



Driving around the area you could be forgiven for assuming that Sizewell C has already started, however this is not the case, but the pre-enabling works certainly give us a taste of what would come if and when it finally did go ahead.

**Here is a summary of the current status of the project:**

The government is a half owner of Sizewell C and will be a majority owner by the end of this calendar year, having invested £1.25 billion so far of £1.7bn allocated in 2021 to get a GW nuclear project to Final Investment Decision within this parliament. The government has already bought out China General Nuclear and is in effect currently buying out EDF which has no intention of taking any more than a 19.99% stake - probably less if that was possible.

Last Monday potential investors were invited to register their interest at the start of a capital raise process. Only verified investment firms that have signed confidentiality agreements are given access to Sizewell C's promotional materials, so we have no idea what costs and schedule are being quoted, or what rate of return investors might receive, despite the fact that it is us, consumers, who would be paying for the project in part through our taxes and in part through a levy on our energy bills.

It is our understanding that a Final Investment Decision would not be until the next fiscal year, ie after 5 April 2023, but that is not guaranteed.

**On cost**, officials have privately admitted to us that Sizewell C will cost "£30 billion plus". In March the project delivered its fifth Cost Estimate but Ministers have refused to publish this or any other estimate.

**Who will invest?** Aside from EDF wanting as small a stake as possible, the government has not indicated what size stake it is prepared to take, although we understand it would prefer NOT to be a majority stakeholder. [UK pension funds are not enthused](#), with Legal & General, Nest, BT and NatWest ruling Sizewell C out. We are still expecting a consultation from the Treasury this autumn in an attempt to reclassify nuclear power as "green" but that is [unlikely to be a game changer](#) for UK funds. What is clear from the capital raise is that the government is looking for a partner with infrastructure expertise, as it has no track record of delivering nuclear power stations, and for this it may well be forced to look overseas.

There are many other issues we've raised successively with Ministers relating to the finance; including the risk that households would be forced to carry, through use of the RAB model which would add a tax to our energy bills during construction. In this we were supported by [The Science Innovation and Technology Committee](#) who called for greater transparency about Sizewell C, saying: *"A headline lower cost than Hinkley Point C is not justified if the value of the risk is too great. This is true even if it forces a conclusion that... gigawatt scale new nuclear is not financeable on defensible terms, and that the UK's nuclear ambition would need to be pursued through other nuclear technologies"*.

Furthermore, we've submitted evidence to the Treasury that undermines the government's cited justification for use of RAB, which is that a reduction in the cost of financing would lead to cheaper electricity. However in Georgia, USA, the electricity from Vogtle 3 and 4, nuclear

units which charged consumers levies during construction via a very similar funding model called Early Cost Recovery, remains very high at \$160-\$170/MWh, and there is absolutely no doubt Sizewell C's electricity would be more expensive than renewable sources.

You have heard us speak previously about the track record of the EPR reactors. [Hinkley Point C's latest cost is £26bn](#), £8bn over its £18bn budget - and that is just in 2015 money - the cost is [£33bn in today's money](#). EDF has announced cost increases and completion delays at Hinkley C since 2017, saying in June that the pre-stated (uncosted) risk of a further [15-month delay is increasing](#). Olkiluoto in Finland [was 14 years late](#). Flamanville in France [is at least 12 years late and not due online until 2024](#). [EDF claims Sizewell C will be cheaper, benefiting from being a replica of Hinkley](#), however it is not possible to replicate the site, the complications of which are likely to eradicate any savings EDF may have hoped to make.

Of the three EPR reactors in operation globally [Taishan 1 in China closed for over a year with fuel failure](#) early in its life and [has been offline again since February](#), reportedly due to [oxidation of its thermal sleeves](#). EDF is keen to frame Taishan's fuel failure as just about the robustness of fuel assemblies, but [French regulators are demanding design changes at Flamanville to limit core vibration](#)

So these are some of the big picture issues with Sizewell C's financing and its reactor type that we are continuing to pursue. Our campaigns are primarily are primarily focused on fighting the project on two fronts: financial as described above, and we encourage you in a personal capacity to support our pensions campaign which is on the home page of our website, and legal, supporting Together Against Sizewell C's Judicial Review.

