

Written Answers from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Regarding Oil and Gas

The Department which is meant to be increasing UK gas output to displace imports is still very reluctant to talk about what it and its quangos are doing to make this possible. The cited source shows just 3 new fields coming into production in 2022, Blythe, Elgood and Tolmount. There is no mention of the status of Cambo or Jackdaw. Ministers should require more open reporting and more progress to fill the gaps in our home energy supply. There are several proven fields that need investment and production licences. The more we produce oil and gas at home the more tax revenue we generate, the more transport cost we save, and the less CO₂ that is produced. Ministers accept this case but need to make sure the quangos reflect their policy. The Treasury needs to stop the windfall taxes which threaten future investment and will reduce revenues in the medium term.

The news on nuclear has also been suppressed. We need to know if it is safe to carry on with current plants for longer pending replacement by new nuclear. Over the weekend EDF was talking of two early nuclear closures owing in part to the windfall tax.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (112036):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will list the gas fields that gained production licences in 2022. (112036)

Tabled on: 16 December 2022

Answer:

Graham Stuart:

While the 33rd UK Offshore Licensing Round opened in October, awards for licences under this round will not be made until next year. Awards under the previous, 32nd licensing round were made in 2020. There have therefore not been any awards for new licences in 2022.

Oil and gas fields, after being licensed, require several consents issued by regulators, such as Development and Production Consents granted by the North Sea Transition Authority (NSTA) before they can begin production. Several fields have received these consents in 2022.

A full list of these consents can be found on the NSTA's website:

<https://www.nstauthority.co.uk/data-centre/data-downloads-and-publications/field-data/>.

The answer was submitted on 28 Dec 2022 at 10:12.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (112035):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an estimate of the amount of coal generating capacity could be made available on stand by notices. (112035)

Tabled on: 16 December 2022

Answer:

Graham Stuart:

Upon agreement between the Electricity System Operator and coal operators, there are 3 coal plants still operating in Great Britain with contingency contracts until March 2023. This totals approximately 2.4GW of capacity which can be called upon if needed for the purposes of security of supply.

The answer was submitted on 28 Dec 2022 at 10:13.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (112034):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has reviewed the planned dates for the closure of nuclear power stations; and whether he has made an assessment of the impact of postponing the closure dates on the safety of those stations. (112034)

Tabled on: 16 December 2022

Answer:

Graham Stuart:

The continued operation of, and any extensions to, operational dates for any UK nuclear power station is a decision for the operator, EDF, and the independent nuclear regulator, the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR), based on safety and commercial considerations. If the ONR has any safety concerns, they will not let the reactor return to service unless and until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed and may require more regular shutdowns for ongoing review. Operational dates are kept under constant review by EDF and the ONR.

The answer was submitted on 28 Dec 2022 at 10:15.