direct stakes are likely to be needed.

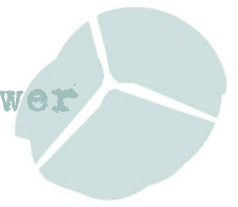
The question is: why doesn't the Government give up? Perhaps the only reason is that it doesn't have an exit strategy. But the Conservative Manifesto in May 2017 did not mention "nuclear" and the Labour Manifesto was equivocal. The gap between the cost of renewables and nuclear has become even more embarrassing with the announcement of new contracts for offshore wind which are far cheaper than the £100/MWh cost of electricity from HPC. The current minority government depends on a shaky coalition which makes any policy predictions highly uncertain, but the continuing fall in the cost of renewables must present an ideal opportunity to argue for a change of policy.

According to Emeritus Professor of physics at Imperial College London, Keith Barnham, renewable power expanded exponentially under the Tory-Lib Dem coalition between 2010 and 2015. If this expansion had continued under the next government, an all-renewable UK electricity supply could have been achieved by 2025. And renewable expansion has reduced the wholesale price of UK electricity. Even onshore wind has a far higher public approval rating than the Conservative party's top priorities for energy: nuclear and fracking, so whoever restores renewable subsidies and cancels Hinkley Point C could win themselves a lot more votes. (2)

The briefing is available here: http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/NFLA_New_Nuclear_Monitor_No49.pdf



1. Presentation by Professor Steve Thomas to the CND Conference 17th June 2017 For his presentation see:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5wUXjtBi4k&feature=youtu.be>
2. Barnham, K *Challenge Conservatives on energy priorities and cuts to renewables*, Guardian 10th May 2017
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/may/10/challenge-conservatives-energy-priorities-cuts-renewables>



3. Labour's Nuclear (Power) War

Labour's Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, told the Labour Party Conference on 25th September that *"the storms and flooding sweeping the world in these last few months are yet another environmental wake up call."* He said the UK *"has huge natural renewable resources ...Yet this Government has slashed the funding, the renewables industry needs to find its feet."*

He wants to see the UK become world leaders in decarbonising our economy. With a publicly owned energy supply based on alternative energy sources: *"Where the Tories have dithered and delayed, to deliver zero-carbon electricity, we will absolutely commit for example to building projects like the Swansea Tidal Lagoon."* And he want to *"...significantly broaden ownership. That means supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, the genuinely self-employed and massively expanding worker control and the co-operative sector."* (1)

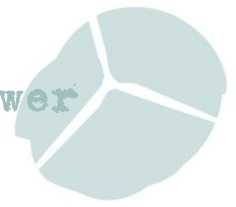
His speech made no mention of nuclear power. But in an earlier interview, for BBC Points West, Jeremy Corbyn said he would not rule out a Labour government pulling the plug on Hinkley Point C unless the nuclear power station was *"already built and in operation"*. (2)

Shadow energy secretary, Alan Whitehead, set out a vision of decentralised energy and called for councils to take over the energy system. (3) Just over a year ago, Jeremy Corbyn pledged to create 1,000 community energy co-operatives and give them the legal right to directly sell energy to the people they serve. He promised to build 1 million carbon neutral homes, half of them council houses. A national home insulation programme would be created to bring four million homes up to the energy efficiency standards B or C, and all rented housing would be forced to meet the same standards. Vulnerable customers would be given help paying their bills. Corbyn committed his government to generating 65% of the UK's electricity from renewable sources by 2030. A £500 billion national investment programme, linked to a National Investment Bank and a network of regional development banks, would ensure new green jobs are created *"where they are most needed – in coastal towns and areas with high unemployment All of these measures will create secure, skilled employment for hundreds of thousands of people,"* added Corbyn. *"As part of our transition to a low-carbon economy, we estimate that we will create 316,000 jobs in wind, solar and wave power."* (4)

Then, Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Shadow Secretary for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, went a spoilt it all by mentioning one of the least likely nuclear proposals – Moorside. She said Labour would *"ensure that 60% of our energy comes from low carbon or renewable sources by 2030 [and] support projects like Swansea tidal lagoon and Moorside nuclear plant."* (5)

In just one word of support – "Moorside"- she undermined the progressive energy policy outlined by John McDonnell, according to David Lowry. (6)

Former Climate and Energy spokespeople Caroline Flint MP and Lisa Nandy MP spoke at a Nuclear Industry Association fringe meeting, which discussed how nuclear energy can play a role in rebalancing the UK economy. Tom Greatrex, chief executive at the Nuclear Industry Association and Paul Spence, director of strategy and corporate affairs at EDF, talked about nuclear's role in the future energy mix as a source of low carbon "affordable" energy. There was



also discussion about the role the state could play in the development of large infrastructure projects.

