



Where's Jess?

Posted by [Chris Vernon](#) on April 26, 2006 - 4:49pm in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)

Topic: [Supply/Production](#)

Tags: [electricity](#), [gas](#), [united kingdom](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Jess isn't the name of my cat but rather the UK government's Joint Energy Security of Supply Working Group ([JESS](#)).

This organisation was set up in July 2001 by the Department of Trade and Industry ([DTI](#)) and the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets ([OFGEM](#)) to "to assess risks to the UK's future gas and electricity supplies".

Their terms of reference are:

- To assess the available data relevant to security of supply, to identify the gaps in that data and develop appropriate indicators;
- To monitor at a strategic level, over a timescale of at least seven years ahead:
 - a) The availability of supplies of gas;
 - b) The availability of supplies of electricity and fuels used for electricity generation;
 - c) The adequacy of generating capacity; and
 - d) The adequacy of the UK's gas and electricity infrastructure;
- To assess whether appropriate market-based mechanisms are bringing forward timely investment to address any weaknesses in the supply chain that are anticipated;
- To identify relevant policy issues and consider implications;
- **To report twice yearly to the Secretary of State and the Gas and Electricity Market Authority.**

Given the goings on in the UK gas and electricity market over the last couple of years I expect they have been very busy indeed. Their remit nicely covers the supply side of the looming [energy gap](#) crisis. Strange then that despite an obligation to deliver twice yearly reports they haven't [published](#) anything since November 2004.

There should have been a report published in the spring and autumn of 2005 and another around about now.

I've been chasing them for the autumn 2005 report for some months now, here's a summary of communications:

11th Jan 2006

Could you please either email to me a .pdf or mail me a hard copy of the November 2005 JESS (Joint Energy Security of Supply) report?

11th Jan 2006

Please note that the release of the JESS Report that was due out in November 2005 has been delayed until late February 2006 and will not be available in hard-copy or for download in PDF format until then.

14th Feb 2006

I am looking for the 2005 JESS report which I was expecting in November, it's now mid-February and the report still isn't available on the DTI website. Could you let me know when this report will be published and the reason for the delay?

14th Feb 2006

Please note that the release of the JESS Report that was due out in November 2005 has been delayed until late February 2006 and will not be available in hard-copy or for download in PDF format until then.

16th Mar 2006

I have still not received the November 2005 JESS report subsequently delayed to late February. Can you update me on the expected publication date and the reason for the new delay.

17th Mar 2006

Thank you for your e-mail, which has been passed to the DTI Publications Team for reply.

The sixth JESS report has been delayed due to pressure of work. Subject to clearance by DTI Ministers and OFGEM, it should be published by the end of this month.

Two members of [PowerSwitch](#) have also been following this up and have recently received the following:

The sixth JESS report has been delayed due to pressure of work. Subject to clearance by DTI Ministers and OFGEM, it should be published by mid to end of May.

20th Apr 2006

We were promised a JESS report last November, then it was February, then March, still no sign of it appearing. What has happened?

21st Apr 2006

You are quite right that we had been intending to publish the next JESS report earlier in 2006 than has come to pass. The report is in a final draft state and is merely awaiting clearance at Ministerial and Ofgem Board level (which has taken rather longer than I had anticipated). I expect to be able to publish in next few days - I'll send you a notification by e-mail as soon as I have done so.

Steve Davies, JESS Secretariat

So what's going on?

My suspicions, although I can't substantiate them are that the report was drafted before the winter and it came to the worrying conclusion that things might be tight (as [suggested](#) August last year). This isn't the kind of news that gets published lightly and it would have been in disagreement with Ofgem's own winter outlook report. It wasn't published.

For the last few months the draft report has been sitting on the desks of the Energy Minister and Ofgem director whilst they wonder what to do about it. The seven year electricity supply outlook probably has a difficult graph showing nuclear and coal generation decline through decommission with the slack being picked up by new gas. The difficulty being due to the previous graph having shown rapid decline of indigenous gas extraction. This is not dissimilar to what the 2004 report said except that North Sea gas has declined somewhat quicker than imagined in 2004, we are closer to the problem now and the harder we look at just where the expected imports are going to come from the more unconvincing they appear.

As we get closer to the Energy Consultation publication date I expect the sixth JESS report might get swallowed up in the new energy white paper and forgotten.

It is a shame that as we enter this era of difficulty, the public bodies whose job it is to carry out the kind of analysis that we need to see, fall silent. How can the market-based approach the government seems so determined to pursue function in absence of the information organisations like JESS were created to provide?



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