



Newsround February 2025

14 January – FT: France's state auditor has said that EdeF should not make a final investment decision (FID) on the UK's Sizewell C (SZC) project until it has reduced its exposure to its other British development, Hinkley Point C (HPC). The Cour des Comptes also said state-owned EDF must ensure that any international projects are profitable, and must not delay the programme of new nuclear projects in France

15 January – Energy Voice: EdeF's chief executive Luc Rémont has hit back at the national French auditor's claims that the energy company should delay its investment in UK nuclear power project SZC. He said the regulated asset base (RAB) model for financing SZC, where the cost of development is shared with the consumer, should not be correlated with the refinancing of HPC. EdeF has started a search for financiers to help refinance the delayed project at HPC, following the French state auditor's findings yesterday, according to Rémont. In October, EdeF issued £500m of senior bonds to help finance investments in two nuclear reactors at HPC. Rémont said that the funding model for the SZC "limits" EDF's capital exposure

[French energy giant EDF launches search for Hinkley Point finance after damning audit report](#)

19 January – Times: Over time, over budget... will our new nuclear plants ever be built? A damning report on EDF, the French company aiming to construct SZC, has thrown the project into doubt, while HPC faces soaring costs and delays. The cost of nuclear power in the UK came roaring back into the headlines last week after reports that the final bill for SZC would be £40 billion — twice what was initially expected. This was followed by a damning report on EDF which laid bare its financing problems, raising questions about whether the plant will be built at all. HPC is running years late and is massively over budget, prompting critics to wonder whether this is a model we should be copying. EDF had originally envisaged that [Hinkley] would be in operation by this year; its most optimistic scenario now puts the start date for the first of its two reactors at 2029. Meanwhile, HPC's original £18 billion cost on the eve of its construction has ballooned to up to £35 billion in 2015 prices — or £46 billion in today's money. Unfortunately, the financing for both plants is far from settled. It is estimated that cost overruns at HPC mean it needs to find another £5 billion to finish the work. This shortfall has been exacerbated by EDF's partner in the project, China General Nuclear Power (CGN), refusing to put in more money after being excluded from SZC on national security grounds. Alison Downes of the Stop Sizewell C campaign said: "We've no faith this project is being looked at objectively, so it's vital that the Office for Value for Money [the new government agency] launches an immediate inquiry before ministers sleepwalk into a disastrous decision." Having allocated £5.5 billion to SZC in the budget, most observers expect Labour to give the green light at the spending review. Some argue that the "sunk-cost fallacy" — a reluctance to abandon projects in which a lot of money has been invested, even if that would ultimately be a more cost-effective option — has kicked in, and that cancelling it now would trigger a large and galling write-down for the government

20 January – Bridgwater Mercury: Plans by EdeF to create 340 hectares of new saltmarsh habitats along the River Severn could assist with tackling climate change, a lecturer has claimed. The saltmarshes, which have been delayed by the energy company, would compensate for the 44 tonnes of fish expected to be sucked into the cooling system of HPC, which is currently under construction. Dr Jonathan Dale, Lecturer in Physical Geography at the University of Reading, believes that the Severn estuary "stands at the forefront of a potential saltmarsh restoration revolution, with EdeF's current proposals representing just of a number of schemes planned for the estuary." Dr Dale added that "the timing of this revolution is significant. With rising sea levels threatening aging flood defences, many coastal areas face inevitable inundation. By planning these transitions now, rather than waiting for nature to take its course, we have a unique opportunity to shape the future of our coastline."

[Hinkley Point C: Saltmarshes could help with climate change | Bridgwater Mercury](#)

23 January – Daily Mail: Keir Starmer: My Labour Government will stop the time-wasting Nimbys and zealots from holding the country to ransom. [One] group delayed the SZC nuclear plant with ... unsuccessful claims. And it is fear of challenge which leads to the ridiculous spectacle of the £100 million bat tunnel for HS2 or the proposal to install an 'acoustic fish deterrent' (AFD) – 288 underwater speakers designed to scare fish away from HPC

[KEIR STARMER: My Labour Government will stop the time-wasting Nimbys and zealots from holding the country to ransom | Daily Mail Online](#)

24 January – Bridgwater Mercury: EdeF has confirmed that a "lengthy process" to identify acceptable compensation for the loss of fish stemming from HPC "has the potential to delay the operation of the power station."

