



**NuClear News No.13
December 2009**

- 1. National Policy Statements Consultation**
- 2. Justification Consultation**
- 3. Radioactive Waste Confidence Attacked**
- 4. Nuclear Costs**
- 5. Is Nuclear Power detracting from tackling climate change?**
- 6. Generating Failure**
- 7. Reactor Problems**
- 8. Zero Carbon by 2030**
- 9. Solar Costs**
- 10. Micro Progress**
- 11. Fuel Poverty: North & South**
- 12. View on the Ground**
- 13. Uranium Mining**
- 14. Waste Transport**

1. National Policy Statements Consultation

The Government has finally launched its consultation on the Draft National Policy Statements (NPSs) for Energy Infrastructure. (1) The first six of the 12 planned NPSs have now been published - all covering energy infrastructure - one is on energy in general (2) and one is on nuclear power. (3)

NPSs are one of the most powerful statements of government policy ever produced. They lie at the centre of the new planning regime for England and Wales covering major infrastructure. The new Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) must take its decisions in accordance with the NPSs. This means, for example, the principle of new nuclear reactors at the sites designated cannot be questioned, except in very limited circumstances.

A series of national and local consultation events are happening around England and Wales. (4) The consultation closes on 22nd February 2010.

The draft Nuclear NPS (EN-6) differs from the other draft NPSs in that it also lists sites that the Government has judged to be potentially suitable for new reactors by the end of 2025. This list is the output from the Strategic Siting Assessment (SSA) process.

The draft National Policy Statements will also be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The Energy and Climate Change Committee has already called for written evidence to help it determine whether the energy NPSs are fit for purpose. The Committee will be receiving copies of written submissions made to the DECC's consultation but will also welcome additional comments. Although the consultation period is open until February 22nd, the Committee said it is only likely to be able to take account of submissions made before Friday January 15th. Oral hearings are set to take place in the New Year. (5)

Subject to this consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny, the Government intends to finalise and formally approve ('designate') the energy NPSs in 2010. The designated NPSs would then be the primary consideration for the IPC when it makes decisions on applications for development consent for nationally significant energy infrastructure.

Probably the most contentious points made in the documents concern nuclear waste. The Government says its preliminary conclusion is that it is satisfied effective arrangements will exist to manage and dispose of the waste produced by new reactors. (6) "*As a result the IPC need not consider this question.*" (7) Consequently the need to store spent nuclear fuel at the reactor sites for up to 160 years - is not even going to be examined by the new IPC. Nor is the disposability of the new type of high

burn up fuel which will be used in new reactors.

Given the high burn up fuel expected to be used in new reactors which contains more enriched uranium, and is left in the reactor for longer, making it hotter and more radioactive, questions have been raised about its disposability. (8) The Government says “*despite some differences in characteristics ... spent fuel from new nuclear build would not raise such different technical issues compared with nuclear waste from legacy programmes as to require a different technical solution*”. Disposability assessments have been carried out by the NDA, for both the EPR and AP1000 reactors, (9) on behalf of the reactor construction companies for submission to the Generic Design Assessment (GDA). They concluded that no new issues arise that challenge the fundamental disposability of the spent fuel. The Environment Agency has yet to review these NDA assessments, but expects to consult on this in May or June 2010 – too late for those wishing to make a submission to the NPS consultation. (10)

Another contentious point is that the Draft Nuclear NPS states that nuclear power should be free to contribute as much as possible towards meeting the need for 25 GW of new non-renewable capacity. That means between 15 and 25 new reactor, depending on the type of reactor built.

Of the eleven sites originally nominated only Dungeness has been dropped. Any new reactor on the proposed site would need to be built further back from the coastline to enable adequate sea defences to be put in place which in turn would destroy the shingle ridges which are the subject of strict environmental protection. Natural England made a strong case for the protection of the fragile ecosystem at Dungeness, as did RSPB. (11) But Michael Howard – the MP for Folkestone and Hythe – has launched a campaign to have Dungeness re-instated on the list of sites. (12)

(1) The Government has set up a website for the consultation on the Energy Infrastructure National Policy Statements: <https://www.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/>

The consultation document is available at: <http://data.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/documents/condoc.pdf>

