Can Fossil Fuels really disappear?

UK Media Focus

When climate change is promoted in the UK, most people think of:-

Or even

These are climate activists who've been reasonably successful at highlighting the problems that the burning of fossil fuels provide, but in terms of solutions, very little is provided or there is a call for a radical change in people's lifestyles - stop eating meat, stop going on holiday, stop buying fast fashion etc.

What there is much less of a focus on is that UK companies across the board have made huge reductions in their use of fossil fuels and this trend is likely to continue.

Coal - the fossilised fossil fuel

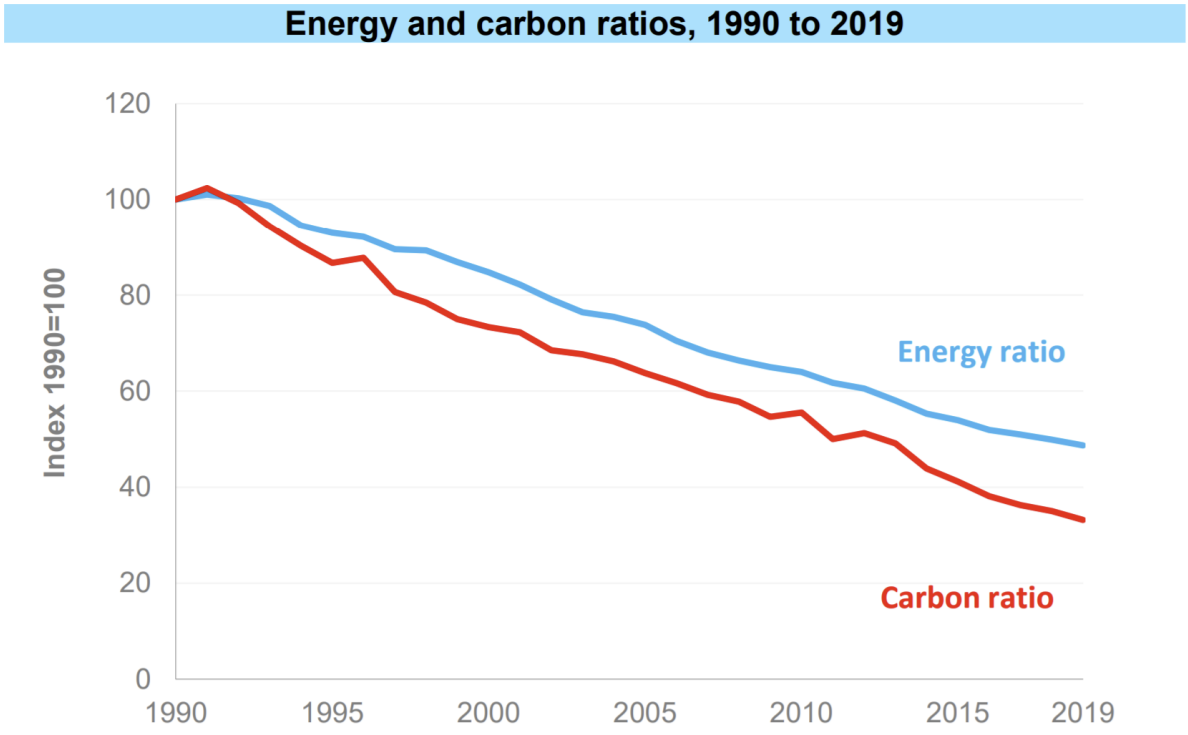
If you think about it, the UK kicked off the industrial revolution using a fossil fuel that is pretty much not used anywhere in the UK now - coal. Up until the 1950s, coal was the main form of domestic heating, powered trains as well as industry, so it's amazing how quickly it's disappeared, and does anybody mourn it's loss? The evidence of coal is gradually disappearing even from the landscape. Pits have been closed down, slag heaps grassed over and the effects of smoke on buildings sandblasted away. London's reputation as a city of permanent smog is confined to the history books.

