

Letter from the Chair of the Welsh Affairs Committee to the Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing ahead of the UK Budget announcement on 15 March 2023 to draw your attention to the representations made to us during my Committee's inquiry into Nuclear energy in Wales.

I would like to extend my thanks again to the Secretary of State for Wales and the Minister of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero for giving their time to attend our Committee meeting on 22 February.

The Committee launched this inquiry following the publication in April 2022 of the British Energy Security Strategy, which set out the Government's ambitions for 24GW of nuclear energy by 2050 and the creation of Great British Nuclear. Simon Bowen, advisor to the Government on the establishment of Great British Nuclear, told my Committee that "it will be disastrous if we waited another two years" because the "whole of the industry will lose faith" and that "we've got to have the courage to take an inter-generational view [...] for low carbon and net zero".

The Strategy named Wylfa, north Wales, as a potential site for a new nuclear project. Since then, we have heard of growing concerns of a loss of momentum in delivery of the Government's Strategy and consequently, further uncertainty over the future of the Wylfa site.

We have heard from a wide range of industry representatives that Wylfa is considered the best site in the UK for new nuclear development. Indeed, it is difficult to see how Government can deliver its nuclear ambitions without taking forward a project at Wylfa.

There is a strong view within the Committee that Wylfa should be the next GW scale site in line after Sizewell C so that north Wales can benefit from the economic impacts of a large-scale infrastructure project, which will bring highly skilled and well-paid long-term job opportunities to a rural area of the UK.

We have heard strong calls from the finance and skills sectors as well as from technology developers for a programme for nuclear which sets out which technology (GW or Small Modular Reactors) the Government wants to be built, where and when. The majority of members of the Committee are of the view that the Great British Nuclear arms-length body should be launched as soon as possible, with a mandate to deliver such a programme, in order to provide much needed clarity to the whole industry.

I am copying this letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, and the Secretary of State for Wales for their awareness.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen', followed by a period.

Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP
Chair of the Welsh Affairs Committee

(3rd March 2023)