



NuClear News
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1. Great British refurbishment?

A long-awaited set of three government consultations on energy efficiency, published on 12th February, have proved to be disappointing, with delay being the order of the day. (1)

The Heat and Energy Saving Strategy (HESS) sets out the need to reduce household carbon emissions to almost zero, in order for the UK to achieve its ambitious targets. It plans for reductions from households of a third by 2020, and by 2030 aims is for whole-house improvements to be available to every householder. Unfortunately, while the targets are ambitious, the document fails spell out a coherent strategy for achieving them. There are insufficient measures such as using the Energy Performance Certificate System or council tax and stamp duty rebates to provide real incentives. And much of what is planned won't start until 2013. Friends of the Earth says targets won't be achieved if we wait four years to begin. (2)

Two other consultations cover a proposal to increase the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT – the scheme under which energy companies offer subsidised energy-efficiency measures) by 20 per cent, and a new Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) to run in parallel with CERT to provide whole-house help to around 90,000 homes in low-income areas.

The HESS will run from 2013 to 2020, and cover non-residential buildings as well. The objective is to deliver “whole house” improvements to 7m homes by 2020. But the programme will start very slowly and build up to a rate of 1.8m homes per year towards the end of next decade. It envisages retaining the “supplier obligation”, but integrating it into a single national programme. All lofts and cavity walls should be insulated by 2015 where it is practical to do so. (3)

The more difficult renewable energy work seems to be getting delayed in favour of cheaper energy efficiency measures. Significantly, the consultation has excluded any in-depth analysis of a proposed Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), which ministers now say is going to be consulted on later in the year, but not introduced until 2011. This should provide incentives for renewable heat systems such as solar water heating and biomass boilers. (4) The Country Land and Business Association reacted with shock and disappointment to this delay. It points out that one and a half million fossil fuelled boilers are installed every year, designed to last between 15 and 20 years, so effectively up to 4 million households will be miss out. (5)

Philip Wolfe, director general of the Renewable Energy Association urged the government to act quickly on the RHI, because renewable heat is expected to meet a third of the EU renewables target. (6) He also expressed concern about the funding gap caused by the end of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme in June 2010 – the grant scheme for microgeneration – at least six months before RHI is introduced, although electricity feed-in tariffs start in April 2010. (7) The Micro Power Council wants to know how the Government can guarantee the capital required to pay for this strategy, and where it will find the skilled workforce needed to implement it. (8)

Although the proposals are welcome, it is disappointing that many of the measures are not beginning until 2013, and then getting off to a slow start and building up towards the end of next decade. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion the Government wants to get the nuclear programme started before it turns its attention to implementing a long overdue energy efficiency and microgeneration strategy.

The consultations close on 8th May 2009.

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<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=392487&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=False>
- (2) Friends of the Earth Press Release, February 12, 2009. http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/green_homes_12022009.html
- (3) Analysis: Affordability the watchword in UK Heat Strategy, New Energy Focus, February 13, 2009. http://www.newenergyfocus.com/do/ecco.py/view_item?listid=1&listcatid=32&listitemid=2252
- (4) Efficiency emphasis in Government's long term heat plans. New Energy Focus, February 13, 2009 http://www.newenergyfocus.com/do/ecco.py/view_item?listid=1&listcatid=32&listitemid=2251
- (5) Government timetable slip means fossil fuels will trump renewable energy says CLA, Farming UK February 25, 2009
<http://www.farminguk.com/news/Government-timetable-slip-means-fossil-fuels-will-trump-renewable-energy,-says-CLA12124.asp>
- (6) Measures on renewable heat welcomed. DEA Direct, February 13, 2009
<http://www.deadirect.co.uk/News/Heat-and-Hot-Water-Solutions/February-2009/Measures-on-renewable-heat-welcomed?id=1470>
- (7) Low Carbon Buildings Programme: Grants for Microgeneration, BERR. <http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/home/>
- (8) Micropower Council response to the Government's Heat and Energy Strategy. Press Release February 12, 2009. <http://www.micropower.co.uk/news/mpc-hess-response-120209.pdf>
See also Micropower Council Briefing: <http://www.micropower.co.uk/news/home-energy-efficiency-consultations-briefing120209.pdf>