(2) Draft Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

<http://data.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/documents/npss/EN-1.pdf>

(3) Draft National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6)

<http://data.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/documents/npss/EN-6.pdf>

(4) <https://www.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/home/events/>

(5) New Energy Focus 13th Nov 2009 http://www.newenergyfocus.com/do/ecco/view_item?listid=1&listcatid=32&listitemid=3214§ion=Policy

(6) See Annex G (page 142) of the consultation document (ref 1)

(7) Paragraph 3.8.20 of the Nuclear NPS (ref 3)

(8) See for example Too Hot to Handle by Hugh Richards, <http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/reports/TooHottoHandle.pdf>

(9) See <http://www.nda.gov.uk/news/disposability-assessment.cfm>

(10) See GDA Progress Report 30th September 2009 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/newreactors/reports/gda-q3-09.pdf>

(11) Romney Marsh Times 27th Nov 2009

http://www.romneymarshtimes.com/2009/11/dungeness-real-nuclear-option.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+RomneyMarshTimes+%28Romney+Marsh+Times%29

(12) BBC 12th Nov 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/kent/8357651.stm>

2. Justification Consultation

Like the NPS Consultation, the Consultation on the Proposed Regulatory Justification decisions on new nuclear power stations (AP1000 and EPR) was launched on 9th November and closes on 22nd February 2010. (1)

Legislation on the Justification Process requires the “Justifying Authority” to decide whether a new class or type of practice resulting in exposure to ionising radiation is justified by its economic, social or other benefits in relation to the health detriment it may cause. Several respondents to earlier consultations have questioned whether the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change should be acting as the Justifying Authority given that he has already expressed support for new reactors.

The consultation document has a series of consultation questions. The two decision documents are both very similar and include a chapter on each of the identified detriments: health detriments; nuclear

waste; environmental detriments and safety and security risks. It also has a chapter on each of the identified benefits: carbon reduction benefits; security of supply benefits and economic benefits.

The Justification Regulations provide for a public inquiry or other hearing as one of a range of possible steps which the Secretary of State can take if he considers it expedient to do so. A number of respondents to the consultation on the Application requested a public inquiry, arguing that someone independent of the Government was needed to ensure an open and transparent decision. The Secretary of State is keeping this under review and does not propose to make a final decision until the end of the process.

At a seminar held in Glasgow in October, the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) heard from radiation consultant, Dr Ian Fairlie, about the findings of a report by the German government on cancer rates around nuclear sites in Germany. The German KiKK study reported a 1.6-fold increase in solid cancer risks and a 2.2-fold increase in leukaemia risks, among infants under 5 years old living within 5 km of all German nuclear power stations. These increased cancer rates were unequivocally linked to proximity to nuclear reactors. The study's findings support over 60 other studies worldwide on increased childhood cancer near nuclear power stations. The Justification decision documents point out that the Government's Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) is currently undertaking a further review of the incidence of childhood cancer around nuclear power stations, with particular reference to the KiKK study and expects the outcome of this review to be available at the start of 2010. (2)

NFLA has now learnt that COMARE's review will not be published until March 2010. It is important that consultees, such as NFLA, are given the opportunity to be fully informed about the findings of the COMARE review before submitting comments on the Justification consultation. The NFLA chair, George Regan, has therefore written to the Secretary of State to request the deadline for comments on the Justification Consultation is postponed until after the publication of the COMARE review of KiKK.

(1) http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/reg_just_cons/reg_just_cons.aspx

(2) See "Don't live near a nuclear station if you plan to get pregnant" NuClear News No.11
<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/nuclearnews/NuClearNewsNo11.pdf>

3. Radioactive Waste Confidence Attacked

The Government's confidence "*that a geological disposal facility could be built which would meet regulatory approval*" (1) has been attacked by four former members of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management, including the committee's first chairman. The four have written to Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Miliband, informing him of their concerns about the government's interpretation of radioactive waste management policy. They accuse him of ignoring the recommendation from CoRWM that the management of radioactive waste from new nuclear build should be subject to a separate process of examination. They say the claim that arrangements for the long term management of radioactive waste will exist are premature, and say that potential host communities need to be able to question the need for on-site, long term storage (up to 160 years) of new build waste during the IPC process. (2)

In addition to concerns raised by CoRWM, there are far more fundamental concerns that were originally raised at the 1990s Public Inquiry into the nuclear industry (Nirex) plans to initiate a nuclear waste repository programme. The proposal was rejected on generic scientific grounds (as well as for site specific reasons).

