

APPENDIX B2

The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Dear Secretary of State

EDF Energy – Lacking a Culture of Quality

The council read with concern a news report by *France24* on the findings of a special audit report on EDF Energy to its largest shareholder, the French Government. The overall finding is that EDF lacks a culture of quality. The consequence has been engineering failings, delays and cost overruns at Flamanville (France), cost overruns at Hinkley Point (UK) and delays at the Olkiluoto plant (Finland).

French Government ministers have reacted strongly to the report, saying that:

- the report underscored an unacceptable lack of rigour at EDF
- EDF must quickly put in place an action plan to bring its nuclear project to the highest levels
- decisions on building more French nuclear reactors cannot be taken before EDF has demonstrated the effective running of the EPR.

It is a matter of grave concern to us that while the French Government does not trust its own energy company to build any new nuclear reactors in France, EDF is pressing ahead with new builds in the UK, particularly at nearby Sizewell C, Suffolk.

We have been seeking assurance that EDF's quality improvement plan contains the right actions, is effectively implemented and is independently scrutinised.

Given the strategic importance of EDF for the UK's strategic energy supply and the critical importance of the UK market to EDF's commercial success, it surely is only right that the UK Government should have a seat at the table when it comes to approving and performance-managing EDF's action plan.

I wrote to the UK's Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) asking if they intend to take a proactive role in scrutinising EDF's action plan and overseeing its delivery.

The reply from ONR stated that they do not intend to have any such role. Even more worrying, the ONR said that the France's nuclear regulator might not have any interest either (a statement that begs a few questions about the work of the French regulator).

If true, this leads to the alarming prospect that EDF Energy: a company with acknowledged and serious quality deficiencies; a company of strategic importance to both the UK and France; a company building nuclear reactors which, if designed or built badly, pose a catastrophic national risk; will not have any independent scrutiny of its plans to eliminate engineering failings and achieve an acceptable culture of quality.

For your information, I attach copies of the related documents:

Appendix A – *France24* press report on the audit of EDF Energy, October 2019

Appendix B - My email to ONR dated 14 November 2019

Appendix C - ONR's reply dated 27 November 2019.

We seek assurance that there will be independent validation that the failings at EDF are genuinely being rectified and respectfully ask you to consider how this might be done.

Yours sincerely

Alan Porter, Chairman
Melton Parish Council,
Suffolk