2. Diverting attention from people power.

A Finnish Government climate policy advisor has admitted that Finland has "*concentrated so much on nuclear [that it has] lost sight of everything else.*" (1) Finland's former environment minister, Satu Hassi MEP, says once the decision was made to build a new reactor, the country lost interest in alternative energy sources. (2) After falling in 2001 and 2002, Finland's carbon emissions have been rising. Measures promised in the climate report of 2001 have not been implemented. (3) Finland's new reactor is now three years late and about 50% over budget. (4)

The delay to the UK's Heat and Energy Strategy is just one more piece of bad news which makes it difficult to avoid the conclusion the same is happening in the UK. Another example is the Warm Homes Act, certain sections of which have been left unimplemented, because, according to ministers, they haven't got the funding, even though expenses were made available by statute within the Act itself. (5) Big centralized projects will not succeed in tackling climate change. What Governments should be doing is focusing on energy efficiency and renewables and empowering citizens by promoting more decentralized solutions.

Sir Jonathon Porritt, chair of the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) warned in 2006 that nuclear power was already seriously diverting attention from the hard decisions required to solve the UK's energy challenges. (6) The SDC says a new nuclear programme gives out the wrong signal to consumers and businesses, implying that a major technological fix is all that's required, weakening the urgent action needed on energy efficiency. A new reactor programme requires "*a substantial slice of political leadership ... political attention would shift, and in all likelihood undermine efforts to pursue a strategy based on energy efficiency, renewables and more CHP.*" (7)

Jeremy Leggett of Solar Century believes the focus on nuclear is more deliberate. He was a member of the Renewables Advisory Board established in November 2002 to advise ministers on how to implement a plan, based on renewables and energy efficiency. By September 2003 the board's industry members were already troubled by slow progress and issued a statement of concern. Leggett says he was warned that DTI officials would deliberately go slowly, to keep hopes for nuclear alive and renewables would be teed up to fail. The slow-motion UK treatment of renewables since then, while renewables markets abroad have grown explosively, now makes it clear they were successful. (8)

Following the 'credit crunch', and Government promises to lead the world out of the economic slump by launching a Green New Deal, you might expect things to improve. The crises of climate change and recession come together and require the same solution: a global green stimulus. Gordon Brown has shown leadership on the need for a global stimulus, but in his case the green part looks like an afterthought, tacked on for

presentational purposes. This has the makings of a terrible missed opportunity. (9)

Energy conservation, renewable energy and low-carbon technology are a huge growth area for the future, but Britain has already missed the start of the race, according to a study by the HSBC Bank which puts Britain near the bottom of the international league. (10) The report reveals that Britain has, so far, devoted only \$2.1bn (£1.5bn) to a green stimulus, less than a third of France's \$7.2bn and less than a sixth of Germany's \$13.8bn. China's spending, at \$221.3bn, is more than 110 times that of the UK. Only 6% of Britain's stimulus packages is devoted to green measures compared with 81 per cent in South Korea.

The experts tasked with delivering Europe's green energy revolution have said that a lack of political leadership is the biggest single obstacle in meeting targets for renewable power. (11) The engineers highlighted the example of feed-in tariffs, which pay renewable electricity generators a guaranteed premium price. While these tariffs have accelerated the introduction of solar technology in Germany and wave power in Portugal, the same is not true for the UK.

Leonie Green from the Renewable Energy Association told Radio 4's "You and Yours" that we don't have the right framework to support people who want to do the right thing where renewables are concerned. *"We've pursued very much a top down approach to renewable energy and in a lot of countries which are very successful on renewable energy it's a bottom up approach where you have householders, private investors (and) municipal energy companies investing. 90% of the investment in renewables in Germany comes from those sectors. All the evidence is that a more low carbon system is a far more decentralised system."*

The battle against climate change can only be won *"in the hands of the many, not the few"*, according to Jacqueline McGlade, head of the European Environment Agency (EEA), who warned the current approach left the public sidelined as "silent observers". Political and business leaders will not be able to tackle the problem without help from ordinary people. We need to empower citizens to engage actively in improving their own environment. (12)

Meanwhile, former Environment Minister, Elliot Morley, now chair of the new energy and climate change select committee says government squabbling has derailed efforts to reduce UK carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by 2010 - a key Labour target from the 1997 manifesto which ministers have admitted they will miss. He asks why on earth we are still building hospitals without combined heat and power, for example. It boils down to tensions between different government departments which has undermined moves to cut carbon. He is "sceptical" that nuclear can deliver more power than renewables for the same cost. (13)

