

Can the country and our children afford nuclear power?

The Larkfleet Group of Companies is a local medium-sized business that focuses primarily on building energy-efficient new homes and developing renewable energy projects.



The UK government's energy policy includes nuclear power, fracking and gas (ie: fossil fuels). There is a complete absence of support for renewable energy. Although the government may say it remains committed to renewables, its actions don't match its rhetoric.

Renewable energy is a large part of the business of The Larkfleet Group of Companies and the government's policy is therefore clearly a cause of concern. I am told repeatedly that the government wants to deliver energy with little or no subsidy and this is why it does not support renewable energy.

This might be sensible but the subsidies elsewhere dwarf those for renewables - and for what reason?

A highly conservative estimate* puts the cost of power from the planned nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C for its 35 year initial contract period at £31.2 billion more than onshore wind and £39.9 billion more than solar power.

This represents a 'nuclear premium' of between £2,700 and £3,400 for every individual in the UK's current population. If the cost were applied just to the population below the age of 16 - who have no choice over the matter and who stand to inherit new nuclear's infrastructure - it would represent a bill of between £14,200 and £18,000 each.

There is also a further cost of between £54 billion and £132 billion for waste management and a further £100 million per year of additional security costs applying to the nuclear supply chain. Insurance costs could also add billions over the lifetime of the plant.

These figures make nonsense of the Treasury's and energy department's claim about no subsidies. Why, then, is the government so keen to give the

nuclear industry a second life, when the alternative of continued subsidy for renewable energy development is not just cheaper but better for meeting our Paris COP commitments on climate change?

The Japanese experience at Fukushima and the Ukrainian experience at Chernobyl - a disaster which happened 30 years ago this week - should also be a lesson to all on the risks involved.

The money that my children will have to pay for a technology that effectively undermines credible and effective renewable energy is plainly crazy. The improvements in renewable energy that were coming through - including cost reduction and battery storage technologies - are now at risk.

Government policy is destroying renewable energy companies like mine which are now struggling to survive.

The renewables industry has already delivered cost savings of over 80 per cent and has been working actively and successfully to deliver a subsidy-free business model. However, we need more time to develop the new technologies to deliver renewable energy at nil subsidy cost.

The destruction of the renewables industry in the UK is projected to result in 27,000 job losses - including the loss of some of the best people in Europe who were driving the UK to become a world leader in innovation.

The Port Talbot steel job losses pale into insignificance when you consider what is happening to the renewables industry. If only a fraction of the nuclear subsidies were made available for renewables, we would create many sustainable jobs and keep the UK at the heart of the international renewables industry.

It is tragic that this opportunity has been lost.

These benefits will never be delivered by nuclear power, so why commit a ridiculous amount of the UK's money when the alternative is better, safer and more cost effective and helps to achieve our Paris 2015 targets more easily and quickly? The Treasury's completely blinkered approach to nuclear power needs to be challenged.

Why won't the government commit to an independent energy cost and technology audit to give the public clear facts and

not bankrupt future generations with a policy which many of them (given the alternative) would not want?

Please ask the question of your elected politicians before it is too late.

By Karl Hick, CEO, The Larkfleet Group of Companies

* Data from report dated October 2015: Solar Trade Association - Comparing the cost of electricity generation from Hinkley Point C with solar and flexibility mechanisms. An STA Analytics short report.

Larkfleet Homes announces four new developments.

We are delighted to announce our latest developments in Rutland, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. The developments at Greetham, Pinchbeck, Thorney and Doddington are now taking registrations of interest.

If you are looking to purchase your first new home this year, make sure you register today.

The developments will be a mix of different house sizes, some of which are perfect for first-time buyers. Solar panels will be fitted as standard and each home will meet our high environmental and sustainability standards, thus ensuring your home's running costs are kept to a minimum.

So why should you buy your first new home from us?

- We are an established, award-winning family-run business with strong focus on sustainability.

