For Immediate Release
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Time to Cancel Hinkley Point C

Reflecting much of the media comment, since offshore wind costs as low as £57.50/MWh were announced earlier this month, (1) *The Guardian's* editorial said the precipitous drop in the price of electricity from offshore wind turbines should "*blow away*" the UK's nuclear plans. It describes Hinkley Point C as "*like a dinosaur even before it arrives on earth*". Ministers should "*open the door to a greener, cleaner future where Britain meets greenhouse gas targets without more expensive nuclear plants*." (2)

Now, in a new report, Emeritus Professor of Energy Policy, Steve Thomas, says it is time to cancel Hinkley Point C. EDF and the French and UK governments may try to suggest that it's too late to stop and will talk up the costs which have already been incurred. But the start of construction, when the first structural concrete is poured, is still between 2 and 4 years away. Preliminary works are conspicuous but relatively cheap. EDF Energy will have incurred expenses since signing the deal with the UK Government in October 2016 and some of these may be compensatable. But these costs would be dwarfed by the costs of going ahead

If wholesale electricity prices do not rise, the extra cost to consumers over the 35 years from opening the plant would be about £50bn. If the wholesale price rises to, say £70/MWh, the cost would be about £27bn.

Thomas says it would be surprising if there aren't further delays and cost increases. EDF's claim it will take the risk of cost increases does not seem credible, so further costs could fall on electricity consumers and taxpayers.

Thomas continued "*Hinkley Point C would use a technology unproven in operation – the EPR - which has run into appalling problems of cost & time overruns in the 3 projects using it. It would be supplied by Areva NP, which is in financial collapse and might not be saveable and has been found to be falsifying quality control records for safety critical items of equipment for up to 50 years – a bizarre situation.*"

Stop Hinkley Spokesperson, Roy Pumfrey said:

"*We keep hearing warnings about the so-called energy gap. But when the government first endorsed Hinkley Point C, (HPC) it was projecting an increase in electricity consumption of 15% by now, whereas in practice we are consuming 15% less than a decade ago. In other words it made a 30 %*

error. We don't need worry about the gap left by HPC – there isn't one. The news has focussed on the rapidly falling cost of offshore wind, but last week we learnt that Energy efficiency improvements could reduce the average householders bill by £270 a year and save the equivalent to the output of six Hinkley Point Cs". (3)

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Notes:

Steve Thomas' report "Time to Cancel Hinkley" is available at:
http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Time-to-Cancel-HinkleyFinal.pdf

(1) For instance even the Spectator says "Hinkley Point C was the best idea available when it was first mooted seven years ago, but time and technology are inexorably overtaking it." Spectator 16th Sept 2017 https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/09/the-city-still-leads-the-financial-world-but-it-faces-a-fight-on-all-fronts/

(2) Guardian 13th September 2017 https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/13/the-guardian-view-of-offshore-wind-cheaper-and-greener

(3) UK Energy Research Centre 6th Sept 2017 http://www.ukerc.ac.uk/news/unlocking-britains-first-fuel.html