



**Energy Review Update No.11**  
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**1. Energy White Paper – a millstone around Gordon Brown’s neck.**

Writing in *The Times* on the day the second Energy White Paper in the space of 4 years was published, Tony Blair said “the UK needs to replace a third of our ageing electricity generation capacity in the next 20 years ... It is right that we consider how nuclear power can help to underpin the security of our energy supply without increasing our reliance on fossil fuels”. (1) Whilst Alistair Darling made his view clear that new nuclear stations should be given the go-ahead before the end of the year, the Prime Minister, mindful of the Greenpeace legal victory was more circumspect. However his article’s headline: “How to stop the lights going out in a dangerous world” clearly reflected his real pro-nuclear view.

The White Paper (2) claims to set out a strategy to deliver energy security and accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy. The Government wants to establish an international framework to tackle climate change; provide legally binding carbon targets; work towards further liberalisation of EU markets; encourage energy saving; provide more support for, and ensure the right conditions for investment in, low carbon technologies.

The Government has announced a consultation on the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), a mandatory carbon trading scheme for large non-energy intensive public and private sector organisations in the UK such as hotel chains, supermarkets, banks, central Government and large Local Authorities, which together account for around 10% of the UK’s emissions. (3)

The Government is already consulting on whether to require all new homes to be zero carbon by 2016, and will announce a decision later this year. The White Paper contains proposals for a higher standard of energy efficiency in consumer electronic goods, and the Government is working to phase out incandescent light bulbs by 2011.

The White Paper also launches a consultation on the Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) for 2008-2011, which will replace the Energy Efficiency Commitment, and proposes a doubling of energy suppliers' current effort. Disappointingly it is only after 2012 that the scheme will evolve into one which transforms suppliers into energy service companies. And it is not until 2020 that the Government expects all householders to have been offered help to introduce energy efficiency measures to ensure all homes have achieved their cost-effective energy efficiency potential.

The Government wants its own office estate to be carbon neutral by 2012. Alongside the White Paper, a Biomass Strategy was also published, and the Government says it is bringing forward a range of measures to ensure that decentralised energy can continue to grow alongside the centralised system.

The White Paper fails to convert the 'aspiration' to produce 20% of UK electricity from renewables by 2020 into a firm commitment. It introduces a banding of the Renewables Obligation (RO) to offer differentiated levels of support to different renewable technologies.

The Government's energy scenarios indicate that it might be possible under certain assumptions to reduce the UK's carbon emissions by 60% by 2050 without new nuclear power stations. But it is concerned this would leave a high risk of not meeting its policy goals. The Government says, having reviewed the evidence, it believes the advantages of allowing the private sector to invest in new reactors outweighs the disadvantages. Its preliminary view is that it is in the public interest to give the private sector the option of investing in new nuclear power stations. But this view is subject to consultation. Alongside the White Paper, it has, therefore, launched another nuclear consultation document. (4) Nevertheless, the Government is proceeding, "on a contingent basis, with a range of facilitative actions to reduce regulatory and planning risks to prepare for the possibility that the Government concludes that it is in public interest to allow private sector companies the option of investing in new nuclear power stations". (5)

Stephen Hale, formerly special advisor to Margaret Beckett when she was Secretary of State for the Environment, now director of Green Alliance, said: "Tony Blair's legacy energy white paper is a millstone for Gordon Brown. Labour is investing political capital in nuclear power, an industry that has never delivered. We need a far stronger policy framework for the transport sector, for heat generation and a long-term carbon price that incentivises a step change in low-carbon investment". (6)

(1) Times 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article1826518.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article1826518.ece)

(2) Energy White Paper Meeting the Energy Challenge

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/mediaDetail.asp?MediaDetailsID=203153&NewsAreaID=2&ClientID=201&LocaleID=2>

(3) Consultation on the implementation proposals of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/carbon-reduc/consultation.pdf>

(4) The Future of Nuclear Power: The role of nuclear power in a UK low carbon economy, DTI, May 2007

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39197.pdf>

(5) Meeting the Energy Challenge - A White Paper on Energy: Foreword and Executive Summary

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39564.pdf>

(6) FT 24th May 2007 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/5be73b76-096a-11dc-a349-000b5df10621.html>

## 2. The Future of Nuclear Power

With the publication of the Energy White Paper the Government also launched a 20-week consultation on nuclear power which runs until 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007. The consultation document (1) was published alongside a number of other documents including: a report on siting options (2); a discussion document on the Justification Process (3); a report on potential waste arisings from new build (4); and a cost benefit analysis (5).

The consultation document claims the UK will be increasingly dependent on imported oil and gas in future at a time of rising global demand and prices, and when energy supplies are becoming more politicised. At the same time, we know that over the next two decades or so almost one third of our coal and oil fired power stations are likely to close and all but one of our nuclear stations will have closed by 2023. Decisions on the type of power stations built to replace this capacity will have significant implications for the level of carbon emissions. If our existing nuclear power stations were all replaced with fossil fuel fired power stations, our emissions would be between eight and sixteen MtC (million tonnes of carbon) a year higher as a result – the equivalent of about 30-60% of the total carbon savings expected from all the measures in the Energy White Paper. Our gas demand would also be higher, at a time when we are becoming more dependent on imported sources of fossil fuels.

