Reform North Yorkshire Energy Policy

John Heath September 2023

Reform UK will make 8 major policy changes:

1. **Reform UK will reduce the electricity costs by 30% by cancelling the green levies and the excessive de-carbonisation costs in the currently rigged market.**

2. **Reform UK will revoke all net zero legislation, including the Climate Change Act 2008, as amended in 2019, the totalitarian 2023 Energy Bill when enacted and all related Orders.**

3. **Reform UK will not force you to replace your gas or oil boilers with heat pumps.**

4. **Reform UK will not set targets for the market share of electric vehicles or for the ending of the sale of petrol or diesel vehicles.**

5. **Reform UK will not force customers of energy companies to face enforced loss of supply through smart meters and smart appliances without their consent and through agreement with their supplier.**

6. **Reform UK will remove the coercion on homeowners relating to energy efficiency expenditure.**

7. **Reform UK rejects the de-industrialisation of the UK caused by uncompetitive energy prices.**

8. **Reform UK will improve energy security by exploiting the UK's own resources.**

The major policies are supported by plans and other policies in all main areas of the UK energy market. The policy objectives are:

Affordable, competitive, reliable and secure energy supply for everyone, consistent with high environmental standards. The customer, not the energy producer, comes first. The market must replace the failed central planning of the last 20 years.

1. Policy Objectives

Affordable, competitive, reliable and secure energy supply for everyone, consistent with high environmental standards.

The customer, not the energy producer, comes first. The market must replace the failed central planning of the last 20 years.[1]

The Westminster parties have failed totally in meeting these simple but essential objectives. Their single minded focus on one environmental issue – CO2 emissions – has resulted in electricity bills up to 30%[2] too high, while the world's investment of around $4 trillion in renewables between 2015 and 2023[3] has had no impact on CO2 levels as measured at the Mauna Loa volcano[4]. Renewables have not delivered on their primary objective. This would not matter if they were economic in the market, but that is a matter for debate. Energy supply has become less reliable whenever the wind does not blow, and less secure as UK gas and oil resources have not been developed, placing the country in the hands of overseas suppliers. Ironically the UK has not fracked for gas, but then buys fracked gas from the USA which has to be liquefied, transported and regasified, increasing costs and CO2 emissions.

Reform UK rejects the de-industrialisation of the UK caused by uncompetitive energy prices.

Exporting CO2 emissions and jobs to China and India is not the answer to our economic and environmental concerns.

2. The Legislative Trap

The Westminster parties have not only agreed on an economically and environmentally damaging energy policy, they have locked the policy into legislation that includes impossible targets, unreasonable assumptions and outright customer coercion, all of which penalises ordinary working people. Any amendment to the policies can be subject to judicial review.

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Reform UK will remove the coercion on homeowners relating to energy efficiency expenditure.

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[1] "Investment decision-making has been effectively quasi-renationalised." Professor Helm, Cost of Energy Review 2017

[2] Helm in his Cost of Energy Review in 2017 pointed out that the Climate Change Commission had identified excess decarbonisation costs of 20%. That has only grown as energy security problems have increased when the wind does not blow. *Note:- The 2017 figure of 20% is old and covers just "legacy" costs – overpriced old contracts. No one really knows this because of all the hidden costs and multiple interventions over the years, but more recent estimates would put the levies at 30%.*

[3] International Energy Agency report: World Energy Investment 2023

[4] See Annex 1

[5] Legislation in Scotland and Wales will be a matter for the devolved bodies.

It is time for the UK to allow markets to work and for technological change to deliver improved environmental outcomes and real improvements for customers. Central control by an international and national elite is not the way forward.

3. Making Energy Affordable and Reliable

The principal area of high cost is electricity, but the interaction of electricity and gas means that the two energy supplies need to be considered. For over 20 years central planning of the electricity sector, most recently tied in with the netzero targets, has eroded the transparency of the costs and driven electricity to become more expensive in the UK than in almost all comparable countries. It is a failure of central planning and more central planning will also fail[6]. The panoply of laws, policies, regulations and mechanisms have created hidden costs and hidden subsidies[7]. The extreme nature of the failure is demonstrated by the need since 2022 to have energy price caps and taxpayer subsidies in order to keep energy affordable. The consequence of price caps is that competition is eliminated, and suppliers either make excessive profits or losses, depending on the cap. As the supplier bankruptcies have now ceased, it is reasonable to assume that the modelled price caps allow more than adequate returns as they enable cartel operation.