The Justification consultation quotes the ICRP Publication 77 which states that "*Waste management and disposal operations are an integral part of the practice generating the waste. It is wrong to regard them as a free standing practice that needs its own justification.*" (3) It also looks likely that, as things stand at the moment, the IPC will be simply told that the strategic question of whether nuclear waste should be disposed of in a geological repository has already been decided. Therefore as a result, the Government position is that any planning application for a geological disposal facility only needs to be examined with regard to local planning issues. Consequently, under the current Government proposals the disposal of spent fuel and nuclear waste from new reactors may not be subject to further public scrutiny after 22nd February 2010.

Meanwhile, the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership has been sending leaflets to all homes in the Allerdale and Copeland council areas. There will also be a series

of public meetings over the next three months. It is the first step in the process to help people decide whether the councils should put themselves forward as a potential host for a nuclear waste dump. (4)

- (1) Draft National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6) para 3.8.8
<http://data.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk/documents/npss/EN-6.pdf>
and para 4.6 of the Justification documents vol 2 &3.
http://www.decc.gov.uk/Media/viewfile.ashx?FilePath=Consultations\proposedregulatoryjustificationdecisionsnewnuclearpowerstations\1_20091203103124_e_@@_justificationpracticescondocvol2.pdf&filetype=4
- (2) Letter to Ed Miliband from Gordon Mackerron et al
http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/news/CoRWM1_Letter_201109.pdf
Press Release 20th Nov 2009
http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/news/Press_Notice_201109.pdf
- (3) Justification document Vol 2. para 4.1
- (4) BBC 15th Nov 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cumbria/8361247.stm>
The leaflet can be found here: <http://westcumbriamrws.org.uk/>

4. Nuclear Costs

Planning is not the only obstacle to a rebirth of nuclear power in Britain. The technology's torturous economics are, if anything, even trickier. The trouble is that nuclear-power plants are very expensive to build and the pay-off from that investment is slow. (1)

Apart from planning, three of the risks faced by developers — Construction, Power Price, and Operational — are so large and variable that individually they could each bring even the largest utility company to its knees financially. This makes new nuclear a unique investment proposition for utility companies. (2) In a report by an influential investment company - New Nuclear - the Economics Say No - Citigroup - say new nuclear can only be built with huge public subsidy, financing guarantees and minimum power prices.

- (1) The Economist 12th Nov 2009 http://www.economist.com/world/britain/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14859289&fsrc=rss
- (2) Citigroup 9th Nov 2009
<https://www.citigroupgeo.com/pdf/SEU27102.pdf>

5. Is Nuclear Power detracting from tackling climate change?

As well as health issues, the Justification Consultation documents deal with the contention that investing in new reactors will divert investment from other low carbon technologies and energy efficiency. The Government argues it is taking action to reduce carbon emissions on many different fronts including ensuring a diverse energy mix from different low carbon sources and investing in energy efficiency.

The Government's Low Carbon Transition Plan (1) expects 30% of UK electricity to come from renewables by 2020 and 10% from nuclear and coal with CCS. But only 2 of the 30% would be from small-scale renewables - whereas the solar PV industry alone expects to provide 12% across Europe. The difference between 2 and 12 would be enough to save us having to replace our nuclear reactors. (2) The Government's proposed Feed-in Tariff, or Clean Energy Cashback scheme has set at a rate which is inappropriately low.

Alan Simpson MP, who advised the Government on Feed-in Tariffs, says we should aim is to get much more than 2% of electricity from microgeneration. *"If they were five times as ambitious, it would only cost the average family another £2 a year"*. But, according to The Guardian, the nuclear industry has been lobbying against support for renewables because it undermines the case for new nuclear stations. (3)

Small-scale renewables could provide 6% of Britain's electricity needs – equivalent to more than two Sizewell B nuclear stations or the Drax coal-fired plant – by 2020 if the government improves the terms of the Feed-in Tariff, according to Friends of the Earth. (4) The environmental campaign group used figures obtained from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and prepared by consultants Poyry and Element Energy to show that introducing a more ambitious scheme than that currently proposed would add only an average £2.37 a year to household electricity bills over the next four years – just £1.20 a year more than the government is already proposing to add to fund the

scheme.

