



Newsletter

April 2013

Nuclear power plans threatened by European commission investigation

The Guardian 14 March 2013

Britain's planned nuclear reactor programme could be delayed for years, and the nation's long-term energy policy thrown into turmoil, as European commission officials launch the first stage of a formal investigation into the use of taxpayer subsidies to support the development.

Sources in Brussels have indicated that Britain hopes to win approval for a multibillion-pound deal with French energy giant EDF at the initial stage, which usually takes two months.

But if after a preliminary investigation the EC's competition directorate decides to launch a full-scale investigation, that would last at least 18 months and probably two years or more. Such an outcome is made more likely by reports that ministers and EDF are discussing a minimum or "strike" price for the nuclear-generated electricity of a little under £100 per megawatt hour – nearly double the current market rate. However ministers will be hoping that their regular meetings with EC officials will make it more likely that a full inquiry will be avoided.

Under the proposals, a nuclear power station – the first for a generation – will be built at Hinkley in Somerset, and the government will guarantee a minimum price for the electricity produced for 30-40 years, a deal which could cost customers a billion pounds a year or more.

News of the latest obstacle to the nuclear building programme comes before the expected announcement next week by the energy secretary, Ed Davey, of whether EDF has won planning permission for the 3.2 gigawatt Hinkley nuclear plant. He is widely expected to give the scheme the go-ahead.

Expectations are rising that Davey could also announce some details of the new contract, including the strike price, in what would be a useful counter to critics that the coalition is not doing enough to stimulate investment to boost the economy and tackle the UK's threatened energy shortages.

A delay imposed by Brussels would cast new doubt on the £14bn project as it would be likely to make it harder for EDF to raise the capital needed until its contract with the government was fully approved. That in turn would delay the entire nuclear build programme, under which the government wanted 16 gigawatts of new nuclear power operating by the middle of the next decade.

"The government wouldn't need state aid approval for nuclear if it wasn't trying to subsidise a risky technology that could wind up costing more than the renewable alternative," said Doug Parr, policy director for the anti-nuclear campaign group Greenpeace.

Maria Madrid, spokeswoman for Joaquín Almunia of Spain, the European commission vice-president in charge of competition, told the Guardian: "The commission is in contact with the UK authorities on this issue, but has not received a formal notification so far. We are discussing this issue. It's confidential. We never communicate on preliminary discussions."

Hinkley C decision "a political scandal" say local campaigners

Stop Hinkley Press Release, 19 March 2013

Local campaigners say that today's decision to grant planning permission for EDF's Hinkley C project is no surprise, but does nothing to answer the serious questions which now hang over the project.

"I don't think anyone in West Somerset believed that the public consultation last year was anything more than an elaborate, undemocratic sham, and that in itself is a political scandal," said Theo Simon of the Stop Hinkley campaign. "Today's decision is a rubber-stamping exercise, but it doesn't change the facts on the ground. EDF don't know what they will do with the radioactive waste Hinkley C would produce, they don't have the investment they need now that Centrica have pulled out and they have threatened to walk away unless the government underwrite their costs and fix the nuclear electricity price artificially high for consumers."

"No other business in this country would get planning permission without a waste management plan and this industry produces the most hazardous waste known to humankind. David Cameron promised there would be no new nuclear without a solution to the waste issue, but today Ed Davey has granted EDF permission regardless. Cameron also promised there would be no public subsidy, but now his government is negotiating precisely that and apparently willing to lock us all into paying double the original price quoted for nuclear, for the next 35 years!"

"If the billions the government are prepared to commit to keeping EDF in profit were spent on creating jobs in renewables, energy efficiency and home insulation, we could cut our energy bills AND create thousands of sustainable jobs. Off-shore wind is now set to deliver power cheaper than nuclear by 2020, when the

government say we will have the "energy gap" that justifies new nuclear. But with the best will in the world, Hinkley C could not now start generating till the mid 20s. EDF's other new reactors in Europe are now many years over schedule and many billions over budget."

"It's becoming apparent to everyone but the government that the nuclear emperor has no clothes. It makes no sense financially, environmentally or in terms of our energy needs. It's time to put it out of it's misery and save the government any further embarrassment. We need clean, green 21st century solutions to 21st century problems, not a toxic white elephant only kept alive by government bailouts and inflated electricity bills."

March 9th Fukushima Anniversary Event London, March and Rally

Stop Hinkley partly subsidised a coach and joined up with SWAN (South West Against Nuclear) to allow local people attend the London event on the 2nd anniversary of Fukushima nuclear disaster. The coach allowed us to be dropped off and collected at 2 different locations in central London and we were able to take all our banners and costumes easily.

The theme of the day was sunflowers, which are a symbol of hope for the Japanese who see the growing plant as a way of cleaning the soil. It was embraced fully with costumes and lovely face paints from Karine (SWAN in Avalon) as well as tying in with the bright yellow colour of the radioactive waste barrel costumes illustrating the waste problem that never goes away and complicates every nuclear installation in the world.



