



## NEW NUCLEAR POWER VITAL TO THE UK'S ELECTRICITY MIX, SAYS NEW REPORT

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The UK should invest in new nuclear as part of the wider electricity mix to secure a sustainable and low carbon future and to forge new trading relationships post-Brexit, according to a new report launched by leading think tank ResPublica. The UK's 15 existing nuclear reactors churned out 65TWh of power in 2016, representing over 20% of all electricity produced in the UK last year.

Our new report *'Expanding Horizons: The Role for New Nuclear in the UK's Energy Mix'* argues that new nuclear should be central to the UK's long-term energy strategy. Nuclear currently meets 45% of the UK's low carbon electricity and the power generated by the current nuclear fleet avoids the emission of 49 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. The report stresses that Britain's new nuclear programme is not only ready to go, but also necessary to meet the country's medium and long-term ambitions for energy security and decarbonisation. No new reactors have been built in almost three decades however and much of the current electricity capacity will close by 2030. Sustained political will and commitment is needed in the coming years to push new nuclear projects over the line.

The report also highlights that new nuclear should not be framed as an alternative to renewables. Earlier this year over half of electricity generation was met from low carbon sources comprised of nuclear and renewables, making nuclear a resource of huge potential as the UK strives to meet legally binding carbon targets. Nuclear is therefore an integral part of the wider solution to meet the Government's aim of having a sustainable, low carbon and secure energy mix as outlined in the recent *'Clean Growth Strategy'*. New nuclear is also a key source for UK innovation with enormous potential for nascent technology such as Small Modular Reactors (SMR), new manufacturing and advanced reactor designs to deliver wholesale energy transition. No single technology can meet the Government's carbon commitments and new nuclear will give the UK security of supply which would act as a springboard to allow further innovation in renewable and battery technologies.

There are 78,000 people currently employed in the nuclear industry and this is estimated to rise to over 100,000 by 2021 as the new nuclear programme creates a wealth of new roles. The high-value jobs needed to construct and maintain the nuclear fleet have transferable skills to other sectors and through further investment in nuclear the UK can create additional high-skilled jobs which are at the heart of the Government's Industrial Strategy. These skills will be in demand globally as other countries look to nuclear to bridge their own energy gaps.

In *'Expanding Horizons: The Role for New Nuclear in the UK's Energy Mix'*, ResPublica argues investment in new nuclear would allow the UK to forge new trading partnerships around the world, exploiting its experience of delivering projects using imported technology to market itself as a global powerhouse for servicing the international nuclear industry, and capitalise on a market that is expected to reach £1tn over the next decade.

**Phillip Blond**, Director of ResPublica said: "*Committing Britain to the new nuclear programme is vital to securing this country's electricity mix, technological advantages and role as a world-leader in low-carbon, secure electricity through Brexit and beyond. New nuclear offers us, not only the opportunity to build on competitive advantages and to open up new markets and global relationships as we leave the EU, but also to build a secure platform for innovation and high-value, high skills jobs.*"

**Ian Liddell-Grainger MP**, Member of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nuclear Energy said: *"Developing baseload nuclear energy that is available around the clock will be an integral part of the UK's future energy mix and a key solution to tackling the trilemma of security of supply, affordability and of meeting the UK's carbon reduction commitments. I welcome this report from ResPublica which sets out the enormous opportunity at hand for new nuclear in boosting skilled jobs, innovation and new export markets."*

**Sue Hayman MP** for Workington and Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nuclear Energy said: *"This report by ResPublica makes clear the case for investing in new nuclear as a way to limit UK carbon emissions. We need to find long-term energy solutions that can continue to meet the electricity needs of the country cost-effectively and reliable new nuclear to balance the intermittent nature of renewable technologies must be a priority for industry and Government."*

**Leon Flexman**, Corporate Affairs Director at Horizon, said: *"Nuclear and renewables have just been responsible for the 'greenest summer' on record and this report is a timely reminder of the challenges we face and the solutions we have available. The two technologies can work together to deliver the stable, secure, low carbon electricity system the UK needs, and be part of a successful Industrial Strategy."*

**Tom Greatrex**, Chief Executive of the Nuclear Industry Association said: *"The UK's decarbonisation ambitions can only be realised with a balanced low carbon electricity mix, as the distinction between energy and electricity diminishes. The growth in use of electric vehicles and efforts to decarbonise heat are likely to increase demand for power, even with energy efficiency and demand management advances. There is no single technology that will achieve this alone, and a responsible approach will utilise both nuclear and intermittent wind and solar as part of a mix to provide the reliable, secure and readily available power for our homes, businesses and public services."*

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The ResPublica Trust is an independent nonpartisan think tank. Through research, policy innovation and programmes, ResPublica seeks to establish a new economic, social and cultural settlement.

*Expanding Horizons* is supported by Horizon Nuclear Power. All conclusions and recommendations contained in the report are independent of Horizon Nuclear Power.

This report is available to download from the ResPublica website as of 10th November 2017. For further details please contact Brendon Marsh at [brendon.marsh@respublica.org.uk](mailto:brendon.marsh@respublica.org.uk) or call 020 3857 8324 or 07835 059469.

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