Alan Simpson MP has tabled an Early Day Motion calling for a much greater level of ambition for small-scale renewable electricity generation than currently proposed. (5)

(1) The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan.

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/publications/lc_trans_plan/lc_trans_plan.aspx

(2) "Microgeneration Fightback" NuClear News No.11 October 2009.

<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/nuclearnews/NuClearNewsNo11.pdf>

(3) Guardian 23rd Nov 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/nov/22/miliband-renewable-energy-plan-dashed-by-departmental-wrangling>

(4) Guardian 30th Nov 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/nov/30/renewable-energy-friends-of-earth>

Friends of the Earth Press Release 30th Nov 2009

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/feed_in_tariffs_30112009.html

(5) EDM No.276 <http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=39819&SESSION=903>

6. Generating Failure

Replacing the UK's nuclear reactors will only save around 4% of our carbon emissions, (1) but could crowd out investment in renewables and undermine energy efficiency. (2) The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) challenges the idea this 4% is not worth bothering with, and says it has yet to see any evidence of 'nuclear crowding' - it promotes renewables, energy efficiency and nuclear.

Now Environment Illinois a US citizen-based environmental advocacy organization has produced a report which shows that, far from a solution to global warming, nuclear power will actually set America back in the race to reduce carbon emissions. (3) The up-front capital investment required to build 100 new nuclear reactors, could prevent twice as much pollution over the next 20 years if invested in energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy instead, says the report. Taking into account the ongoing costs of running the nuclear plants, a clean energy path would deliver as much as five times more progress for the money.

"New nuclear power investments would actually worsen climate change because the money spent on nuclear reactors would not be available for solutions that fight it faster and at lower cost," said Peter Bradford, a former U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner. "Counting on new nuclear reactors as a climate change solution is no more sensible than counting on an un-built dam to create a lake to fight a nearby forest fire."

Linda Gunter, spokesperson for Beyond Nuclear says "Renewables and energy efficiency will be completely strangled by investing in nuclear power, and will eliminate those opportunities ... with each nuclear plant taking between six to ten years to start operating - and costs running between \$12-\$25 billion each for ratepayers, investors or taxpayers - "we've got a finite amount of time to face this [global warming]," she says. (4)

(1) See for example New Nuclear Monitor, No. 8. May 2005. <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/nuclearmonitor/c4h.pdf>

(2) Building New Reactors Damages Attempts to Tackle Climate Change, No2NuclearPower Briefing, June 2009 <http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/reports/NewNuclearDamagesClimate.pdf>

(3) Generating Failure: How Building Nuclear Plants Would set America back in the Race against Global Warming. Environment Illinois 17th Nov 2009.

<http://www.environmentillinois.org/uploads/c4/6b/c46b345b95dd70df2c8341d397e21866/Generating-Failure---Environment-Illinois---Web.pdf>

(4) Truthout 29th Nov 2009

<http://www.truthout.org/1129091>

7. Reactor Problems

Nuclear safety regulators from three countries – the UK, France and Finland, have sent a joint letter to Areva asking them to make improvements to the initial EPR design. The regulators' Joint Statement (1) says all three have raised problems regarding the EPR Control and Instrumentation (C&I) systems. The issue concerns the adequacy of the safety systems that maintain control if the EPR nuclear reactor goes outside normal conditions and their independence from the control systems used to operate the

plant under normal conditions.

