

A better energy policy

If we left energy policy to the Opposition we would be closing down our oil and gas fields more quickly, refusing to get more out of the ground, and urging the construction of more windfarms. This requires a big increase in the grid which will take years to plan, agree and build. Meanwhile we would be even more dependent on imports. We would be in more danger of rationing or interruptions to supply. Prices would rise to provide sufficient incentive to put in the extra wind and solar capacity.

These parties have energy policies based on the imperative of getting to net zero. They never seem to worry about security of supply or affordability. These two aims should be more central to energy policy.

The government has now accepted that getting more of our own oil and gas out makes sense. It did with some persuasion keep open a couple of coal stations for longer which has been helpful in the last two years.

We still do not have good ways of storing renewable power when it is available for times when there is no wind and sun. It may be possible to do this with battery stores and or making green hydrogen. Until that happens we need more back up power. As government and Opposition press on with wanting more things to run on electricity we need more reliable power, it would be good to put extra gas fired stations in to meet need.

There is no point in urging more people to switch cars and heating systems to electricity if there is insufficient renewable power on a reliable basis and insufficient grid space to carry the power from a distant offshore wind farm to a customer. There needs to be greater clarity about costs and charges and more consideration of affordability. The UK is suffering from too little domestic output at too high a price.