The consultation says new reactors are unlikely to be ready much before 2020, but claims they could make a significant contribution after then, up to and beyond 2050. The Government's preliminary view is that preventing investment in new reactors would increase the risk of not achieving long-term climate change and energy security goals, or achieving them at higher cost.

Since the 2003 Energy White Paper the Government claims there have been a number of developments, which have led it to consider afresh the potential contribution of new nuclear power stations. These include the significant progress made in tackling the nuclear waste issue. However, Justice Sullivan's High Court Judgment, (6) said that the Government's previous Energy Review consultation document did not give a fair summary of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management's [CoRWM's] position on nuclear waste from new reactors and "was not merely wholly inadequate, it was also seriously misleading".

This was because CoRWM had said future Government decisions on new build should be subject to their own public assessment process, including consideration of waste, because such decisions raise different political and ethical issues when compared with the consideration of wastes which already exist. This new consultation, the Government says "provides the opportunity to discuss the ethical, intergenerational and public acceptability issues associated with a decision to allow the private sector to invest in new nuclear power stations and generate new nuclear waste".

The Government also says it is developing proposals to ensure that nuclear operators meet the full decommissioning costs and full share of waste management costs. It also says its economic analysis suggests that nuclear power can offer general economic benefit, and the interest shown by some utilities in nuclear power reflects assessments that with carbon being priced to reflect its impacts and gas prices likely to be higher than previously expected, the economics of new nuclear power stations are becoming more favourable. See 'Nuclear Nonsense' story 4 for analysis and counter-arguments from Tom Burke.

An editorial in *The Independent* said the greatest danger posed by the White Paper could be nuclear investment crowding out investment in renewables and undermining energy efficiency. The Government claims to be interested in an open debate, but acts as if it has made its mind up. It points out that Mr Brown will be left with the job of paying for these dangerous follies. It argues that it is not too late for Britain to switch back to an environmentally friendly - and non-nuclear - energy track. (7)

Buried away on page 204 of the Energy White Paper is a significant shift. The Government says new nuclear power stations should proceed on the basis that spent fuel will not be reprocessed. This is the clearest statement so far of ministers' intention to abandon the decades-old policy of reprocessing uranium burnt in reactors. (8)

(1) The Future of Nuclear Power: The role of nuclear power in a UK low carbon economy, DTI, May 2007

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39197.pdf>

(2) Siting New Nuclear Power Stations: Availability and Options for Government, Jackson Consulting, April 26, 2006.

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39030.pdf>

- (3) Justification Process for New Nuclear Power Stations in the UK: A discussion of the basis for considering together different candidate reactor systems, by TJ Abram, Nexia Solutions, March 2007 <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39200.pdf>
- (4) Potential Waste Volumes Arising from New Build, Dr Paul Gilchrist, NDA, October 2006 <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39386.pdf>
- (5) Nuclear Power Generation Cost Benefit Analysis <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39525.pdf>
- (6) High Court Judgment available at: <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/MultimediaFiles/Live/FullReport/ERJRSullivanJudgement.pdf?&CFID=4713382&CFTOKEN=17459695>
- (7) Independent 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 [http://comment.independent.co.uk/leading\\_articles/article2578450.ece](http://comment.independent.co.uk/leading_articles/article2578450.ece)
- (8) RobEdwards.com 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 [http://www.robedwards.com/2007/05/uk\\_signals\\_aban.html](http://www.robedwards.com/2007/05/uk_signals_aban.html)

### 3. New reactors for Hinkley, Sizewell, Oxfordshire and Brighton?

The Jackson Consulting report (1) on nuclear siting, released alongside the Energy White Paper, suggests a hierarchy which would choose existing nuclear reactor sites first, followed by other nuclear sites and sites with other types of power stations. But, of the 14 existing civil nuclear power station sites, only nine are considered feasible for new reactors, and only four are available immediately – Hinkley, Sizewell, Bradwell and Dungeness. The first two of these could feasibly take new twin reactors. (2)

However, there are approximately 14 coal fired power stations some of which may potentially be available for new nuclear build. In many cases these conventional power station sites are likely to already have water and grid facilities for around 2GW of electricity generation. Finally if no other existing sites are available then it may be possible to build a nuclear power station at a completely new location. In the 1980s CEBG identified 7 greenfield sites in the UK that might potentially be suitable for new nuclear.

The Jackson report also warns that tens of millions of pounds may have to be spent on flood defences and sea walls. (3) Any reactors built in low coastal areas would need protection from rising sea levels and storm surges, the study said. Extra spending on defences would add to the huge cost of construction, estimated at more than £1bn a plant. Recent studies by the Met Office & Middlesex University confirm this.

The suggestion that coal-fired power station sites might be used for new reactors has been particularly controversial in Oxfordshire – site of the Didcot power station. (4) The Oxfordshire press reported that both Didcot and Harwell had emerged as potential sites. (5) RWE npower, which owns Didcot Power Station, said it had no intention of going nuclear, or selling its coal-fired Didcot 'A' station when it closes in 2015. (6) And the Conservative leader of South Oxfordshire District Council vowed to fight any move to site a nuclear power station in Didcot. (7) Brighton, site of the Shoreham gas-fired power station, has also been identified as a potential site for a new nuclear power station, a proposal unlikely to be well received in a city that recently elected 12 Green Party councillors.

(1) Siting New Nuclear Power Stations: Availability and Options for Government, Jackson Consulting, April 26, 2006.

