



Newsletter August 2015

Former Tory Energy Minister calls for Hinkley C to be abandoned

Stop Hinkley Press Release 22 July

Stop Hinkley has welcomed a speech by the former Conservative Secretary of State for Energy (1979-81), Lord Howell of Guildford, who today described the proposed Hinkley Point C nuclear power station as “by far the biggest future burden on consumers and households”.

Although he is “very pro-nuclear” Lord Howell said he “would shed no tears at all if the elephantine Hinkley C Project was abandoned”

Lord Howell’s remarks come just one day after the current Secretary of State for Energy, Amber Rudd, said there is a “very good prospect” of a decision to build Britain’s first new nuclear plant finally being taken later this year. Ms Rudd told MPs on the Energy and Climate Change Committee that: Hinkley “...is going to be the first new nuclear plant in over 20 years so it is essential to me that we succeed in it.”

The Government announced moves to curb subsidies to small-scale solar farms this morning. This follows similar moves to cut subsidies for onshore wind announced in June, and an end to subsidies for larger solar farms announced in May last year.

Rudd’s motivation is that she wants to prevent an overspend of the government’s clean energy support budget, known as the Levy Control Framework (LCF), which is designed to limit the impact of subsidies on household energy bills. Solar at all scales is expected to add only around £10 to consumers’ bills this year.

Yet the Treasury is offering subsidies – paid for by consumers - of up to £17.6bn to EDF Energy over 35 years.

Stop Hinkley spokesperson Roy Pumfrey said: “The Minister appears to be delusional in thinking that Hinkley Point C will get built any time soon; deceitful by pretending that she is helping UK consumers and disingenuous for saying that Hinkley C is a good deal. The list of problems which EDF needs to overcome gets longer every week. Cutting subsidies to sustainable energy, whilst carrying on regardless with a scheme unlikely ever to come to fruition, is just plain daft.

Lord Howell reminded us that no reactor of the Hinkley C variety has ever been completed successfully and those that are being built are years behind.”

- See all Stop Hinkley PRs on the Press Releases page of the website www.stophinkley.org

100% RENEWABLES FOR THE SOUTH WEST

Next month, at a meeting organised by Taunton Transition Town, John Green will explain that we can produce all our energy needs in the South West from renewable energy sources.

Based on the rigorous analysis provided by The Resilience Centre in a report commissioned by Molly Scott Cato MEP, this talk and discussion will focus on how, and by when, this will be achieved.

Here in the SW of England we have some of the world’s best renewable energy resources. Developing these resources will strengthen our energy security and boost our rural economies, particularly benefiting some of the most deprived rural areas. However, the voice of the silent majority who are in favour of renewables is being drowned out by a well organised alliance spearheaded by CPRE and the nuclear industry who have been campaigning vigorously to undermine support for renewable energy initiatives and policies in the UK.

Will this generation create the political will needed to rapidly transform our energy systems away from its present focus on fossil fuels and nuclear power, or will it be left to the next generation? Passionate engagement is anticipated.

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Areva aware 'as early as 2006' of serious fault in nuclear reactor destined for UK

[The Telegraph](#), 9 July

French state-owned nuclear giant Areva has been aware for almost a decade of critical anomalies in its new generation EPR plant in Flamanville, the same model sold to Britain

Areva, France's nuclear giant, has been aware since 2006 that the steel vessel of its flagship new-generation reactor that confines radioactivity is faulty.

Until now, it was thought that Areva had only recently become aware of "very serious" anomalies in its €9 billion (£6.5bn) European Pressurised Reactor, or EPR – the same model sold to Britain. The EPR is being built in Flamanville on France's Channel coast.

In April, it was revealed that excessive amounts of carbon in the steel in the top and bottom of the reactor's vessel, which forms a shell around it, could cause cracks which could prove disastrous, since the vessel, which houses nuclear fuel, cannot be replaced during the lifespan of the reactor.

However, according to *Le Canard Enchaîné*, the satirical and investigative weekly, Areva was aware as early as 2006 that "a serious problem risked compromising the solidity of the heart of several of its reactors, including the EPR of Flamanville".

