



NFLA media release, 21 August 2023, For immediate use

For the sake of Suffolk, Nuclear Free Local Authorities urge Centrica to 'Say Non to Sizewell C'

The Chairs of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) Steering Committee and the NFLA English Forum have written to the Chief Executive of Centrica, which owns British Gas, urging him *'for the sake of our planet, the people, fauna and flora of Suffolk, the wallets of your hard-pressed electricity customers, and your own company bottom-line'* to say NON to Sizewell C.

The Times reported in July that Chief Executive Chris O'Shea was considering taking a stake in the project and Councillors O'Neill and Blackburn in their letter point out the pitfalls of investment *'which would bring with it clear financial, ESG and reputational risks for Centrica'*.

EDF Energy, now wholly owned by the French state, is currently building a similar plant at Hinkley Point C in Somerset – its history has not been a happy one with the project hugely behind schedule and massively over budget. In addition, Sizewell C will utilise the same EPR reactor as Hinkley Point C, a reactor design with a chequered safety and reliability record. A reactor in China was involved in an accident and is currently again shutdown (Taishan-1) and in Finland a second one only came online after the operator was forced to carry out repairs after a succession of equipment failures (Olkiluoto-3).

Sizewell C is also a site presenting unique challenges. It is located on the Suffolk Heritage Coast, facing the increasing threat of storm surges and coastal erosion, and with climate change modelling suggesting it would become inundated and isolated; there are several sites of scientific interest nearby; and the county is under increasing water stress with fears that there will be insufficient fresh water to meet the needs of the plant as well as local people.

The Councillors point out that several prospective investors who manage large pension funds have clearly indicated that *'they will not be dipping their financial toe into the radioactive water'* of Sizewell C. Pension managers at The People's Pension; Nest; BT; BBC; Tesco; and Pearson have all, in correspondence seen by campaigners at Stop Sizewell C, indicated they will not be backing Sizewell C, whilst the Daily Mail reported that Nat West and BT told the paper they would also not be investing and Legal and General's Nigel Wilson told the BBC's Today programme: *"We are not big fans of HS2 and Sizewell C"*.

Councillor O'Neill believes this to be sage advice:

"At a current projected cost of £32.7 billion, Hinkley Point C's budget is fast approaching twice its first estimate at the time of financial close, and there is no reason to believe that Sizewell C will be delivered any more quickly or any more cheaply as the construction of large nuclear power plants in the UK is a litany of projects being delivered late and vastly over budget".

Councillor David Blackburn, Chair of the NFLAs English Forum, is a co-signatory to the letter. He is urging opponents of the project to also contact Centrica to ask them not to invest:

"It would be far wiser for Centrica to direct every available penny into the proven renewable technologies that we already have now – these would generate power and heat far more quickly and more cheaply, and

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR & RENEWABLE ENERGY ISSUES



generate for them a more immediate financial return, than any further investment in this monstrous nuclear boondoggle."

"The NFLAs are pleased to back the campaign launched by Stop Sizewell C asking supporters to send an email directly to Mr O'Shea asking him not to invest in Sizewell C.

"You can take this direct action in just a few clicks by going to the site at <https://action.stopsizewellc.org/centrica> Please sign this and share it with your family and friends.

"For the sake of Suffolk, we do not need Sizewell C".

Ends//... For more information, please contact NFLA Secretary Richard Outram by email on richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk or mobile 07583097793

This news release can also be found on the NFLA website at <https://www.nuclearpolicy.info/news/for-the-sake-of-suffolk-nuclear-free-local-authorities-urge-centrica-to-say-non-to-sizewell-c/>

Notes to Editors

The letter to Mr O'Shea sent today by email reads:

Mr Chris O'Shea, CEO Centrica

Monday 21st August 2023

(Copied to Investor Relations, Centrica)

Dear Mr O'Shea,

Please say NON to Sizewell C!

We are writing to you as Chair of the UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities and Chair of the NFLAs English Forum to urge you not to invest money in taking a stake for Centrica in the controversial Sizewell C nuclear power plant project in Suffolk.

It was reported in The Times of 22 July 2023 that such an investment is under consideration:

(Mr) 'O'Shea also has floated the idea of investment in EDF's Sizewell C nuclear project, though [Martin] Young [of Investec] cautions that EDF "haven't exactly covered themselves in glory in terms of their ability to deliver on time and on budget".

This is putting it mildly. Young was here clearly primarily referring to Hinkley Point C, Sizewell C's predecessor, which is being built by EDF Energy in Somerset.

This will be delivered late and vastly over budget.