(1) Blake, M. Bad Reactors: Rethinking your opposition to nuclear power? Rethink again. Washington Monthly Jan/Feb 2009 <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2009/0901.blake.html>

(2) Harding, L. Caught between global warming and an energy crisis, Blair looks north for answers. Guardian April 14, 2006 <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/green/story/0,,1753914,00.html>

(3)) Satu Hassi MEP, Finnish Environment Minister 1999 – 2002, Deciding on Nuclear, UK Parliamentary and Sustainable Energy Group (PRASEG) briefing November 2005, <http://www.satuhassi.net/puheet/praseg.pdf> See also "Finland: How Kyoto was used as an argument and what happened afterwards" October 18, 2005, Satu Hassi MEP, <http://www.satuhassi.net/puheet/kyoto181005.htm>

(4) Gow, D. New-generation Finnish nuclear reactor hit by fourth delay. Guardian October 18, 2008 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/oct/18/nuclearpower>

(5) Hugh Muir's Diary, Guardian, February 24, 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/feb/24/hugh-muir-diary>

(6) Porritt, J. Nuclear is the soft solution to tackling climate change, Guardian, July 5, 2006 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2006/jul/05/comment.guardiansocietysupplement1>

(7) Is nuclear the answer? Sustainable Development Commission, March 2006 <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/IsNuclearTheAnswer.pdf>

(8) Leggett, J. Yes Minister, Nuclear's best. Guardian, January 3, 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/jan/03/politics.greenpolitics>

(9) Bridging the green gap. Independent on Sunday 1st March 2009 <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/leading-articles/leading-article-bridging-the-green-gap-1634749.html>

(10) Lean, G. Britain fails to deliver on pledge to lead world to green recovery. Independent on Sunday March 1, 2009 <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/britain-fails-to-deliver-on-pledge-to-lead-world-to-green-recovery-1634773.html>

(11) Jha, A. Lack of political will slowing Europe's renewables revolution, Guardian, November 5, 2008 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/nov/05/climatechange-carboncapturestorage>

(12) Kinver, M. Climate curbs need people power, BBC February 17, 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7892992.stm>

(13) Adam, D. Squabbling derails greenhouse gas efforts says ex-Minister. Guardian, February 23, 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/feb/23/greenhouse-gas-carbon-emissions>

3. Nuclear Assault on Scotland

A pro-nuclear assault on the Scottish Government's anti-nuclear policy has led to questions about the motives of the UK Government. There are plenty of sites in England for new reactors without having to build any in Scotland. It seems the nuclear industry and the UK Government cannot tolerate a devolved administration prepared to hold out against nuclear expansion plans. (1) Labour has clearly decided nuclear is a stick it can use to beat the Scottish National Party (SNP). (2)

It was ironic the UK Scottish Minister, Jim Murphy, launched his attack on the same day 10 offshore wind power sites were announced which at peak output will produce three times the capacity of Scotland's nuclear stations, enough to meet all of Scotland's electricity demand. Murphy was speaking at a conference of nuclear spin doctors in Edinburgh. Meanwhile, First Minister, Alex Salmond, was opening the new offices of a marine renewable company - the latest renewable company to base its operations in Scotland. Perhaps there is a fear Scotland could provide an example of how to develop a non-nuclear energy strategy. (3)

Murphy attacked the Scottish Government for being at odds with what he claimed was an increasing pro-nuclear consensus across Europe, and accused Scottish ministers of failing to come up with a sophisticated argument against nuclear power. He said without new nuclear plant Scotland may depend on electricity imported from across the border in peak periods: "Scottish self-reliance without new nuclear generation is imaginary." (4)

Former Labour MP, Lord O'Neil, chair of the UK Nuclear Industry Association, claimed recent opinion polls showed increasing support for nuclear amongst Scottish citizens. (5) Of course, as opinion pollsters admit, support for nuclear power is based on its perceived benefits in tackling climate change and energy security. (6)

UK Energy Minister, Mike O'Brien, had earlier accused the Scottish Government of "turning up its nose" at thousands of highly paid high-skilled jobs, claiming each new reactor would create around 9,000 jobs during construction. (7) The Scottish Government, on the other hand, estimates renewable energy can create at least 16,000 jobs over the next decade. In an echo of Labour's Trade and Industry Secretary in 2003, it said: "It would be foolish, misguided and plain wrong to turn our back on those possibilities or sacrifice them in pursuit of dangerous and unnecessary new nuclear power stations." Alex Salmond said: "Anything you invest - and it will be billions in nuclear power - is billions taken away from clean technology and in renewable technology."