This is just the latest in a series of embarrassing setbacks that have already cost Areva in Finland alone, where one of the very first EPRs is being assembled, about 3.2bn euros in provisions so far. The Financial Times reported that France was trying to avert a crisis of confidence over its EPR reactor. (2) An independent expert, commissioned by Greenpeace, has concluded the EPR design suffers from serious safety flaws. (3) It fails to adequately separate different reactor control systems. Greenpeace is calling on the Finnish and French governments to immediately halt work at the EPR construction sites in Olkiluoto and Flamanville. According to Dr. Helmut Hirsch the flaws in the reactor safety systems *“in the worst case, can lead to a minor incident developing into a severe accident.”* (4)

Interim assessment reports for the two reactor designs being considered for construction in the UK have been published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). (5) The HSE said both designs – the EPR and AP1000 - could be suitable for construction on licensed sites in the UK once satisfactory progress is made in a number of technical areas. Kevin Allars, HSE’s Director of New Build GDA said: *“Although we have made good progress, initial resource shortages in some technical areas and insufficient information from the design companies in others, has limited the extent of assessment sampling that we have been able to do. There is still a significant amount of detailed assessment work for us to do.”*

However, he added: *“If they aren’t acceptable, or there are sufficient doubts in our mind whether they should be built in this country, then we will not issue a design acceptance confirmation. So far we don’t have a complete design yet from either . . . So we cannot rule it out.”* (6)

The Guardian said the HSE has thrown the Government’s energy plans into chaos. (7) It said the HSE’s report had expressed “significant concerns” about the lack of separation between the safety protection and control systems on the EPR reactor design. The HSE has also raised a number of issues with EDF and Areva relating to the structural integrity of the EPR and it concludes: *“It is too early to say whether they can be resolved solely with additional safety case changes or whether they may result in design modifications being necessary.”*

The design put forward by Westinghouse is also criticised, with the HSE saying the safety case on internal hazards has “significant shortfalls”. It criticises the company for a “lack of detailed claims and arguments” to support various assertions, while questioning aspects of the civil and mechanical engineering plans as well as the structural integrity and “human factors”.

NuClear News No.12 reported that the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission had sent a key component of the Westinghouse AP1000 back to the drawing board. (8) The Safety Shield Building – the outer structure surrounding the AP1000 containment - does not meet “fundamental engineering standards” with respect to design basis loads. (9) It has several functions, including holding a large tank of water so that in the event of an accident it can be dribbled over the surface of the steel containment dome. It is intended to protect the reactor from severe weather including tornado-hurled projectiles, hurricanes, earthquakes and air crashes. It also adds shielding in the event of a severe accident. But the NRC was not convinced the Safety Shield Building would protect the reactor from “external” events like earthquakes, tornadoes and high winds. (10)

Allars said: *“I am independent of government, and independent of industry and I will do what I need to protect society from any dangers of nuclear power. I will only be in a position to agree a generic design assessment if I get the right information [in future] to do that”.*

In a letter to The Guardian, Allars said *“It is wrong to say that the designs for the proposed new nuclear stations in this country are unsafe. This is not what our reports say ... we have said in the reports that we have so far not identified any show-stoppers that would preclude construction and operation in the UK [but] we still need more information from the design companies to reach a meaningful conclusion. However, subject to the full co-operation of the design companies, I remain confident that we can complete the assessment by our target date of June 2011”.* (11)

(1) Joint Regulatory Statement 22nd Oct 2009 http://www.stuk.fi/stuk/tiedotteet/sv_FI/news_571/_files/82389010005557285/default/epr_stuk_asn_ja_hse_englanniksi.pdf

(2) FT 4th November 2009

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/96e7e26c-c8e3-11de-8f9d-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1

(3) Greenpeace International Press Statement 20th Nov 2009 <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/press/releases/nuclear-expert-warns-of-safety>

(4) Statement by Dr Helmut Hirsch. <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/statement-on-the-separation-of.pdf>

(5) HSE Press Release 27th November 2009 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/press/2009/e09110.htm>

(6) New Statesman 27th Nov 2009 <http://www.newstatesman.com/2009/11/reactor-safety-french-nuclear?>

(7) Guardian 27th November 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/27/nuclear-power-reactor-design>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/nov/27/nuclear-reactors-contain-safety-flaws>

(8) "Reactor Design Problems" NuClear News No.12 November 2009

<http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/nuclearnews/NuClearNewsNo12.pdf>

(9) See NRC Press Release 15th October 2009. <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/news/2009/09-173.html>

(10) New York Times 16th Oct 2009

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/16/science/earth/16nuke.html?_r=2

(11) Guardian 28th November 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/28/nuclear-power-safety-regulator>

