



Newsletter November 2010

Government confirms support for nuclear, sidelines Severn barrage

The coalition government announced on 18 October the details of its revised consultation on energy policy. This included confirmation of its support for new nuclear power stations and the abandonment of backing for a barrage across the Severn Estuary.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) was forced to re-run the consultation after a challenge from Friends of the Earth, which argued that it hadn't properly addressed the issue of sustainability. The new 300 page policy statement (NPS) on nuclear power, one of six covering energy issues, is not that different from the original, however.

Two of the original ten sites proposed for new nuclear build – Braystones and Kirkstanton in Cumbria – have been dropped, leaving Hinkley, Sizewell, Bradwell, Oldbury, Wylfa, Sellafield, Hartlepool and Heysham.

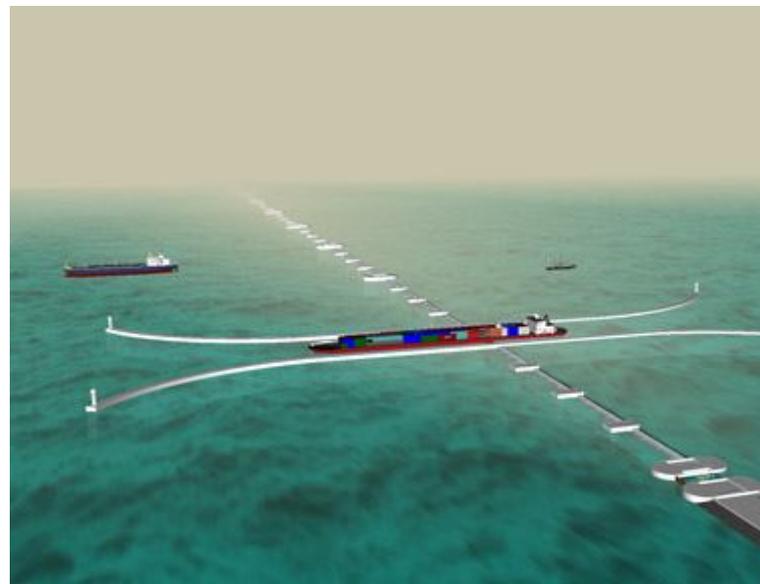
The new consultation document also says that the so-called 'interim storage facilities' for radioactive spent fuel at new nuclear sites like Hinkley *can* be raised through the new fast-track planning system, run by the Infrastructure Planning Commission. Previously this was not allowed once policy on nuclear waste had been laid down by the NPS.

The NPS unconvincingly tries to claim that the spent fuel may not need to remain under water in an interim store for as long as the 160 years already indicated, arguing that the fuel assemblies could be re-jigged to reduce their total radioactivity. But it does confirm that the 'high burn' fuel from EdF's proposed Hinkley reactors will be twice as hot and twice as radioactive as from a standard Pressurised Water Reactor such as Sizewell B.

The viability of government plans for the eventual disposal of nuclear waste will not be allowed to be raised with the IPC, however, as it is considered certain that a 'Deep Geological Facility' will one day become a reality. The process is currently part of a 'volunteerist' scheme although only one area - Cumbria - has put itself forward. A recent geological report appears to show that many parts of Cumbria are unsuited to a deep repository. So Hinkley and other sites may in fact be permanently left with the waste.

Barrage dropped

The government has meanwhile decided that it will not back a tidal barrage across the Severn Estuary - on the basis of cost.



Stop Hinkley issued a press release on the government's announcement, including the following statement:

"It's a shame that the government has abandoned funding for the Severn barrage without completing its consideration of the potential. There are a range of options available, including the tidal reef proposal

(see illustration) which unlike the barrage would pose no threat to the estuary's birds. Any of these proposals would have made a substantial contribution to the country's electricity supply.

This is no justification for giving the green light to nuclear at Hinkley. All the safety issues haven't suddenly gone away: health, accidents, terrorism plus the risks of radioactive waste being stored on the site for up to 100 years after the power stations stops operating.

