WILL THE LIGHTS GO OUT IN THE UK?

With spinning reserve reduced to single figures last winter my concerns over security of power supplies in the UK mount.

The recent news over the closure of the Ferrybridge and Longannet power stations do not ease my concerns. Both power stations are coal fired and are two out of sixteen ageing stations that account for around 32% of the UK’s power demand.

Both stations closed not because they failed the 2017 emission targets but because both plants are over 40 years old and are now uneconomic to run.

The loss of these plants will hugely diminish the security of energy supplies in the UK; more importantly there are no shiny new equivalent-sized power stations being built to replace these stations.

The Government still hopes that new gas-fired power stations will be built, but this hasn't happened so far and the much-heralded new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point is at best a decade away. Wind and solar will not plug the hole and the recent appointment of Amber Rudd as “Energy Secretary” who intends to push forward with plans to enforce the Tory policy to curb the spread of onshore wind by amending current planning rules to give greater power to local communities, while subsidies for new wind farms will be banned altogether.

The big question for me is “when will the lights start to go out”!

Author: Martin Rawlings
May 26th, 2015