8. Zero Carbon by 2030

Mark Z Jacobson and Mark A Delucchi, writing in the November edition of Scientific American, describe how, by 2030, the world could shift to a virtually zero carbon energy system. Their model is based only on existing technology that can already be applied on a large scale, and excludes nuclear power and fossil fuels. It calls for, globally, the building of 3.8m large wind turbines (wind being 25 times more carbon efficient than nuclear power), 90,000 solar plants and a combination of geothermal, tidal and rooftop solar-PV installations globally. Andrew Simms of the New Economic Foundation writing in *The Guardian* says if the world can make 73 million cars and trucks every year surely a few million wind turbines and solar plants won't be a problem. People forget, he says, the effort it took to get us hooked on oil in the first place. As Jacobson and Delucchi point out, starting in 1956 the US interstate highway system managed to build 47,000 miles of highway in just over three decades, "changing commerce and society". (2)

For more scenarios like this see: <http://www.mng.org.uk/gh/scenarios.htm>

(1) Mark Z Jacobson and Mark A Delucchi, A Plan to Power 100 per cent of the Planet with Renewables. Scientific American November 2009. <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=a-path-to-sustainable-energy-by-2030>

(2) Guardian 30th November 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cif-green/2009/nov/30/84-months-counting-wind-solar>

9. Solar Costs

By the end of 2009, there will have been a 50% drop in the lifetime cost per kWh (before subsidies) of solar power, and a 10% reduction in the cost of other sources of renewable energy compared to the end of 2008. This prediction is a result of detailed quarterly research by New Energy Finance. So, it looks like solar PV is going to become competitive sooner than expected. (1)

According to the independent EU Energy Institute, tests show that 90% of existing solar panels last for 30 years, rather than the predicted 20 years. This brings down the lifetime cost. The institute says the panels are such a good long-term investment that banks should offer mortgages on them like they do on homes. Because of feed-in tariff schemes elsewhere, in Germany, Italy and Spain, solar panels are now manufactured in volume - that brings down costs, and China's big solar domestic programme, along with schemes in the US and India, will keep prices falling. (2)

The solar energy sector has the potential be worth £27bn, create thousands of jobs, slash carbon emissions and help to address fuel poverty. "The government needs to turn this vision into a reality", says Paul Roche, Director of SIG Sustainable Solutions. (3) Government procrastination over the feed-in tariff levels continues to deny the UK economy a massive opportunity. Solar energy is one of the most viable small-scale energy generation methods, but political backing is essential for small-scale renewables to become commonplace. (4)

- (1) Climate Progress 25th Nov 2009
http://climateprogress.org/2009/11/25/new-energy-finance-solar-power-pv-price-drop/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+climateprogress%2FICrX+%28Climate+Progress%29
- (2) BBC 30th Nov 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8386460.stm>
- (3) See <http://www.evee.co.uk/default.asp>
- (4) Guardian 28th Nov 2009
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/nov/28/copenhagen-solar-power-feedin-tariffs>

10. Micro Progress

November has proved to be a month of significant progress for microgeneration. First there was Royal Assent for The Green Energy Bill, which requires the government to conduct a root and branch overhaul of Microgeneration policy in the UK, as well as allowing air source heat pumps and micro-wind turbines (below a certain size and provided they are quiet) to be installed on the majority of domestic dwellings without planning permission. (1)

A set of proposals which will feed into the government review of microgeneration policy has been unveiled by the Micropower Council. The Micropower Manifesto proposes four key objectives as a framework for the future micropower strategy required within 12 months by the Green Energy Act. These are (a) cohesive financial support (b) comprehensive retro-fitting of microgeneration technologies into existing building stock (c) clear information for consumers on the options and help available, and (d) credible career options throughout the industry. (2)

Dave Sowden, chief executive of the Micropower Council said the Microgeneration Manifesto marked a “*turning point for the sector*” and paved the way for “*a microgeneration mass market breakthrough.*”

- (1) Smart Energy Press Release 23rd Nov 2009
http://www.smartenergy.co.uk/Press_releases.html?action=FullStory&PressID=42
- (2) Microgeneration Manifesto. <http://www.micropower.co.uk/publications/Microgen-Manifesto.pdf>