In February 2023, EDF Energy announced that the first reactor will be available in June 2027, and the second one year later, but with the caveat there is a 'rising risk' of an additional 15-month delay, and the cost of the project at current prices amounts to at least £32.7 billion, fast approaching twice the original budget at the point of the Financial Investment Decision of £18 billion.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR & RENEWABLE ENERGY ISSUES



There is no reason to believe that Sizewell C will be delivered any more quickly or any more cheaply as the construction of large nuclear power plants in the UK is a litany of projects being delivered late and vastly over budget.

Like Hinkley Point C, Sizewell C will be reliant upon an EDF-designed European / Evolutionary Power Reactor which has a poor track record for safety and reliability.

The first such installation at Taishan-1, China suffered an accident emitting radioactive gas in the summer of 2021 and was shut down for over one year. After coming back online in August 2022, the reactor was again shutdown from January of this year for reasons that are still not fully understood.

A further installation at Olkiluoto-3, Finland only came online in 2022, after 17 years, and then suffered a rapid succession of parts failures which lasted for over a year curtailing power generation. In April of this year, after multiple repairs, it finally again came back online, but power output was reduced after only one month, as the cost of generation was uncompetitive compared to the power that was available from hydroelectric plants.

The Sizewell C site is in an area of outstanding natural beauty, being located on the Suffolk heritage coast, with habitats of scientific importance on its doorstep, particularly of birdlife. The Suffolk coast is subject to storm surges and coastal erosion, with climate change likely to increase the frequency and intensity over time, and models show that the Sizewell C site will be inundated and isolated in coming decades.

It is also located in a county suffering increasingly from water stress and there are real fears that the demands placed by the plant upon the supply of potable water will jeopardise that available to the local populace. Sizewell C will also be water-cooled sucking in vast amounts of seawater which will have a hugely negative impact upon the marine environment.

Finally, as we have seen in Ukraine, nuclear power plants also represent a huge potential target for any hostile power, with Russia having previously threatened to swamp Britain's coastline with a nuclear weapon generated tsunami.

In summary then, investment in Sizewell C would bring with it clear financial, ESG and reputational risks for Centrica.

Many other pension investors have already indicated, in correspondence seen by campaigners at Stop Sizewell C which were probably responses to letters that read rather like this one, why they will not be dipping their financial toe into the radioactive water:

People's Pension - *"Direct investment into nuclear power infrastructure projects is not part of The People's Pension's investment strategy and we will not be investing directly into Sizewell C."*

NEST - *"Nest has not invested directly into nuclear infrastructure and we have no plans to in the foreseeable future."*

BT - *"I am happy to inform you that we have no investment or exposure to Sizewell C, nor do we plan to in the future."*

BBC - *"The (pension) Scheme does not exclude the possibility of making nuclear-related investments, but currently has no plans to make any direct equity investment in Sizewell C."*

Tesco - *"We can confirm that the Scheme has no investments in EDF (who are the parent company for Sizewell C) and has no immediate plans to invest in the company."*

Pearson - *"I can advise that the Trustees of the Plan have not considered investing directly in the Sizewell Nuclear Plant and have no plans to do so going forward."*

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR & RENEWABLE ENERGY ISSUES



And, in addition, from the media:

NatWest – as reported in Daily Mail of 31 Jan 2023 <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-11697759/Two-UK-pension-funds-snub-Sizewell-C-nuclear-plant-plan.html>

Legal and General - Nigel Wilson said *"We are not big fans of HS2 and Sizewell C"* on the BBC Radio 4 Today programme November 2022

So, there you have it. Sage advice from some of the leaders in the pension investment markets.

Sizewell C is not the solution to our climate emergency or our cost-of-living crisis. It would come on stream far too late to arrest the inexorable rise of temperature, and it would represent further financial pain for hard-pressed households as a nuclear levy would be added to every electric consumer's bill.

It would be far wiser for Centrica to invest every available penny into the proven renewable technologies that we already have now – these would generate power and heat far more quickly and more cheaply, and generate for you a more immediate financial return, than any further investment in this monstrous nuclear boondoggle.

Therefore, for the sake of our planet, the people, fauna and flora of Suffolk, the wallets of your hard-pressed electricity customers, and your own company bottom-line, we are asking you to write back to us to confirm that you will say NON to EDF Energy and not invest in Sizewell C.

Thank you for considering this letter. Please respond in the first instance to our NFLA Secretary Richard Outram by email to richard.outram@manchester.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Lawrence O'Neill,
Chair, UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Councillor David Blackburn,
Chair, NFLA English Forum