Despite this critical safety issue, according to *Le Canard*, Areva had "not seen fit to alert anyone" about the problem "and continued construction as if nothing were amiss".

It was only when the ASN, the French nuclear watchdog, ordered a series of robustness tests in recent months that the worrying faults came to light, it said.

The weekly cited a document addressed to the ASN from the French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN), which states that certain parts of the reactor vessel contain twice the permitted norm of carbon, running the risk of it being too brittle to sustain massive pressure increases.

"What surprised us is that the people from Areva didn't react to such a high abnormal value," Sylvie Cadet-Mercier, who follows new reactors for the IRSN, told *Le Canard*.

The IRSN note also points out that the technology Areva chose to build the Flamanville 3 reactor vessel was "technologically backward compared to that used in the existing operational fleet (of nuclear plants)".

Areva's "incomprehensible" silence over the anomalies meant that it proceeded with installing the 160-ton part, which takes six years to complete, instead of forging a new one, said the IRSN note.

The plant is already running five years late and costs have tripled.

Designed to be the safest reactors in the world and among the most energy-efficient, the EPR has suffered huge delays in models under construction in France, Finland and China.

Areva is contracted to provide two of its EPRs to Hinkley Point in Somerset station, a development the European Commission estimates will cost £24.5 billion.

EDF, the majority French state-owned energy group, is in the final phase of negotiations with the British government on building the two plants in Britain, which in February it said would be "possible in the next few months".

Experts say the same "production process" as for Flamanville had been used on reactor vessels destined for the British-based plants, along with two in China and one in Calvert Cliffs, Maryland, in America.

The fresh revelation came a month after it emerged that nuclear safety inspectors had detected crucial faults in the cooling system of the Flamanville reactor, exposing it to the risk of meltdown.

France's nuclear safety watchdog found "multiple" malfunctioning valves in the Flamanville EPR that could cause its meltdown, in a similar scenario to the 1979 Three Mile Island nuclear accident in the US.

IRSN said: "For now, one cannot conclude it is serious as we haven't fully judged the quality "of the valves" – a view it will announce this summer.

Areva on Wednesday said that it had provided ASN with findings on excessive carbon in the vessel in 2008 and 2009, but among other data as they were not considered a priority.

"If you're asking whether anything has been hidden, the answer is categorically non," a spokesman told *Le Monde*.

However, it said it could not rule out a quality control lapse and that management had launched an internal review and an external audit of two of its factories.

Too expensive - Not needed - Top bank report hits out at plans for £25bn Hinkley C nuclear plant

[Daily Mail](#), 1 August

Plans for Britain's first nuclear reactor in almost 30 years have come under sustained attack from politicians and City bankers.

A report from a top bank this weekend warned that the cost of the £25billion Hinkley Point C plant was 'becoming harder to justify'.

HSBC concluded: 'We see ample reason for the UK Government to delay or cancel the project.'

And former Tory Energy Secretary Lord Howell of Guildford – the self-described 'pro-nuclear' architect of a drive into nuclear power under Margaret Thatcher – has told the House of Lords that the reactor plan in Somerset was 'one of the worst deals ever for British households and British industry'.

Plans for Hinkley Point C have been controversial from the start with the Government guaranteeing what many saw as a sky high price electricity generated at the site.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change shrugged off HSBC's report and the criticism seems unlikely to stop the nuclear plan. The Secretary of State for Energy, Amber Rudd, said on Friday that Britain could sign a deal as early as October during a visit by China's President Xi Jinping.

EDF announced on the same day that it had chosen preferred suppliers for £1.3billion worth of work linked to the new plant.

But with the chorus of disapproval growing louder the Government and nuclear industry are set to be under huge pressure throughout the project to prove it is value for money for British energy users.

Key to the criticisms levelled by HSBC's analysts is that the electricity produced by the reactor is likely to be too expensive, as European wholesale prices are expected to fall along with demand for energy from UK users. It warned of 'huge difference between UK forward prices and the Hinkley price'.

Among HSBC's eight key concerns is that the reactor will be economically unviable due in part to a rising number of electricity grid links with the Continent providing a ready source of cheaper supply.

At the same time it said projections by National Grid to 2025 all point to flat or declining demand. HSBC said its demand estimates are for a fall of one per cent a year.