The barrage is also not the only renewable game in town. The largest offshore wind farm in the world has just started operating off the coast of Kent. An even larger one is proposed for the Severn Estuary. We now have 5 Gigawatts of wind power up and running in the UK, and a lot more ready to start. On 16 September a full 10% of the UK's electricity was produced by the wind.

All this has happened while nuclear has done nothing. The last nuclear power station was opened in Britain more than 20 years ago. Why? Because its costs and risks are too great for any company to consider it without public subsidy. Stop Hinkley believes that nuclear is the failed energy solution of the past, and clean, risk-free renewables are the future."

DECC Consultation on Nuclear Power Policy: Deadline for responses 24 Jan 2011

All details and documents are available at the Department of Energy and Climate Change website -

www.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk - including the "over-arching" National Policy Statement (EN-1), which covers all energy sources, the nuclear power NPS (EN-6), and the Appraisals of Sustainability for both EN-1 and EN-6, which cover how nuclear power stands up against other low carbon options.

You can respond to the consultation either by filling in the form available at the website or by submitting your own separate comments by email to nps.consultation@decc.co.uk or post to **Energy NPS consultation, Department of Energy and Climate Change, 3rd floor A, 3 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2AW**. If you want ideas on what to say, check the Stop Hinkley website.

Breast cancer figures spark fresh fears over nuclear power risk

From *This is Somerset*, 21 October

Fresh fears over the health effects of nuclear power were raised last night after new figures showed breast cancer diagnoses are 50% above national figures in two areas near Hinkley Point in Somerset.

French energy giant EDF wants to build a new reactor at the West's biggest power station but a study by Professor Chris Busby, of Green Audit, cast a shadow over claims the new reactor would not have ill-effects for those living nearby.

In response to the study, though, local public health chiefs insist there is still "no compelling evidence" of a link between Hinkley and statistical rates of cancer.

Professor Busby's study centres on the electoral wards of Burnham-on-Sea north and south, where 54 extra cases above average were recorded between 1994 and 2004. The figures were confirmed by Professor Derek Pheby, former director of the South-Western Regional Cancer Registry and member of the Medical Research Council.

Anti-nuclear pressure group Stop Hinkley says this is enough evidence to argue that a further power station should not be built.

Stop Hinkley obtained the figures after a House of Lords ruling allowed 'incidence' or 'diagnosis' data to be made available. Previously only 'mortality' data or death rates were available. It applied to the South West Public Health Observatory to provide the figures under the Freedom of Information Act and commissioned Prof Busby to analyse them.

Between 1994 to 2004, 113 women would have been expected to contract breast cancer. Prof Busby found 167 women were diagnosed, 50 per cent higher than normal. According to Professor Pheby, the random chance of this occurrence in the two electoral wards was one in two million. Stop Hinkley

says the study backs up several previous health studies.

In a discussion with Professor Busby, health officials at SWPHO suggested that the whole region's breast cancer rate is one quarter higher than the national average, reducing some of the claimed Burnham excess. But Prof Busby says the Office of National Statistics national and regional figures confirm the risk at Burnham.

Jim Duffy, Stop Hinkley coordinator said: "With confirmed breast cancer rates like this it would be inhuman to allow Hinkley C to go ahead with its massive outpourings of radioisotopes."

Badger Protest Blocks Hinkley Gates



Campaigners from the Stop Nuclear Power Network blocked the access road to Hinkley Point on 4 October to mark the closing day of EdF's consultation into its plans for a Hinkley C power station.

Dressed in badger costumes, and locked across the only access road, the activists were protesting against the "flawed" consultation. "This EdF-led consultation is a con", said Mell, a teacher from Suffolk. "While it's good to involve the local community, the main question - whether a new nuclear power station should be built or not - is not part of it. What kind of democracy is this if the most important question - whether we want to expose ourselves and coming generations to nuclear danger and radioactive waste - is not part of the consultation?"