We assembled in Hyde Park, and were so lucky with the weather. With banners and flags flying we wove our way down London streets conveying our messages loud and clear. We stopped at various locations on route to make individual protests, including the EDF offices, and ended with a Rally outside the Houses of Parliament with a range of speakers including our own Nikki Clark.

Parliamentary meeting 11th March 2013

Report by Jo Smoldon

As part of the Fukushima remembrance an open meeting was arranged in the House of Commons and involved bringing us all up to date with the 'anti-nuclear' story from a wide range of speakers. There was everything from facts and figures to the reality of life at the moment around Fukushima.

Taka Honda explained how children in Fukushima are in a high radiation area and 43% are having abnormalities in their thyroids. It is emerging that some children have been diagnosed with thyroid cancer from the nuclear disaster. He gave an insight into how parents have a daily stress: "Shall I open the windows today or not?" "Should I go outside today or not?" "Should I hang out the washing today or not?" "Should the children play

outside today or not?" "Should we wear masks?" A constant dialogue and worry. All the responsibility is left to the parents and there is no support from the government. Not all the people understand radiation and the risks, like it would be in Somerset if we were to have a nuclear incident. The mothers are concerned about the health of their children but don't know what to do.

There were pictures presented. A child's face had been sketched on the page and the child drew around it their thoughts and images. Wind turbines were drawn in many of the pictures. It was an incredible display of artwork and drew us all very close to those young people on the other side of the world. This exhibition will be coming to Wells in August. Further details when available.

As an information source I recommend listening to the speeches on the links below:

- Kate Hudson, General Secretary, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: <http://youtu.be/L1CXthKRTsU>
- Jonathon Porritt, environmentalist, Forum for the Future: <http://youtu.be/fiHRDrRzUrM>
- Dr Paul Dorfman, Nuclear Consulting Group, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust nuclear policy research fellow and senior researcher at University of Warwick: http://youtu.be/cb_TNlrBSfk
- Prof Stephen Thomas, energy policy researcher, University of Greenwich: <http://youtu.be/l6F-pBfNR78>
- Geoff Read, Fukushima evacuee: http://youtu.be/c4kRwUW_Vl0
- Taka Honda, World Network for Saving Children from Radiation: <http://youtu.be/rMfguc1zdDw>
- Satsuki Goto, JAN UK: <http://youtu.be/nEMuebeaHNc>
- Camilla Berens (Kick Nuclear), Gordon Taylor and Neil Crumpton: http://youtu.be/MKXb_efp9-w

"Hinkley C? Somerset Says No" Window Stickers

Circular vinyl car/window stickers, 10 cm diameter. If you would like one (or more), please send a SAE to Suki Lillenthal, Parsonage Farm, Over Stowey, Bridgwater TA5 1HA. She also has small metal badges with same image. There is no charge for these, though donations are always welcome! The most important goal is to get them out and about on cars and windows... so please get in touch. Any queries 01278 733237 or email Suki at suki@parsonfarm.co.uk.



Suki Lillienthal's report on a meeting with Ed Davey.

On April 3rd Stop Hinkley members, Chinks Grylls, Katy Atwater and myself went to a meeting of the South Somerset Climate Action Group in Ilminster where Ed Davey, MP was guest speaker. We sat with Mr. Davey at supper and had a good opportunity for a bit of face to face questioning. That, combined with his talk and group question and answer session, gave me a few insights into his thinking and the situation at DECC in general. Here are the main points as I saw them:

1. Ed Davey, personally (or so he said at supper) is not necessarily an advocate of nuclear power. Therefore, the only conclusion is that he is pursuing this option for all sorts of political and so-called economic reasons.
2. He stated numerous times "I'm not going to sign a deal with EDF unless I see it as beneficial to the U.K. public".
3. He has quite a strong interest in renewable and reduction measures and continually used government initiatives in these areas to deflect any concrete answers to why DECC is pursuing nuclear power so strongly.
4. The quote that sticks most in my mind is.... "We probably could go down the road of no new nuclear power, as is being done in Germany and other EU countries, but it would be HEROIC."

DECC is certainly not going to give up on this nuclear option at the moment. We need to keep pressuring and asking questions of all the politicians. Any letters to Ed Davey, DECC or any of our local MPs and politicians would be well worth writing. They need to be reminded that any deal with EDF is not a good deal for the British public.

Jo Smoldon's report on CND event in Wells with Bruce Kent, supported by Tessa Munt and Michael Eavis.

On April 4th Bruce Kent gave a passionate delivery of a life long experience of understanding the nuclear weapon global story. Anecdotes of accidents leaving nuclear subs abandoned on the ocean beds including some with nuclear weapons on board, to real life near misses involving bravery of men that have heroically not pushed the button.

He suggests a treaty involving practical steps and inspection of places like Aldermaston to make it criminal to work on weapons of mass destruction and so remove nuclear weapons from the world.

