

Earlier this month, members of Balfour Beatty's marketing and communications teams paid a visit to Hinkley Point C and Avonmouth in Somerset. In doing so, we had the incredible opportunity to see both formidable sites first-hand and to learn about the complex works that Balfour Beatty is delivering.

Hinkley Point C (HPC) is the first new nuclear power station to be built in the U.K. in over 20 years. HPC is expected to produce enough low-carbon electricity for around 6 million homes. Over the estimated 60-year lifecycle of HPC, it will meet 7% of the country's electricity needs.

The visiting team enjoyed an authentic 'Hinkley' experience, spending a night at the Sedgemoor Campus in Bridgwater - where many of the site's workers live - and taking a bus to site, as HPC's current 4,000-strong workforce is required to do.

"It was really interesting to get the full site experience by staying at the Sedgemoor Campus and meeting some of the workers," explained UKCS's Employee Communications Manager, Jen Wood, "It meant we got a truly well-rounded feel for what it's like to be part of such a monumental project."

The first stop on our bus tour was the 430-acre HPC site – Europe's largest construction project. Our wonderful host, HPC's Community Relations Manager, Hayley Terrell, talked us through key facts pertaining to HPC, and patiently walked us through how nuclear power operates. Hayley also introduced us to 'Big Carl' – the world's largest crane. Standing at 250m tall, the Sarens SGC crane can lift 5,000 tonnes at a radius of 40m. At the peak of construction, Big Carl will be joined on-site by another 50 tower cranes.

Balfour Beatty's involvement in HPC, spans across three major packages of work: a joint venture with NG Bailey to deliver the electrical works, the North and South 400kV Overhead Line project, and the tunnelling and marine package – which is considered one of the most complex engineering projects currently taking place in the world.

In order to learn more about the fascinating tunnelling and marine works, the team visited Balfour Beatty's Avonmouth facility in Bristol. There, Hayley explained that the project will

see the construction of three tunnels under the seabed that will supply the two reactors at Hinkley Point C with cooling water and then discharge it back into the Bristol Channel.

“Using state-of-the-art technology, our experts will excavate nine kilometres of tunnel, which will be lined with 40,000 concrete segments. The tunnels will be connected to the seabed by vertical shafts more than 40 metres in depth and capped with large intake and outfall heads that allow sea water to pass through into the tunnels,” said Hayley. Both the concrete segments and the heads will be manufactured to exacting specifications at a purpose-built facility at Balfour Beatty’s Avonmouth site.

The ‘heads’ will be lowered into place by two of the largest marine cranes in the world, operating from barges bigger than a football pitch. Once in place the heads will be connected to the tunnel shafts. The Bristol Channel has the second highest tidal range in the world, presenting engineers with quite the challenge.

There was a palpable sense of awe and intrigue coming from every member of the visiting team. We all agreed that seeing such an important project first-hand made us feel even more proud to work for Balfour Beatty - a company that is delivering some of the most important and complex projects in the world.

To find out more about Hinkley Point C, check out their Yammer page [here](#).

Yammer

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In order to understand more about the fascinating tunnelling and marine works, the team visited Balfour Beatty's Avonmouth facility in Bristol. There, we learned how the project will facilitate the construction of three tunnels under the seabed that will supply the two reactors at Hinkley Point C with cooling water and then discharge it back into the Bristol Channel.

The visiting team enjoyed an authentic 'Hinkley' experience, spending a night at the Sedgemoor Campus in Bridgwater - where many of the site's workers live - and taking a bus to site, as HPC's current 4,000-strong workforce is required to do. The group came away with a collective sense of pride that we work for a company capable of delivering such complex and critically important projects.

To find out more about the team's visit, look out for the full article in next week's UKCS Friday Feed!