- We offer a number of schemes to help make your first purchase easy, including the government-backed 'Help to Buy' Scheme.

- We are a 'local' business, employing and supporting local people and businesses.

If you are a first time buyer and not sure quite where to start your journey to your new home, our 'First Time Buyers Guide' will take you through all that you need to know.

Larkfleet Homes shortlisted as Housebuilder of the Year

Larkfleet Homes has been shortlisted for the Construction News Awards, Housebuilder of the Year 2016.

The Construction News Awards celebrate their twentieth year this year and are renowned for being the most prestigious and coveted awards in the UK construction industry. They are known throughout the industry for their rigorous judging process and panel of respected judges.

Karl Hick, CEO of Larkfleet Homes, said: "We are delighted to be a finalist in the Housebuilder of the Year category. It is an endorsement from expert, independent judges of the quality of the homes that we build. It sends a strong signal to house buyers that they can purchase a Larkfleet home with confidence."

We have had a fantastic twelve months which has included expanding

our geographical reach with two new brands, Larkfleet South West and Larkfleet Norfolk and Suffolk. Our portfolio now includes these and our more established brands of Allison Homes and Allison Luxury Homes, as well as Larkfleet Homes, Larkfleet Exclusives and The Croft."

Larkfleet Homes specialises in sustainable housebuilding and development. We continue to invest substantially into our research and development programmes focusing on this. We have also invested in a number of community based projects, which include the development of the Larkfleet Community Fund and sponsorship of the Greater Peterborough University Technical College."

To be named as one of the finalists for this year's Construction News Awards, Housebuilder of the Year is an honour in itself and we look forward to showcasing the company further during the next stages of the competition."

Lark Energy teams up with university on storage research

Lark Energy Commercial is teaming up with a group of Masters students at Cranfield University to explore the costs and benefits of linking various battery storage technologies with solar and other renewables. The group, under the leadership of Patrick Luk, Professor of Electrical Engineering, will be looking at how storage can extend the benefits of solar power into the evening and how it can address the increasing grid challenges facing decentralised energy. It will also seek to identify which technologies are most appropriate for specific commercial applications.

The project marks the latest collaboration in a growing partnership between the Larkfleet Group and Cranfield University. It builds on a joint Knowledge Transfer Partnership looking at new housing and energy technologies and a forthcoming R&D project on a new solar technology in which Lark Energy is investing.

New planning website aids consultation

Larkfleet Homes has launched a new website which gives details of all its current development proposals and invites input from local people – an invitation which is repeated at public exhibitions of development plans and in literature distributed to homes around each potential site.

The company prides itself on its engagement with local people during the planning process and can point at several examples of changes made to plans as a result of suggestions during these consultations.

The new website is at www.larkfleetplanning.co.uk.



Government releases policy paper on garden villages

As promoted last year by ENHB guest blogger Lord Matthew Taylor the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued a policy paper inviting expressions of interest from local authorities who want to create new garden villages.

The prospectus sets out how the government can support local areas that want to create new garden villages, towns and cities. It offers tailored support to local areas with proposals to deliver 1,500 homes and above.

It is divided into two parts covering expressions of interest for different scales of development.

The first part of the prospectus invites expressions of interest by 31 July 2016 for new garden villages of between 1,500 to 10,000 homes.

The second part of the prospectus invites expressions of interest on a rolling basis in new garden towns and cities of more than 10,000 homes.

The DCLG says that it is taking action on a range of fronts to ensure new homes get built. This includes speeding up the planning system; ensuring land for housing is available and gets built out, ensuring the use of brownfield land is maximised, providing new opportunities for custom and self-builders, backing SME builders like Larkfleet Homes and providing more opportunities for home ownership through Help to Buy and our Starter Homes programme.

Large new settlements have a key role to play, not only in meeting the UK'S housing needs in the short-term, but also in providing a stable pipeline of housing well into the future, the DCLG said.