Why has netzero central planning failed?

The economist Professor Stern set out in the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change[8] his proposals for tackling climate change. He advocated that the primary mechanism should be a form of carbon taxation, allied to investment to enable adaptation. Subsequent UK governments have decided to take the riskier and more intrusive approach of setting specific targets and seeking to establish a decarbonisation plan. The overall UK target is currently "net zero" by 2050, although opposition parties want to meet this target earlier, with Labour setting a target of 2030.

Within this overall target are a raft of interim targets, such as shifting all electricity generation to "clean" sources by 2035. The targets assume that renewables are cheap, that grid level battery storage will become economic in this decade, that electricity can replace gas for heating and can replace fossil fuels for transportation before 2050. The measures are simply assumed to be affordable, with no published cost benefit analysis.

Evidence increasingly suggests that these targets are fantasies and their achievement would make energy unaffordable and unreliable. The latest projections of electricity generation costs by the Department for Net Zero and Energy Security (DNZES) seek to justify the target by making unrealistic assumptions on the cost of renewables, especially wind.[9] These figures have already proved totally unrealistic in the failure of the government to get proposals for offshore wind projects even at high prices. As pointed out by the energy analyst David Turver[10] this outcome shows that the government

[6] The principles of Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments on the failings of technocrats apply today more than ever.

[7] "The scale of the multiple interventions in the electricity market is now so great that few if any could list them all, and their interactions are poorly understood." Helm, Cost of Energy Review 2017.

[8] Published in 2006. Professor Stern believes that climate change is the critical problem for the earth. He is chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment.

[9] See response of Reform UK Harrogate and Knaresborough and Skipton and Ripon

[10] AR5 Results Puncture Renewables Fantasy https://davidturver.substack.com/p/ar5-results-puncture-renewables-fantasy?r=1oshda&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email&s=03

cannot achieve its netzero targets – unless it commits to much higher energy prices or higher taxes to subsidise the wind sector[11]. Affordability must become a real constraint on netzero projects.

What is the lowest cost answer?

Westminster politicians frequently refer to renewables (they mean wind primarily) as the cheapest energy source. This view is supported by claims from the biochemist Simon Evans who is editor in chief of Carbon Brief[12]. Alternative views come from Gordon Hughes (Professor of Economics at Edinburgh University)[13] and more recently from the engineer Kathryn Porter[14].

Wind power is expensive because:

- Capital and operating costs are higher than forecast, especially offshore wind. This is because both wind turbine and offshore platform technologies are already mature and forecast cost reductions are minimal.

- Renewable project costs exclude items which are passed directly through to customers under the distorted market arrangements:

    - Direct costs of connection to the transmission or distribution grid.

    - Grid reinforcement and extension costs needed to absorb the variable power and maintain quality of supply.

    - Back up costs to meet the intermittency of supply. Renewables contracts are not for firm supply, and yet renewables have priority in despatch. Back up costs involve a second level of capacity[15], availability of alternatives and flexible operation of the alternative. In the UK in reality these can only be met primarily by gas fired generation, which has to operate inefficiently in order to be available to meet variable output from renewables.

    - Balancing costs, to meet short term variability in supply and to follow fluctuations in demand that renewables cannot follow.

    - Payments to curtail supply from renewables when supply exceeds demand.

    - Subsidies that have been used to enable projects under the Renewables Obligation and other mechanisms, and which are met by customers through inclusion in prices.

[11] Note that the government has accepted small high cost projects in geothermal, tide and wave, solar and onshore wind. These will add to future electricity prices.
[12] Record Low Price for UK Offshore Wind is Nine Times Cheaper than Gas, Carbon Brief, July 2022
[13] Why is Wind Power so Expensive, GWPF, 2012
[14] The Myth that Renewables are Cheap Persist in Part because of the Flawed Use of LCOE, Watt-Logic, August 2023
[15] In 2022 Great Britain had 100 GW of generation capacity, but peak demand from the grid was only 49 MW. This means that over 50% of capacity is there for back up and reserve, compared to 12-15% in systems without intermittent renewables.