11. Fuel Poverty: North & South

Around 1.8 million solar panels will be needed to help Scotland meet the targets set out in the Climate Change Scotland Act, according to a study published by the Association for the Conservation of Energy and Eaga Scotland. Over 1.5 million efficient boilers, 2.2 million draft-proofing strips and 1.5 million loft insulation packages, will also be required as well as smaller numbers of wood-burning stoves and insulation for solid walls. The combined cost of the measures is estimated as £13.4bn in addition to current investment plans. (1) Simon Kemp from EAGA said: “*This is hugely encouraging as we can now quantify the fantastic potential impact the Climate Change Act could have on the Scottish economy.*” (2)

Meanwhile WWF Scotland has called on the Scottish Government to rethink its plans to eliminate fuel poverty. The government should drop its means-tested approach in favour of a street-by-street home refurbishment scheme, says the Perthshire-based environment group. Figures published in November show there are now 600,000 families living in fuel poverty in Scotland, despite the government’s Energy Assistance Package which is designed to help reduce fuel bills and improve the energy efficiency of homes, by using benefits and tax credit checks to identify those most at risk of fuel poverty. (3) But, in a joint report with the Ayrshire-based Energy Agency, WWF Scotland shows that the non means-tested approach is “highly successful” in reducing the cost of energy as well as lowering the country’s carbon emissions. (4)

Meanwhile, according to Eaga in England and Wales, there are tens of thousands of vulnerable households unable to get help with insulation costs this winter because the Government’s fuel poverty programme has run out of money. Last week, Eaga, the company which runs the Warm Front programme, warned households who had applied for help that they would have to wait close to six months. The company, which said the scheme had seen very high levels of demand, also wrote to local insulation suppliers telling them not to book any more work until January. It said it was having to spread the work out until March to make sure funding for the current financial year lasts. Funding next year has also been halved. Unless the government increases funding for the current financial year in next week’s pre-budget report, waiting times will grow. (5)

The number of deaths in England and Wales, during December, January and February last winter, were up almost 50% on the previous year to 36,700, sending an extra 10,000 pensioners to early graves. There are now some 6.6 million households in England and Wales suffering from fuel poverty. National Energy Action warns that a lethal combination of low incomes, high bills and poor insulation continues to pose a serious threat to the health of millions of people. Dot Gibson, general secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention, said: "Since 1997, we have lost over 260,000 pensioners during the winter because of cold-related illnesses, yet the Government seems incapable of acting". (6)

Ironically the length of the insulation waiting list emerged on the same day the Department for Business Innovation and Skills trailed the fact that Lord Mandelson and Alistair Darling would soon announce a "substantial Government investment in civil nuclear manufacturing" (7) Strange, given that the Government is supposed to be eliminating fuel poverty, but NOT subsidizing the nuclear industry.

(1) Warm Home, Green Jobs: The economic impacts of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act in the residential sector, October 2009 [http://www.ukace.org/publications/ACE%20Research%20\(2009-10\)%20-%20Warm%20Homes,%20Green%20Jobs%20\[briefing\].pdf](http://www.ukace.org/publications/ACE%20Research%20(2009-10)%20-%20Warm%20Homes,%20Green%20Jobs%20[briefing].pdf)

(2) New Energy Focus 29th October 2009

http://www.newenergyfocus.com/do/ecco/view_item?listid=1&listcatid=32&listitemid=3160§ion=Wind

(3) WWF Scotland Press Release 30th November 2009. http://www.wwfscotland.org.uk/what_we_do/latest_wwf_scotland_news.cfm?3498/Energy-bills-Urgent-re-think-called-for

(4) Achieving our Potential: an analysis of area-based approaches to improving energy efficiency in Scotland's homes. WWF Scotland and Energy Agency, November 2009 http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/report_v_5.pdf

(5) Guardian 2nd Dec 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/dec/02/fuel-poverty-warm-front>

(6) Independent 25th Nov 2009

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fuel-bills-blamed-for-50-rise-in-winter-deaths-1826917.html>

(7) Dept for Business Innovation & Skills Dept 2nd Dec 2009

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/detail.aspx?ReleaseID=409191&NewsAreaID=2&HUserID=891,768,890,852,781,684,710,705,765,674,677,767,684,762,718,674,708,683,706,718,674&ClientID=-1>

12. View on the Ground

- EDF is seeking a buyer for its Bradwell site. It says it wants to concentrate its resources on Hinkley Point and Sizewell. (1)