[Hinkley Point C: EDF says fish issue could delay new plant operation | Bridgwater Mercury](#)

24 January – East Anglian Daily times (EADT): Campaigners have spoken of their "shock and desolation" at the death of an environmental activist, who was a founder of campaign network Greenpeace UK. In Suffolk, Pete Wilkinson was perhaps most well-known for his work as chair of action group Together Against Sizewell C (TASC), which is campaigning against plans for SZC. However, the London-based activist had been involved with campaigning since the 1960s when he co-founded environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth and was appointed as one of the five members of the Greenpeace international board of directors

[Pete Wilkinson was well known for Sizewell C campaign work | East Anglian Daily Times](#)

24 January – The Rivers Trust: Save Severn Estuary's Fish: Demand Action from Hinkley — Sign the petition. HPC must not remove protection for millions of fish in the Severn Estuary. Help us hold EdeF accountable and ensure the Severn Estuary's ecosystems are protected. HPC will draw the equivalent of 3 Olympic swimming pools of cooling water per minute from the Severn Estuary, one of the UK's most highly designated nature conservation sites. The huge intake pipes, equivalent to the cross-section of six double decker buses, are required to have an AFD fitted to prevent millions of fish being sucked into the system and killed. Ten years into construction and EDF are still putting off fitting this important fish protection measure. The Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) is not against the power station providing vital power for the UK, BUT is just demanding that the fish protection measures be installed as originally consented and that damage to the Severn Estuary ecosystem is properly addressed

[Save Severn Estuary's Fish: Demand Action from... | The Rivers Trust](#)

26 January – Oil Price: Global nuclear energy production is set to reach a record high in 2025, driven by increased investment and growing demand. The resurgence of nuclear power is driven by factors such as the need for reliable, baseload power and the growing concerns about climate change. However, the concentration of nuclear technology supply chains in China and Russia poses risks to global energy security and could undermine Western sanctions against Russia

[A New Era for Nuclear Power | OilPrice.com](#)

27 January – Telegraph: EdeF signals ageing British nuclear fleet can run into 'the 2030s'. Extension of plants' operations could help Ed Miliband's scramble to hit clean power targets

28 January – Times: New UK nuclear power station will start up in 2035, claims EDF. SZC, projected to generate 7% of UK electricity, aims for 2035 launch. But will it avoid the costly delays plaguing its sister plant? The first reactor from the Suffolk nuclear plant will enter commercial operation in 2035 and the second in 2036, according to a presentation published by SZC that described a final investment decision by this summer as "essential".

28 January – Somerset Live: The leader of the Green Party on Somerset Council has attacked the prime minister following his recent comments on HPC. EdeF has courted controversy over plans to create new saltmarshes in the Severn estuary to offset the environmental impact of HPC. In an article for Mail Online, prime minister Sir Keir Starmer lambasted efforts to block major infrastructure projects, singling out opposition to the AFD which EdeF had originally proposed for HPC. These comments have drawn the ire of Councillor Martin Dimery, who warned Mr Starmer that his stance would lose him support across the southwest

[Somerset Green councillor slams Sir Keir Starmer over Hinkley Point C comments - Somerset Live](#)

1 February – BBC: Land in Gloucestershire next to two decommissioned nuclear power stations, in Oldbury and Berkeley Green, is set to be redeveloped for a new kind of nuclear technology. Simon Bowen, chairman of Great British nuclear (GBN), said the region's "rich nuclear history" was "enormously exciting", and the new projects would provide "very high quality jobs" for the area. "I have made no secret of the fact that I think Oldbury is an absolute prime site for SMRs [small modular reactors]"

["Huge potential" for Gloucestershire to become nuclear hub - BBC News](#)

2 February – Telegraph: Labour must roll back its pursuit of net zero and prioritise energy self-sufficiency. The government is on the brink of collapse. Coalition partners have walked out. And a row over energy exports and green rules is shaking the political system. With so much else going on in the world, we don't usually pay much attention to Norwegian politics. But perhaps we should. After all, we rely on the country to keep our lights switched on. We have allowed ourselves to become dangerously dependent on imported power, and no matter how much we may think it is reliable, in a crisis you can only depend on yourself. We need to restore our own oil and gas industry – before it is too late.