The extra cost of the above is not easy to determine, as the data is hidden in the standard statistics. For example, the cost of back up is simply treated as a cost of gas fired generation, and not attributed to the intermittency of wind power. Also the costs vary hour by hour and year by year as they are dependent on when the wind blows. Any calculation is at best an average, and assumptions for the future can easily be manipulated. What is clear is that the cost to the customer of intermittent renewables is significantly higher than the reported costs of wind power generation in particular. Any policy response should seek to address the need for accountability for delivering reliable power and the need for transparency of costs, subsidies and cross subsidies.

What is the role of gas in the current and future electricity market?

Currently the electricity market is dependent on gas as the primary means of meeting demand that is more than baseload supply from nuclear and not covered by renewables, notably wind. When there is more than enough wind energy, gas is not used, but as soon as the wind falls short then gas is needed. In extreme conditions, old coal fired generation is still called up.

The Climate Change Commission projections for netzero in 2050 continue to have a role for gas in the electricity sector, if not in the heating sector. This is because the increased demand from electric vehicles and heat pumps cannot all be met by renewables despite massive investments in projects and grid reinforcement. However, the government wants to eliminate fossil fuels from electricity generation by 2035, and Labour wants to do it by 2030. The only alternative to gas would be grid scale battery storage, but this is not currently available or technically feasible.. In a wind lull storage would need to cover demand for 10 days in winter. A study in Germany[16] has suggested a need to invest €16 trillion to store 16 TWh to cover the wind lull, and for the UK the figure would be say £10 trillion. The battery manufacturing capacity and the related mining capacity do not exist. Grid reinforcement costs are unknown but would be substantial, and the land requirement would also be significant. The picture below is of the largest UK battery, which at best would supply only 196 MWh and run out in 2 hours, not 10 days:

[16] Germany's Energiewende, where we really stand, Kompendium der Energiewende, November 2017

Harmony Energy Battery in Cottingham

The only realistic alternative to gas fired generation in the long term may be small modular reactor nuclear. Until such time as that technology is proven and economic the UK should continue to utilise gas for power generation.

What is the reliability problem?

To date the UK has avoided blackouts caused by inadequate generation since the early 1960s. However, the reserve margin when the wind does not blow, and especially at winter evening peak times, is now very tight and emergency measures are under consideration at National Grid, including payments to customers with smart meters to be disconnected at system stress periods. This Demand Flexibility Service first ran in early 2023 and will be repeated this winter.

Reliability of supply should be a joint responsibility of all electricity sector participants, but electricity suppliers (or retailers) and renewables generators have been able to avoid this obligation. For example, renewables generators have priority despatch rights, meaning that their output must be taken, but have no obligation under contract if the wind does not blow or the sun shine. Suppliers who offer renewables only contracts to customers only contract for the intermittent renewables supplies. When the wind does not blow, they are not covered by contract and buy from the so-called balancing market, which was not intended for bulk purchases and which can see high and volatile prices. Not surprisingly, when faced with spiking market prices following the cessation of Russian gas supplies into Europe, these suppliers suffered financial distress and some went bankrupt, such as Bulb, which was then sold to Octopus Energy with the liabilities not taken on by Octopus passed on to all customers in higher prices.

Reliability has gone missing in the market, leading to inappropriate behaviours by market participants and a reliance on central mechanisms to cover risks and pass all costs onto customers irrespective of the supplier. An administered capacity market mechanism is in place to buy back up capacity centrally and again pass costs on to all customers. Given the system stress whenever the wind does not blow, this mechanism cannot be deemed a success, as may be anticipated from a centrally planned scheme.

Policies to correct the failings

The multiple problems of the energy sector are widely recognised, but most solutions call for yet more support and subsidies for renewables and more central planning, all of which will increase prices to customers and do nothing to improve reliability. While central activities are needed in the short term to unravel the failed laws, policies and regulations, the objective should be to return to a market driven energy sector that places the customer first, not the means of energy production. The basis for the proposed changes is the re-introduction of firm contracts between generators and suppliers, especially to cover periods of system stress due to wind lulls and/or high demand. At the same time all subsidies, cross subsidies, hidden subsidies and operating distortions should be eliminated so that there is cost transparency, with any intervention for environmental reasons also being clearly identified. This process will take time and will highlight stranded costs, but the removal of subsidies should reduce prices by around 10% initially, while the removal of excessive stranded costs caused by past policy failures will in the longer term take out an estimated further 20%. Beyond that a return to competitive market operations will lead to a change in the upstream energy mix based on competition that will be optimal for low prices for customers while preserving reliability of supply. The market can resolve the issues of intermittency and reliability that central planning has failed to address.

