



Press Release

30 December 2010

### **New Alliance Warns of Pre-Emptive Strike by Nuclear Industry**

The nuclear industry is already starting site preparation works at two of its favoured locations for new power stations - even before it has applied for permission to build the plants. This warning that the industry is “jumping the gun” comes from a new alliance of local organisations opposed to the government’s plans for a nuclear revival.

Communities Opposed to New Nuclear Energy Development (CONNED) brings together groups around seven sites earmarked for possible development – Hinkley Point in Somerset, Sizewell in Suffolk, Bradwell in Essex, Wylfa on Anglesey, Oldbury In Gloucestershire and Sellafield in Cumbria and Hartlepool in County Durham.<sup>1</sup>

- At Hinkley Point, Electricite de France (EdF) has already dug trenches and boreholes across a 430 acre stretch of previously untouched countryside, but now wants to devastate the whole area, moving enough earth to fill Wembley Stadium twice over.
- At Sizewell, planning permission has been granted for large amounts of clay and peat to be moved to investigate the local topology and geology. Rare reptiles, including biodiversity action plan species such as adder, will be displaced. A series of test bores have also been undertaken, damaging local footpaths.

“It’s clear that the industry wants to give the impression that everything is signed, sealed and delivered, hoping that the opposition will fade away,” says CONNED spokesman Crispin Aubrey. “In fact this is far from being the case. Opposition is strong and some investment analysts even argue that it will be extremely difficult for the companies to finance these expensive white elephants<sup>2</sup>. Our local countryside will then have been trashed in vain.”

A series of hurdles still have to be overcome by the companies wanting to build new nuclear plants before they even get planning permission. These include regulatory approval for their new reactor designs, agreement on how much they will contribute towards decommissioning and waste costs and, crucially, building consent from the

Infrastructure Planning Commission. All these will take much more than a year to be finalised.

The government also still has to gain approval for a new bundle of financial support measures announced in December 2010, including a guaranteed carbon price, without which the nuclear industry says it cannot operate new power stations economically. The latest cost estimate for the Hinkley Point twin reactors is £9 billion, an increase of £1 billion from just a year ago.

CONNED argues that the country is in danger of sleep-walking into a future where Britain is once again in hock to an industry with a massive legacy of dangerous waste and a voracious appetite for public subsidy.

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**Notes:**

1. Although Kirksanton and Braystones in Cumbria were excluded from the government's most recent list of approved sites, the developers are planning to appeal.
2. Evidence by Peter Atherton, Citibank investment advisor to House of Commons Energy and Climate Change Committee, 14 Dec 2010  
[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenergy/uc648-ii/uc64801.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenergy/uc648-ii/uc64801.htm)

**What is happening on the ground**

At **Hinkley Point**, EdF is applying to West Somerset Council for permission to devastate 430 acres stretching from the Severn Estuary to the village of Shurton. This involves filling in a beautiful valley and even starting excavation of the power station foundations. The plans include:

- Removal of the majority of trees and hedges.
- Closure of existing footpaths and bridlepaths, including the coast path.
- Stripping topsoil and vegetation to make a terraced area for the proposed nuclear reactors.
- Re-routing underground streams.
- Excavation of more than 2.3 million cubic metres of soil, sub-soil and rocks. This would be enough to fill Wembley Stadium twice over.
- Construction of a jetty out into the sea.

At **Sizewell**, permission has already been granted for earthworks to test the hydrology and topology of the site. A further 650,000 cubic metres of soil and subsoil could later be moved from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- Clay and peat are being moved onto nearby land as part of a “heathland regeneration project”, but the significant amount of clay in the spoil and lack of preparation of the ground mean that this new area is never likely to return to heathland.
- Adder, slow worm and grass snake are all present on the site, as are badgers, otters and water voles. All are being displaced as part of the preparatory work.

### **About CONNED**

Communities Opposed to New Nuclear Energy Development brings together the following local groups:

**Bradwell:** Blackwater Against New Nuclear Group, Bradwell for Renewable Energy

**Heysham:** Heysham Anti-Nuclear Alliance - [www.heysham-anti-nuclear-alliance.org](http://www.heysham-anti-nuclear-alliance.org)

**Hinkley Point:** Stop Hinkley - [www.stophinkley.org](http://www.stophinkley.org)

**Oldbury:** Sheppardine Against Nuclear Energy -

<http://sheppardineagainstnuclearenergy.blogspot.com>

**Sellafield:** West Cumbria & North Lakes Friends of the Earth

**Sizewell:** Shut Down Sizewell - [www.shutdown-sizewell.org.uk](http://www.shutdown-sizewell.org.uk), Communities Against Nuclear Expansion – [www.suffolkcane.org.uk](http://www.suffolkcane.org.uk)

**Wylfa:** People Against Wylfa B - <http://stop-wylfa.org>

The aim of CONNED aim is to raise public awareness about the consequences for health, the environment, safety and security of potential new nuclear power developments, as well as supporting alternative energy strategies. The alliance is supported by national campaign groups, including Greenpeace, the Nuclear Consultation Group and Nuclear Free Local Authorities.

### **For more information:**

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