The Scottish Parliament, too, has made clear it does not wish to see new reactors in Scotland. (8) It would be wrong to assume that, had the SNP not won the last election the position would be any different. Several members of the Labour Party in Holyrood have made their opposition known, and Labour would almost certainly have had to go into a coalition with the anti-nuclear Liberal Democrats to form an administration.

John Robertson, a Glasgow Labour MP, and chair of the All Party Nuclear Energy Group (9) in the House of Commons, has been campaigning for a change in the devolution settlement to prevent the Scottish Government from blocking new reactors. (10) Acting as secretary to the group of Scottish Labour MPs Robertson says planning over energy should be brought back to the UK level. Apparently many Labour MSPs, however, were of the opinion that removing powers from Holyrood would be 'bad politics'. (11) In the event, the MSPs won the fight and Scottish Labour will not recommend any changes to Scottish Government powers. (12)

Meanwhile, the First Minister's Council of Economic Adviser's (CEA) First Annual Report recommended the Scottish Government commission an independent assessment of energy options open to Scotland. (13) The CEA said achieving an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 will be difficult if reactors are not replaced. The Council was apparently divided on the nuclear issue so the request for an independent study was a compromise. (14) The Scottish Government accepted the CEA recommendation. (15) Some in the nuclear industry saw this as a victory, but Alex Salmond insists the independent study will vindicate his position. (16)

A briefing on alternatives to new reactors in Scotland is available here: http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/reports/alternatives_in_Scotland.pdf

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(2) Q&A: Dr Richard Dixon on Nuclear Energy, Scotsman, February, 18 2009 <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/QA-Dr-Richard-Dixon-on.4989965.jp>

(3) Philip, A. War of words over nuclear power north of the border. Press and Journal, February 16, 2009. <http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/1079694?UserKey>

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(5) UK Government to underline its support for new nuclear at Scottish Conference, Foratom and NIA Press

Release, February 10, 2009. http://www.foratom.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=3091&Itemid=636

(6) Knight, R. Public Attitudes to Nuclear Power, December 2008. <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/public-attitudes-to-nuclear-energy-2008.ashx>

Also see "Support around nuclear sites is fragile" NuClear News No.1 <http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/nuclearnews/NuClearNewsNo1.pdf>

(7) Macdonell, H. 'Axing Nuclear will force out Skilled Jobs, Scotsman, February 10, 2009 <http://news.scotsman.com/latestnews/39Axing-nuclear-will-force-out.4962650.jp>

(8) Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Burning Question, Scotsman, February 10, 2009 <http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/comment/Burning-Issue.4962605.jp>

(9) <http://www.allparty-nuclear.org.uk/>

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(11) Barnes, E. Labour split as MPs urge cut in Holyrood powers. Scotland on Sunday February 8th 2009. <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland/Labour--split-as-MPs.4958481.jp>

(12) Barnes, E. Labour MSPs win battle for Holyrood powers. Scotland on Sunday, February 22, 2009. <http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/latestnews/Labour-MSPs-win-battle-for.5004389.jp>

(13) First Annual Report of the Scottish Council of Economic Advisors, December 2008 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/252027/0073770.pdf>

(14) Jones, P. Salmond must consider nuclear option. Times, December 14, 2008. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/scotland/article5342388.ece>

(15) Scottish Government Response to the First Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisors. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/257232/0076373.pdf>

(16) Maddox, D. Independent study on nuclear power needs. Scotsman 16th Jan 2009 <http://news.scotsman.com/politics/Independent-study-on-nuclear-power.4883378.jp>

