

The Siting of UK Nuclear Power Installations

EPRG Working Paper 1321

Cambridge Working Paper in Economics 1344

M.C. Grimston and W.J. Nuttall

This paper considers the history of policy concerning the siting of nuclear power stations in the UK. In the first phase of nuclear development (roughly speaking 1945 to 1965) there was a highly cautious attitude, with installations being placed in remote rural locations with very low population density. The second phase (1965 to 1985) saw a more relaxed approach, allowing the development of Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactors (which with concrete pressure vessels were regarded as significantly safer). The AGR stations were allowed closer to population centres including 'semi-urban' locations, notably at Hartlepool and Heysham. In the third phase (1985 to 2005) there was very little new nuclear development. Sizewell B (the first, and so far only, Pressurised Water Reactor power station in the UK) being co-located with an early Magnox station on the rural Suffolk coast. Meanwhile, however, there was considerable effort expended on trying to find a site for disposal of radioactive wastes. Renewed interest in nuclear new build from 2005 onward led to a number of sites being identified for new reactors before 2025, all having previously hosted nuclear stations and including the semi-urban locations of the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, some speculative comments are made as to what a 'fifth phase' starting in 2025 might look like. This history is examined with reference to the various policy issues and concerns that shaped decision making.

Contact william.nuttall 'at' open.ac.uk
Publication October 2013
Financial Support EPSRC – NREFS Project, Ref: EP/K007580/1