

Answers to my Written Parliamentary Questions – budget for carbon capture and storage

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (198584):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether she has made an estimate of the government's budget for carbon capture and storage expenditure over the next five years. (198584)

Tabled on: 11 September 2023

Answer:

Graham Stuart:

In the 2023 Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced an unprecedented £20 billion investment in the early development of carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS). The quantum of spend within a given period will depend on the outcome of commercial negotiations and will be subject to confirmation at the next and subsequent spending reviews.

The answer was submitted on 19 Sep 2023 at 11:40.

Comment. It is most important that this spending is reviewed and properly controlled. The UK needs to keep in line with major industrial nations like China and Germany, as CCUS is all additional cost. If we burden ourselves and competitors do not we will simply lose more industry and swell the bill for subsidies to try to offset the damage.

Answers to my Written Parliamentary Questions – electricity prices

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (198579):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, whether she has made a comparative assessment of UK electricity prices compared to those charged in the United States. (198579)

Tabled on: 11 September 2023

Answer:

Graham Stuart:

Domestic and industrial electricity prices for countries that are members of the International Energy Agency (IEA) are published in Quarterly Energy Prices tables 5.5.1 and 5.3.1 respectively.

Table 5.5.1:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/international-domestic-energy-prices> and Table 5.3.1:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/international-industrial-energy-prices>

Average electricity prices in the United States are among the lowest in the IEA, below those in the UK, and they have been one of the 5 countries with the lowest prices across the IEA since the mid-2000s. Electricity prices vary by locality in the United States based on the availability of power plants and fuels, local fuel costs, and pricing regulations.

JR Comment

This reveals that UK suffers a major competitive disadvantage by going for expensive electricity, along with high energy and carbon taxes. To have a stronger industrial base we need cheaper energy.

[Answers to my Written Parliamentary Questions – average retail pump price](#)

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (198580):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, how much and what proportion of the average retail pump price for a litre of petrol is tax as of 11 September 2023. (198580)

Tabled on: 11 September 2023

Answer:

Amanda Solloway:

As of 11 September 2023, average retail pump price for petrol was 153.1 pence/litre the total tax for this was 78.47 pence/litre or 51.3% of the pump price. This is comprised of fuel duty, currently held at the reduced rate of 52.95 pence and VAT amounting to 25.52 pence.

At Spring Budget 2023 the government announced continued support for households and businesses by maintaining the rates of fuel duty at the same levels for an additional 12 months, by extending the temporary 5p fuel duty cut and cancelling the planned inflation increase for 2023-24. That represents a saving for drivers this year of overall around £5bn and for the average car driver around £100 and around £200 since the 5p cut was introduced.

The answer was submitted on 19 Sep 2023 at 13:31.

HS 2

I voted against HS 2 when Parliament was asked to make decision on going ahead with the project. I had read the business case, which was as thin as it was stretched. Returns were poor on a modest planned spend. How much worse they now look given the huge cost overrun.

The original case placed emphasis on shorter journey times by allowing the trains to travel at speeds which cars and coaches are banned from trying for green and safety reasons. When people objected that those on business could work on a train lowering the costs travel time the government switched the defence of the project to needing more capacity.

It was never clear we needed extra north-south capacity . The shortages were on prime commuter routes at peak hours. This ceased to be true after covid lockdowns led to much more home working.

It would be a good idea to pause additional contracts to build more. The railways need to come up with a new business model now commuting is no longer so big. Railway capacity where needed can be increased with digital signalling.

Getting people back to work

I have drawn attention to the loss of nearly 800,000 self employed since February 2020, and proposed tax changes to reverse the losses. I am surprised Ministers have allowed this to happen and have accepted the official argument that the loss is down to covid, when the losses have continued after the end of lockdowns. There may well be people on benefits who would be both better off and happier if they worked for themselves, who have been put off by the paperwork and tax issues it raises. the rules now make it difficult for a self employed person to get a contract from a company.

The collapse of self employment is part of a wider problem Ministers are trying to address. They say maybe 500,00 people of working age are now signed off from work owing to ill health who would like to return to work. Whilst no-one who is badly incapacitated should be required to work, those with some physical conditions impeding mobility may well be able to work with computer assistance or from home, whilst those with mental health issues might find work can be part of the answer or part of the way of managing the condition.

The Secretary of State has announced various initiatives to tackle some of these problems. There is considerable delay, with elongated timetables for consultations to be followed by possible legislation. It should be time to accelerate the possible. I cannot believe it is against the law to run the Employment and benefit system to encourage and help people back to work. After all, that was the main point behind the legislation and reforms bringing in Universal Credit.

Ministers need to push harder. The economy will grow faster and the budget deficit will fall if we can persuade and help more people into work. They will also be better off.