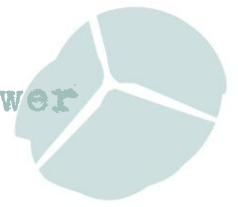
Caroline Flint highlighted predictions that the UK would require 20% more electricity over the next 20 years whilst a significant amount of current generation would be coming off the grid. Flint said meeting this gap would need a mix of renewable and nuclear technologies. Turning to Hinkley Point, she said it remained to be seen whether the £92.50/MWh would turn out to be good value for money. Nevertheless, she said there needed to be competition in the industry to further drive down prices. Finally, Flint discussed the potential of small modular reactors to contribute to UK industrial policy. She said they were cheaper and quicker to build than large nuclear power stations, were UK owned intellectual property, 75% of the supply chain was British and had great export potential.

Lisa Nandy said that for a party committed to tackling poverty and climate change it was necessary to have a focus on keeping bills low. Nandy highlighted that in her communities when constituents heard “climate change” they thought of bills going up and their jobs disappearing. Effectively tackling climate change needed communities to be on board, she added. On Hinkley she agreed with Flint and said she wanted to see better deals for nuclear energy in the future. Nandy also said that on joining the shadow cabinet she had an honest discussion about nuclear energy with Jeremy Corbyn and had found him very willing to listen to the case for the technology. She explained that nuclear energy was important for the Labour party because it was one of the best sources of well paid jobs outside of London. (7)

Labour’s Clive Lewis who was Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy until 8th February 2017 when he resigned in protest over the Labour Party’s decision to whip its MPs into voting to trigger Article 50, accused the nuclear unions of being a ‘voice for big business’. He says they are failing to speak up for renewable energy because they do not have members in that sector. He singled out the GMB for being too close to the nuclear lobby and said it was not speaking up for renewable energy because it did not have members there. He also questioned why unions “fight to the bitter end” for the arms industry.

His comments were seen as reflecting tensions within the Labour movement over union support for nuclear power and a nuclear deterrent. GMB, Unite and Prospect have tens of thousands of members in the nuclear and arms industries. He said unions had thrown their weight behind plans for Hinkley Point C. *“That is one of the reasons that a big song and dance and hoo-ha about solar wasn’t made by the unions and yet they are getting staunchly behind Hinkley,”* Lewis said. He told a 60-strong audience at an event organised by Labour Energy Forum that the Labour movement needed to do more to get involved in the renewable energy sector. (8)

The Labour MP for Norwich South said: *“One of the problems with where trade unions are at the moment is that they have been so weakened that I think they have become, and have been used by big business as, a voice for big business. Because big business understands that if you have a unionised workforce they also become spokespeople for you. They create a situation where you have a wide and broad spectrum politically of people supporting your particular position. On nuclear, yes, GMB and other unions are staunchly supporting it because the jobs there generate union members. Contrast that to the highly self-employed solar sector: the unions have no trade unions there. They are not speaking up at all for them.”*



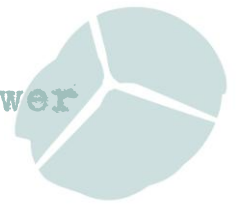
The GMB accused him of being “*anti-working class*”. The union said his remarks were “*offensive to our members*”. In a furious letter, GMB Scotland secretary Gary Smith said he was “*staggered*” at such remarks coming from “*someone who is meant to understand the value of working people ... I am staggered that you chose to attack our members and the work we do before availing yourself of the relevant facts*”. He added: “*Some basic research on our work would have shown you that GMB has publicly stated our support for renewables as part of a wider balanced energy policy. However, we have been rightly critical of an industry that sucks up billions in taxpayer funded subsidies but has, in return, produced little in the way of jobs for the people in Britain. This is an industry that needs to get its act together and start delivering for the working people of our country. Instead of a ‘jobs bonanza’ from renewables, working class communities and our people in Scotland have been stuck with paying billions of pounds in public subsidies through a flat tax on their energy bills, with the poorest being hit hardest.*” (9)