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39030.pdf>

(2) Guardian 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 <http://environment.guardian.co.uk/energy/story/0,,2086815.00.html>

(3) FT 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/1c9ccb2c-096d-11dc-a349-000b5df10621.html>

New Scientist 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn11913-uk-backs-new-generation-of-nuclear-reactors.html>

(4) Telegraph 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=HJCLTRMP3M1R5QFIQMFSFFOAVCBQ0IV0?xml=/news/2007/05/25/nuke125.xml>

(5) Oxford Mail 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007 [http://www.oxfordmail.net/display.var.1423564.0.county\\_could\\_get\\_nuclear\\_station.php](http://www.oxfordmail.net/display.var.1423564.0.county_could_get_nuclear_station.php)

Didcot Herald 24<sup>th</sup> May 2007

[http://www.heraldseries.net/news/hsdidcotnews/display.var.1423490.0.nuclear\\_power\\_station\\_could\\_be\\_built\\_in\\_county.php](http://www.heraldseries.net/news/hsdidcotnews/display.var.1423490.0.nuclear_power_station_could_be_built_in_county.php)

(6) Oxford Mail 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 [http://www.oxfordmail.net/display.var.1436522.0.power\\_plant\\_rejects\\_nuclear\\_future.php](http://www.oxfordmail.net/display.var.1436522.0.power_plant_rejects_nuclear_future.php)

(7) Didcot Herald 30th May 2007

[http://www.heraldseries.net/news/hsdidcotnews/display.var.1436376.0.leaders\\_vow\\_to\\_oppose\\_nuclear\\_move.php](http://www.heraldseries.net/news/hsdidcotnews/display.var.1436376.0.leaders_vow_to_oppose_nuclear_move.php)

#### 4. Nuclear Nonsense

Tom Burke, former Director of Friends of the Earth and special advisor to several previous Environment Secretaries, peels away some of the myths surrounding the Government's case for new reactors and presents the counter-arguments. (1)

Firstly, nuclear generators are not waiting for permission to build new nuclear stations. There is nothing preventing reactor construction, apart from economics. If the Government is intent on having new nuclear build it will either have to abandon the liberalised electricity markets it wants the rest of the European Union to adopt or find a way to cheat on its pledge to provide no subsidies. It may cheat by offering a very high price for carbon. Given that the current price for carbon is less than €1 a tonne and the floor price needed to make new nuclear attractive would be much more than €20 a tonne this would commit the Treasury to very large future expenditures. It will also cheat by making the taxpayer bear an unspecified share of the cost of radioactive waste disposal – a hidden subsidy.

The government is intending to help the generators with three obstacles: the time it would take to subject the reactor design to a proper examination of its safety case; the time it would take for the need for the reactors to be examined properly by the public; and the uncertainty about the future price of electricity.

The fact that existing generating capacity, including nuclear capacity, will at some point in the future close, is being put forward as a rapidly approaching "generation gap". But as existing power stations close they will be replaced. That is how markets work. There is currently a margin of more than 20% of capacity over peak demand. Why would anyone expect the generators to build new power stations before they are needed?

Another myth is the question of increasing dependence on Russian gas. This is simply a scare tactic, with three aspects. First, gas is used mainly to provide heat. Only a quarter of the gas Britain burns is used to produce electricity. Much of that quarter is used to generate electricity at peak times because gas turbines can be switched on and off easily. Nuclear-power stations must be run constantly to be economic so they can only replace a small proportion of the gas we use for electricity generation. Second, most of Britain's gas now and in the future comes not from Russia but from that deeply unstable country, Norway. Third, Russia is more dependent on Western Europe's revenues than the other way round.

Burke goes on to say that new nuclear build can do nothing worthwhile to help with climate change before 2020 and would divert capital, and more importantly, scarce skills away from investments in renewables, energy efficiency and the carbon-neutral coal technologies that will reduce Britain's carbon footprint faster and more cheaply than new nuclear build.

Finally, Burke warns us to look very carefully at any numbers about capital costs or construction times, stating that the nuclear industry has always estimated the cost and construction time of new reactors wrongly. Frequently cited estimates for the capital cost of a nuclear power station range from \$1,000/kilowatt to just over \$2,000/kilowatt hour. The estimated cost of 8 reactors actually being constructed in Asia is just over \$4,500/kilowatt. The construction time for the much vaunted new reactor in Finland has increased from 48 months to 66 months in 18 months.

A cross-Party group of MPs, in a letter to *The Guardian*, challenged the view that the lights will go out unless we agree to build new reactors, and that nuclear power will prevent an increase in

dependency on imported gas and is necessary to allow us to meet climate-change goals. (2) The MPs say we should not be panicked into accepting a technology that poses a continuing risk in terms of weapons proliferation and terrorism, produces a toxic waste for which no management solution is agreed, benefits from hidden subsidies and tends to undermine both the prospects of renewable energy and efforts to increase energy efficiency.

One of the authors of the letter, Lib Dem Energy Spokesperson, David Howarth, writing in *The Independent*, says the Government has been rushed into a bad decision by clever lobbying. (3) Drawing on new analysis for the Liberal Democrats he says that by 2050 the effect of allowing nuclear power to operate alongside renewables is simply to reduce the contribution from wind and wave power whilst hardly affecting the need to import gas. If we want to reduce our dependence on gas, we would be much better insulating our houses than building new reactors.

