



Newsletter July 2009

Eden support for nuclear company

Eden row over 'carbon polluter'

Western Morning Press
Saturday July 11, 2009

THE Eden Project has been criticised by environmentalists over its links with French nuclear energy giant EDF and its UK subsidiary EDF Energy.

The Cornish environmental attraction supported EDF Energy's Green Britain Day, launched yesterday by athletes including Olympian Victoria Pendleton and Paralympian Eleanor Simmonds, which urges people to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Eden Project, near St Austell, staged a series of events promoting EDF Energy's message to "do something green for the team", angering campaigners who question the nuclear producer's green credentials.

Mike Rigby of anti-nuclear campaign group Stop Hinkley, said: "It really is very rich of EDF, a major global corporate producer of nuclear waste." He accused EDF of being a major carbon polluter and objected to the corporation lecturing on how to be greener.

Eden Project chief executive and co-founder Tim Smit said: "Eden hasn't merged with EDF. We have partnered with them on a campaign to encourage action in lowering the carbon footprint.

"Eden's commitment to renewables and energy independence has been amply demonstrated by its memorandum of

understanding to develop a geothermal power plant on its site, active exploration of hydro-electric energy from Luxulyan and its construction of a biomass boiler.

"As far as Eden's position on nuclear energy is concerned, unlike gangs, it doesn't have a collective view – that's not how we want to evolve opinions. If I were to be asked my personal opinion, I would agree that the case for nuclear has been overstated and that the potential of renewable energy has been understated and under-funded."

The Stop Hinkley group, which campaigns against the Hinkley Point nuclear power station in Somerset and wants nuclear reactors on the Bristol Channel and the Severn Estuary to be decommissioned in favour of greener technologies, says the Eden Project's support of EDF is perhaps understandable given the background of its board.

Two of Eden's trustees, Sir John Rose and Simon Robertson, are senior figures within Rolls-Royce, a firm known to be keen on nuclear development in the UK. Eden non-executive director Cullum McAlpine is a director of UK building and civil engineering company Sir Robert McAlpine, whose portfolio includes the Hinkley Point B nuclear power station.

Meanwhile, EDF Energy faced a possible court battle, after green energy company Ecotricity accused it of using a green Union Jack like Ecotricity's logo to promote Green Britain Day. Ecotricity founder Dale Vince said: "EDF are not

British and they are so not green – the two things that this flag surely suggests to people."

A company spokesman said Ecotricity would be pursuing a High Court challenge after confused customers and partners contacted head office complaining about the Green Britain Day logo.

However, EDF spokesman Rajan Lakhani said the Union Jack flag had been used in many ways by hundreds of commercial and non-commercial enterprises. He said: "Turning the flag green is an effective way to simply visualise Team Green Britain and what Green Britain Day is all about."

In an interview with The Times earlier this week, Mr Smit praised EDF's green credentials. He said: "We bought our green tariff electricity from EDF, which led to discussions about an education project. The energy provider sponsored a big array of solar cells that give us about 30 per cent of the power we need for our education building. "The more we spoke to EDF, the more we became aware of its ambition to be a clean energy giant. Not just for altruistic reasons, but because EDF genuinely believed in the vision of a low-carbon world."

Around 20 campaigners from across the country contacted Mr Smit on Wednesday asking him to "consider pulling out of your involvement with EDF".

The Eden Project responded yesterday. "You have raised some important points which need addressing," the e-mail reads, before enclosing a copy of Mr Smit's article in the previous day's The Times.

Mr Lakhani said EDF had "led the way" among energy companies in making "long-term commitments to the environment and to sustainability".

He said: "EDF Energy is now the UK's largest generator of low-carbon electricity and the first sustainability partner of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. "As Tim Smit said in his comment piece in the Times, EDF Energy 'genuinely believe in the vision of a low-carbon world'."

Editor: No doubt supporters will be using suppliers other than EDF for their electricity.

Examples of utilities' sources of power are as follows:

Good Energy: buys electricity from 100% renewable sources but does not actually invest in new renewables.

Ecotricity spent £401.69 per customer on new renewables last year but bought in 18% nuclear electricity, slightly above the average of 16%.

EDF spent just £10.69 per customer on renewables while other nuclear companies **npower** (owned by RWE) spent £4.38 and **E.On** (who want to build at Oldbury with RWE) spent nothing at all! (figures by Ecotricity)

Stop Hinkley anger at nuclear academy gifts

Western Morning News, June 16 '09

AN anti-nuclear campaign group has complained to the public spending watchdog about deals involved in the creation of a nuclear training academy at a Westcountry college.

Sedgemoor District Council in Somerset and the South West Regional Development Agency (RDA) have been criticised for gifting land and funding to Bridgwater College for its planned training hub. The council handed over a one hectare parcel of land, valued at £85,000, to the college and the RDA pledged £1.9 million to the development.

