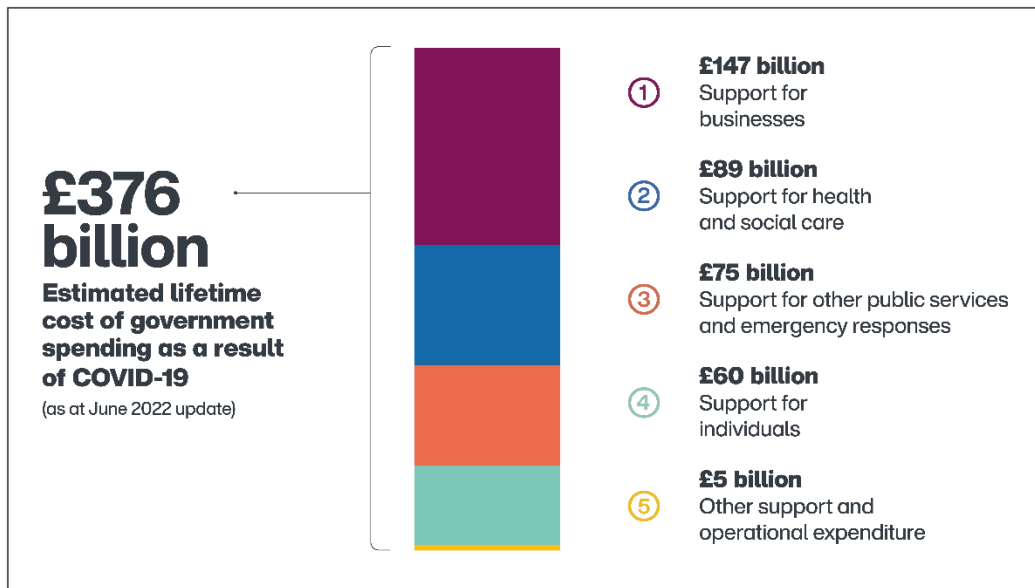


What's It Worth? Nuclear Power Versus Covid-19

Rick Bradford, written 19 November 2022



In this extremely brief post I make a very simple point.

The Government does not have its priorities right.

I sense your amazement.

The [National Audit Office tells us](#), as of June 2022, that the extraordinary costs arising from the Government's handling of the Covid-19 saga is estimated to be £376 billion, with £321 billion already spent. [Others](#) put the final sum at closer to £500 billion when Government losses from Bounce Back Loans are added into the total.

Let us be optimistic and settle on the lower figure, £376 billion.

Compare this with the cost of the twin-EPR (European Pressurised Reactor) power station at Hinkley Point C, now under construction. Much pilloried for its extremely high cost, [EDF continues to insist](#) the “nominal” cost is, and always was, £18 billion. Probably a more forthright (i.e., honest) statement is that the cost in 2015 pounds will be [around £26 billion](#).

Hinkley Point C will generate [3.26 GWe](#).

So...for the amount that the Government has spent on Covid-19 over two or three years (and mostly in one year) we could build 14 Hinkley C's and have change left over. That would be a total new nuclear capacity of over 45 GWe.

Peak demand for the whole of Great Britain in the winter of 2021/22 was [44.2 GWe](#).

‘Nuf said?

The cost of Covid, if used to build nuclear power stations, would solve all our electricity generation problems for 60 years, probably longer – and do so consistent with “net zero” if that's what you really want.

Not that I'm suggesting we would want to build 14 twin EPR stations. The actual nuclear technology in question is a moveable feast. I am only making a point about costs and Government priorities.

Yes, I know there are also running costs. But with capital costs out of the way, nuclear electricity could be supplied at sensible prices, reliably and all the time. And, of course, we wouldn't really need 45 GWe of new nuclear capacity. Half that would probably do.

It doesn't matter whether you regard the Government's spending on Covid as wise or not. What the Covid saga demonstrates is that the Government *can* choose to spend (i.e., borrow) £376 billion in just two or three years, without a prior plan to do so.

If they can do that for the sake of an exercise where the money gets blown on irrecoverable revenue, why, pray tell, can they not do so for a capital project that would provide massively beneficial infrastructure from which the country would benefit big-time for 60 years or more?

What the Covid saga demonstrates is that the Government could solve our electricity generation crisis totally, if they had a will to do so. And do it consistent with the "net zero" lunacy, as it happens.

So, one is forced to conclude that it is neither cost nor carbon emissions that are preventing the obvious solution being adopted.

So, what is?

It is this sort of question that gives credence to the idea that there is another agenda at work here.