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Dear George,

Thank you for your email dated 28 July, to Philip Hammond, on behalf of your constituents and the concerns they have raised about Hinkley Point C. I am replying as this matter falls within my portfolio and I apologise for the delay in responding.

New nuclear generation is part of our plan to build an energy system fit for the 21st century based on secure, affordable, clean energy. A new wave of nuclear power stations is part of the mix we need to keep the lights on into the future, and of course nuclear is a tried and tested technology.

Following EDF's recent decision regarding Hinkley Point C, the Government will now consider carefully all the component parts of this project and make its decision in the early autumn.

It is up to commercial developers to bring forward plans to construct nuclear power plants in the UK. This includes the type and design of reactor they intend to use. Of course, the reactor must satisfy the independent regulators' scrutiny and demonstrate that it is safe, secure and meets environmental standards.

The UK has a robust system of independent regulation for ensuring safety and security at every step of civil nuclear projects through construction, operation and decommissioning. Any company involved in the UK's nuclear power industry does so in accordance with the UK's stringent regulations. Safety at nuclear sites is paramount and is kept under regular review. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has regulatory and operational independence and is staffed with professional nuclear safety and security personnel. It carries out inspections to ensure robust requirements are met across the industry.

The regulators will not agree that a nuclear power station can start operation unless it is satisfied that it is safe and secure, and meets environmental standards.

I would also like to assure your constituents that nuclear power generation is extremely low carbon, including factors such as construction, mining, electricity generation and clean up. Nuclear power produces a similar amount of carbon dioxide emissions as wind power, and much less than solar.

The cost of construction is a commercial matter for developers. Furthermore, the Funded Decommissioning Programme will ensure that new developers will meet the plant's

decommissioning costs and the costs of managing and disposing of its waste to make sure that the taxpayer does not have to bear the burden of these costs in future.

The waste and decommissioning costs are factored in to the proposed HPC Strike Price. The operator would pay a higher proportion of the Strike Price into their FDP fund if costs go up; but would benefit if they manage costs effectively.

The Government is also investing at least £250 million over the next five years in an ambitious nuclear research and development programme that will revive the UK's nuclear expertise and reinforce our position as a global leader in innovative nuclear technologies.

I hope you and your constituents will find this information useful.

*Warm regards
Lucy Neville-Rolfe*

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