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Welsh Labour

1) What are your views on nuclear weapons, and in particular, if elected, would you be prepared to sign the ICAN Parliamentary Pledge in support of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?

Nuclear weapons, and policy in terms of defence and UK international relations, are not devolved to the Senedd. However, the UK Labour position was set out in a speech on 25 February by Shadow Defence Secretary John Healey: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/feb/25/labour-to-state-non-negotiable-support-for-uks-nuclear-weapons>

Both the 2017 and 2019 UK Labour manifestos contained a commitment to renewing Trident – but they also made a very welcome commitment to a policy of multilateral nuclear disarmament.

The third pillar of UK Labour’s defence policy is a commitment to upholding international law, universal human rights, abiding by multilateral treaties and (as an advocate of the rules-based international system) playing a full and active role in international institutions such as the UN.

2) As well as banning nuclear weapons, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons also prohibits the financing of nuclear weapons. Would you support measures to ensure that the Senedd pension fund has no investments in companies involved in nuclear weapons production?

If returned to the Senedd, please be assured that I will write to the Pension Board requesting that they commit to ensuring the fund does not invest in companies involved in nuclear weapons production. (I have already done this in terms of divestment in fossil fuels.)

In response to the fossil fuels divestment issue, the Senedd Pensions Board that governs the Members’ Pension Scheme said that the Scheme is a relatively small Scheme consisting of investments in a number of investment packages akin to unit trusts and managed by a professional fund manager. Individual investment selections are delegated to the fund manager as the costs of attempting to do this individually or by the Pensions Board itself would result in higher charges and the Board has a duty to ensure there is enough money in the scheme to pay the promised benefits. The Board said it takes environmental, social and governance issues seriously when selecting and monitoring the Scheme’s investment managers and funds (and pointed to the fact that the level of investment in fossil fuels had reduced by 20% to 2.4%). They continue to raise these matters with advisors and fund managers and urge them to consider environmental and social issues when making investment decisions.

3) In 1982, Wales was declared a Nuclear Free Country, following motions passed by every County Council in Wales. County Councils were, at that time, the highest democratic tier of government in Wales. The Senedd is now the highest Welsh democratic forum. The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons bans “allowing ... nuclear weapons to be stationed or deployed on their territory”. For states that have ratified the Treaty, this prohibition is now part of international law. Would you

support a Senedd policy of prohibiting the transporting, stationing or deploying nuclear weapons in Wales, in Welsh air space, and in Welsh coastal waters ?

There are no nuclear weapons deployed from or based in Wales, and I want it to stay that way.

4) Wales currently generates more electricity than it uses, without any operating nuclear power stations. How would you react to any proposal for new nuclear power generation in Wales, whether that be a new nuclear power station at Wylfa, or Small Modular Nuclear Reactors at either Wylfa, Trawsfynydd, or any other site ?

I am pleased that half of our energy needs in Wales are now met from renewable sources.

Wales has immense natural resources, and we need to do more to maximise on and offshore wind generation. We also have real potential to become a world leader in wave, tidal and marine energy generation, building on the demonstrator projects we have been investing in over the past five years. But to realise its potential we need a UK Government which is also willing to support a marine energy revolution. I am extremely supportive of a Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon, and hope that a viable project can come forward.

Welsh Labour's position is that, for the time being, our future includes nuclear – both in the form of small modular reactors and the production of medical isotopes for the treatment of disease.

5) Although nuclear power is not a devolved issue, nuclear waste is a devolved matter. How would you react to any proposal for storing nuclear waste in Wales ?

The current and past use of radioactive material for medical and industrial applications in Wales means we have a responsibility to contribute to efforts to minimise the risk of harm caused by nuclear waste. We must not ignore our responsibility and we must work with communities in Wales to ensure no one is disproportionately affected by the risks of nuclear waste or the cost burden of safe disposal.

The First Minister established an independent advisory group to provide expert advice about the steps we can take to protect the interests of Wales' people and environment in the context of the development of a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point in Somerset. This has now reported, providing advice and guidance. The report is available at: <https://gov.wales/implications-hinkley-point-c-independent-report> The First Minister's written statement in response to the advisory group report is available at: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-report-hinkley-point-c-stakeholder-reference-group>