

Rolls-Royce unveils shortlist of locations for first £200m nuclear reactor factory

Engineering giant Rolls-Royce has revealed its final shortlist for the location of the first factory set to build its small modular reactors – a project set to bring £200m investment and 200 jobs to the winning site.

The FTSE 100 firm announced a competition at the start of the year, asking development bodies to bid for the initial factory, which will be the first of three factories and will manufacture the ‘heavy vessels’ for its small modular reactor (SMR) power station .

It said it marks the largest and most complex facility and that construction will begin once Rolls-Royce SMR receives the go-ahead to build a fleet of SMRs in the UK.

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Sunderland’s IAMP; Forrest Park Newton Aycliffe, Catterick 53, Richmond, North Yorkshire; Gateway in Deeside, North Wales; Ferrybridge in Yorkshire; Grimsby & Pioneer Park, Stallingborough, Greater Lincolnshire and Kingmoor Park, Carlisle, Cumbria are the shortlisted locations.

A technical team has reviewed potential shortlisted locations based on their access to major road networks, local skills and local incentives for renewable power generation.

Two other plants are also set to be built, to focus on the construction of mechanical engineering and plumbing parts for the reactors, and their locations have yet to be decided. It is understood they will come from the full list of areas that pitched for the project.

The Rolls-Royce SMR chief executive, Tom Samson, said: “I would like to thank everyone who sent in a submission suggesting locations in their region for the first Rolls-Royce SMR factory. The response was fantastic and shows the ambition and appetite of the UK to build and operate a fleet of SMRs which will provide affordable, low-carbon electricity for generations to come.

“The final location will come from the shortlist and will result in significant investment, long-term high-skilled jobs and will support the UK Government’s aspirations for levelling-up. Today’s announcement is another example of the pace of our project and why Rolls-Royce SMR is the UK’s domestic nuclear energy champion.”

Last month Rolls-Royce said that it can only deliver its first mini nuclear plant by its 2029 target date if the Government commits this year to the technology it needs.

The FTSE 100 firm’s ambitious plans will see the mini reactors built in factories around the country – with the first focusing on construction of heavy-pressure vessels forming part of the reactor –

and then assembled on site, a construction system that it says cuts the risks and huge costs associated with the construction of big nuclear power plants.

Rolls-Royce has been a nuclear reactor plant designer since the start of the UK nuclear submarine programme in the 1950s. It says the Rolls-Royce SMRs will draw upon standard nuclear energy technology that has been used in 400 reactors around the world.

Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, Kwasi Kwarteng, said: “This is fantastic news for Sunderland, North Yorkshire, Deeside, Lincolnshire and Carlisle which, if these SMRs go ahead, could be at the forefront of manufacturing components for this British-made

tech.

“Backed by £210m, SMRs have the potential to provide quicker and cheaper low-carbon nuclear power, and today’s announcement underlines the potential for new jobs around the country created by embracing this new technology.”

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