

Sizewell

The Sizewell project has recently suffered a number of very depressing turns of events.

A number of us recently visited the NNLAG (National Nuclear Local Authorities Group), specifically to hear from the Somerset Councils about their experience with the Planning Inspectorate Enquiry into the Hinkley Point station. That was unremittingly bad news, especially as to the Inspectorate's negative attitude towards local communities, legacy issues and more. It was felt the EDF would have come away from that process with a clear steer that there was a much reduced need to provide mitigation etc to an area hosting such projects, in our case, Sizewell.

That was reflected very much when our officers met with senior EDF representatives, and heard that EDF wish to withdraw most of the funding for our Sizewell team, and to limit their involvement with the community over the coming year to a single 2-day workshop on each of the major topics, such as 'Transport', or 'Coastal Processes' – a completely untenable and unrealistic approach in our view.

Overlaid on these, the national, indeed the global, picture on nuclear power is appearing increasingly difficult. Specifically, EDF and the Department of Energy appear still to be a long way from agreeing the 'strike price' for power, which will fundamentally influence EDF's investment decisions, initially on Hinkley, and then Sizewell. Their partner Centrica has pulled out, and other potential partners, possibly from China have yet to be secured.

Effectively, all of this means that we are likely to have to scale down very considerably our aspirations around local benefits from the scheme, although we shall continue to work energetically to the contrary. Following the recent County elections there is to be a meeting of our JLAG group, with the new SCC representatives, tomorrow, to start to formulate tactics for the way forward.