(1) Decoding Nuclear Nonsense, by Tom Burke, Open Democracy, May 25, 2007

[http://www.e3g.org/images/uploads/070522\\_Decoding\\_Nuclear\\_Nonsense.pdf](http://www.e3g.org/images/uploads/070522_Decoding_Nuclear_Nonsense.pdf)

(2) Guardian 23rd May 2007 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,,2085718,00.html>

(3) Independent 23rd May 2007 <http://comment.independent.co.uk/commentators/article2573270.ece>

## 5. Bunkum and balderdash – but does it matter?

Geoffrey Lean, writing in the Independent on Sunday (1), complains about all the hype surrounding the Energy White Paper, which made it sound like the nuclear industry would soon be growing again. He calls this "bunkum and balderdash". In fact the White Paper put far more emphasis on saving energy and on increasing power from renewable sources, while doing almost nothing to increase the prospects for new nuclear power stations. Even under its most optimistic projections, 20 years hence the amount of energy Britain gets from the atom will fall to a fraction of what it is today. Far from the promised "new generation" of nuclear power stations, it is possible that not one will ever be built.

The White Paper, says Lean, did nothing to alter the financial facts of life. What would make a difference would be government subsidies big enough to make the investment attractive. But Gordon Brown has long ruled out providing public money. Even if companies do decide - or are bribed - to build new reactors, don't expect Britain to become a "nuclear nation". Far from the much-touted "expansion", the most that could happen over the next quarter of a century is a slight amelioration of a precipitous decline. Lean reckons the small print of the White Paper suggests that only between two and four new reactors would be built by 2030. That would mean that Britain then generated only between 25 and 40 per cent as much nuclear energy as today.

Where the White Paper did provide for ambitious expansion, says Lean, was in energy saving and renewables, but you could not have told that from last week's media. The atomic hype made ministers appear bold, and provided a story, but remained bunkum and balderdash nonetheless. Unfortunately, if Leans intends to imply that these energy efficiency and renewable energy measures will deliver on climate change targets, he may be sadly mistaken. Jeremy Leggett, chief executive of Solar Century, argues the white paper was a huge step backwards from the Government's 2003 White Paper vision for energy, which followed intensive consultation with industry, leading to a pretty good product. (2)

In contrast the 2007 white paper is a hodge-podge of half-policies and suggestions which don't get us anywhere close to the deep cuts that we need, so all we are left with is the hope that somehow new reactors will start generating in 2017 and beyond. He called it "a massive blind alley."

The British Wind Energy Association appeared to agree and bemoaned the fact that the Government had failed to turn its aspiration of providing 20% of our electricity from renewables by 2020 into a firm target. BWEA said this was particularly disappointing in the light of the EU target of providing 20% of energy (not just electricity) from renewables by 2020. (3)

Leggett blames senior civil servants who think that grown-ups don't get their energy from decentralised, renewable sources. From day one in the follow-up to the white paper of 2003, they have been half-hearted and not pulled out any stops to try and solve the problems to make renewables happen.

Dr Catherine Mitchell of Warwick Business School, who was a member of the previous Energy Review team says the new white paper has nothing to do with placing the UK on a path for carbon reductions that might meet the challenge of climate change. It has sealed the fate of the UK in not being able to meet its future carbon dioxide reduction targets. Nor will UK businesses be able to benefit from the enormous opportunities a sustainable non-nuclear future offers. (4)

(1) Independent on Sunday 27th May 2007 <http://comment.independent.co.uk/commentators/article2586572.ece>

(2) Guardian 28th May 2007 [http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk\\_news/story/0,,2089512,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,2089512,00.html)

(3) Guardian 30th May 2007 <http://society.guardian.co.uk/societyguardian/story/0,,2090278,00.html>

(4) FT 30th May 2007 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/4015eb46-0e4b-11dc-8219-000b5df10621.html>

## 6. Scottish debate rumbles on

Nuclear Engineering International says Scotland is set for an anti-nuclear future with the election of Alex Salmond as First Minister. (1) Mr Salmond told the BBC's Politics Show: "There's absolutely no chance of us allowing a new generation of nuclear power in Scotland. There is just no consensus in Scottish society or in the Scottish Parliament to have foisted on us another generation of nuclear power stations." (2)

One of Salmond's first acts as First Minister was to visit the Longannet coal-fired station as Scottish Power announced a £6 million feasibility study into plans to re-fit the Fife plant, along with Cnockzie in East Lothian, with new "supercritical" turbines and boilers. The £1 billion project would cut carbon dioxide emissions at the plants by 20 per cent, and would mean Cnockzie, instead of closing at the end of 2015, could stay running for perhaps another 30 years, while the life of Longannet would also be extended. The re-fit could also pave the way for reducing emissions by 90 per cent by pumping carbon dioxide underground when "carbon capture" technology is advanced over the next decade. (3)

A survey of MSPs in the new Scottish parliament carried out by Friends of the Earth Scotland revealed that a clear majority are opposed to the building of any more reactors in Scotland. MSPs who say they are against nuclear power outnumber those who said they are in favour by three to one. (4)

British Energy has effectively ruled out attempting to build new reactors in Scotland describing it as "the least attractive part of the UK" to base a new station following the elections. The high costs of transmitting electricity from Scotland to England is also a factor. (5)