If at any stage there are major issues of affordability or reliability (e.g. rolling blackouts or a need to impose an energy cap to protect ordinary customers), then an emergency would be declared to enable radical actions to speed up the changes.

The energy regulator will be required to identify and quantify within 3 months all subsidies and cross subsidies and distorting system and market mechanisms in the electricity and gas markets, whether these are legally embedded such as the Renewables Obligation or part of operating procedures such as priority despatch rights for renewables or the allocation of generation connection and reinforcement costs to grid rather than project costs.

The regulator will be required to inform all licensees that they have responsibilities for reliability of supply to end customers.

The regulator will be required to incorporate into supplier licences the obligation to demonstrate within 6 months that its electricity purchases are covered by firm contracts at times of peak demand and in the eventuality of a wind lull. In addition the regulator will be required to include in generation licences the obligation to cooperate with suppliers in providing firm contracts for supply during these periods and to offer firm and reliable supplies if requested to do so by suppliers. These measures will return the balancing market to its proper role and establish reliability as part of the operation of the market. Customers will no longer be exposed to high risk energy procurement strategies of market participants, and suppliers will be less likely to impose costs on customers through bankruptcies driven by these high risk strategies.

The regulator will require the system operator to operate despatch in line with contracts between generators and suppliers after the 6 month period, with uncontracted generators bidding in for uncovered demand.

At the end of the 6 month period at the latest the energy caps will be removed and suppliers will be expected to offer competitive prices and products to customers. The regulator will be required to report stranded legacy costs arising as a consequence of the new firm contracts and the removal of subsidies and cross subsidies.

Upon identification of all subsidies and legacy costs, government will work with the regulator to determine how stranded costs from previous policies and contracts are to be allocated between customers, taxpayers and investors, taking account of the overriding need to reduce the impact of high prices on customers and to eliminate any excess profits. If the analysis demonstrates evidence of cartel activities, then the government will refer the matter to the Competition and Markets Authority.

4. Energy and the Environment

The above policies will make transparent the extent that taxes, subsidies and cross subsidies have increased energy bills. They constitute a range of carbon taxes that go well beyond the taxes that are explicit in the Emissions Trading Scheme. The scheme itself is a cap set administratively on industries including power generation, who can then trade emissions. The initial tax was set at £50.00 per tonne of CO2 equivalent emitted, and in 2023 this had risen to £83 per tonne. This itself will inevitably increase the cost of living, but the other policies, regulations and cross subsidies in the electricity and gas sectors constitute a much higher burden and act as a quasi-tax on emissions. One consequence is to reduce UK competitiveness, especially in manufacturing, which leads to the transfer of manufacturing to countries utilising energy sources with higher CO2 emissions. Netzero can seem to be a success because of de-industrialisation and the export of emissions.

Rather than continuing with these complex mechanisms and their costs to businesses and households, the carbon tax regime will be scrapped and replaced with a simple rate of tax on fossil fuel use. This will only be introduced after the other taxes and cross subsidies in energy have been identified and eliminated, and will be set at a rate that is consistent with energy being affordable and with UK business being competitive internationally.

Environmental policies should balance all environmental impacts of the supply and use of energy, such as land use, landscape damage, pollution and particulate emissions, impacts on wildlife in the air, on the ground and in the ocean as well as CO2 emissions.

Energy Efficiency

Despite allegations to the contrary from activists, the UK has undertaken initiatives to improve energy efficiency over the last 30 years, by way of technical specifications in new and refurbished buildings, improved performance of engines and motors, increased insulation. Most of the investment has been market driven rather than imposed, although grants have provided support. The data from the Energy Performance Certification scheme makes it clear that much of the marginal improvements in energy efficiency may not provide a return to households. The investment will not yield sufficient savings in energy to justify the cost, and it will therefore damage UK productivity by allocating investment to the wrong projects.

