



Newsround April 2025

9 March - Burnham-on-Sea.com: An alternative Acoustic Fish Deterrent (AFD) system is being proposed for Hinkley Point C (HPC) to end a bitter row over some of the site's environmental measures. The move sees EDF, which owns the nuclear power site, drop the controversial idea to create new salt marshes along the Severn Estuary rather than fit AFDs to the station's water intakes. EDF said that all salt marsh design and development work would be paused while work continues in 2025 to prove the effectiveness of the new AFD system

[EDF unveils fresh details on new fish deterrent technology to be used at Hinkley Point C](#)

11 March - Gloucester News Centre: Villagers on both sides of the Severn are relieved EDF has shelved their controversial plans to create salt marshes which were linked to the construction of HPC

[EDF's salt marsh plans pause met with 'great relief' on either side of the Severn — Gloucester News Centre](#)

11 March - New Civil Engineer (NCE): The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) was notified of 13 rail-related incidents at UK nuclear sites since 2020, seven of which were at Sellafield. NCE was sent data about the incidents by the ONR and Sellafield under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. While most incidents resulted in no formal action, seven resulted in reviews of dutyholder investigations and three resulted in follow-ups via routine site inspector interactions. In addition, one resulted in no ONR action, but a police investigation was launched

[ONR reveals 13 rail incidents at nuclear sites since 2020, including 7 at Sellafield | New Civil Engineer](#)

14 March – Business Green: Almost 70 per cent of the public believe it is important for the UK to be a global leader in tackling climate change, according to the government's latest quarterly attitudes survey, which highlights strong ongoing support for climate action, clean energy, and low carbon heating. However, the attitudes tracker survey - which took in the views of over 3,200 adults in November and December last year - shows that while 69 per cent believe it is important for the UK to lead the world on climate action, only 38 per cent think it currently does so. This perception comes despite the UK having delivered the deepest emissions reductions of any G20 country since 1990

[Survey: 70 per cent of public believe UK should be a global leader on climate action | BusinessGreen News](#)

15 March – Guardian: Labour's push for economic growth at the expense of climate and nature is "extremely dangerous", the co-leader of the Green party has said. Adrian Ramsay, the MP for Waveney Valley between Norfolk and Suffolk, was one of the five Green MPs elected to parliament last July in their best ever result. He said he and his colleagues knew they would be holding Labour to account, but did not expect to be as disappointed as they have been

[Green leader Adrian Ramsay: Labour's 'growth v nature' framing is an outrage | Green politics | The Guardian](#)

16 March – FT: Nuclear plant boss Julia Pyke: 'It's a tough gig, developing big infrastructure projects in the UK'. Pyke is on a mission to show the nuclear industry is filled with "nice, normal people". As joint managing director of Sizewell C (SZC), a planned nuclear power station on England's Suffolk coast, she has to win over campaigners, as well as the UK government, which has already committed billions of pounds towards the project. Her attempts have included an unconventional move to set up a choir at the facility. "We want to make ourselves much more accessible," says Pyke, herself a former choral scholar. She brought the singers to London for the nuclear industry's annual bash to perform "Let it Be, Sizewell C", a take on The Beatles' song, to assembled dignitaries. "It made me laugh," she says. "Obviously people were drunk, but by the end of it they were waving their phones in the air."

18 March – FT: Letter Alison Downes: Nuclear plant boss Julia Pyke ("It's a tough gig, developing big infrastructure projects in the UK", Work & Careers, March 17) says "I know [some campaigners] want to believe that it's all a terrible failure, but truly, it isn't." As one of those campaigners she is trying unsuccessfully to "win over", I would point out that all six "EPR" reactors — the type proposed for Sizewell C on the Suffolk coast — have been significantly late and over budget. Taishan 1 in China (five years late, double its budget) was offline for almost two years early in its operational life. Olkiluoto 3 in Finland and Flamanville 3 in France have suffered teething troubles after being 14 and 12 years late and costing three and four times their budgets, respectively. HPC's budget has

already doubled and the project is four to six years late, with another four to six years still to go. Given her role, is it not important to understand how Pyke defines “failure”?