The SNP's opposition to nuclear power prompted warnings from pro-nuclear Labour MPs that Scotland would struggle to provide enough electricity, but Simon James, of the Nuclear Industry Association, said: "the likelihood is that the demand for new nuclear power will be much more in the southeast of England than anywhere else." (6) The Labour MPs were even urging Alistair Darling to end the Scottish Executive's veto on new reactors. (7)

On the morning the White Paper was published Alistair Darling warned the lights would go out if the SNP maintained its antipathy to nuclear power. It was irresponsible, he said, and there was no evidence that renewables could fill the energy gap. But by the afternoon, Darling said the issue was academic as Torness would be around longer than Alex Salmond. During a debate in the Scottish Parliament on the same day, Jack McConnell effectively rejoined the anti-nuclear consensus by not objecting to Alex Salmond's anti-nuclear statement. It is clear that many Scottish Labour MSPs quietly support the SNP's unambiguous anti-nuclear stance. (8)

Duncan McLaren, the Executive Director of Friends of the Earth described claims the lights would go out if Scotland failed to build new reactors as ill-informed scaremongering which ignored the reality of our energy systems and markets and downplayed the success of the Scottish renewables industry, which has, so far, delivered its generation targets ahead of schedule. Even if Torness and Hunterston close on schedule, rather than having their lives extended as widely predicted, the lights would not go out. Scotland currently exports 20% of its electricity output south of the Border. He welcomed Scottish Power's plans to renew capacity at Longannet and Cogenzie but called on the Spanish-owned company to move rapidly to develop carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology as well. McLaren says the challenge becomes smaller if the current executive consultation on an energy efficiency strategy leads to practical measures to begin delivering the 30% or so energy savings that are cost-effective today. (9)

Meanwhile, there was huge anger in Scotland when BP announced that it was pulling out of a carbon capture and storage project at Peterhead, and the Government appeared to get the blame. Professor Stuart Haszeldine, of Edinburgh University's school of geosciences, said ministers at Westminster had continually "found problems rather than solutions" since the oil giant first announced its intention to go ahead with the Peterhead carbon capture and storage (CCS) scheme. Under the £500m project, which would have brought 1000 construction jobs to the economically-deprived area, BP would have extracted hydrogen from North Sea gas to fuel a power station. The remaining carbon dioxide would have been pumped into the depleted Miller oilfield instead of being dispersed into the atmosphere. (10) The SNP minority government continues to apply pressure to Westminster to take steps to revive the Peterhead scheme.

(1) Nuclear Engineering International 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007

<http://www.neimagazine.com/story.asp?sectioncode=132&storyCode=2044389>

(2) Herald 21st May 2007 <http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/news/display.var.1412234.0.0.php>

(3) Scotsman 18th May 2007 <http://thescotzman.scotzman.com/scotland.cfm?id=771022007>

(4) Sunday Herald 20th May 2007

[http://www.sundayherald.com/news/heraldnews/display.var.1411802.0.holyrood\\_set\\_to\\_clash\\_with\\_brown\\_on\\_nuclear\\_plans.php](http://www.sundayherald.com/news/heraldnews/display.var.1411802.0.holyrood_set_to_clash_with_brown_on_nuclear_plans.php)

BBC 21st May 2007 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/south\\_of\\_scotland/6675501.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/south_of_scotland/6675501.stm)

(5) Scotsman 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007 <http://news.scotzman.com/index.cfm?id=785462007>

(6) Scotland on Sunday 20th May 2007 <http://news.scotzman.com/scotland.cfm?id=782792007>

(7) Scotland on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2007 <http://news.scotzman.com/politics.cfm?id=823622007>

(8) Sunday Herald 27th May 2007

[http://www.sundayherald.com/oped/opinion/display.var.1429129.0.and\\_the\\_debate\\_on\\_how\\_best\\_to\\_keep\\_the\\_lights\\_on\\_in\\_scotland.php](http://www.sundayherald.com/oped/opinion/display.var.1429129.0.and_the_debate_on_how_best_to_keep_the_lights_on_in_scotland.php)

See also Lesley Riddoch, writing in *The Scotsman* (premium content - 28<sup>th</sup> May)

(9) Herald letters 29<sup>th</sup> May 2007

[http://www.theherald.co.uk/search/display.var.1430516.0.its\\_time\\_to\\_give\\_us\\_the\\_power\\_to\\_decide\\_on\\_energy.php](http://www.theherald.co.uk/search/display.var.1430516.0.its_time_to_give_us_the_power_to_decide_on_energy.php)

(10) Herald 25th May 2007 <http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/news/display.var.1425139.0.0.php>

## **7. Planning for a nuclear future? Government speaks the 'opposite of the truth', Planning White Paper 'piecemeal, ill-conceived and disjointed'**

Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly has unveiled major reforms of the country's planning system intended to speed up the system, with contentious reforms on community consultation.