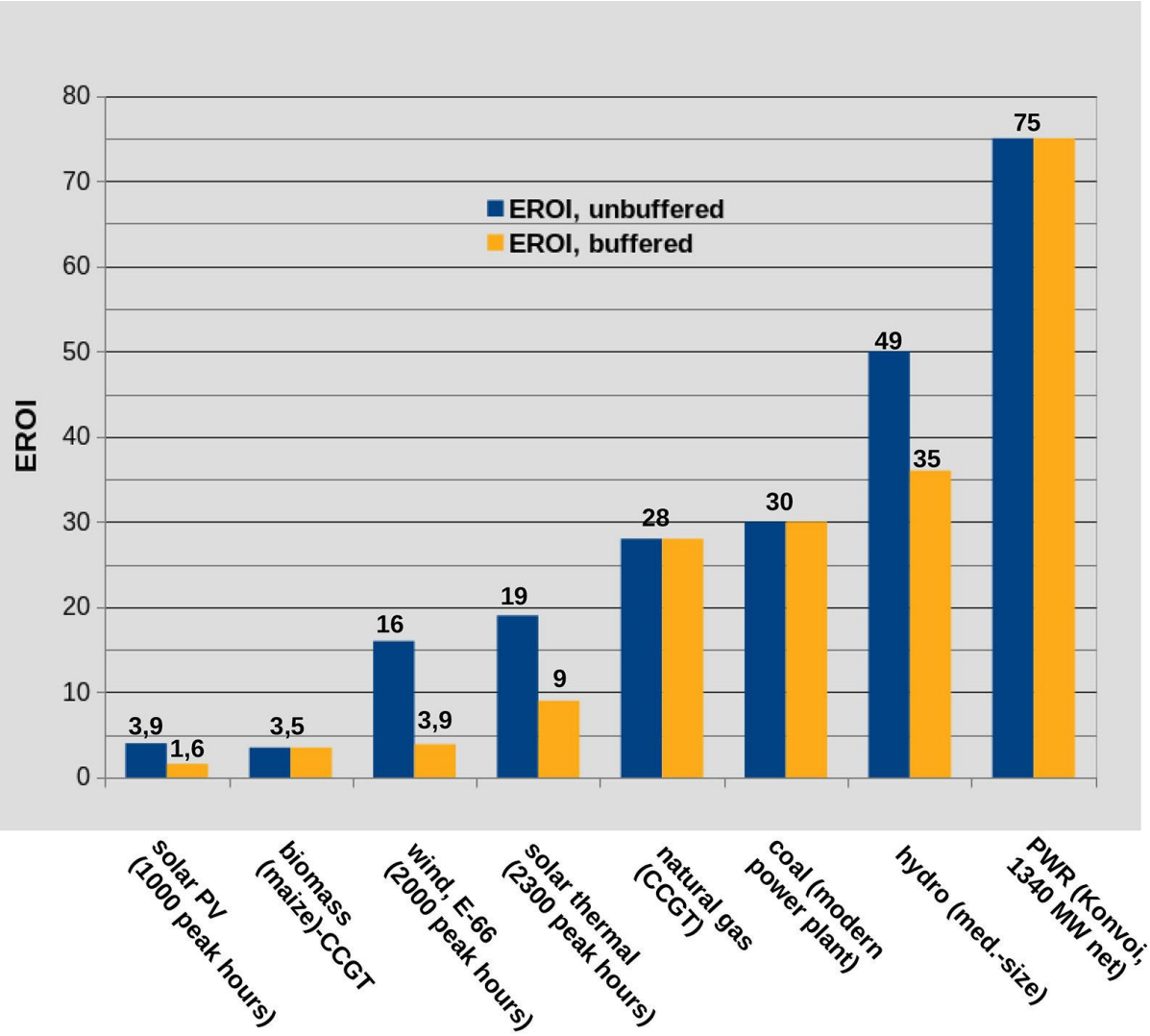
Any form of coercion by policy or regulation to force investment on households, landlords or businesses as envisaged by the Westminster parties will be removed from law or other regulation. The market can drive improvements supported by grants where households cannot afford an investment that will give an economic return. Technical specifications will continue to be tightened in line with technological progress, but without requiring the unwarranted cost of retrofitting.

5. Electricity Production

The best means of meeting customer demand for electricity is for the market to determine which technologies and energy sources best deliver affordable, competitive and reliable electricity. Environmental issues are an important factor, of course, and not just CO2 emissions. Land use, impact on wildlife (birds, bats, whales, insects), pollutants are all important factors. An optimal environmental answer would recognise the energy efficiency of the production process as well as the direct environmental impacts.

Low Carbon Electricity Production – the Role of Nuclear

Based on the metric Energy Returned on Energy Invested[17] there is a clear hierarchy of energy sources.



