

- where there are significant risks to the environment, the Government be prepared to take precautionary action to limit the use or spread of potentially dangerous pollutants, even where scientific evidence is not conclusive, if the balance of likely costs and benefits justifies it;
- to help people to make better and more informed choices as consumers, investors and voters, there must be improved access to and understanding of information on environmental matters;
- since many of the world's environmental problems are global in scale, international action is necessary to deal with them; and
- since safeguarding the environment can be very costly in the short term, whatever the longer term benefits, it is important to adopt the most cost-effective instruments. In particular, the Government will take account of the argument that market-based instruments will often be more efficient and less expensive than regulation in reducing emissions because they allow producers and consumers, rather than regulators, to decide how energy can best and most economically be used.

The United Kingdom is a net exporter of energy, with abundant supplies of oil, gas and coal, as well as existing nuclear generating capacity in place. The UK is a major supplier of crude oil to OECD countries. It also exports and imports considerable amounts of petroleum products. Concerning natural gas exports, there are at present only limited opportunities to sell new gas into continental markets, but the Government will consider applications for waiving the landing requirement on a case-by-case basis without any presumption that exports should not take place and bearing in mind security of domestic supplies.

3. Relevant Studies

Reports which have contributed to the development of the UK Government's policies and proposals, as set out in the White Paper, include:

- Energy Paper 55: Renewable energy - the way forward
- Energy Paper 56: Prospects for the use of advanced coal-based power generation plant in the United Kingdom
- Energy Paper 58: An evaluation of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions and measures to ameliorate them