The Planning White Paper will bring in a new system for dealing with major infrastructure projects. There will be a new national policy framework set by Ministers and parliament setting out how the country's key infrastructure needs will be met for the next 10-25 years. This will be subject to public consultation. There will also be a new inquiry system led by an independent commission consisting of leading experts from key sectors - who will take decisions on individual projects. (1)

The proposals in the Planning White Paper have provoked widespread and vociferous opposition. Ruth Kelly's assertion that the planning white paper is designed to strengthen local democracy has been described as the 'opposite of the truth' by the Campaign to Protect Rural England



(CPRE). The very purpose of the paper is to reduce local control in order to accelerate the consent procedure for major infrastructure projects (MIPs). So, for example, the power of consent for MIPs is transferred from local councils to a new quango, which will be led not by the local development plan but by predetermined national policy, from which it will be able to depart only when bound to by law. CPRE says the new quango could not refuse an application for a new reactor on the grounds, for example, that the government's policy overstates the need for nuclear power. The right of local people to participate fully in the inquiry process, including by giving evidence and cross-examining the developer's witnesses, is replaced by the sop of a right to be consulted by the developer, and an "open floor" soap box to permit them to voice their grievances.

The Civic Trust says the intentions in the planning white paper could not be clearer. It will abolish the requirement to demonstrate a need for major new developments. There will be a presumption in favour of development which will cripple the ability of local communities to have any effective role in the holistic planning of their areas. The white paper places primacy on economic development - it will severely limit local communities' ability to have any useful say in planning. The Civic Trust says the White Paper is "piecemeal, ill-conceived and disjointed. An immediate return to the drawing board is urgently required". (2)

A coalition of environmental and social organisations supported by over 2.3 million people has come together to fight these damaging proposals which it says are the result of the Treasury's determination to rebalance the planning system in favour of business and away from environmental and social concerns. At a time when action on climate change and environmental protection is needed more than ever this rebalancing is a step in the wrong direction. The coalition intends to fight and defeat these proposals over the coming months. (3)

Nuclear Free Local Authorities have also expressed great concern about the proposals to take development control powers away from local councils in England and Wales and give them to an appointed Infrastructure Planning Commission. At the heart of the Planning White Paper are proposed grounds for giving or refusing the go-ahead for nuclear power stations, or other major infrastructure projects. (See for example para 3.14, p49.) Legal advice to the Nuclear Free Local Authorities is that this provides nuclear station developers with a well-nigh unassailable basis for approval of their projects but by contrast it leaves local authorities and their communities with an extraordinarily narrow and unlikely basis for a refusal i.e. actual illegality. (4)

Greenpeace Director John Sauven accused the government of planning to rubber stamp the wrong projects. He indicted ministers for diluting democracy and saying they know best, claiming their performance on climate change over the last decade shows how wrong they often are. He said the Planning White Paper is clearly intended to open the door to new nuclear power stations and airports, which will take the UK's fight against climate change backwards. (5) Friends of the Earth (FoE) agreed, and called on the Government to rethink its plans and introduce a planning system which allows people a say on the decisions that affect them. (6)

FoE said once specific projects considered to be of national importance are given the green light in national policy statements, affected communities will have no meaningful opportunity to debate the need for the development. (7) Public input will be limited to implementation of the project. If these reforms are about speeding up the process, as the Government claims, it should examine the real reasons for delays in the current system.

(1) 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' White Paper <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510503>  
Planning consultation document

[http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/672/PlanningforaSustainableFutureConsultation\\_id1510672.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/672/PlanningforaSustainableFutureConsultation_id1510672.pdf)

(2) Guardian 5th June 2007 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/letters/story/0,,2095346,00.html>

Planning White Paper: Our concerns, CPRE, May 2007

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/planning/planning-system/planning-system-our-concerns>

(3) Coalition Press Release, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007

[http://www.civictrust.org.uk/news/Planning\\_white\\_paper\\_coalition\\_response.pdf](http://www.civictrust.org.uk/news/Planning_white_paper_coalition_response.pdf)

(4) Nuclear Free Local Authorities Press Release 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007 <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/news/pr070606.php>

(5) Greenpeace Press Release, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/media/press-releases/greenpeace-on-planning-white-paper>

(6) Friends of the Earth (FoE) Press Release 17th May 2007

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press\\_releases/planning\\_white\\_paper\\_major\\_16052007.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/press_releases/planning_white_paper_major_16052007.html)

(7) FoE's vision of a better planning system: [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/better\\_planning\\_system.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/better_planning_system.pdf)

## **8. Nuclear accidents – near misses and safety failures continue**

Twenty-one years since Chernobyl the fact that there has not been another accident with a core meltdown may be lulling us into a false sense of security, according to a new analysis commissioned by European Greens. (1)

Every year there are thousands of incidents, but because there is no catastrophic radioactive leakage, the world reacts as if there is no problem. The Forsmark incident in July 2006 should have shattered this complacent approach, when an accident on the scale of Chernobyl was probably only avoided by minutes. But the main difference between Forsmark and lots of other incidents is that the real risk of Forsmark was publicized rather than brushed under the carpet.

With 8,000 reactor-years of experience accumulated worldwide a group of experts from the Institute of Risk Research, Union of Concerned Scientists and the Oko Institute, were asked by European Greens, after the Forsmark incident, to ask whether the absence of a major accident since 1986 was achieved by good practice or was it simply just luck?

The authors conclude that many nuclear safety related events occur year after year, all over the world, in all types of nuclear plants and in all reactor designs and there are very serious events that go either entirely unnoticed by the broader public or remain significantly under-evaluated when it comes to their potential risk. The widespread belief that nuclear safety will be actually enhanced because of a lessons-learned process turns out to be ill-conceived.