HSBC also highlighted the 'bleak' future of large nuclear reactors which have a history of escalating costs and sliding deadlines.

Both Howell and the HSBC energy analysts said building a string of smaller reactors may be preferable economically.

EDF has been guaranteed twice the current market price of electricity over a 35-year period paid for through consumer energy bills. In addition, the Treasury has offered a credit guarantee to underwrite up to £10billion of debt.

Campaigners said the financial support appears at odds with comments from Rudd who on Friday defended plans to withdraw subsidies from green, renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power.

She said: 'I feel we can deliver on low-carbon electricity through less subsidy.' Independent environmental policy adviser Dr David Lowry said: 'It's bizarre. Ideologically you can understand why they would want to withdraw subsidy from solar and wind power so that they can live or die in the market place.'

'So the Government is in favour of a free market for energy except, for reasons I can't identify, when it comes to nuclear power where it is in favour of massive subsidies.'

The Austrian and Luxembourg governments launched a legal complaint last month, followed by a challenge from ten German and Austrian green energy firms.

The complainants say the UK Government's subsidies may reach £76 billion and are in breach of European rules relating to state aid. Some observers say the dispute could lead to delays of six years.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change said HSBC did not take into account the role of the reactor in reducing carbon emissions, nor the contribution that the project would make to UK jobs.

A spokesman for EDF said it was confident the legal challenges would be rejected. It said the European Commission had concluded that the project was an 'appropriate and proportionate way for the UK to meet its need for secure, low-carbon electricity'.

Green Scythe Fair, 14 June

Report by Jo Smoldon

Another day where the sun shone on the green!
We had a busy Stop Hinkley stall telling everyone about the European petition we have pledged to support www.ews-schoenau.de/campaign.html It was really good to see the face of a visiting German who came from Schoenau, who couldn't believe it when he saw us pushing their petition. He was so happy!



Lots of people were asking about what is happening at Hinkley. Some saying "it doesn't look like its happening any more does it?"

Discussion about all the reasons why the project is being delayed, this takes an ever increasing amount of time in itself!

There was lots of talk about the tidal lagoon at Swansea Bay recently being given Government permission and about new lagoon projects lined up for other areas of the estuary.

I had a lovely surprise when I approached the lunchtime discussion speakers and found one of them was Theo. As the main topic of the day was Climate Change I wanted to distribute Allan's article on 'Why nuclear is not the answer to climate change'. I was given the job of encouraging the crowds in to hear the discussion and was able to give them a leaflet to browse on the way. There were good speakers and debates, so a success all round.

We had taken the radioactive waste barrel costumes but couldn't see where we had the space to display them. Instead, we decided to set up a relay where two volunteers wore the barrels and circulated the fair, giving out petition slips. It gave helpers a break from the stall and got their legs moving as well as an opportunity to see other stalls. Many thanks to everyone who took a turn. It turned out much easier to do than initially thought because people were approaching us to ask for a leaflet as we walked around in the conspicuous costumes. Some wore the barrel costumes and entered the relay event.

The only problem I had with the day was my promise of a glass of cider at the end dissolved as they had sold out, an indication of the huge numbers who attended the event.

New Nuclear Madness

A Poem by Stop Hinkley member, Cat Watling

Why bother to write anti-nuclear verse?
Why conjure with words
to state the bloody obvious?
Whether the rhyme is gentle and fluffy,
or ranting and angry,
we know the truth already, don't we?

Read the full poem here:

<http://stophinkley.org/PoemNewNucMad.htm>

Events

Stop Hinkley meetings
Mondays 7th September &
19th October, at 7pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
Off West Street, Bridgwater TA6 3RT
[NB Though meetings are usually held on the third Monday of the month, there is no meeting in August and the September meeting has been brought forward.]

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John Green talks about
100% RENEWABLES FOR
THE SOUTH WEST
Monday 21st September at 7.30pm
organised by Taunton Transition Town
at the Creative Innovation Centre,
Paul Street, Taunton TA3 1PF

Keep up to date on the Events page of the website, which now includes reports on past events. www.stophinkley.org/Events.htm

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