



## South Lakes Action on Climate Change Statement on Nuclear

SLACC is against the building of new nuclear power stations as a solution to climate change. New nuclear power stations are unlikely to be operational for at least 10 years and, when the carbon cost of construction and the mining of fuel is taken into consideration there will be no overall carbon benefit for at least a further 5 years (and longer if the currently unknown energy cost of storing and disposing nuclear waste is taken into account). As we need to reduce carbon use dramatically within the next 15 years the building of new nuclear power stations is an irrelevant distraction from what has to be done.

Even if the UK's existing capacity were doubled, it would only result in an 8% cut in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2035 (and nothing before 2010). This fact must be set against the risks.

We also agree with the Sustainable Development Commissions conclusions regarding nuclear, namely:

- 1. Long-term waste** - no long term solutions are yet available, let alone acceptable to the general public; it is impossible to guarantee safety over the long-term disposal of waste.
- 2. Cost** - the economics of nuclear new-build are highly uncertain. There is little, if any, justification for public subsidy, but if estimated costs escalate, there's a clear risk that the taxpayer will be have to pick up the tab.
- 3. Inflexibility** - nuclear would lock the UK into a centralised distribution system for the next 50 years, at exactly the time when opportunities for microgeneration and local distribution network are stronger than ever.
- 4. Undermining energy efficiency** - a new nuclear programme would give out the wrong signal to consumers and businesses, implying that a major technological fix is all that's required, weakening the urgent action needed on energy efficiency.
- 5. International security** - if the UK brings forward a new nuclear power programme, we cannot deny other countries the same technology (under the terms of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change). With lower safety standards, they run higher risks of accidents, radiation exposure, proliferation and terrorist attacks.