The Labour Energy Forum also held a fringe event at the Conference. Labour Energy Forum is a think tank of Labour Party members coming together to debate and promote a just, progressive, democratic energy future. The Forum promotes bold left visions for a clean, reindustrialised and democratised economy and energy system. (10) In a report published in September the Forum asked why it was that German cities own some of the largest windfarms in the UK, while our cities miss out? It said “*the sell-off of UK wind to foreign and private companies will leave the public hurting for decades. Public ownership of offshore wind is a huge opportunity to revive coastal communities, create tens of thousands of jobs, and build a public revenue stream well into the twenty-first century.*” (11) (Bridget Woodman course director of the MSc in energy policy at the University of Exeter has also been complaining about offshore wind concentrating power in the hands of a few large corporations.)(12)

Sam Mason of the PCS Union gave a presentation on her union's support for renewables. (see A Just Transition NuClear News No.97) Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) worked very hard, successfully, for a pro-renewables motion at the TUC earlier this year. The historic composite resolution on climate change that supports the energy sector being returned to public ownership and democratic control was carried unanimously by hundreds of delegates. It calls on the TUC to work with the Labour Party to bring the energy system back into public ownership and democratic control, as well as to: implement a mass program for energy conservation and efficiency; lobby for the establishment of a “just transition” strategy for affected workers; and, investigate the long-term risks to pension funds from investments in fossil fuels. (13)

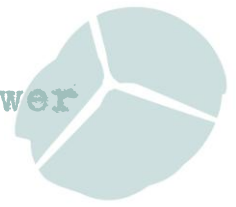
Notably, the text of the resolution also formally recognized the important work of TUED partner, The Transnational Institute (TNI), based in Amsterdam, whose recent report, “*Reclaiming Public Service: how cities and citizens are turning back privatization,*” highlighted the global trend towards re-municipalization of public services, including energy. (14)

Following the vote, Martin Mayer, UNITE’s representative to the Labour Party’s National Executive Committee, told TUED: “*Today British trade unions for the first time agreed a visionary strategy to combat climate change. That must mean taking back control of our privatised energy and a serious call for a just transition to protect jobs.*” Jenny Patient of Sheffield Climate Alliance—part of the Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union group—added, “*We know there are good and valuable jobs in the transition to zero carbon and this resolution shows the way*



forward by making this integral to a cross-sector industrial strategy that can rebalance and rebuild industries and protect workers.”

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1. Labour Party 25th September 2017 <http://press.labour.org.uk/post/165721772504/shadow-chancellor-john-mcdonnell-speech-to-labour>
 2. BBC 22nd September 2017 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-41359590>
 3. Utility Week 26th September 2017 <http://www.utilityweek.co.uk/news/labour-calls-for-councils-to-take-over-energy-system/1312992>
 4. Utility Week, 8 September 2016; <http://utilityweek.co.uk/news/Corbyn-pledges-to-create-200-local-energy-companies/1275732> and Guardian 7th September 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/blog/2016/sep/07/why-labour-is-putting-energy-reform-at-heart-of-its-green-agenda-jeremy-corbyn> and Carbon Brief 8th September 2016 <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-jeremy-corbyn-promises-65-per-cent-renewables-by-2030> David Lowry's Blog 25th September 2017 <http://drdavidlowry.blogspot.co.uk/2017/09/the-energy-transformation-is-happening.html>
 5. Labour Party 26th September 2017 <http://press.labour.org.uk/post/165757097614/rebecca-long-bailey-speech-to-labour-party>
 6. David Lowry's Blog 26th September 2017 <http://drdavidlowry.blogspot.co.uk/2017/09/nuclear-fission-in-one-word-labours.html>
 7. Politics Home 29th Sept 2017 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/energy/nuclear-power/opinion/nuclear-industry-association/89431/powering-nation-strategy>
 8. Guardian 26th September 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/sep/26/labours-clive-lewis-accuses-nuclear-unions-of-being-voice-for-big-business>
 9. Politics Home 28th September 2017 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/89369/clive-lewis-accused-being-%E2%80%98anti-working-class%E2%80%99>
 10. <https://labourenergy.org/>
 11. Labour Energy Forum 13th Sept 2017 <https://labourenergy.org/2017/09/13/who-owns-offshore-wind/>
 12. Independent 20th September 2017 <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/britains-offshore-boom-is-in-the-hands-of-a-few-very-large-developers-a7942591.html>
 13. TUED 12th Sept 2017 <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/tued-bulletin-64-backing-corbyn-uks-tuc-votes-for-public-ownership-of-energy/>
 14. TNI 23rd June 2017 <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/reclaiming-public-services>