18 March – World Nuclear News (WNN): France's Nuclear Policy Council - headed by President Emmanuel Macron - has agreed that a subsidised government loan should be issued to state-owned power utility EDF to cover at least half the construction costs of six EPR2 reactors

[EDF may get state loan for six new reactors - World Nuclear News](#)

18 March – BBC: Nuclear power station staff were reportedly subjected to a swearsy outburst by an MP when she visited their site, witnesses have said. Rachel Gilmour, the MP for Tiverton and Minehead, admits there were problems at Somerset's Hinkley Point C when it emerged she had driven there without a valid licence. But she has denied ranting at members of staff during the visit

[Rachel Gilmour denies swearing outburst at Hinkley Point C - BBC News](#)

20 March - Stop Hinkley: Roy Pumfrey of Stop Hinkley talks to Stop Sizewell C supporters and answers their questions about his experiences at HPC, as a resident and campaigner

[The Hinkley Experience: Insights for Sizewell C \[Video Q&A\]](#)

20 March - East Anglian Daily Times (EADT): Suffolk has become an early adopter of hydrogen-powered buses as SZC trials the new technology. A pilot fleet of four Wrightbus Hydroliners - launched Trinity Park, Ipswich - is operating from a depot at the town's Ransomes Europark. The fleet is transporting the new nuclear site's workforce from Ipswich and Pakefield to Leiston as part of its Construction Workforce Travel Plan

[Sizewell C adopts trial fleet of hydrogen buses for workers | East Anglian Daily Times](#)

20 March – Guardian: Nuclear whistleblowers who try to draw attention to cultural and safety issues face bullying, MPs have warned. Members of parliament's public accounts committee have said they are concerned about the way people who raise concerns about culture and safety on nuclear sites are treated. “There is generally a problem with whistleblowing and a safety culture,” said Rachel Gilmour, a Liberal Democrat MP, when quizzing nuclear bosses on Thursday. “That relation between bullying and safety within a nuclear context” needs greater examination, Gilmour said, adding that her office was seeking to raise the issue further with regulators. The Guardian's Nuclear Leaks investigation has revealed claims of bullying, sexual harassment and drug use at the nuclear waste dump, Sellafield, which could put safety at risk

[Whistleblowers at nuclear sites may face bullying and threats, MPs warn | Nuclear waste | The Guardian](#)

21 March – FT: France has ousted the chief executive of the state-owned nuclear power group EdeF after months of tensions over strategy and the risk of cost overruns in the construction of six new reactors. Luc Rémont, who had been at EDF since November 2022, would be replaced by Bernard Fontana, the current head of Framatome, a subsidiary of EDF that builds reactors and components, the Élysée Palace said on Friday

21 March – BBC: A longstanding leak at "Britain's most hazardous building" is a nuclear plant's "single biggest environmental issue", a select committee has heard. The leak in the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo (MSSS) - built more than 50 years ago at Sellafield in Cumbria - started in 2019 after first occurring in the 1970s. Labour MP Luke Charters told the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday that every three years the silo leaked enough material to fill an "Olympic-sized swimming pool". Sellafield head Euan Hutton said the leak did not "pose a detriment to the public"

[Silo leak is Sellafield's 'biggest environmental issue' - BBC News](#)

21 March – Stop SZC: Redirect SZC funding to the Warm Homes Plan, say campaigners. Campaigners call on Rachel Reeves and Ed Miliband to stop Sizewell C, redirect its funding to generate ‘Warm Homes’ jobs in every constituency by the next election. Building Sizewell C would likely cost around £40bn over the next 15 years. Deducting money already spent, if Sizewell C is cancelled now, the public money saved by 2030 would be £7.1bn. A paper from Stop Sizewell C and the Green New Deal Group calls for this saving to be added to the £6.6bn the government is committed to spend in the current Parliament on energy efficiency in the nation's homes. Turbocharging this ‘Warm Homes Plan’ by more than doubling its budget will generate long term, secure jobs,

particularly for young people across the UK. It will be quick to implement, so by the next election new jobs and cheaper, warmer, healthier homes will have appeared in every constituency

