

Why do Reform want to increase UK energy prices?

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Reform has pledged to do everything it can to block green energy, but doing so will increase energy prices. Why do they want to do that when there are so many better things to do?

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This is the transcript:

Why are Reform so keen to increase energy prices in the UK?

To put it another way, why are Reform so keen to destroy the cheapest source of energy creation that we have in the UK?

I ask the question because Richard Tice, who is the deputy leader of Reform in the UK Parliament, has said in the light of English council election successes by that party recently, that he will want to use 'every lever' available to his party to assist those new local councillors to block renewable energy projects in the areas for which they are now responsible, and this makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

I'm going to put up a chart of the cost of production of electricity from various types of energy source in the UK at present. And the sources, by the way, to produce this chart came from all over the place and they are bound to be wrong, because these numbers vary by the moment, but they are pretty indicative of the cost per kilowatt hour of producing energy - that is, electricity - from various types of source.

Technology	LCOE (£/MWh)	LCOE (pence/kWh)
Onshore Wind	£38	3.8
Offshore Wind	£44	4.4
Large-Scale Solar PV	£41	4.1
CCGT (Gas)	£114	11.4
Nuclear	£128	12.8
Biomass	£102	10.2
Hydropower	£88	8.8
Floating Offshore Wind	£194	19.4
Tidal Stream	£240	24.0

And, as you'll see, onshore wind and offshore wind, coupled with large-scale solar power, are by far the cheapest ways to generate electricity in this country at present.

The only thing that comes close to it is hydropower, which is, of course, only available in certain parts of the country, and in particular, Wales and Scotland, with very little being possible in England.

And after that, we jump up significantly in terms of what electricity costs to produce, to gas, which costs roughly three times onshore wind.

And then there is nuclear power, which costs roughly three times offshore wind.

And we go up even further when we go to things like floating offshore wind and tidal power, but those last two are, of course, at the present point of time in their experimental stage, so of course they're expensive. We'd expect them to come down in cost dramatically, just as have other renewable sources over time.

So, if Richard Tice is desperate to block access to renewable energy in the UK by using every lever that is available to the local authorities that Reform now controls, what he's

really doing is trying to put up the price of electricity in the UK. In fact, he's trying to put up the cost of production by roughly threefold on average, which is bound to be passed on to you in the form of the price that you pay for electricity. It cannot be otherwise.

So, there is something clearly very odd here. In rural areas, what Richard Tice is talking about is increasing the cost of energy when, in practice, rural areas should be benefiting from the fact that locally generated electricity should be available cheaply in those areas, as a matter of fact.

And he's also blocking the route to low-priced electricity for powering cars in rural areas, and we all know that rural areas are particularly car-dependent.

When we come to urban areas, what he's talking about is actually doing something quite different. He's trying to, of course, give the car power over communities, power over children, power over cyclists, power over buses and everything else, because he claims there is anti motorist wokery going on, but what he actually means is that he wants to boost the profits of the car companies, of the petrol and diesel companies and to harm local communities as a consequence.

None of this makes any sense, but what is required is a narrative to answer this madness that Reform is putting forward. So what is that?

What is it that Labour, or any other party, let's be blunt about it, could promote that, would provide the alternative strategy that would counter the Reform narrative and actually support local communities?

Well, the first thing to say is that there must be a pro-local energy policy in the UK, the exact opposite of what Richard Tice is proposing.

And this pro-local energy policy would all be about community generation of power in this country.

As a matter of fact, my suggestion is that any local group that applies for planning permission to put up no more than, say, two wind turbines to fuel electricity in their area, should get automatic planning permission to do so within a few months of the application going in. There shouldn't be any long delays. There shouldn't be any rigorous planning process. A couple of wind turbines in an area are not going to cause harm, but they will generate local power for local communities, which local communities should be able to buy at the cost of local production.

It should also be the case that the energy companies who manage the grid network should be required automatically to provide support to these energy systems, so that locally generated power can be logged into the local energy system, so that people can buy it. There should be no excessive charges from the National Grid for carrying locally produced energy over distances of, say, five kilometres, maybe 10 kilometres, until it

reaches a consumer. This should not be allowed, so that local energy produced for local people, at local cost, should be provided at local low prices, so that people could benefit.

And there should be a law that says that banks should be required to support these facilities. They should, in other words, be expected to provide low price loans to these facilities on long-term lending so that they can put these arrangements in place for the benefit of local communities, because the biggest cost with regard to local energy production is the upfront cost of installing the couple of wind turbines I'm talking about. Put them in and thereafter the cost, the marginal cost that is, of producing the electricity, is tiny. And on that basis, requiring that banks fund that upfront cost with low-price loans is a prerequisite of successful local energy generation, which is, of course, also a prerequisite of the recovery of local, and particularly rural, economies in the UK.

The government should support this whole activity. It should be looking at ways to fund these programmes, and if banks don't want to be a part of it, I've already suggested, for example, that ISAs should be available to fund this programme, and if not, pension funds.

But the point is, the government has to be proactive here. It has to help local energy sources to become the basis for local energy production, for the benefit of local communities. Do all of this, and what you could end up with is community interest companies owned and managed locally that would deliver for their communities. And they would be delivering something that would absolutely revive their local economies.

This is the way to answer Reform.

Don't try to outcompete them with regard to being anti-green.

Ignore all the woke nonsense, because it is just nonsense.

Come up with something that is easy, clear, and practical, and what I've just suggested is easy, clear, and practical.

We could have this local energy production at low cost for the benefit of local communities, and it could start very quickly if only the legal, rather than the practical obstacles, were removed and banks were required to support this process, which they should do as part of their own license to operate, granted to them by the Bank of England.

It's time for Labour to talk about this.

It's time for the Greens to talk about this.

It's time for the Lib Dems to talk about this.

We need to beat the fascists in the Reform Party on their home territory, which at the moment is in local, rural communities.

Local communities should benefit from the Green Revolution. This is the way that they can.

My thanks to Mike Parr for ideas that informed this video.