

Sizewell C nuclear plant gets £14bn go-ahead from government



Image source, Sizewell C

Image caption,

The government has said it will invest £14.2bn into the Sizewell C nuclear power plant

Alice Cunningham

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The government has committed £14.2bn of investment to build the new Sizewell C nuclear plant on the Suffolk coastline, ahead of the Spending Review.

It will create 10,000 direct jobs, thousands more in firms supplying the plant and generate enough energy to power six million homes, the Treasury said.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves said it was a "landmark decision" that would kickstart "economic growth".

However, Alison Downes, director of pressure group Stop Sizewell C, condemned the announcement, adding it was a move the government would "come to regret".

Reeves said the project would be the "biggest nuclear building programme in a generation".

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said nuclear energy would "deliver a golden age of clean energy abundance" and help boost the UK's energy security.

The government insists that nuclear power provides enormous amounts of low carbon, non-intermittent energy that forms a crucial part of the UK's energy future.

However, Sizewell C will take at least a decade to complete and the plant of which it is a copy, Hinkley Point C in Somerset, will switch on in the early 2030s - more than a decade late and costing billions more than originally planned.

Image source, Martin Giles/BBC

Image caption,

Alison Downes of Stop Sizewell C condemned the government's announcement

The final investment decision on the funding model for the plant is due later this summer.

The Sizewell C project has faced opposition at local and national level from those who think it will prove to be a costly mistake.

Ms Downes said she believed the money could be spent on other priorities and feared the project would "add to consumer bills".

"There still appears to be no final investment decision for Sizewell C, but £14.2bn in taxpayers' funding, a decision we condemn and firmly believe the government will come to regret," she said.

"Ministers have still not come clean about Sizewell C's cost and, given negotiations with private investors are incomplete, they have signed away all leverage and will be forced to offer generous deals that undermine value for money."

On Saturday about 300 protesters [demonstrated on Sizewell beach](#) against the project.



Image source, Jamie Niblock/

BBC

Image caption,

Large areas of land have already been cleared in preparation for the building of Sizewell C

The Sizewell C investment is the latest in a series of announcements in the run-up to the government's [Spending Review](#), which will be unveiled on Wednesday.

The review will see the chancellor set out day-to-day spending and investment plans for each government department.

A number of policies have already been announced, including the [U-turn on winter fuel payments](#), a commitment to increase defence spending, and [investment in the science and technology sector](#).

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Sizewell C has had other pots of funding confirmed over the years by government and in September 2023 a formal process to raise private investment was opened.

Ministers and EDF have previously said there were plenty of potential investors and they were close to finalising an agreement on it.

Once operational, Sizewell C is expected to employ 900 people.

As well as Sizewell C, the government said it was investing £2.5bn over five years into research and development for fusion energy and making investments into its defence nuclear sector.

This included development of HMNB Clyde and investment in Sheffield Forgemasters.