



**For Immediate Release
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Failing New Nuclear Programme should be Scrapped

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) has called on UK ministers and officials to take stock of the UK's new nuclear strategy. It is clearly failing to deliver. It is obvious now that it can only be delivered by huge public subsidies. The country can ill afford these at a time when public services are under intense strain. At the same time the 'Brexit' decision means the UK is going to leave the EURATOM Treaty which deals another blow to UK nuclear policy. For once ministers should look at the area of energy policy that has delivered and will continue to deliver given sensible financial support. This means the creation of a wide renewable energy mix coupled with supporting Councils to deliver decentralised microgeneration projects and fully realising energy storage and energy efficiency technology. Such policies are more cost effective, can be deployed much more swiftly than new nuclear, produce good quality well-paid jobs, deliver low carbon climate change objectives and, above all, would not generate thousands of tonnes of highly radioactive waste. (1)

Toshiba's announcement that it will not be involved in the construction of new nuclear reactors at the Sellafield 'Moorside' development in west Cumbria has thrown into sharp relief the sorry state of the UK's new nuclear policy. Over the past decade, international energy utilities E-on, RWE Npower, Iberdrola and Centrica have all confidently announced their commitment to building new nuclear power stations, whether at Hinkley Point, Wylfa or Moorside, but then had to pull out as they realise they cannot afford the huge levels of investment that such projects require.

At the same time EDF, who are supposed to be building a new nuclear plant at Hinkley Point, issued three profit warnings last year following a string of unplanned nuclear plant shutdowns. EDF is contending with a government-directed restructuring of the French nuclear industry, and is being pushed by the French state, its controlling shareholder, to rescue reactor builder Areva by taking over the part of its struggling business that is behind EPR technology. The EPR reactor that EDF is building at Flamanville in France is already six years late and €7.2bn over budget. A large drop in French nuclear output over the winter due to safety inspections on 18 of its French reactors, at the request of the country's nuclear regulator ASN, was partly to blame for a sharp drop in profits. Furthermore, the company is saddled with debt and needs to spend €55bn upgrading its existing reactors in France.

Stop Hinkley spokesperson Roy Pumfrey said:

"If you look around the country you find local authorities and communities that are still finding ways to take control of their own energy and make the economic case to install renewables despite cuts in subsidies. This contrasts with the vast level of public subsidy being offered or sought for new nuclear."

Portsmouth City Council for instance has already fitted 2MW of roof based solar panels and is planning to carry on installing. (2)

Swindon council launched a series of solar bonds last year. (3) Stanley Town Council teamed up with North Star Solar to offer fuel-poor households the chance to install solar panels, battery storage technology and LED lighting free of charge and independent of government subsidies. (4) Camden Council has teamed up with Islington and Waltham Forest to deliver a pilot programme designed to reduce the fuel bills of residents at risk of fuel poverty. (5)

Pumfrey added: *“What we have in Somerset is a large hole in the ground and worsening traffic jams, with no guarantee that it will lead to anything because of the parlous state of the French nuclear industry. The Hinkley Point C site represents a huge missed opportunity. It is time we switched course and got on with the job of making Somerset fit for a low carbon sustainable future.”*

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Notes

(1)NFLA Press Release 15th February 2017 <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/news/toshiba-want-out-moorside-nuclear-project-uk-needs-new-energy-policy/>

(2) See <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/A265- NB152 -Decentralised-energy-best-practice.pdf>

(3) Business Green 2nd June 2016 <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2460151/swindon-council-green-bonds-hit-investment-target-early>

(4) Business Green 16th June 2016 <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2461769/north-star-solar-launches-pioneering-solar-and-storage-scheme-for-colliery-town>

(5) Business Green 13th December 2016 <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3001075/camden-council-launches-fuel-poverty-tackling-solar-project>