Stop Hinkley, which has campaigned against the nearby Hinkley Point nuclear power station, has referred the moves to the Audit Commission. It claims the deals contradict the Government's promise that nuclear power can be developed without hand-outs from the public purse.

Sedgemoor council says councillors weighed up the potential loss of income from the "landlocked" real estate – which is already being leased to the college under a 25-year deal – with the benefits to the economy of a skills centre.

The RDA argues the industry's ageing workforce means there will be a skills gap, and the centre will train a new generation of engineers that the industry needs.

Jim Duffy, spokesman for Stop Hinkley, said: "The replies from Sedgemoor council are not convincing. "Even if the land is tied to the college, the council could have pushed harder to get payment for the site, which will benefit the nuclear industry, especially when £1.9 million is being pumped into the project by another arm of the taxpayer.

"Sedgemoor and the RDA seem far too chummy with the nuclear industry which the Government says should pay its own way." At just 12 miles from Hinkley Point, the college is thought to be ideally placed to provide highly-skilled workers during a major shift for the industry.

Since 1976, a reactor at Hinkley Point on the Bristol Channel shoreline has supplied millions of homes with power. It is set to be decommissioned in 2016. Meanwhile, around 86 hectares of land at the site has been included on a list of 11 potential areas where a new wave of nuclear power stations could be up and running from 2017.

The contested land was originally two football pitches. Half the site is already developed as a full size artificial pitch, the

remaining land was to be developed as sports facilities available for public hire.

Stop Hinkley contends the council's donation of public land will deny future revenue to taxpayers and benefit commercial companies which are supposedly financially mature. It has also reported the RDA donation to the Audit Commission as it represents "an indirect public subsidy to the nuclear industry".

A spokeswoman for Sedgemoor said there had been no objections to public notices concerning the academy, which will be allied to a performing arts centre, and a workforce with "up-to-date engineering skills" will boost pay locally. She said: "The Energy Skills Centre will have significant positive benefits for the residents of Sedgemoor, coming at a time when there is very significant prospect of substantial investment in energy-related activity in the local area.

"The centre will ensure the local community will be trained in the skills needed and that local people will benefit from the increase in the labour market." An RDA spokesman said the funding, agreed in principle, did not represent subsidising the nuclear industry and pointed to other strong sectors it is investing in, including aerospace.

Update on Planning and Licensing

UK safety regulator seriously concerned over EPR safety systems: The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) wrote to EDF and Areva this month, saying that the safety management systems in the new reactor's designs were overly complicated, allowed minor systems to override major systems and did not allow manual shut-down of the reactor from the control room. This news echoes the complaints of the Finnish regulator reported in last month's Newsletter. Areva is now scrambling to

redesign the systems but this may delay the timetable for the EPR's safety licence.

Stop Hinkley attended a NII conference in June where NGOs complained about an announcement that '**exclusions**' may provisionally form part of the licence if not enough information was provided by its deadline. Top nuclear consultant, John Large later said to Stop Hinkley: "A very real risk of the NII permitting the EPR licensing process to proceed on a piecemeal basis is that it, itself, could be compromised by having to wave through unsatisfactory aspects of the final design"

At the same conference it was noted that the Government has been evasive in engaging with campaign groups over the new build process and provided no feedback from consultations. Stop Hinkley proposed that the NGOs present should call upon the Department of Energy, and Climate Change to meet us over our concerns about its various disconnected consultations. Sizewell campaigner and former CoRWM member Pete Wilkinson has drafted a joint letter.

The timetable for various stages of the nuclear planning process includes:

- Draft Nuclear National Policy Statement due any day now;
- Justification decision: looking at pros and cons of a new radioactive process: this Autumn;
- First preliminary submissions to the Infrastructure Planning Commission: next April;
- First site licence application: September 2010;
- Decision on EPR and AP1000 reactor design safety: June 2011.

The Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) is the new Government quango set up to 'fast-track' planning consent to major projects such as individual nuclear power stations. Details of how it will function are slowly emerging but a 'commissioner' will lead a

six month examination period to include hearings. This will be followed by a decision-making period of up to three months, then a six-week window for a legal challenge. This could mean an appeal to the high court for a judicial review.

Unlike the previous Public Inquiries where objectors could cross-examine nuclear and government experts, the commissioner will weigh up the arguments and ask his own questions, ruling out issues which he decides are not relevant.

The Conservative Party has said it will abolish the IPC alongside many other quangos if it gets elected, which would put more planning responsibility back on local councils who otherwise would deal with details.

West Somerset District Council is set to pass a new planning policy, part drafted by EDF, at its full council meeting on Wednesday 22nd. The 'Planning Performance Agreement' has not been through any scrutinising committees nor yet (15th July) seen by councillors. It is expected to facilitate planning measures if the IPC is abolished.

Events

Stop Hinkley meeting

Tuesday 15th September, 7.30pm
West Bow House, Milton Place
off West Street, Bridgwater

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