Some of the events and incidents that have occurred could have evolved into serious accidents, had the defects, malfunctions, etc. not been discovered in time (near-misses); other incidents might be taken as early warnings or as precursors of serious accidents; and there are the so-called recurring events whereby a pattern of failures is repeated time after time at different plants. Sometimes, there develops an element of self-congratulation by the nuclear industry when an incident is brought to a 'successful' close, so much so that this overrides the various serious concerns that the incident should not have been triggered in the first place.

The study also shows that the use of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA's) International Nuclear Event Scale (INES) scale is misleading and accentuates the tendency to systematically underestimate the risk potential of nuclear incidents.

(1) Residual Risk: An account of events in nuclear power plants since Chernobyl in 1986, by Georgui Kastchiev et al, European Greens, May 2007 [http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/topics/dokbin/181/181995.residual\\_risk@en.pdf](http://www.greens-efa.org/cms/topics/dokbin/181/181995.residual_risk@en.pdf)

## **9. Ban the bulb**

A global movement to ban incandescent light bulbs is gaining momentum. If the rest of the world joins Australia in this simple step to sharply cut carbon emissions, the worldwide drop in electricity use would permit the closing of more than 270 coal-fired (500 megawatt) power plants. For the United States, this bulb switch would facilitate shutting down 80 coal-fired plants. (1)

In Britain, a nongovernmental group called Ban the Bulb has been vigorously pushing for a ban on incandescents since early 2006. (2) . Pressure for rapid change on this issue is gaining momentum in the European Parliament. Now a group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have started moves to ban these bulbs, which waste 95 per cent of the electricity they

use, to cut out 25 medium-sized power stations' worth of carbon emissions every year. A written declaration in the European Parliament calling for the sale of incandescent bulbs to be banned in the EU gained the support of 197 MEPs.

(1) IPS News 9th May 2007 <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37666>

(2) See Greenpeace UK Light Bulbs Campaign: <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/climate/light-bulbs>

### **10. IPCC says "safety, weapons proliferation and waste remain as constraints" to nuclear expansion.**

The recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report (1) – widely spun as providing a recommendation by climate scientists for an expansion of nuclear power – did nothing of the sort.

The report noted that nuclear power provides about 16 percent of the world's electricity and said that figure could rise to 18 percent by 2030. But the head of Austria's climate change unit at the Bangkok talks said the figure had been contentious. "It could give the impression that the IPCC is projecting a significant increase in the contribution of nuclear power," said Klaus Radunsky. "This was politicising the IPCC and that in our view, is not appropriate." Bert Metz, co-chair of the IPCC group that wrote the report, stressed that it was not an endorsement of nuclear power. "It is absolutely a technical review. We are not making policy recommendations," he said. (2)

The IPCC did note worries over nuclear safety, weapons proliferation and waste (3). This was a timely reminder that a global expansion of nuclear power would probably require the development of fast reactors fuelled with weapons-useable plutonium, the use of reprocessing and more transports of plutonium and mixed uranium and plutonium oxide (MOX) fuel around the globe. The IPCC said in 1995 that the security threat of trying to tackle climate change with a global fast reactor programme "would be colossal". (4) It would present a serious threat to efforts to control the spread of nuclear weapons and prevent nuclear terrorism.

What's more, other research shows we can reduce carbon emissions much more cheaply and effectively using renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. Dollar for dollar, investing in energy efficiency is seven times more cost effective at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than investing in nuclear power. Even if it were safe or economical, it's also clear that nuclear power capacity cannot be built rapidly enough to be much help. The average construction time for nuclear plant completions 1995 - 2000 was 116 months (nearly 10 years). As a contrasting example, the first offshore wind farm in the UK took only eight months to build.

Writing in the Deccan Herald from Bangalore India, M V Ramana of Bangalore University, and G Ananthapadmanabhan, Executive Director of Greenpeace India, say that the IPCC report shows how far from the truth the assertion that nuclear power can play a major role in mitigating global warming actually is. (5)

Up to 2030 the report divides mitigation measures into seven categories: energy supply, transport, buildings, industry, agriculture, forestry, and waste, and estimates that together they have a potential to reduce emissions by about 16.2-30.3 Giga tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents/year (GtCO<sub>2</sub>/y). Of this sum, energy supply constitutes a mere 2.4-4.7 GtCO<sub>2</sub>/y. Within this energy supply category, there are several possibilities that are currently on the market: improved supply and distribution efficiency, co-generation of heat and power, fuel switching from coal to gas, nuclear power, renewable heat and power (hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal and bio energy), and early applications of carbon capture and storage (e.g. natural gas processing). The message is clear: an expansion of nuclear power can at best play a minor role in mitigating climate change.

The IPCC report makes clear which sectors of the economy offer the most potential for emissions reductions. These are buildings (5.3-6.7 GtCO<sub>2</sub>/y), industries (2.5-5.5 GtCO<sub>2</sub>/y), and agriculture (2.3-6.4 GtCO<sub>2</sub>/y).