4. Killing Jobs

It was probably inevitable that jobs would be added to climate change and energy security as an argument in favour of new reactors now unemployment is on the rise again. But if Mike O'Brien had done a Google search on nuclear power station jobs, he would have found a very different set of figures to the 9,000 construction and 1,000 operational jobs he has been proclaiming. As just one example, EDF, the company most likely to be involved in new-build in this country, has said its plans for the UK "could create approximately 350 direct permanent jobs and over 2,000 temporary jobs during the peak construction period" for each power station. Another example is given for EDF's station currently under construction in Finland where "around 600 (construction) people work at the site, with up to 3,000 during peak times". (1)

The Department of Energy and Climate Change says the 10,000 jobs includes jobs at the nuclear reactors, off site jobs for corporate, business, maintenance functions, construction jobs, and jobs in the engineering and construction supply chain. Crucially the figure is for a twin reactor station, and not all sites are suitable for two reactors. (2) So the Government has been rather over-egging it, especially when you consider that John Hutton told the UNITE conference on 28 March 2008, that up to 100,000 new skilled jobs could be created by a new nuclear programme. This figure is based on a scenario which involves the construction of twenty new reactors – up to 32GW. (3)

As a capital intensive industry, nuclear power is not a very efficient way of creating jobs. It produces around 75 jobs per year per TWh of power, whereas wind power produces 918 – 2,400 per year per TWh. And due to technological changes, any new nuclear power stations would employ fewer people than existing plants. (4)

It gets worse. Peter Bradford, former member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, argues that nuclear power could actually kill jobs. The capital markets are not swimming in credit. If you use billions for nuclear construction you may well suck up money that might be otherwise be available for, say, wind projects that could create far more jobs per pound spent. (5)

(1) Letter from Martin Forwood to the Whitehaven News February 12, 2009. http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/opinion/you_say/1.511949

(2) Response from DECC to FoI request from Martin Forwood.

(3) Hansard 21st April 2008. Column 1467W <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080421/text/80421w0096.htm#08042337000028>

(4) Goldemberg, J., 2004, The Case for Renewable Energies, International Conference for Renewable Energies, Bonn, quoted in NEF, 2005, Mirage and Oasis, p41. http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_PublicationDetail.aspx?PID=209

(5) How did \$50bn high risk, job killing, nuclear loans get in the stimulus? Fraudulent budget gimmickry, Climate Progress. February 11, 2009. <http://climateprogress.org/2009/02/11/nuclear-loan-guarantee-program-stimulus/>

5. Justification Consultation

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) Steering Committee has produced a briefing to encourage its members to respond to the Government's Justification Consultation. The NFLA is unequivocal in its criticism of plans for new reactors – the opportunity cost is too high. Nuclear investment will damage the nascent local energy revolution which local authorities should be at the centre of, and thus damage efforts to tackle climate change. Nuclear power's capital costs are out of control and recent studies have cast "significant doubt" over the official risk attached to radiation doses received by people living near nuclear reactors.

The Nuclear Consultation Group, a group of academics with specialist knowledge on nuclear power and energy have called for the Government to hold an inquiry on Justification, and is asking other consultees to do the same. The hurried and unsynchronised timeline for various nuclear consultations does not allow for full discussion of all relevant issues, and once finalised the justification process may foreclose on any future discussion of issues crucial to nuclear power. Nor does the group believe it is appropriate for the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to be the Justifying Authority as he has already expressed clear support for new nuclear reactors.

The Government's Consultation on the Justification for Building New Nuclear Power Stations. New Nuclear Monitor No.15 <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/nuclearmonitor/NNM15.pdf>

6. Plutonium Games

Early on the morning of Wednesday 4th March, the first part of the largest plutonium convoy ever carried in the world took place between the French reprocessing plant at La Hague and the port of Cherbourg. The imposing convoy of 5 trucks and tens of escort vehicles with armed police was watched by Greenpeace observers throughout the course of the 20 kilometer journey. A second transport took place the following night. (1) Two ships owned by Pacific Nuclear Transport Limited (PNTL) arrived in Cherbourg on 5th March to transport the 1.8 tonnes of plutonium contained in 65 MoX fuel assemblies (Mixed plutonium and uranium oxide fuel) to Japan. PNTL is owned by International Nuclear Services, Areva and Japanese nuclear companies (2), but it operates as a subsidiary company of International Nuclear Services which is 100% owned by the UK Government's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. (3)