"We have so much peace history and yet we are washed with the military news promoting fear and creating justification of nuclear weapons and nuclear war." "North Korea has a memory of what was done to them, we need to build bridges and have zones of peace around the world." "For every one job in the armaments industry worldwide you can have 5 jobs with the same amount of national money." "War is the greatest cause of global poverty today." All statements imparted from a cold, wintry pavement in Wells last week!

The government in the next 12 months will be pushing forward to replace Trident which will cost us over £100

billion. Trident is a nuclear submarine which has 16 American nuclear missiles on board, and can only be fired using American satellite guidance. He explained that 3 American companies run Aldermaston and America could cut off our so-called nuclear weapon independence.

Trident, although not popular with MPs, was pushed forward because we didn't want the French to be the only ones with nuclear weapons. How ridiculous is this now when we are having Electricity De France dictate to us that we will have nuclear power and not true green renewable energy generated in the UK?

I agree with Bruce we *can* live in a nuclear free peaceful world.

Caroline Lucas extracts a promise of no contract with EdF over Hinkley Point until there's "a positive state aid decision from the European Commission"

10 Apr 2013: Written Answers to Questions

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Cheltenham on nuclear power stations, what consideration he has given to requesting the National Audit Office to review whether his Department's plans to subsidise nuclear power represents value for money for UK taxpayers and businesses in respect of (a) carbon floor price support, (b) contracts for different support, (c) the underwriting of accident liability over a defined amount, (d) the underwriting of long-term waste storage and monitoring which go beyond any funded agreement in the event of that agreement failing and (e) the underwriting of construction costs for new nuclear power stations; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Fallon: I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

An Investment Contract will only be agreed for Hinkley Point C if it represents a fair deal which is affordable and value for money for consumers; and is consistent with the Government's policy of no public subsidy for new nuclear, a positive state aid decision from the European Commission and Royal Assent of the supporting legislation. If a deal is agreed, we will set out the evidence to demonstrate that these tests have been satisfied. We would obviously comply fully with the National Audit Office's scrutiny of the deal, if they choose to examine and report on the value for money considerations of the deal.

NO 2 NUCLEAR POWER
news and information about the UK nuclear industry

If you would like to be kept up to date on daily news regarding nuclear issues, as well as renewable energy, sign up to receive free daily email updates from www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk

Beyond Nuclear

On April 3rd a recently formed anti-nuclear group SWAN (South West Against Nuclear) in Avalon put on a public meeting in Glastonbury Town Hall. A crowd of nearly 100 people which included local councillors and local MP Tessa Munt attended the meeting.

A presentation was given by long-time activists Linda & Paul Gunter, who are part of the American campaign Beyond Nuclear. www.beyondnuclear.org The talk ranged over topics as diverse as economics, engineering safety, renewable technologies and military connections between nuclear power and weapons.

In the States, as here in the UK, nuclear power is uneconomic and EDFs American investment partners, Constellation, just like Centrica, have pulled out. In the USA the Atomic Energy Act protects Americans from foreign companies being the sole owners of a nuclear reactor on their soil. Consequently, EDFs plans for an EPR there ground to a halt.

Unfortunately, here in the UK we're not afforded such protection. As well as EDF being allowed to purchase British Energy in the first place, the UK government are now bending over backwards to give them the subsidies that the government promised they'd never give, that EDF promised they'd never need and that we all knew they can't build without.

Extreme Energy

Extreme Energy is the process where energy extraction methods grow increasingly more intense over time, as easier to extract resources are depleted. Driven by unsustainable energy consumption, the increased extraction effort is resulting in growing destruction of both communities and the environment. The local and global environmental impacts are growing at a frightening rate. A number of new extraction methods are also accessing fossil fuels which would previously be left in the ground and threaten to devastate our countryside, while increasing our contribution to the global ecological crisis.

Extreme energy methods include bio-energy, coal bed methane, new nuclear, opencast coal mining, shale gas and oil, tar sands and underground coal gasification.

In Bristol over Easter weekend there was a southwest Extreme Energy Gathering. People from a range of energy related campaigns got together. The anti-nuclear groups were well represented with people from Stop Hinkley and both SWAN groups in attendance.

We shared ideas and began to develop what we hope will become a shared narrative on extreme energy, which will feed into discussion at the forthcoming National Extreme Energy Gathering. This will take place on the 27th/28th April at the MERCi centre in Manchester, bringing together diverse campaigns and communities that are resisting extreme energy extraction methods for a weekend of networking, strategising and sharing of skills and knowledge. <http://extreme-energy-gathering.org.uk/>

Events

Stop Hinkley business meetings Mondays
8th April & 13th May at 7.30pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
(behind the Squibb pub)
West Street, Bridgwater

Witch Watch
Thursday 25th April, Friday 24th May,
Saturday 22nd June, Monday 22nd July
last lay-by before the gates of Hinkley Point
Email Wanda wanda@stophinkley.org
or phone 07874 819608



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