EROIs of Several Electricity Generation Technologies

EROI or EROEI is a measure of energy produced divided by the energy needed as input. It gives a societal view on the need for energy production technologies to be energy efficient. Although it does not match short term to the prices of specific projects, it gives a longer term guide to the economics of those technologies. Note that the comparator should be between reliable technologies and

[17] Energy Intensities, EROI (Energy returned on Invested) for Electric Energy Sources, Weissbach et al, EPJ Web of Conferences, 2018

therefore the wind and solar comparisons should be with the yellow bars that incorporate the energy inputs for storage of the intermittent electricity production. In the above PWR is nuclear pressurised water reactor.

If the UK is to be serious regarding CO2 emissions and other environmental issues, then the one technology that would justify special treatment is nuclear.[18] To some extent this is already the case as the current nuclear fleet must operate as baseload as it is not able to follow the fluctuations of demand. Future nuclear development can be based on large modular or small modular reactors which may be able to operate flexibly and therefore compete with gas fired generation in the role of following the fluctuations of demand. Construction and development worldwide is currently dominated by China and Russia[19].

Reform UK would accelerate the development of nuclear power as the primary means of controlling CO2 emissions by ensuring a guaranteed share of the electricity market up to 30%, with a review depending on the success of projects.

The regulation of nuclear power projects will be brought under the sole control of a department of Energy, with a brief to halve the costs and time of the planning process.

6. Upstream Oil and Gas – Energy Security

Fossil fuels remain abundant as more reserves are proven each year than are exhausted. Current reserves of oil and gas are estimated at 50 years' consumption, while for coal the figure is over 100 years[20]. But there is always more than the reserves, because what is currently unknown or thought of as uneconomic will become economic to exploit; as McFadden puts it: "It is also important to note that global proven reserves have increased over time. This, as we previously touched upon, is mainly a consequence of improved technology and extraction methods that have made previously unexploitable oil reserves economically and physically viable for extraction." In terms of a shortage of a commodity, there are others which are of greater concern, notably copper which will be needed for the electrification of modern industrial societies and the integration of ever more renewables under netzero. Copper is extracted using fossil fuels intensively, generally in places where there is no robust electricity supply, especially one utilising renewables. Current economically exploitable reserves of copper are inadequate for the transition to netzero, placing both time and cost constraints on unrealistic netzero targets. The United States Geological Survey and the Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR) highlight the real resources crunch under netzero, covering more than just copper.

[18] Note that solar has a much higher return when used for direct heating as in rooftop PV, rather than for power generation

[19] https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/current-and-future-generation/plans-for-new-reactors-worldwide.aspx

[20] McFadden, Don't Worry, we'll never run out of oil, November 2022. https://interestingengineering.com/science/we-will-never-run-out-of-oil

Metal	Element	Total metal required produce one generation of technology units to phase out fossil fuels (tonnes)	Global Metal Production 2019 (tonnes)	Years to produce metal at 2019 rates of production (years)
Copper	Cu	4 575 523 674	24 200 000	189,1
Nickel	Ni	940 578 114	2 350 142	400,2
Lithium	Li	944 150 293	95 170 *	9920,7
Cobalt	Co	218 396 990	126 019	1733,0
Graphite (natural flake)	C	8 973 640 257	1 156 300 ♦	3287,9
Graphite (synthetic)	C		1 573 000 ♦	-
Silicon (Metallurgical)	Si	49 571 460	8 410 000	5,9
Vandium	V	681 865 986	96 021 *	7101,2
Rare Earth Metals	-			
Neodymium	Nd	965 183	23 900	40,4
Germanium	Ge	4 163 162	143	29113,0
Lanthanum	La	5 970 738	35 800	166,8
Praseodymium	Pr	235 387	7 500	31,4
Dysprosium	Dy	196 207	1 000	196,2
Terbium	Tb	16 771	280	59,9

* Estimated from mining production. All other values are refining production values.
♦ Natural flake graphite and synthetic graphite was combined to estimate total production

(Source: BGR 2021, USGS, Friedrichs 2022)

Oil and gas will need to remain in use for most of this century under any scenario, and especially if the extension of renewables proves unaffordable or unrealistic due to the above constraints. Even coal consumption is now rising to record levels according to the International Energy Agency[21] because of higher gas prices and the fact that developing countries find renewables unsatisfactory for powering economic growth. Fossil fuels of course have many other uses aside from energy – "Petrochemicals derived from oil and natural gas make the manufacturing of over 6,000 everyday products and high-tech devices possible. Major petrochemicals—including ethylene, propylene, acetylene, benzene, and toluene, as well as natural gas constituents like methane, propane, and ethane—are the feedstock chemicals for the production of many of the items we use and depend on every day"[22]. Especially critical is the production of fertilisers. As Professor Channa Prakash points out: "Organic farming yields 18.4% lower than conventional farming….so it is foolhardy to embrace organic food if you want to save the earth". Sri Lanka's experiment with organic farming resulted in shortages, inflation and riots. The UK's only fertiliser plant has closed.