4. Tory Policy Evolution

The Government is unlikely to use the complex funding arrangements used to subsidise Hinkley Point C for future nuclear projects, according to Energy Minister, Richard Harrington. He says nuclear “absolutely” has a role to play in the future energy mix, but the Hinkley financing model was “unlikely” to be used again. Speaking on the fringes of the Conservative Party conference, he said he believed that a “third model” existed between the complex deal agreed with EDF Energy on Hinkley, and the suggestion that Government should be the main financier behind nuclear projects in order to drive costs lower. (1)

The Hinkley deal was heavily criticised by the National Audit Office, and a House of Lords report piled further criticism on the £20bn project. Lord Holick branded Hinkley a “*good example of bad policy*” and warned the Government that it was time to consider a plan B. EDF Energy said it is willing to engage with Government to create a new pricing model for its future projects at Sizewell and Bradwell.

Former Tory environment minister and energy committee chairman Tim Yeo, has been calling for the Government to take a direct financial stake in future nuclear projects, or to offer loans to developers that can be paid back once the plants come on-line. Tim Yeo, chairman of New Nuclear Watch Europe said he believed Government money would “*undoubtedly unlock progress*” with the Moorside project. He said “*Obviously, from the government’s point of view any future strike price will have to be significantly below Hinkley. I’m sure both Kepco and CGN (the two companies said to be interested in investing in Moorside) are capable of delivering a price below the Hinkley strike price, but there’s a haggle to take place there.*” (2)

Meanwhile, the Government has finally recognised that energy demand is falling. Britain’s energy bills are on the slide despite rising renewable energy subsidies paid through consumers’ bills due to energy efficiency measures reportedly dubbed “green cr-” by David Cameron.

The Government is preparing to reveal evidence that the push for home building regulations and insulation is paying off with lower bills, according to energy minister Claire Perry. The Government is expected to release its clean growth plan “within weeks”, followed by an independent review of costs, and the Government’s Industrial Strategy. “*It’s something that we don’t seem to talk about,*” Perry told delegate of the Conservative Party conference. “*But for household consumers energy bills have actually gone down, mostly because we are more energy efficient and use more efficient appliances.*”

The minister said the Government will shortly publish a report showing that energy efficiency has resulted in lower household bills in recent years, even as the industry undergoes a major overhaul. Official figures show that the average price of a dual fuel energy bill paid via direct debit has fallen from over £1,000 a year in late 2013 to less around £865 a year today. The impact of energy efficiency is expected to be laid bare within a raft of Government energy programmes expected over the next month. (3)

In addition, onshore wind could be about to make a comeback. Energy ministers Richard Harrington and Claire Perry both told delegates at the Conservative party conference that new



onshore wind projects could return to play a role depending on whether their costs are competitive and they win the support of local communities. Mr Harrington said he sees “no reason” why onshore wind projects shouldn’t compete against other forms of technology and clinch support if their costs are low enough and their planning permission has been granted. RenewableUK’s Executive Director Emma Pinchbeck said a number of Conservative MPs expressed their support for onshore wind, “because they’re focusing on consumers’ bills and they know that onshore wind is the cheapest way of generating new power”. (4)

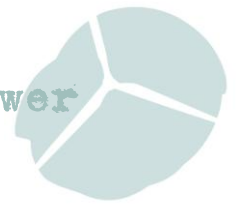
ScottishPower has lobbying for political support to develop more onshore windfarms. Keith Anderson, CEO of ScottishPower Renewables, said: *“It’s now cheaper, easier and faster to build onshore wind. In a little over 18 months we have built over 470 MW of onshore wind, delivering enough power for more than 280,000 homes and with it significant environmental and financial benefits for the UK. If the UK Government is serious about reducing carbon emissions and having enough clean power to support the huge expected growth in electric vehicles, then more onshore wind is essential. One new onshore wind turbine could power around 7,000 electric vehicles, but we need to act now to meet growing demand.”* (5)

The Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) was pushing Small Modular Reactors at the Tory Conference. NIA has been pushing the idea that there could be a small reactor in every town because of the need to electrify heating and transport. *“I have yet to see a 100% renewable energy plan that is credible,”* said meeting Chair Matthew Rooney. (In response Andy Stirling of the Sussex Energy Group pointed out that *“No matter what side of the argument one is on, each successive former loudly proclaimed cause for ‘lack of credibility’ of renewables has been comprehensively falsified. At the same time, the credibility of optimistic claims on behalf of nuclear have also systematically collapsed. So it is the ‘credibility’ of this kind of brazen statement that is at issue: it provides its own refutation.”*)

NIA says small modular reactors (SMRs) offer the potential to provide scalable and reliable low carbon power and heat. *“It is very difficult in liberalized economies to fund large nuclear reactor projects these days and that is where small modular reactors could come in.”* Small modular reactors (SMRs) offer the potential to provide scalable and reliable low carbon power and heat. Rooney explained that the problem with large nuclear reactors is that like with all large infrastructure projects, they tend to go over budget, which is partly attributable to the fact that they build everything on site. *“When it comes to SMRs, it is the modular that is important rather than the small,”* said Rooney. The advantage is that you build it in a factory you standardize the process, you replicate the design, which brings down cost over time.

Rather than one in every town though, Rolls Royce is forecasting three factories in the UK, one for the primary vessels, one for mechanical electrical modules, one for civil engineering and civil construction markets. *“There are enough nuclear licence sites in the UK to be able to be able to deploy a fleet to give return on investment without having to go onto new sites. There is certainly enough public acceptance near these sites as well.”* (6)

In contrast, according to a new survey Polling by YouGov, most Britons would not be happy living near a small reactor. A poll believed to be the first survey of public attitudes towards SMRs, found that 62% of people would be unhappy living within five miles of one. The poll, commissioned by the climate change charity 10:10, found that only 24% would be unhappy



living near an onshore windfarm, which the Conservative party has stymied with tougher planning rules. The figure fell to 17% for community for owned windfarms. Ellie Roberts, a campaigner at 10:10, said: *“These results show just how wildly out of step with public opinion UK energy policy has become.”*

Harry Holt, the president of nuclear at Rolls-Royce, said: *“With demand for energy set to rise in the near future, in part due to the growing popularity of electric cars, we believe that a UK SMR programme is a vital addition to our national infrastructure.”* (7)

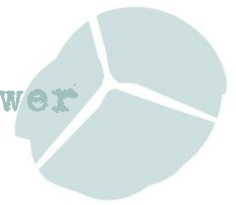
The Government looks set to give the green light to SMRs in the coming months, according to the *Telegraph*. The Government said it is evaluating evidence over the commercial case for the reactors, including funding methods and the potential for export. The Government has been holding meetings with the SMR competition participants over the summer to discuss how to help facilitate development and deployment of the reactors. *“We expect to be in a position to close the existing SMR competition shortly.”* (8)

Rolls Royce says its SMR could deliver electricity at £60/MWh. (9)

Interestingly a recent Rolls Royce report makes the connection between civil and military nuclear power quite clear. It says: *“One particular application for deployment of the talent developed through the UK SMR programme would be in the ongoing maintenance of the UK’s independent nuclear deterrent. Currently, the UK Government is required to invest funding to sustain the skills and capability necessary for the maintenance of the Royal Navy’s nuclear submarine programme. Recent decisions in Parliament have committed the UK to continue with independent deterrence for another generation, and therefore the need to maintain the relevant skills and capability remains paramount.”* (10)

NuScale, which is backed by US engineering giant Fluor Corporation, published an action plan detailing how it could deliver the technology by the 2020s. The five-point UK SMR Action Plan sets out how the firm would partner with UK industry to deliver a multi-billion pound SMR venture, which could see UK firms provide more than 85 per cent of the content required for UK reactors. (11)

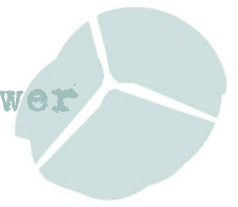
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5. Moorside Delayed