[Ed Miliband will crucify your savings along with the economy](#)

2 February – Carlisle News & Star: An improvement notice has been served on a Cumbrian nuclear site following a 'shunting accident' on the rail system at Sellafield. The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has served an improvement notice on Sellafield Ltd following a shunting accident on the rail system at the Cumbria site. The enforcement action was taken after a railway wagon that hadn't been properly secured rolled about 60 metres along the track before colliding with a stationary wagon. The incident occurred during shunting activities when several other railway wagons were being moved on the same stretch of track

[Improvement notice issued on Sellafield Ltd. after 'shunting accident' | News and Star](#)

3 February – NFLA: Welsh antinuclear campaigners believe that the continued fixation of certain Senedd politicians and civil servants on bringing a new nuclear project back to Wylfa amounts to a delusion which will deny local people of Ynys Môn the opportunity to take up green jobs in the interim

[Nuclear delusion in Ynys Môn will deny islanders green jobs](#)

3 February – Construction Enquirer: A tax-row is disrupting work on Balfour Beatty's giant tunnelling contract at HPC. More than 100 workers downed tools last week following a dispute with their employer TG Tunnelling Ltd (TGT). The Enquirer understands the dispute is over lodging allowances for agency workers on the site. TGT is one of several labour suppliers on the job, but it hasn't been deducting tax from lodging allowances like its fellow suppliers. HM Revenue & Customs is understood to now be chasing back-dated tax from TGT whose workers could see their tax bills rise. One site source said: "The lads suddenly heard that they could be on the hook for back-dated tax and facing bigger bills. "They immediately cabined-up and refused to work."

[Tax-row tunnellers down tools on Balfour Hinkley job | Construction Enquirer News](#)

3 February - Daily Mail: A nuclear power station worker was quizzed on suspicion of being a spy after he returned to the UK from Russia. Mario Zadra, a 67-year-old Italian national, worked at HPC from 2020 to 2023, and was questioned by counter-terrorism police after he flew into Heathrow Airport on 12 April 2023. It was reported that potentially sensitive documents were found in his possession and were seized by the authorities to prevent them being 'used to carry out a hostile attack'.

[Engineer who worked on Hinkley Point C nuclear project quizzed on suspicion of being a Russian spy | Daily Mail Online](#)

4 February – New Civil Engineer: GE Vernova's nuclear division, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GEH), has entered into a series of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with prominent UK nuclear engineering companies Boccard and Cavendish Nuclear. This move aims to establish closer ties among local suppliers, capitalising on their expertise in nuclear power plant construction and operations. The partnerships come as GEH works on the development and regulatory approval of its BWRX-300 SMR, which is one of four technologies currently under consideration in GBN's SMR selection competition

[GE Hitachi expands collaboration with UK firms to advance SMR development | New Civil Engineer](#)

4 February – Bridgend Local: Regular public consultation is being held by 'Last Energy UK Limited' on its proposal to develop and build four 20 MW micro-nuclear energy plants on the site of the former coal-fired power station at the Llynfi river, Llangynwyd

[Proposal to build micro-nuclear plants at Llangynwyd, Nr. Bridgend - Public Consultation Meeting Mon 17 Feb](#)

6 February – DESNZ: More nuclear power plants will be approved across England and Wales as the Prime Minister slashes red tape to get Britain building - as part of his Plan for Change. Reforms to planning rules will clear a path for smaller, and easier to build nuclear reactors – known as SMRs –to be built for the first time ever in the UK. This will create thousands of new highly skilled jobs while delivering clean, secure and more affordable energy for working people. This is the latest refusal to accept the status quo, with the government ripping up archaic rules and saying not to the NIMBYs, to prioritise growth. It comes after recent changes to planning laws, the scrapping of the 3-strike rule for judicial reviews on infrastructure projects, and application of common-sense to environmental rules

[Government rips up rules to fire-up nuclear power - GOV.UK](#)

7 February – iNews: Plans to develop a critical “mega-nuclear” power station in North Wales were dropped in 2021 amid concerns over the impact its construction would have on the Welsh language and culture, documents reveal. Industry sources cited the decision as a prime example of the planning system obstructing the development of much-needed new nuclear power reactors

