

# Western Gateway bid for nuclear fusion plant on Wales-England border lands further backing

A bid to build a multi-million-pound nuclear fusion plant on the border of Wales and England has received more support from industry bosses in the South West.

The Western Gateway – a cross-border partnership aimed at promoting economic growth across the West Country and South Wales – is proposing to build the £220m plant at Severn Edge in Gloucestershire.

It is [one of five under consideration by the government](#) for the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) flagship STEP programme which is looking to prove the commercial viability of fusion energy. The idea is a British nuclear fusion plant would be able to help the UK meet its future energy needs.

In March, the Western Gateway bid, which has already received support from industry and universities across the region, [received backing from ministers](#). Now, more senior business leaders have spoken out in support of the project, which could create more than 30,000 jobs for communities on both sides of the Severn and add £3.5bn to the economy if successful.

Jeremy Wrathall, founder and chief executive of [Cornish Lithium](#), is among the latest business leaders to offer his support for the bid. He said: "We would like to express our support for the Severn Edge site as a home for the STEP fusion energy plant.



A CGI of what the nuclear fusion plant could look like  
(Image: Atomic Energy Authority)

“Siting STEP at Severn Edge places it close to the UK’s primary sources of lithium. Having a viable source of lithium will make fusion energy more secure and increase the resilience of the UK energy system.”

David Ralph, member of the Great South West (GSW) Steering Group, and Karl Tucker, chair of Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), have also said they are “highly supportive of the site”.

Mr Ralph said: “Locating STEP at Severn Edge will be an important part of sustaining the legacy from Hinkley Point C. Ensuring the supply chain and skilled work force can transition and transfer to this project will not only continue to support our local economy, but it will also serve to de-risk the STEP project and potentially shave significant time off the construction timescales, reutilise existing assets and create commensurate savings to the public purse.”

UKAEA is currently working with each site and its local communities to gain a more in-depth understanding of the

socio-economic, commercial and technical conditions of each bid.

It will then make a final recommendation to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with the successful site announced around the end of 2022.

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