Moorside will not be delivered on schedule, according to Tom Samson, the chief executive of NuGen. It will not be up and running by the 2025 target. He has also said he expects a new investor in the project in the early part of 2018 and confirmed the company has been speaking to the Government about possible support. *“Clearly there will be a shift in the start date from 2025 to later in the 2020s, but the plant could still be up and running before 2030,”* he said. (1)

But he also said he was *“115 per cent”* confident the scheme would go ahead. Toshiba has always insisted that it remains committed to the Cumbrian project though it has long term plans to sell its stake. Korea Electric Power Corporation (Kepco) and China General Nuclear Power Corporation (CGN) have both expressed an interest in buying into NuGen. Both Kepco and CGN have their own reactor designs, which would need regulatory approval if they were to be used by NuGen. (2)

The new start date for Moorside will largely depend on which of the bidders is successful, as KEPCO and CGN are both likely to want to use their own nuclear reactor technology. KEPCO’s reactor design has yet to start the regulatory process, while CGN began the approval process earlier this year as the company also plans to build a new nuclear plant in Bradwell, Essex. It is beginning to look like the end of the road for Westinghouse’s AP1000 technology in the UK, but Samson didn’t rule that out.

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6. Balancing Green Energy

The secret to switching to an energy system based entirely on renewables may lie in the universe's most abundant substance – hydrogen. Research and development is being backed by some big energy companies including Shell and Uniper (formerly part of Eon) in addition to carmakers BMW and Audi. They're supporting research into how the element can be used to store energy for weeks or even months beyond what lithium-ion batteries can manage.

Batteries are increasingly being used to store surplus electricity generated at times of the day when demand is low so that it can be used at times of the day when demand is high. But batteries will tend to go flat if the electricity isn't used within a few weeks. Hydrogen, however, can be stored indefinitely in tanks. That would allow, for example, voltage collected from solar panels in the summer to be used in winter. (1)

Excess power from wind or photovoltaics can be used to drive electrolysis, separating water into its component hydrogen and oxygen elements. The hydrogen captured by that process could, whenever needed, feed natural gas power plants or fuel cells to make electricity. Industrial plants like oil refineries can also use hydrogen for chemical processes.

One technology, known as Power to Gas (or P2G) is discussed in a new book by Chris Goodall called *"The Switch"*. P2G generates hydrogen from surplus renewable energy which can then be combined it with carbon dioxide to make methane. A P2G plant is already being operated in Lower Saxony by Audi. The CO₂ comes from a neighbouring anaerobic digestion plant. The resultant methane can then either be injected into the gas grid to provide green gas, or it can be used to generate electricity when renewables are not producing sufficient electricity. (2)

P2G has already surpassed its 2020 cost reduction target set by the European Union. ITM Power, the leading electrolyser company in the UK, says its power-to-gas product is now half the price it was just a few years ago. The firm's work in Germany – where it has two groundbreaking projects – shows that not only is the process possible, it's pretty much commercially viable. Renewable energy sometimes has to be 'constrained' because there is too much power to make use of – on a windy, sunny day for example. This can mean that we are paying renewable operators to turn off their renewable generators. Power-to-gas could change this — by turning all that surplus electricity into hydrogen, which can be used at anytime and in any number of ways. The hydrogen gas at the end of power-to-gas can be used as is, or it can be turned back into electricity, or it can be mixed with carbon dioxide (captured from industrial or fossil fuel facilities even) to make a synthetic natural gas. Perhaps its most straightforward application is injecting it directly into the natural gas grid, something which power-to-gas pioneer Germany has been doing for years. (3)

'Power to gas' will be the key grid stabilisation technology and source of long term storage capacity, according to Goodall. A vital step towards commercialisation of P2G has been announced by the French manufacturer McPhy which has won a €1.3m contract with the Austrian gas storage specialist RAG. RAG will install an electrolyser and pump hydrogen into a sealed underground cavern alongside CO₂ from a biogas plant. Microbes in the cavern will absorb the H₂ and CO₂, exuding methane (natural gas) as the waste product. The methane will



then be injected into the gas grid. The electrolyzer can respond within 30 seconds to instructions to take less or more electric power. Electrochaea's Copenhagen pilot plant has shown that methane-generating microbes can respond similarly quickly to enhanced availability of hydrogen. (4)