Around 700 people attended a meeting organised by the Save Our Valley campaign which aims to oppose proposals to build a new power line through North Somerset from Hinkley Point. (2) The campaign has already attracted the support of Carol Vorderman (3)

- Opposition is growing to plans for a new reactor at Oldbury partly because of the four huge cooling towers planned. People are really concerned about the whole scale of the thing and especially the height of the towers - measuring between 70 and 200 metres high. (4)
- The Braystones site, about 3.5km from Sellafield near Egremont, was, like many other parts of Cumbria, flooded during November. Residents say this has reinforced their opposition to a new reactor being built. Particularly worrying was the fact that the road between Beckermest and Braystones was flooded to a depth of six feet. (5)
- The other green field site on the list at Kirksanton near Millon in Cumbria is home to Britain's largest colony of natterjack toads – a rare and highly protected species –according to Cumbria Wildlife Trust. (6)
- British Energy is consulting on proposals to build a new dry storage facility to manage Sizewell's spent fuel from 2015, when the existing fuel storage pond is due to reach full capacity. (7)

(1) Maldon Standard 27th Nov 2009. http://www.maldonandburnhamstandard.co.uk/news/localnews/4764786.Bradwell_land_to_be_sold_again/

(2) BBC 27th Nov 2009

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/somerset/8382223.stm>

(3) Telegraph 1st Dec 2009

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/6692258/Carol-Vorderman-backs-power-line-campaign.html>

(4) Gloucestershire Gazette 26th Nov 2009

http://www.gazetteseries.co.uk/news/4757633.Opposition_grows_to_nuclear_power_station_plans/

(5) Whitehaven News 26th Nov 2009

http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/news/tide_turns_on_potential_site_for_nuke_plant_1_641934?referrerPath=news

(6) Telegraph 26th Nov 2009

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthcomment/geoffrey-lean/6617454/Will-the-natterjack-toads-go-nuclear.html>

Whitehaven News 18th Nov 2009

http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/news/wildlife_group_worried_about_effect_of_n_sites_1_638094?referrerPath=news

(7) East Anglian Daily Times 7th Nov 2009

<http://www.eadt.co.uk/content/eadt/news/story.aspx?brand=EADOnline&category=News&tBrand=EADOnline&tCategory=xDefault&itemid=IPED06+Nov+2009+20%3A57%3A15%3A123>

13. Uranium Mining

Greenpeace has found dangerous levels of contamination in the streets of Akokan – a town in Niger – near uranium mines operated by Areva. What is even more disturbing is that earlier this year AREVA claimed those same streets were safe. (1)

The story begins in 2003 when radioactive contamination was found in towns close to Niger's uranium mines by the independent French laboratory CRIIRAD and local NGO Aghir In'Man. In 2007 CRIIRAD found dangerous levels of radiation levels near the hospital in the mining village of Akokan. The mine operator, French nuclear giant AREVA, admitted to widespread contamination in the village. In October of that year, the mining company and AREVA subsidiary COMINAK reported the contamination had been addressed. In September 2009 AREVA confirmed to CRIIRAD that a clean up had been done and the streets made safe. It is clear that this is not true. (2)

(1) Greenpeace International Briefing November 2009

<http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/briefing-radioactivity-in-ak.pdf>

(2) Greenpeace Nuclear Reaction 27th Nov 2009

http://weblog.greenpeace.org/nuclear-reaction/2009/11/areva_nuclear_scandal_greenpea.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+nuclearreaction-greenpeace+%28Nuclear+Reaction+-+a+Greenpeace+blog%29

14. Waste Transport

More than ten years later than originally scheduled, the first shipment of vitrified High Level Waste (HLW) is expected to be shipped from Sellafield to Japan probably starting in January 2010, and arriving in Japan by March. It is likely that the HLW, loaded into transport containers, will be sent from Sellafield to Barrow docks by rail and loaded onto the Pacific Sandpiper for the 25,000km voyage to Japan. Contrary to some media reports there are no plans to use an armed ship.

CORE Briefing 26th Nov 2009

<http://www.corecumbria.co.uk/newsapp/pressreleases/pressmain.asp?StrNewsID=272>