['Mega' nuclear power station was blocked over fears it would harm the Welsh language](#)

8 February – Dave Toke's Blog: Of all the nonsense about nuclear power that one hears, the idea that somehow it is planning problems rather than financial issues that stop its development surely takes the biscuit. The Government bats away any formal planning objection made to its nuclear plant when companies want to build them. Yet the UK government is flogging nuclear planning problems as a scapegoat for the technology's failure for all it is worth. And it is talking about the non-existent concept of small modular reactors. Is this a smokescreen to hide its problems with financing SZC? There was a silly story published in most leading newspapers about the proposed Wylfa plant in North Wales being knocked back in 2019 because of 'language' objections. The reality was that the proposal was scrapped for financial reasons. This involved the Government being unable to offer enough incentives to keep Hitachi interested in developing the project. In January 2019, the BBC reported that 'Japanese tech giant Hitachi said it was suspending construction of the new plant in north Wales as the project's cost continues to spiral.'. The National Grid cancelled plans for pylons needed for the project

[It's money that has stopped nuclear power, not planning problems](#)

9 February – Telegraph: The £40bn nuclear project at risk of becoming another British white elephant. The shadow of HPC hangs over another much-needed power station. On the Suffolk coast, an army of yellow diggers and dump trucks are levelling fields and preparing the ground for one of Britain's biggest infrastructure projects. It is here that thousands of workers plan to raise SZC, a multibillion-pound nuclear power station, in the late 2030s, eventually providing power for some 6m homes. If approved in the coming months, the scheme would replace capacity lost elsewhere over the next decade as other nuclear plants from the 1970s and 80s gradually shut down. Yet that is still a big “if”, with Labour ministers currently weighing up whether the benefits of Sizewell C are worth the gargantuan costs, which will reportedly exceed £40bn (the original budget given to HS2). On one hand, it is a shovel-ready project that promises to boost energy security and economic growth – something Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor, is in desperate need of. Hanging over the project, however, is the shadow of its sister scheme: HPC, which is running years behind schedule and has gone dramatically over-budget. Should SZC spiral into disaster, like HPC, it could easily become a white elephant that kills off the prospects of any future successors. And unlike its sister scheme, which was funded entirely by EdeF and other investors, British taxpayers will be on the hook if things go wrong, with the Government playing the role of anchor investor. “There is no transparency around Sizewell C,” says spokesperson Alison Downes, who lives nearby. “Why, despite government support, does its likely eye-watering cost and impact on households remain shrouded in secrecy?” HPC has morphed into the most expensive nuclear power station ever built, by some distance. Originally budgeted at £18bn, it is now estimated to cost £46bn

9 February – EADT: Campaigners opposed to SZC have slammed prime minister Sir Keir Starmer's backing for nuclear energy as "appalling". On Thursday, the Labour leader pledged to "build, baby, build" as part of an effort to create thousands of highly skilled jobs and boost economic growth in the UK. This included plans to "fast forward on nuclear" by tackling "blockers" and changing planning rules so more reactors could be built in more parts of the country. But Jenny Kirtley, chair of action group Together Against Sizewell C (TASC), said: "Starmer's statement is appalling, full of soundbites fuelled by the pro-nuclear lobbyists – many of whom already have their 'snouts in the trough' - spouted by a clueless government blaming 'blockers' to divert attention away from the evidence that nuclear is not cheap, quick to deploy, homegrown, nor clean."

[Sizewell C campaigners slammed "clueless" Government | East Anglian Daily Times](#)

10 February – FT: The IEA has found that nuclear plants delivered since 2000 in the US and Europe were on average eight years late and cost two-and-a-half times their original budget. The UK government on Thursday announced planning reforms intended to make it easier to build nuclear plants quickly and cheaply. Tom Burke, founder of E3G, a London-based clean energy consultancy, is far more sceptical, saying the information from the countries claiming better records lacks credibility. "Where the publicly available information is reliable — if you look at what happened in Finland, the United States and the United Kingdom — people have not built reactors to time and budget, ever," Burke says

Roy Pumfrey for Stop Hinkley February 2025