Goodall says there is now even talk of converting electricity from offshore wind farms into hydrogen on artificial energy islands in the North Sea. This is an indication of the growing realisation that large scale supply stabilisation using electrolysis will be cheaper than using batteries. (5)

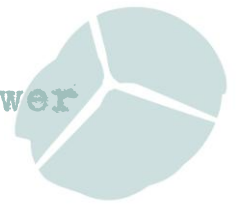
While the process of splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen by electrolysis has been well known for years, recent breakthroughs have placed the technology firmly at the cutting edge of scientific research, due to its huge potential for large-scale and renewable hydrogen production. There has been a lot of media attention recently given to the idea of storing surplus renewable electricity in lithium ion batteries. But the timescale over which energy can be stored in these electrochemical devices is relatively short. Hydrogen, however, can sit in a tank for months, years and even decades. Moreover, hydrogen produced from electrolysis can also serve as a renewable feedstock for the chemical industry, at a scale that is commensurate with the world population. This is a really important point because, eventually, in an energy economy that is completely sustainable without fossil fuels, we will still need a way to have chemical energy for the production of fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, plastics and many other materials. (6)

Levenmouth Bright Green Hydrogen

Closer to home, the Levenmouth Community Energy Project – led by Bright Green Hydrogen (BGH) in Methil, Fife – is a collaborative initiative supported by Fife Council and Toshiba. This facility is demonstrating how hydrogen can be derived from a renewable turbine and solar resources. It is the first project of its kind in Scotland to use green hydrogen to fuel a fleet of hybrid/electric vans. (7) Some of the hydrogen is used to run a fleet of 17 low-emission refuse trucks and vans, while the rest is stored in fuel cells and can be called upon to generate low-carbon electricity when output from the renewables devices is poor. A 'smart' microgrid controls how much hydrogen gets stored and how much is converted into power to supply businesses. As well as commissioning two specially adapted dual-fuel bin lorries, the scheme aims to help local firms boost their environmental credentials by offering a range of hydrogen-powered vehicles for hire. (8)

Earlier this year an international summit on hydrogen was held in Aberdeen to bring together bus operators and re-fuelling companies to present study findings of large scale hydrogen re-fuelling. The event showed the economic benefits of hydrogen to the area. (9) Key industry and public sector players have joined forces to fund and deliver the World's largest demonstration of hydrogen fuel cell buses in Aberdeen. The project will deliver a hydrogen infrastructure in Aberdeen, including:

- Production of hydrogen from a 1MW electrolyser - supplied by Hydrogenics;
- Establishing a state-of-the-art hydrogen refuelling station, Scotland's first commercial-scale hydrogen production and bus refuelling station that will include hydrogen production through electrolysis;



- Deployment of a fleet of 10 hydrogen buses, to be operated by First Group and Stagecoach;
- The development of a hydrogen safe maintenance facility, within an operational fleet maintenance depot;

The buses will only emit water vapour, reducing carbon emissions and air pollution, as well as being quieter and smoother to run. (10)

Orkney Surf 'n Turf

Meanwhile the Orkney island of Eday will draw excess power from a community wind turbine and surplus tidal power from Orkney's European Marine Energy Centre to produce hydrogen to provide auxiliary power for vessels in Kirkwall harbour and ultimately CalMac ferries serving Scotland's islands. The hydrogen will be shipped to Kirkwall harbour – a distance of about 20 miles – and fed into a hydrogen fuel cell to provide auxiliary power for vessels in the harbour. (11)

At the end of August, researchers in Orkney announced they had generated hydrogen using electricity from tidal arrays at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC). Researchers at the site believe it is the first time tidal power has produced hydrogen anywhere in the world. Traditional production of hydrogen is very energy intensive, negating much of the carbon gains of using the fuel instead of petrol or diesel in cars, or using hydrogen instead of natural gas in heavy industries. Producing hydrogen using clean power sources therefore opens a route for the fuel's widespread use in transport and industry. The team used power from the tidal energy test site at Orkney to fuel an electrolyser provided by hydrogen firm ITM Power, which uses electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. The project was bankrolled with £3m in funding from the Scottish government. Neil Kermode, managing director of EMEC, said the production of hydrogen marked a "tremendous milestone" for the team involved. (12)