The Westminster parties and activists such as Just Stop Oil are all against further oil and gas production in the UK, although the Tories hide behind drilling regulations and windfall taxes to discourage domestic exploitation of the country's significant resources. This blind adherence to environmentalist dogma will continue to expose UK households and businesses to higher costs and lower energy

[21] Global coal demand set to remain at record levels in 2023, July 2023, https://www.iea.org/news/global-coal-demand-set-to-remain-at-record-levels-in-2023
[22] US Department of Energy

security, while actually increasing global CO2 emissions due to transportation, liquefaction and regasification. It is unsound economically and environmentally.

Exploiting the UK's gas reserves is especially important as gas is the only energy source available for power generation when the wind does not blow, and the UK was subject to the stresses of the European gas market following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These stresses have not gone away, and volatile European prices could still lead to another energy cost crisis this winter.

While the oil market is fully international with low transportation costs, the gas market is better described as a series of regional markets with significant costs involved in trading between the regional hubs. Although the UK is part of the European market, it also has the opportunity of earmarking by contract a proportion of domestic production for the UK gas and electricity markets, thereby fixing prices over time and reducing price and therefore downstream cost volatility. By exploiting the shale gas reserves, especially in the north of England, and earmarking output in this way, the UK can make a significant improvement in its energy security.

The policies on upstream oil and gas and on energy security are as follows.

Remove legal, regulatory, taxation and consultation barriers to the exploitation the UK's domestic oil and gas reserves, including the shale gas reserves that require fracking.

> **Align gas drilling regulations for fracking with those for geothermal drilling – which has proved safe in the UK and around the world.**
>
> **The Ministry to target a halving of the planning and consultation periods for energy infrastructure (including for renewables) with the national interest to prevail while mitigating legitimate local concerns.**
>
> **Require a proportion of gas output from shale gas projects to be tied under contract to the domestic energy market for a period of 15 years, thereby providing energy security and reducing price volatility.**

Facilitate a return to domestic fertiliser production when energy prices have been reduced and gas supplies secured.

Scrap the ban on gas and oil boilers. Heat pumps cannot be economic at current electricity prices. When prices are reduced as targeted by the policies on electricity, then heat pumps can operate in the market and without support or coercion.

Coal

Coal is still in use for power generation in order to meet supply shortfalls when there is a wind lull. In Germany coal production and use in power generation is now rising again to replace the use of Russian gas, but in the UK the policy is still to end all power generation from coal by October 2024.

In 2022 UK coal production was 0.6m tonnes and imports of coal were 6.4m tonnes, although that was inflated by stock building at the remaining power stations for energy security reasons. 2.1m tonnes is still used for the remaining steel production in the UK at Port Talbot and Scunthorpe. The government has approved the West Cumbrian Mine with a view to replacing imports of coal for steel manufacturing, but the legislative framework has allowed the decision to be appealed by environmental groups and the timetable for a final decision is in reality beyond the next election. As a consequence, steel manufacturing is reliant on imports and the related CO2 emissions from transportation.

Reform UK supports the development of UK coal mining to supply the UK steel industry, subject to it being developed on a fully commercial basis.

Other Sources of Generation

Alternatives such as geothermal energy, wave and tidal power and hydrogen are currently the subject of government support. All are currently uneconomic, and any development should come from the private sector. If any of these ever become economic then the market as proposed will allow them to be developed commercially. The only clear needs in the electricity generation sector are the continuation of the use of gas and the development of nuclear as a zero emissions alternative to gas fired generation as well as continuing a more limited role as baseload power.

Reform UK will end the use of taxpayers' money to try to pick winners in the energy sector.

The policies on making energy affordable and reliable will isolate the green subsidies paid to the Drax biomass generating plant. This plant imports wood pellets from North America, and is controversial because of the threats to virgin North American forests and because of the transportation costs and CO2 emissions.

Reform UK will discuss with the owners of Drax how to move its production to a more sustainable energy source.

