

Looming energy crisis as Hitachi pulls plug



Foolish to rely on foreign companies and Governments to keep Britain's lights on

GMB has warned of a looming UK energy crisis after plans for a £16billion new nuclear reactor in Wales went belly up.

Japanese firm Hitachi this morning announced that its board in Tokyo had decided it is suspending all work on the new plant on Anglesey in Wales.

GMB had hailed plans for the reactor as 'a breakout of common sense' in June 2018 after the Government pledged to underwrite billions of pounds of loans, effectively taking a public stake in the project.



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Justin Bowden, GMB National Secretary for Energy

Now, unless the Government steps in, the Wylfa plans look set to be mothballed along with the planned new Plant at Moorside in Cumbria.

For the 12 months from 7 March 2017, every one in 5.6 days was a low wind day (65 days in total) when the output of the installed and connected wind turbines in the UK produced less than 10% of their installed and connected capacity for more than half of the day. For 341 days in the year, solar output was below 10% of installed capacity for more than half of the day.

Justin Bowden, GMB National Secretary for Energy said:

“Hitachi’s announcement, coming so soon after the Moorside fiasco, raises the very real prospect of a UK energy crisis.

“As coal is taken out of the equation in the next few years and the existing nuclear fleet reaches the end of its natural life after 50 years, decisions are already long overdue for construction to be completed in time and not leave the country at risk of power cuts or reliant on imported electricity, much of it from unreliable regimes.

“While the Government has had its head up its proverbial backside over Brexit, vital matters like guaranteeing the country’s future energy supply appear to have gone by the wayside.

“The go ahead on a new, part publicly funded power station at Wylfa, and the accompanying creation of thousands of new jobs and apprenticeships, was an unusual outbreak of common-sense in UK energy policy.

“GMB had hoped it signalled a new dawn for the country’s vital infrastructure by providing surety and pushing down the costs to taxpayers and electricity bill payers.

“ Once again, this tragic farce shows it is foolish to rely on foreign companies and foreign Governments to keep Britain’s lights on and our economy powered when we could do



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"This decision has nothing to do with costs. The planned reactor at Wylfa is not the 'first of a kind', and this fact – combined with the Government stake – would ensure Wylfa was built at a cost much lower than Hinkley Point C currently under construction in Somerset.

"The Government must act and step in now, pick up the reins and take whatever funding stake and leadership is necessary, to ensure Wylfa goes ahead on time. The NDA (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) has the nuclear expertise and could be immediately redesignated to do this.

"At the end of the day, it is a basic function of the Government to guarantee we have enough electricity for our homes and industries and history shows that voters do not forgive or forget when the lights go out.

"New nuclear is almost zero carbon and because it produces energy 24/7 it is a perfect complement to wind and solar – which everyone knows don't work all the time.

"Once again, this tragic farce shows it is foolish to rely on foreign companies and foreign Governments to keep Britain's lights on and our economy powered when we could do easily be fully energy self sufficient."

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