

NUCLEAR POWER update

Many Council members will have noticed the recent, seemingly unending, media articles pressing for the Government to support new nuclear build. The BBC's recent two-parter on the "wondrous" progress at Hinkley C (under construction in Somerset and approx. 1/3 finished) is merely the most egregious of recent media articles extolling nuclear power.

But it is not all going EDF's way. The Sun and the Daily Express, for example, both panned the BBC TV series as gushing, over-the-top, sycophantic claptrap. The programmes failed for example to reveal that we were just witnessing the construction of auxiliary units. Neither of the proposed 2 nuclear reactors have been built yet and indeed questions remain as to when or whether they will ever be built and commissioned.

The situation needs closer scrutiny. Indeed the media in the past has often criticized the economic and political nonsense of Hinkley C see <https://www.ianfairlie.org/news/21-media-comments-opposing-hinkley-c/>

The reason why EDF (which is behind most of the recent media lobbying) is pushing so hard is that its UK empire is slowly crumbling. Most of its 14 aged AGR reactors will soon be closing for good in the next few years, leaving only its Sizewell plant to operate for another 10 years or so.

Indeed some recent heavy-duty articles in the (nominally Tory-supporting) Spectator journal, the US business magazine Forbes, and the industry rag PV News have all drawn attention to the contradiction between nuclear industry's dire economics and EDF's frantic support for Hinkley C.

Many arguments exist as to why the Hinkley C project should be scrapped – see my 2020 article <https://www.ianfairlie.org/news/why-hinkley-point-c-should-be-stopped/> but Boris – in yet another of his ill-considered policies- is apparently planning to stiff UK taxpayers to pay for the ever-increasing costs of building new nuclear, IN ADVANCE of receiving any electricity. It remains to be seen whether Boris can ram this nonsense through the House of Commons later this year.

In other news, in plans to deal with global warming, both the UK government and the European Commission have, apparently, decided that nuclear power is not to be included in so-called green plans to tackle the climate emergency. In the case of the UK, this is due to banks being reluctant to issue green bonds if investors saw that they could be used for nuclear construction.

However readers should not celebrate this outbreak of common sense as the nuclear industry employs many lobbyists and press agents (over 200 it is rumoured in the UK and in Europe). And, as in the past, these sane proposals may not see the light of day when it comes to their implementation.