As we hope you are aware, Court of Appeal judge Lord Justice Coulson has said the arguments about Sizewell C's water supply should be looked at again. He said that given Kwasi Kwarteng granted SZC planning consent against the advice of the Planning Examining Authority, and because of TASC's range of arguments about the need for a water supply, the appeal had "a real prospect of success". He also acknowledged the scale and public interest in SZC.

At the High Court hearing, TASC argued it is clear a desalination plant will be needed to guarantee a permanent water supply of 2.2 million litres per day for Sizewell C. However, the environmental impact of such a plant was not included in the planning application for the nuclear power plant and therefore was neither assessed nor taken into account by the Business Secretary. TASC said the issue of a water supply should not have been treated as a separate issue to the power plant application which EDF claims will produce electricity for 60 years in the heart of Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Natural Beauty. On appeal, it is argued that Mr Justice Holgate was wrong to say that SZC Limited was "unable to identify a permanent supply of potable water" and that water supply connections were "simply unknown". TASC say the company could at any time have decided to proceed with a desalination plant but, instead, chose to keep open the option of a supply provided by Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL). Also, it is put that if Sizewell C did rely on NWL for its potable water, the scale and location of the power station would necessitate additional infrastructure and the impacts of this, including harm to European Sites, have not been assessed.

The government will be keen for this appeal to be heard and settled as soon as possible so the hearing may be before the end of the year. It's not clear cut what will happen if the appeal is in our favour. There may have to be further assessments conducted. But this serious issue needs to be resolved, and we hope potential investors have received a clear message that outstanding risks should deter them from investing in Sizewell C.

And it's far from being the only risk. Sizewell C's coastal defences are - as you well know - highly controversial and carry a great deal of uncertainty. The proposed defences are a combination of a Hard Coastal Defence - rock armour on the seaward side of the site - and a Soft Coastal Defence which is intended to replicate the natural movement of sediment up and down the coast. The latest information we have is that SZC is expected to submit the design of these features in late October, with an 8 week period for regulators, agencies and the responsible authority for the coast - East Suffolk Council - to make comments. I am not aware at this stage of any public consultation.

Both the above items were part of an East Suffolk Council resolution last week, which stated that the development should only commence following identification of long-term solutions by Sizewell C Ltd to issues concerning water supply, sea defences and coastal dynamics, long term local storage of highly radioactive spent fuel, marine biosphere impacts, and satisfactory confirmation of the size of the development site with associated impacts on Minsmere and other precious habitats.

In the meantime, we must remain vigilant to changes to the DCO and other incremental changes such change of use applications for holiday lets

And we must hold Ministers to commitments they have made.

Andrew Bowie, who is the newish Nuclear Minister visited Suffolk in May but his engagement was limited to a very few groups and Parishes. He promised to return before the July recess, but did not, and we still don't have dates for his return when he MUST engage much more widely with local elected representatives. So thank you if you have signed the letter to him and hopefully he will be back sooner rather than later

At a recent meeting with the Minister, we were very critical of SZC's false promise in January that advance works would be reversible when there has been considerable felling on Goose Hill and elsewhere. We were also critical of poor communications from the SZC stakeholder engagement team, who erroneously insisted the Sizewell Link Road would be temporary and taken up after construction - failing to correct this mistake when challenged in real time, and only correcting it the following day. We are also concerned that much of the dialogue T&PCs have with SZC is siloed into issue-specific fora, and the project has doggedly refused to reinstate the Community Forum. We hear that may be changing but Forums will possibly be annual at best, grossly limiting opportunities for broader conversations about cumulative impact. We urge you in your own dialogues wito repeat the message that this is not acceptable.