[Redirect Sizewell C funding to the Warm Homes Plan, say campaigners - Stop Sizewell C](#)

25 March – NCE: EDF's ownership of Sizewell C has decreased to 16.2% and the UK government's stake increased to 83.8%. Meanwhile, the French company's chief executive has been axed and its financial stability has been called into question. The UK's flagship gigawatt-scale new nuclear projects under construction – HPC and SZC – are both subject to intense scrutiny as costs rise and timelines slip. HPC is late and over budget, and SZC is awaiting its delayed final investment decision (FID) which is scheduled to be made at the Spending Review on 11 June. The FID will reveal the final determination of who will fund the project and how. The government has already invested several billion pounds in developing it. HPC's costs rose from around £25bn in 2015 to up to £34bn in 2024, and SZC is projected to cost £40bn – double what it was estimated by EDF and the UK Government to cost in 2020

[EDF reduces stake in Sizewell C as boss sacked | New Civil Engineer](#)

28 March – Guardian: The French energy company EdeF was one of the top providers of hospitality to energy ministers, with 10 occasions, and had the most meetings with ministers and officials in the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The report found that between meetings and hospitality, EDF provided hospitality to or attended meetings with senior officials and ministers on average once a week

[UK ministers and officials treated to hospitality 3,500 times in five years, study finds | Politics | The Guardian](#)

31 March – BBC: The construction of SZC on the Suffolk coast is a key part of the government's growth programme. But some locals fear being forced out, accusing landlords of cashing in on a jobs boom by evicting tenants and raising rents to unaffordable levels

[Landlords 'cashing in' on Sizewell C jobs boom, claim locals - BBC News](#)

1 April – FT: UK Treasury confident SZC investors will soon be 'teed up'. Ministers will decide whether to proceed with delayed Suffolk scheme in June spending review. A senior Treasury minister has said he is confident private financing for SZC will be "teed up" in time for a final investment decision in June over whether to proceed with the delayed project (April Fool?)

2 April – BBC: The gender pay gap at the UK's largest nuclear site has increased, a report has found. Latest figures showed the average (medium) pay gap at Sellafield rose from 13.65% in 2023 to 19.62% in 2024. Sellafield Ltd said it was "disappointed" at the figures and said it was "due to the combination of long-term gender distribution across grades and the impact of complex payment practices"

[Gender pay gap increased at Sellafield nuclear site, report finds - BBC News](#)

5 April – BBC: With nuclear energy production increasing globally, the problem of what to do with the waste demands a solution. But where do you store something that stays dangerous for thousands of years? Safely storing the nuclear waste that already exists is only the start of the problem, however. With the world moving away from fossil fuels towards low-carbon alternatives, nuclear energy production is set to increase, which means more waste is going to be produced - a lot more. In the UK, most nuclear waste is currently sent to Sellafield, a sprawling site in Cumbria, in the north-west of England, with about 11,000 employees, its own road and railway network, a special laundry service for contaminated clothes and a dedicated, armed police force (the Civil Nuclear Constabulary). Sellafield processes and stores more radioactive waste than anywhere in the world. But more hazardous material is on the way, much of which will come from the new nuclear power station being built at Hinkley Point in Somerset. To keep pace, experts have been hunting for other, much stranger, disposal solutions. "In the UK, around 90 per cent of the volume of our legacy waste can be disposed of at surface facilities, but there's about 10 per cent that we don't currently have a disposal facility for. The solution is internationally accepted as being GDFs," says Dr Robert Winsley, design authority lead at the UK's Nuclear Waste Services. "We estimate that about 90 per cent of the radioactive material in our inventory will decay in the first 1,000 years or so. But a portion of that inventory will remain hazardous for much longer - tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of years. "GDFs use engineered barriers to work alongside the natural barrier of stable rock. This multi-barrier approach isolates and contains waste, ensuring no radioactivity ever comes back to the surface in levels that could do harm.

