

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 13 October 2022

Liberal Democrat Amendment to Renewable Energy motion

To be proposed by Cllr Alastair Singleton

Green Party Motion on the negative environmental and fiscal impacts on the impact of increasing taxation on the inhabitants of B&NES as a result of the Government's decision to raise the moratorium on fracking in England, to expedite exploitation of remaining oil and gas reserves in the North Sea and its continued support and funding of nuclear power in preference to cleaner, cheaper and more quickly available renewable energy generation.

Council Notes:

1. The Government's stated intention to lift the moratorium on shale gas exploration – 'fracking' – in direct contravention of the Conservative Party's manifesto for the 2019 General Election. The arguments for nuclear energy appear to be contentious and therefore decisions to continue to invest in expensive, long term nuclear projects require further scrutiny.
 2. The Government's further announced intention to intensify efforts to explore for new and exploit existing oil and gas resources in the North Sea, which defies advice from the Government's Climate Change Committee and puts at risk its legal obligation to achieve Net Zero by 2050.
 3. The Government's stated commitment to fund new nuclear power stations, starting with Sizewell C, at significant cost to the taxpayer, and with many years of delay before any electricity can be produced.
 4. That new New research suggests that the assumption that nuclear energy is necessary to form a baseload of energy provision is no longer valid, that the arguments in favour of nuclear energy are contentious and that a compelling economic case has yet to be made for further nuclear energy development. neither is it valid to pursue the development of nuclear energy purely on economic grounds.
 5. That research further indicates that renewable energy capacity, including solar, wind, geothermal and tidal, is now cheaper and faster to deliver than either hydrocarbon or nuclear derived energy. Nuclear energy is not a clean and safe technology and still has the potential to cause considerable harm.
 6. The current planning policy that governs renewable energy infrastructure, and onshore wind turbines in particular, needs to be amended to encourage investment in this area.
- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
 - *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

Council therefore:

1. Restates its 2018 position that it opposes fracking within B&NES and neighbouring areas, as both unnecessary and potentially highly injurious to the local environment, including Bath's unique and protected hot springs.
2. Calls on the Government to reconsider its policies on both shale gas exploitation and oil and gas exploration.
3. Calls on the Government to review approvals given for Sizewell C and for investment into nuclear energy in general.
4. Calls on the Government to back investment in renewable energy and provide financing directly for this.
5. Calls on the government to change the National Planning Policy on Solar Panels and onshore Wind Turbines to facilitate their development where there is popular support.
6. Requests that the Leader write to the Secretary of State at the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and local MPs to inform them of the council's position.

- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*