Oil & Gas

Oil & Gas have more than displaced Coal in terms of energy supply, but Oil has rapidly been displaced by renewable energy in terms of electricity supply, already. It's increased use is mainly due to Transport

The energy ratio (consumption divided by GDP) has fallen to less than 50% of 1990 levels. The ratio of carbon has fallen by 2/3. This has been achieved whilst still growing our economy

OVERALL ENERGY

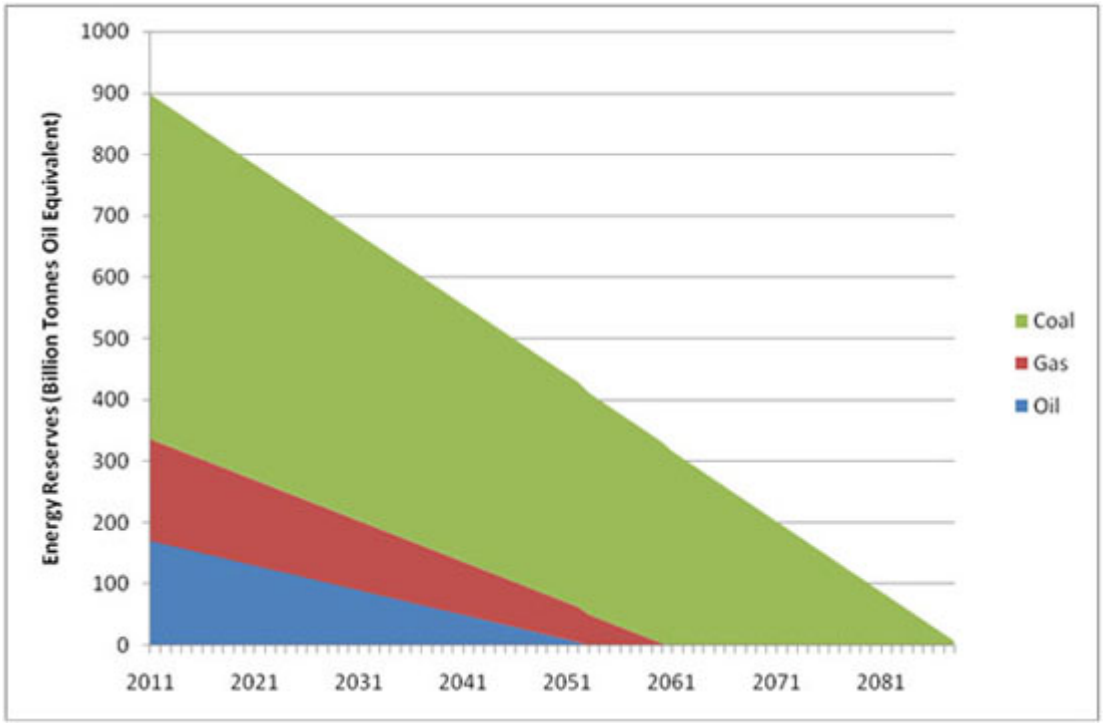


	Index 1990=100				
	1990	**2000**	**2010**	**2018**	**2019**
Primary energy consumption*	100	108.4	96.4	87.5	86.5
Carbon dioxide emissions	100	93.7	83.7	61.4	59.0
GDP	100	127.9	150.7	175.3	177.8
Energy ratio	**100**	**84.7**	**64.0**	**49.9**	**48.6**
Carbon ratio	**100**	**73.3**	**55.5**	**35.0**	**33.2**

* Temperature corrected primary energy consumption.

Can we burn fossil fuels indefinitely?

The answer is no, fossil fuels are created over millions of years from initial decomposition of animal & vegestation and pressure. It's not possible to reproduce this, and identifying and extracting new sources of fossil fuels gets more difficult over time. So even if we set aside all of the environmental arguments for ending fossil fuels, the reality is that we are likely to run out of them within the next 100


Energy Reserves (Billion Tonnes Oil Equivalent)
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
2011
2021
2031
2041
2051
2061
2071
2081
Coal
Gas
Oil
years