



Together Against Sizewell C

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE LABOUR PARTY ON ENERGY POLICY

To Sir Keir Starmer and all Labour Party candidates

Candour: dictionary definition: the quality of being honest and telling the truth, especially about a difficult or embarrassing subject.

Keir Starmer said, at PMQs on the 22nd May, 2024, that he could not 'think of single example where (a) duty of candour should not apply to all public servants across the board,' and that, the duty of candour 'should be enshrined in law across the board.'

Keir Starmer's words give hope in a world of fake news and official lies. NGOs welcome them and agree that this duty of candour must apply to all sectors, but none so urgently as the energy sector which has been labouring for decades under the pretence that nuclear power will significantly help in the task of reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. Being candid, few can disagree that nuclear power is costly, potentially dangerous, slow to deploy, capital (not labour) intensive, leaves a toxic legacy for future generations and that exposure to low levels of ionising radiation has unknown health consequences. Moreover, it can only help in a very marginal way to reduce the release of climate change gases before the deadline of 2050. It is time for the Labour Party to acknowledge these unavoidable truths if it genuinely believes in the duty of candour.

The Labour Party is going to form the next administration in Parliament. It faces a mountain of work to repair, recover and heal the many broken public services. It must rebuild the trust between the government and the electorate. It faces a test over where its priorities lie in reshaping this country: with limited resources, it is required, amongst a plethora of other things, to get the NHS back on its feet, to develop a social care programme, recruit and train thousands of doctors, nurses, police personnel, carers, special educational needs practitioners, deal with the immigration issue in a humanitarian way, ensure our defences are strong and well supported, that the lights don't go out and that we achieve a net zero carbon energy sector by 2030 followed by the entire economy by 2050.

The task is onerous and hideously challenging. However, the latter can be achieved, but only by a Labour administration ending the futile and slavish pursuit of a Boris Johnson-inspired nuclear fantasy of trebling the amount of nuclear generated electricity by 2050. Hinkley Point C's cost has spiralled out of control and is years overdue in construction. Sizewell C's site preparation work has wrecked large areas of the Suffolk Coastal AONB, is still without a final investment decision and relies on a reactor design even the French engineers who developed it label as 'too complicated to operate'. Both of these projects are potential Labour Party HS2s waiting to morph into future millstones around the neck of a Labour administration struggling to keep taxes down while trying vainly to find investors in projects that no-one wants and that are not needed. Sizewell C in particular will become a sink for tax revenues for the ultimate benefit of the French government. Nuclear power is quite simply too expensive, generates too many liabilities and plants take too long to construct to have anything but a marginal impact on combatting the existential crisis posed by climate change. Small modular reactors (SMRs) are not the answer either: they are not small and there is not one prototype in the UK that could be 'rolled out' with sufficient speed. And, at circa 300 – 500 Mwe each, we would need around 50 of them to meet the Johnson fantasy's nuclear aspirations.

Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) are heartened by the Labour Party's recently reported support for a GB Energy organisation eager to close the door to Putin by pursuing 'clean energy', making the

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UK a 'superpower' in that field. To see a Prime Minister-in-waiting and a Labour Party ready to form the next government making public commitments to renewables such as green hydrogen and tidal power and supporting the nascent markets for emerging renewables technologies is encouraging and, being candid as evidenced by the in-passing mention of nuclear power, recognising that the technology cannot remotely be considered 'clean'.

TASC urge Sir Keir Starmer and the Labour Party to pursue these policies while abandoning the nuclear infatuation of recent decades and to liberate the huge potential for tens of thousands of jobs created by the decentralisation, diversification and innovation of the renewables sector coupled with an emergency programme of energy conservation.

To that end, we urge him to begin this transformation of the UK energy sector by initiating within the first 100 days of coming to office, a national programme of retrofitting insulation and solar panels to all existing housing and other building stock and by making mandatory the fitting of photo voltaic cells to the roofs of all new housing.

Pete Wilkinson,
Deputy Chair, TASC

Together Against Sizewell C have been actively campaigning for over a decade to stop EDF's proposals to build Sizewell C's twin EPR nuclear reactors, on the fragile eroding Suffolk coastline. Further details are available on our website <https://tasizewellc.org.uk/>