7. Transport

The netzero policies have resulted in a war on the motorist. In particular, working people and poorer families are being penalised for not being able to invest in the environmentally acceptable cars, while being encouraged to use cycles or public transport which are simply no convenient for much of modern life, especially outside the largest cities with more extensive public transport networks. The consequence is higher costs for working people, and for many businesses lower turnover as city centres become unattractive for those who rely on cars for transport. Rural areas are hardest hit by higher costs, and by the inconvenience of electric vehicles that are not designed for anything but urban living.

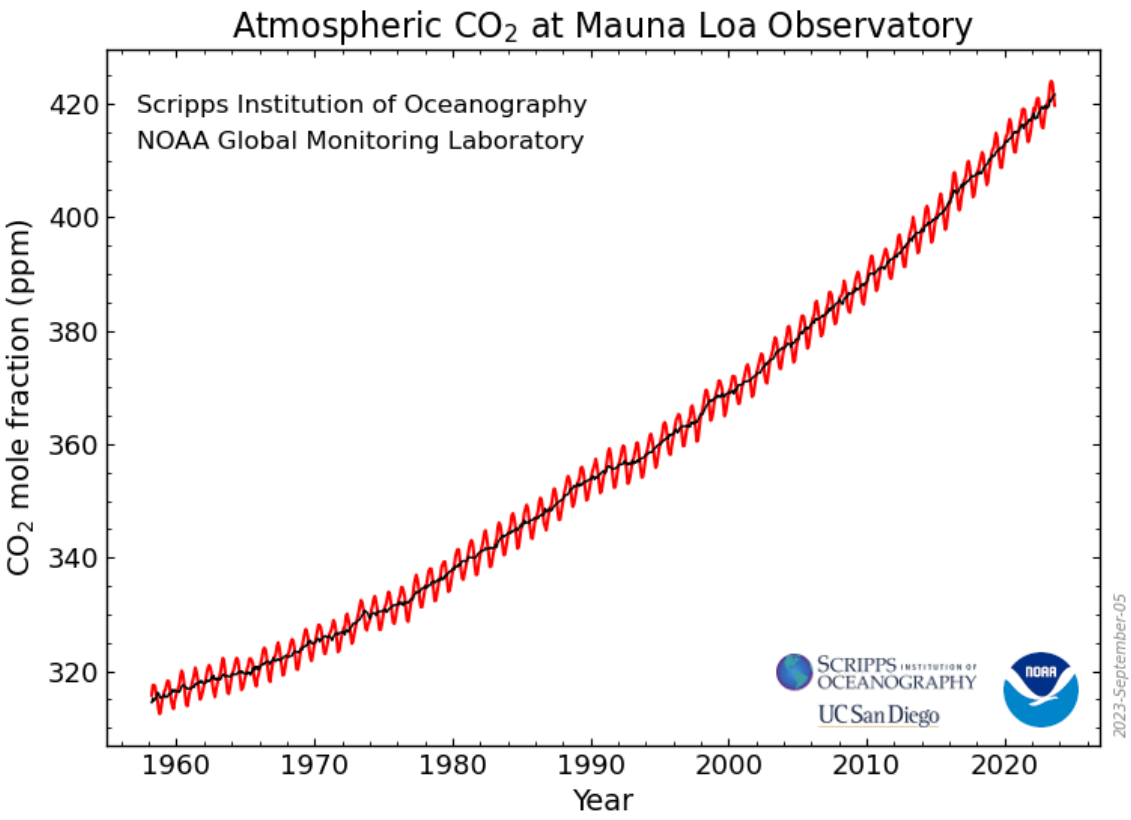
The fundamental problem is the cost and inconvenience caused by these environmental policies, and increasingly by the coercion involved in forcing people to incur higher costs. The issue is not change as such, but the level of coercion and cost used to enforce change instead of simply allowing market forces and technical progress to drive the change. The policies are therefore simply to remove onerous and ill thought out policies.

End the ULEZ scam - based on derisory modelling - which hits poorer working people and the elderly while doing nothing to improve air quality – which has been improving for decades.

End the artificial targets for electric vehicles, which are as yet unpopular, are inappropriate for rural lives, are costly, are of uncertain economic life (no second hand value) and may cause blackouts due to inadequate electricity supply.

Scrap the policy on banning sales of new diesel and petrol vehicles.

Annex 1 – CO2 levels at Mauna Loa Observatory



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