

Energy

No time to waste

Energy is central to our lives and the economy, fuelling our homes, transport and workplaces. But the earth has limited supplies of fossil fuels, such as oil and gas. Their use is now producing harmful pollutants faster than our planet can cope. Carbon dioxide emissions are causing climate change – the greatest challenge our planet faces.

The UK has a shameful record on energy. We generate less energy from clean, renewable sources than nearly every other country in Europe – just 1% of our total energy. We are still Europe's second largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Power stations are the biggest single source of carbon dioxide emissions in the UK, followed by transport. 35% of our electricity still comes from coal-fired power stations. 26% of our electricity comes from hazardous nuclear power.

Wind power alone could meet three times our current electricity needs in the UK. Unless we radically change how we generate and use energy, we will be responsible for climate change, pollution, and other threats to people and the environment for generations to come.

A green economy would significantly reduce energy demands and would obtain that energy from non-polluting renewable sources.

What needs to be done?

- 1 Investment in renewable sources – sun, wind, water power and biogas – must be hugely increased. Use of fossil fuels should be massively reduced, and phased out altogether where possible.
- 2 An end to nuclear power. It is expensive and dangerous, risking catastrophic accidents that could damage our health, environment, and economy for generations.
- 3 More efficient energy use, better conservation and insulation measures, and a massive increase in recycling – with stronger incentives to switch to renewable energy and use energy more efficiently.
- 4 Energy should be generated, stored and distributed more locally.
- 5 Action to end 'fuel poverty' subsidising insulation and conservation measures to make fuel bills affordable for all.

Can we afford green energy?

The cost of not turning to renewable energy is growing daily as we face the mammoth task of dealing with climate change, pollution and hazardous nuclear waste. The impact of climate change will bring huge, unpredictable costs as our economy, transport systems and environment are forced to adapt. Government figures put the cost of the UK's liabilities for nuclear waste at around £1000 for each person and rising.

Subsidising energy conservation/efficiency measures, like home insulation, and using cheaper renewable energy will also bring down home fuel bills, ending 'fuel poverty'.

Won't this approach harm our economy and hit jobs?

No. Studies have shown that boosting investment in renewable energy could generate hundreds of thousands of jobs. This could bring new secure employment to parts of the UK that need it most.

Wind power already produces cheaper energy than nuclear power – and more efficient energy use would cost industry less.

How much energy can renewable sources provide?

Wind power generated around the UK offers huge potential. Tidal power, solar energy and biogas could also be harnessed. But we need to invest in the technology today.

Wind farms are all very well, but don't they spoil the landscape?

Some communities have raised concerns about the way wind farms impact on landscapes. But wind farms are frequently developed off-shore and can be sited sensitively. Listening to local people lies at the heart of the Green Party's approach.

Is this just about the UK's needs?

No. Many wars, like the Iraq war, have been fought for the control of foreign oil and natural resources. Meeting energy needs through renewable domestic production – for the UK and other countries – is good for global peace and security.

To join the Green Party or obtain copies of our manifestos or other policy leaflets please contact us at

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