

More power please

The net zero policies followed by successive Labour, Coalition, Conservative and now Labour governments have left us dangerously short of electricity. The favourite option has been installing more and more inter connectors with European countries, leaving us very dependent on imports when the weather lets us down with renewables. This is especially dangerous as Europe is very short of energy and may not have the power to send when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine. French old nuclear plants are becoming unreliable and even Norway's hydro system can struggle for want of rain.

The U.K. needs to install a new fleet of gas power stations. These should draw on more U.K. domestic gas as outlined in the oil and gas industry blog, as well as importing from Norway, Qatar and the USA. There needs to be more gas storage to build our resilience. Old reservoirs can be adapted for this purpose. Gas generated power at present gas prices is the most economic way of covering demand when looking at pre tax costs of capital and running costs.

The U.K. should replace the nuclear capacity it will lose this decade with new nuclear, and if possible add to the 4.8 GW that disappears. It is likely the cheapest and best way to do this will be to agree to build a number of 300-450 MW generators to a proven design, pre fabricating as much as possible to speed site build times. Designs should not be varied. Past nuclear sites are obvious locations with a settled community and local workforce used to nuclear activity.

The U.K. with other leading renewable countries need to come to a determination about how best to store renewable energy when it is plentiful. Is this more pump storage, or big battery or hydrogen conversion? It is expensive stopping wind turbines when the wind is blowing because there is insufficient demand or a shortage of grid.