Back in the UK, the poor prognosis for the Sellafield MoX (Plant (SMP), which has so far cost the taxpayer £2bn, (4) has bizarrely, led some to suggest building a replacement MoX fuel plant. (5) SMP was built between 1994 and 1997 at an original cost of £470m, but has been dogged with problems ever since. There were five public consultation exercises and a number of legal challenges, before the first plutonium was introduced into the plant in April 2002. Designed to manufacture 120 tonnes of MoX fuel per year for foreign customers, its production capacity has been reduced to around 40t/yr. Even that reduced target is clearly beyond its capability – it has only produced 9.45 tonnes in its seven year life. (6) The Guardian has confirmed that 'well placed industry sources' are saying there is little chance the plant will stay open. (7)

The NDA has been consulting on credible options for UK's rather embarrassing stockpile of 100 tonnes of plutonium. So far it has sidestepped making a decision about the most controversial options - using plutonium to fuel new UK reactors, or selling it to another country to fuel their reactors – but the subject is still very much on the agenda, and it's clear which option the industry and the trade unions at Sellafield would favour. Jamie Reed, the Labour MP for the Sellafield area has been pressing the case for a new MoX plant to be built at Sellafield. He says this would secure the jobs of 1,000 staff who either work at SMP or have jobs linked to it elsewhere on the Sellafield site. And a new plant could also create up to 5,000 construction jobs. Areva, which is part of the consortium now running Sellafield, has already been reported to be talking to the NDA about a new MoX plant. (8)

The nuclear industry's vision is clear: a new MoX fuel plant at Sellafield which dispatches plutonium fuel under armed guard to reactors capable of using MoX around Britain. Ultimately the industry hopes this will convince us that ordinary spent fuel should be reprocessed to separate plutonium to fuel fast reactors, and so we will also need to build a new reprocessing plant at Sellafield. This scenario will almost certainly never come to fruition because of technical, economic and other obstacles. But, in the meantime, promoting the plutonium economy as an option for the UK threatens to open a Pandora's Box around the globe.

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities has produced a briefing: "Options for Dealing with UK Plutonium Stockpiles" which is available here: <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/docs/radwaste/RWB18.pdf>

Greenpeace Briefing on the MoX Shipment: <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/france/presse/dossiers-documents/tout-savoir-sur-les-transports.pdf>

(1) Greenpeace sheds light on the most important plutonium shipment ever carried out. Greenpeace France Press Release, March 4, 2009. <http://www.greenpeace.org/france/news/greenpeace-met-en-lumiere-le-p>

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- (3) International Nuclear Services Website. <http://www.innuserv.com/page/about-us>
- (4) Irving, A. New MoX plant could bring 5,000 jobs boost, Whitehaven News, February 18, 2009. http://www.whitehaven-news.co.uk/news/new_mox_plant_could_bring_5_000_jobs_boost_1_515597?referrerPath=home
- (5) Weatherall, R. French nuclear firm target processing site. Newcastle Sunday Sun, February 22, 2009. <http://www.sundaysun.co.uk/news/north-east-news/2009/02/22/french-nuclear-firm-target-processing-site-79310-22979804/>
- (6) Sellafield MoX Plant: stuck on the road to nowhere. CORE Briefing, February 18, 2009. <http://www.corecumbria.co.uk/newsapp/pressreleases/pressmain.asp?StrNewsID=253>
- (7) Macilister, T. Ten-year old Sellafield plant may be closed. Guardian, February, 17 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/feb/17/sellafield-plant-closure>
- (8) Bream, R. Push for closed cycle reprocessing. FT 9th June 2008 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a957260e-35bb-11dd-998d-0000779fd2ac.html>

7. Safety Blow

Public confidence in the safety of nuclear power received a series of blows this month as one power station was fined over radioactive leaks, and it was revealed that the Government has quietly scrapped the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee (NuSAC). (1)

Nuclear power station operator Magnox Electric was fined £250,000 and ordered to pay £150,000 costs as a result of more than 14 years of radioactive leaks at the closed Bradwell Nuclear Power Station in Essex. It is the highest fine for a prosecution brought by the Environment Agency in eight years. (2)

The Guardian reported that the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee (NuSAC) was quietly scrapped after it warned the future safety of Britain's ageing nuclear plants was being put at risk by poor performance, delays and budget cuts. The committee has been offering critical advice to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for nearly 50 years, but was disbanded without any public announcement. Former members of NuSAC are now worried about the lack of independent safety advice at a time when the government is embarking on a major nuclear expansion. (3)