At the official opening of the Orkney hydrogen energy project a partnership of Orkney Islands Council and the Orkney Renewable Energy Forum released a Sustainable Energy Strategy for Orkney. The strategy sets out five key goals: The achievement of ambitious carbon reduction targets; The reduction and eradication of fuel poverty; Positioning Orkney as the globally recognised innovation region to develop solutions for the world's energy systems challenges; Ensuring a secure energy supply during transition to a low carbon future, and Maximising economic opportunity and investment in Orkney. (13)

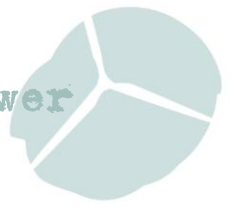
Meanwhile the UK Government's much delayed Clean Power Plan may reignite plans for a £50bn hydrogen overhaul of the country's gas grid. A report from KPMG found that converting the UK gas grid to use hydrogen could be £150bn to £200bn cheaper than rewiring British homes to use electric heating powered by lower-carbon sources. Crucially, the consultants said hydrogen heating would be the least hassle for energy customers because very few appliances would need to be replaced. The existing gas grid would need only minor upgrades because it was originally designed for hydrogen, the report added. A return to hydrogen heating is already being trialled by Northern Gas Networks which is working to transform Leeds to become a "hydrogen city" by the late 2020s. (14)



Political leaders in the Western Isles are still waiting for the results of a consultation run by the Westminster Government which closed in January on whether non-mainland onshore wind should be considered a separate technology from onshore wind more generally? (15) There are two major schemes on the Western Isles, which already have planning consent, and are expected to result in a £1bn investment in Lewis. But with the ending of subsidies for onshore wind these schemes have been put on hold. Energy firms argue that without the subsidies, it would be too expensive to lay a sub-sea cable to bring the electricity from the islands to consumers on the mainland. (16)

There have been discussions about laying 'interconnectors' to the islands at least since the ultimately unsuccessful plans for the first giant wind farm for Lewis were unveiled in 2001 - over 15 years ago. By 2013 it was difficult to overstate the anger and sheer frustration felt in the islands as the vision of creating an age of prosperity founded on wind, wave and tidal energy appeared to be disappearing over the horizon. Three and a half years later, the anger and frustration have intensified. The Western Isles faces a 13.7% decrease in population by the year 2039, and desperately needs an economic catalyst. But the UK Government's plans to curb subsidies for new onshore wind farms have been yet another hammer blow. At least the new consultation offers a glimmer of hope. (17) Perhaps establishing a hydrogen infrastructure in the Western Isles could offer an alternative way forward.

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7. Hinkley Mud Debacle

EDF Energy has secured a marine licence to dump up to 200,000 cubic metres of dredged material from near the Hinkley site close to Cardiff Bay.

One expert has raised concerns about the proposed dumping, saying he fears that the mud may have a higher level of radioactivity than is currently believed. Tim Deere-Jones has been analysing data about the tests conducted on mud and waste which could be dumped off the coast of Wales. He says he has three concerns about the waste. Firstly there are 50 different radionuclides in the mud and testing has only taken place on three. Secondly, he says that he believes only surface samples have been taken. Research from other sites suggests that if samples were taken from five times deeper, there could be a five times higher concentration of radioactivity. Thirdly, he says tides in Wales mean that waste could be transferred from the sea into land, through coastal flooding or even sea spray heading up to 10 miles inland. However, it is understood dredging has not yet begun and no date set for it to begin. (1)

South Wales Central AM Neil McEvoy said the licence should be revoked until a full environmental impact assessment had been carried out: "*No dose of radiation is acceptable for human health so it beggars belief that the Welsh Government would allow material from a nuclear site to be dumped in Welsh waters,*" he said. (2)

A petition has been launched in the Welsh Assembly which says: "*We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to direct Natural Resources Wales to suspend the licence it has granted to NNB Genco, which permits up to 300,000 tonnes of radioactively contaminated material, dredged from the seabed at the Hinkley Point Nuclear power station site, to be dumped into Welsh inshore waters. We further request that the suspension of the licence is used to ensure that a full Environmental Impact Assessment, complete radiological analysis and core sampling are carried out under the auspices of Natural Resources Wales, and that a Public Inquiry, a full hearing of independent evidence and a Public Consultation take place before any dump of the Hinkley sediments is permitted.*" (3)

More than 5,000 people have signed the petition which means it must now be debated in the Assembly. (4)

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