Even before EdF has secured planning permission for Hinkley C, the company wants to start 'enabling works'. Nikki from Bridgwater said: "From this autumn on, EdF wants to dynamite and bulldoze 435 acres of green fields, including the habitats of badgers, bats and other wildlife, and in close proximity to Bridgwater Bay, which is a sanctuary for thousands of waders, ducks and other sea birds. It's a joke to think that this land could be restored - as EdF claims - should Hinkley C not be built."

*From Stop Nuclear Power Network:
<http://stopnuclearpower.blogspot.com>*

Update: An application by EdF to West Somerset Council for "Preliminary Works" (in advance of gaining consent to build Hinkley C) is now expected before the end of the year. Watch the Stop Hinkley website for details of how you can object.

Stop Hinkley News

Meeting with MP

Five members of Stop Hinkley met Bridgwater MP Ian Liddell-Grainger at his constituency office on 12 November to press the case against Hinkley C. Each person raised a different point, including radioactive waste storage for 160 years, lack of local employment benefits, the planned advance trashing of the site, the French reactor's poor track record and the realistic alternatives to Hinkley C. Liddell-Grainger indicated his continued support for the new reactors and said that he had "heard it all before".

Stop Hinkley AGM

The Stop Hinkley Annual General Meeting was held on 1 November in Bridgwater. Val Davey was elected as Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Website Coordinator, Allan Jeffery as Assistant Coordinator and Crispin Aubrey as Press Officer. It was agreed that Jim Duffy's other responsibilities as Coordinator would be taken on by members of the campaign. Jim was personally thanked for the inspiring contribution he had made to Stop Hinkley through the years.

Stop Hinkley Sails into Bristol



The sailing boat "Iris", ably skippered by Stop Hinkley supporter Katy Attwater, made a special journey from Watchet in Somerset to join anti-nuclear activists for a planning meeting in Bristol over the weekend 23-24 October. Iris's masts carried the message "Wake up Bristol, You're about to be Nuked", on the other side "No Need for Nuclear Power" and below it the familiar yellow "Say No to Hinkley C" banner. Leaflets were handed out and Sunday afternoon passers-by in Bristol Docks engaged by fellow campaigners Nikki Clark and Carol Richards with loud-hailers and music.

Social Evening

The first Stop Hinkley social evening was held at the Unity House bar in Bridgwater on 15 November, with 16 supporters enjoying an evening's relaxed discussion. Next one is on 6 December (see Events).

IPC Meeting

Members of Stop Hinkley are scheduled to meet officials from the Infrastructure Planning Commission at the beginning of December. The aim is to establish how the campaign will put its case against Hinkley C at hearings which could start in summer 2011. EdF is expected to submit its application to the IPC in the spring, later than originally planned.

Nuclear News

Sizewell Out of Action for Six Months

The only operating Pressurised Water Reactor in the UK, at Sizewell in Suffolk, finally returned to generation in September after being out of action for six months. It was shut down in March when higher than normal moisture levels were detected in one of the buildings. So much for reliable nuclear power.

The reactors proposed for Hinkley Point are also PWRs.

BBC Points West

BBC TV's Points West news programme broadcast items on successive nights in early October about the proposals for new reactors at Hinkley Point and Oldbury. Quoting critics of the nuclear industry, including economics professor Stephen Thomas and others, the three films were suitably sceptical about EdF's ability to keep its show on the road.

Nuclear Subsidies

The government is expected to announce a package of measures in December which would give extra financial support for new nuclear power stations. This includes fixing the price of carbon emissions and making special payments to "low carbon" generating options. Hopefully these can all be challenged as subsidies specifically designed to make nuclear an economic proposition. The coalition government has said it will not subsidise new nuclear plants.

Events

- 29 Nov DECC nuclear policy public meeting, Armada House, Telephone Avenue, Bristol, 2pm**
Register at www.energynpsconsultation.decc.gov.uk
- 30 Nov Nuclear New Build Conference, Ramada Hotel, Temple Meads, Bristol, demo outside from 8am**
- 6 Dec Stop Hinkley Social, Unity House, Dampiet St, Bridgwater, 7.30pm**
- 13 Dec Stop Hinkley meeting, West Bow House, Milton Place (off West Street), Bridgwater, 7.30pm**

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