

Bring on the extra energy

The Regulator's announcement that they are seeking more gas supplies for the winter seems late when it has been obvious for a long time that we could be short of energy . There was a similar delay in coming to the late conclusion we needed to keep some coal fired power stations instead of demolishing them all, given the need for back up power for cold days with no wind. As it has turned out they have been running coal stations on and off throughout the summer on low wind days as well.

The best answer is still to get more UK gas out of the ground. The government changed policy some time ago to urge more UK production. The Chancellor's Financial Statement included some energy projects without time frames or details of how much extra production they could release. There were several potential prospects that we know about missing from the list. The Energy Ministers need to push hard to get the licencing authorities to expedite additional production on fields already producing, and speed the link in of fields discovered close to existing production capacity and pipelines to be tied into those facilities. None of this need take too long, and the sooner we have more domestic production the better.

This should not be contentious. Home production means the big tax revenues on such activities goes to the UK Treasury, not to a foreign government. It means more better paid jobs here in the the UK rather than abroad. It means less CO2 is generated than if we imported LNG, which creates more than twice as much CO2 as domestic pipelines gas. It takes a lot of energy to compress, cool, transport and convert the gas back which you do not need to do with gas flowing down a domestic pipe. It means more gas delivered to home customers with secure supply.