The HSE said that an advisory body better suited to current challenges in the industry would be set up to replace the committee. But some former members of the committee were fearful that a lack of independent oversight at a time when the industry is seeking to expand could contribute to safety lapses. HSE also said its board decided to defer any decision on future arrangements for providing independent technical advice on nuclear safety, pending various reviews. (4)

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- (2) Bradwell: Power firm faces £400,000 fine for nuclear waste leak. Essex Chronicle, February 17, 2009 <http://www.thisistotalessex.co.uk/latestnews/BRADWELL-Power-firm-faces-400-000-nuclear-waste-leak/article-705991-detail/article.html>
- (3) Edwards R. & Macilister, T. UK nuclear advisory group scrapped after warning of safety risks, insiders claim. Guardian February 16, 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/feb/16/nuclear-safety>
- (4) Letter from Geoffrey Podger, Chief Executive of the Health and Safety Executive to The Guardian February 18, 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/feb/18/letters-nuclear-safety>

8. Gang of Four.

Four prominent environmentalists outed themselves on the front page of *The Independent* (1) as having found a heart for nuclear. However, while they claim that climate change is the reason for their atomic shift, they fail to explain how nuclear power can contribute to our current efforts to combat climate change.

As the Euro Greens point out we have ten or eleven years to act. Even if we ignore all the problems with nuclear power what can it contribute to this urgently-needed emissions reduction effort? (2)

The Nuclear Consultation Group said significant issues with regard to nuclear power remain to be addressed, let alone resolved. These include uncertainty about nuclear fuel supply and manufacture, vulnerability to attack, security and proliferation, radioactive waste management, radiation risk and health effects, reactor safety and decommissioning. Even if financing new nuclear build were competitive in these cash-strapped times, it is not possible to build enough nuclear power stations to make a significant impact on the amount of coal that will be burnt world-wide. Nuclear power is an expensive, inflexible option, soaking up money and slowing development of more sustainable solutions to climate change. (3)

Catherine Mitchell, who worked on the first Government energy review in 2002/3, and is now Professor of Energy Policy Exeter University, says Britain has visionary goals – the 80% cut in carbon emissions by 2050 and the 15% target for energy from renewable sources by 2020, and 20% cut in energy demand. If the UK meets these legally binding targets, there is no need for new nuclear or coal plants. “*Why does government - ie Treasury - policy seem to concentrate on technologies we don't need?*” she asks. (4)

Andrew Warren, Director of the Association for the Conservation of Energy says before the myth gains too much

ground, the reason why nuclear construction ground to a standstill in the 1980s was not opposition from ecologists, but because these large white elephants are wholly uneconomic. The economics have not changed. (5)

(1) Connor, S. Nuclear Power? Yes Please. Independent, February 23, 2009

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/nuclear-power-yes-please-1629327.html>

Stephen Tindale followed this up with an article in The Sun, February 24, 2009. <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/article2265768.ece>

(2) If nuclear is the answer, the question is not about climate policy. Stop Climate Change, Euro Greens, February 24, 2009. http://www.stopclimatechange.net/index.php?id=25&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=289&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=2&cHash=34de0638d5

(3) Letter from the Nuclear Consultation Group to The Independent, February 25, 2009. <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-the-bnp-1631292.html>

(4) Mitchell, C. These fossil fools, Guardian, February 27, 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/feb/27/mitchell-fossil-fuels-labour-carbon>

(5) Warren, A. Nuclear power is too expensive. Letter to The Independent, March 3, 2009

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/letters/letters-pedigree-dogs-1635917.html>

9. Nuclear Sites

The NDA has started an ebay-style auction of three sites on which some energy companies will be invited to build up to six new nuclear reactors. Companies will bid electronically as many times as they want and can track in real time the highest offer for each site, but not the identity of the bidder. The auction will close at the end of the month. The three parcels of land are all adjacent to soon to be closed or decommissioned nuclear reactors at Wylfa in Anglesey, Bradwell in Essex and Oldbury near Bristol. EDF is also selling the land it bought near the Wylfa site.

Webb, T. Government opens bidding for nuclear sites. Guardian, March 1, 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/mar/01/nuclear-site-auction>