5 April – Daily Mail: It was Britain's worst nuclear disaster, but it is likely you have never heard of it. Unlike Chernobyl in Ukraine, or Fukushima in Japan, Windscale in Cumbria is not vivid in the public imagination. And that is because the full extent of the fire that broke out in 1957 at the nuclear site now known as Sellafield was covered up by the government, even though it led to dozens of cases of cancer. Atomfall, a video game released late last month, sets users in an imagined post-apocalyptic version of Cumbria, a world where the Windscale fire has turned much of northern England into a lawless quarantine zone. But the real thing could have been so much worse. One local union leader went as far as saying that the consequences could have been as bad as the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, had efforts to put water on the blaze backfired

[The cover up that kept Britain's worst nuclear disaster secret despite fears it could have been as bad as Chernobyl | Daily Mail Online](#)

6 April – Observer: Workers building the troubled HPC nuclear reactor in Somerset have raised concerns that the construction site is overrun by rats. The Unite and GMB trade unions are understood to have warned the developer, the French energy giant EdeF, that urgent action is needed because the rodents are “everywhere”. The growing vermin population has prompted fears over the health of the workforce building Britain’s first new nuclear power plant in a generation, which is running years late and billions of pounds over budget. A source on the site told the Observer: “They’re all over. You see them just sat there, looking at you. It is worse near the canteens, where I guess it started. But they are everywhere now.” A second source confirmed that the trade unions had broached the issue with EDF, describing the number of rats on the site as “quite grim”. EDF is under pressure to deliver the plant by the early 2030s after significant delays and spiralling costs have saddled the company with growing debts. Workers have claimed that the financial pressures faced by EDF have had a damaging impact on their working conditions and pay

[‘They’re everywhere’: workers warn of rat infestation at Somerset nuclear plant | Animals | The Guardian](#)

6 April – FT: The new boss of French state-owned energy group EdeF faces the same nearly impossible tasks that led to the ousting of his predecessor: satisfying the government’s often contradictory demands for cheap power to help industry and the construction of costly new nuclear reactors. Bernard Fontana is a seasoned industrialist who has run EdeF’s engineering arm Framatome for nearly nine years. He will seek to avoid the fate of the previous CEO Luc Rémont, removed last month after just over two years because of repeated clashes with the state. On Fontana’s to-do list will be repairing relations with the government, the company’s only shareholder, striking energy supply deals with some of EDF’s biggest industrial clients, while also advancing plans to build six nuclear reactors in just over a decade — a key initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron, which was announced three years ago

7 April – Morning Star: Tunnelling crews at HPC have cancelled a planned strike after securing victory in a pay dispute. Members of GMB and Unite working at TG Tunnelling will now receive a payment to cover tax they were incorrectly charged last year. GMB members accepted the firm’s offer with a majority of 93 per cent. GMB organiser Tim Northover said: “GMB members have accepted an offer which means they will not be out of pocket.”

[Tunnelling crews at Hinkley Point cancel strikes after winning pay dispute | Morning Star](#)

7 April – Guardian: A senior manager at HPC accepted bribes such as an £11,000 quad bike to funnel extra work to a British engineering firm, an employment tribunal has heard. Ashley Daniels was investigated by HPC’s owner, EdeF, after he was given gifts such as £2,000 hospitality tickets for a boxing match and a refill for his Montblanc fountain pen, the tribunal in Bristol heard. The hearing was told Daniels ensured more work was “directed” to a firm specialising in heavy lifting so that it could continue operating at HPC. The Guardian understands Daniels was dismissed by EdeF. The details have emerged in the judgment of a tribunal claim brought by an engineer called Garrick Nisbet, who sued his employer, Notus Heavy Lift Solutions – a subcontractor at HPC – for unfair dismissal

[Manager at Hinkley Point C accepted a quad bike as a bribe, tribunal hears | Hinkley Point C | The Guardian](#)

10 April – Independent: Sir Keir Starmer is expected to approve a major nuclear power plant alongside a slew of mini reactors in a bid to boost Britain's stagnant economy. The prime minister will approve investment for the construction of SZC before the June spending review, The Times reported, as well as unveiling plans for a fleet of small modular reactors (SMRs) across the UK

[Keir Starmer set to approve nuclear plant in bid to power up economic growth | The Independent](#)

Roy Pumfrey for Stop Hinkley April 2025