- (1) Working Group III contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Mitigation of Climate Change. Summary for Policymakers, IPCC 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007.  
<http://www.ipcc.ch/SPM040507.pdf>
- (2) Reuters/Planet Ark 7<sup>th</sup> May 2007 <http://www.planetark.org/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/41741/story.htm>
- (3) Greenpeace International Press Release 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007  
<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/news/ipcc-report-lays-out-options>
- (4) IPCC working group II (1995) Impacts, Adaptions and Mitigation Technical Analyses. Climate Change 1995 IPCC working group II.  
[http://archive.greenpeace.org/comms/no\\_nukes/nenstcc.html](http://archive.greenpeace.org/comms/no_nukes/nenstcc.html)
- (5) Fight Against Global Warming: N-Energy Won't Help, by MV Ramana and G Ananthapadmanabhan, Deccan Herald 12<sup>th</sup> May 2007  
<http://www.deccanherald.com/Content/May122007/editpage200705121173.asp>  
 See also Greenpeace International Briefing: Climate Change: Nuclear not the answer.  
<http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/briefing-nuclear-not-answer-apr07.pdf>

## 11. Volunteering to host a nuclear waste dump

ERU10 reported that the Mayor of the municipality of Toyo in Kochi Prefecture had lost an election after he applied to start the process to see if the town would be a suitable site for a nuclear waste dump. (1) Now it appears that the ancient Korean capital of Kyongju has won a competition to become South Korea's biggest nuclear waste dump, but it will cost the Government £162 million. Four cities applied, but Kyongju won with nearly 90 percent of its voters saying they wanted to host a store of nearly 800,000 barrels of radioactive waste. (2)

Dounreay in Caithness was one of two potential sites for an Intermediate Level Waste dump announced by Nirex in the spring of 1989. Caithness District Council organized a referendum in November 1989 when 74% of voters opposed the plans, but more recently there has been some discussion about whether the County should volunteer for a new dump investigation. (3) Now, the board of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), says a nuclear waste repository would harm efforts to regenerate the economy after the rundown of Dounreay. (4)

- (1) Japan Times 23rd April 2007 <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/rss/nn20070423a5.html>
- (2) Reuters 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007 <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SEO240317.htm>
- (3) See History of Nuclear Waste Disposal Proposals in Britain  
[http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/reports/waste\\_disposal.php](http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/reports/waste_disposal.php)
- (4) Scotsman 16th May 2007 <http://thescotzman.scotzman.com/scotland.cfm?id=758462007>

## 12. Microgeneration grants slashed

The government has drawn sharp criticism from the country's microgeneration industry after re-launching its low carbon buildings programme – the controversial grant system which was suspended in March. (1) Key changes are the abolition of monthly allocations of funds, which embarrassed the DTI by running out on the first day of each month, a shortening of grant claim periods and huge reductions in grant money for solar PV and wind turbines. The maximum per household is now £2,500, down from £15,000. For wind systems it is halved to £2,500. As a result, the annual return on solar PV systems drops to uneconomic levels, analysts say. Grants for solar water heating, at £400, or ground source heat pumps, at £1,200, remain. One industry representative said "If I had to think of a way to destroy the renewables industry, even my worst case scenario would not have been as bad as this".

- (1) Guardian 10th May 2007 <http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,2076039,00.html>

## 13. Eco-houses

Bill Dunster, architect of the BedZed zero-carbon development in London, says that Gordon Brown could be remembered as the Prime Minister who made the first moves towards creating a

viable 21st century Britain, after Brown's announcement about eco-towns. If Brown can solve the shortage of affordable housing for key workers at the same time as providing an environmentally benign energy-security strategy, then this could be the most impressive piece of joined-up government thinking for decades.

If approximately 5,000 new homes a year were built to zero-carbon specifications then economies of scale would mean that the cost of microgeneration measures would come down to such an extent that they would be cheaper than purchasing fossil fuel. If Brown made low-cost loans available we could make 70% of the homes in the UK zero-carbon by 2050. (1)

Dunster made his remarks after Gordon Brown pledged to build five new 'eco-towns' with a total of 100,000 new homes powered by renewable electricity from sources including solar and wind energy. (2) The Conservatives accused Brown of simply re-announcing a year-old policy and said a pledge to create 10 new eco-towns a decade ago had only yielded one in 10 of the promised homes. (3)

(1) Guardian website 15th May 2007 [http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/bill\\_dunster/2007/05/eco\\_town\\_planning.html](http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/bill_dunster/2007/05/eco_town_planning.html)

FT 19<sup>th</sup> May 2007 <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/7a4abb6e-05a6-11dc-b151-000b5df10621.html>

(2) Observer 13th May 2007 <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/politics/story/0,,2078506,00.html>

(3) Independent 14th May 2007 <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/politics/article2539383.ece>

See also Independent 25<sup>th</sup> May 2007 [http://environment.independent.co.uk/climate\\_change/article2581246.ece](http://environment.independent.co.uk/climate_change/article2581246.ece)

#### **14. THORP - virtual reprocessing**

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has launched a public consultation into the NDA's proposal to allow advance allocation of THORP reprocessing products to overseas customers in certain circumstances. (1) Overseas customers send their spent fuel to Sellafield for reprocessing in THORP. This process sees re-usable nuclear materials, plutonium and uranium, being separated from waste. Once completed, the materials and waste are sent back to the customer. Under the NDA's proposal, the customer would receive an allocation of materials and waste from existing stocks which is equivalent to their spent fuel consignment although their materials may not yet have been reprocessed.

The obvious question is, if overseas customers materials can be sent back before their spent fuel is reprocessed, then why bother reprocessing it at all. In fact why bother going to the expense of re-opening THORP?

(1) NDA website 14th June 2007 <http://www.nda.gov.uk/news/advance-allocation.cfm>

DTI Consultation Document 14th June 2007 [Responses required by 26th July]

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file39759.pdf>