

Thank you for inviting me. My name is Andrew Turner. I am a Westleton Parish Councillor and my statement is on behalf of the Westleton Parish Council.

Westleton is a village 6 or so miles north of the proposed Sizewell C site.

We are seriously concerned that the development of Sizewell C will be the cause of significant environmental, economic and social damage to the local area.

I am sure that others more expert than me will explain the detail of the damage that the construction and operation of Sizewell C will have on this beautiful part of the country – but it does seem extraordinary to us that a proposal is being made to construct a new nuclear power station in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, next to an RSPB nature Reserve, that cuts across a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is sited on the beautiful, but also eroding, Suffolk Heritage Coast.

This landscape is the home of Westleton's residents – and we are very concerned that it will be irreparably damaged by the construction. The impact of the noise, dust, light pollution, the spoil heaps, the accommodation campus and the thousands of daily vehicle movements on the main and local roads can only have a horrendous impact on our quality of life here.

Others will also have better knowledge than me to explain the detail of the specific threats that the proposed design of the power station itself presents to the stability of the coastline, and the impact of the destruction of woodlands and wildlife habitats – all of which will be permanent.

And the build will impact terribly on the local economy too as tourism brings millions of pounds to the area each year – much of which will surely disappear as tourists realise that they have no desire to holiday next to the biggest building site in the country and be caught up in HGV traffic each time they want to explore the area.

Moreover, we do not believe the economic benefits which EDF claim will result from the construction. Instead, we anticipate with dread the influx of thousands of workers putting undue pressure on local emergency, health and leisure services and placing upward pressure on house rental and purchase prices. And while EDF takes pride in explaining that they will use the local workforce, we are concerned that the effect will be to deprive residents of services provided by local traders – and/or result in higher prices because of reduced supply.

As I said, I am sure others will substantiate these concerns with hard data and evidence. I cannot – we simply envisage an unpleasant future. Instead, I will focus on the specific impact of the construction traffic on our village as this is a matter I can comment upon in detail.

The B1125 is a road which links the B1122 in the south with the A12 at Blythburgh. It travels directly through Westleton. It has traditionally been used as a rat run by workers travelling from the north down to the Leiston – many of which are undoubtedly workers at the existing Sizewell sites.

Unfortunately, much of this traffic travels through Westleton much faster than the 30mph speed limit. Consequently, Westleton Parish Council has had to invest in a speed radar gun operated by a speed watch team and two Vehicle Speed Activated signs. While these do have some impact, drivers speeding through the village continues to be a serious road safety concern. Just last month, Vehicle Activated Sign data showed that on average throughout the day 18% of vehicles were travelling at

more than 35mph and that rose to 33% during peak hours; during last month for traffic going just one way, 1746 vehicles were logged travelling faster than 40 mph, and 69 faster than 50mpg – one was logged travelling at 60mph. In March, the percentages were similar – but 2 cars were logged at travelling faster than 60 mph and one faster than 65mph. These figures are representative of the month-on-month experience pre-Covid traffic as well, although of course traffic numbers were greater then. I hope it gives you an indication of the scale of the problem.

So, what do EDF say will be the effect of the Sizewell C construction on traffic through Westleton? Their stage 4 consultation document states that: *“Aside from the A12 and B1122, the largest proportional increases in traffic arising from the construction phase under the integrated strategy, are predicted to occur near Leiston and Saxmundham, and in Westleton...”*

Their projection is that an additional 650 vehicles will travel along the B1125 through Westleton every day as a consequence of the construction. This may sound cynical, but I suspect that that is a conservative figure. But they also state that:

*“In some locations there is a large proportionate increase in traffic compared with the reference case (without Sizewell C), such as ... the B1125, however these increases are from low existing levels and the road capacity would not be exceeded.”*

With this statement EDF are suggesting that they recognise that the uplift of 650 vehicles per day – up to an 22% increase in daily traffic, is not a problem as we are currently blessed with low traffic volumes. We disagree, as does the Department of Transport whose 2018 Statistical Release notes that average daily traffic flows on rural minor roads (i.e rural B roads) is 1,000 vehicles per day<sup>1</sup>. This means that the B1125 traffic flow through Westleton is already significantly above the national average for minor rural roads as EDF’s consultation document calculated 2,400 vehicles daily in 2015 and projected 2,950 vehicles per day by the time construction begins. To be fair, according to our Vehicle Activated Sign data, these figures are not too far off.

We are a small village with an above-average age population. When we drafted a parish plan some years ago, speeding through the village was one of the top concerns of the residents – and hence our investments in equipment designed to slow the traffic. However, as our data shows, this remains a problem. So, we are understandably keen to avoid an unnecessary increase in traffic as it would surely result in higher numbers of speeding vehicles as well as being the cause of additional noise, pollution and road safety concerns within the village.

A further concern is that the additional traffic will increase the wear and tear of the roads. Already the state of the B1125 either side of the village is poor and it unfortunately proves challenging to get the Council to make timely repairs – the increased traffic will only exacerbate this problem.

So, in a nutshell, Westleton Parish Council is opposed to the construction of Sizewell C because of the environmental, social and economic damage it will cause to the area and the road safety and environmental concerns which it will in particular present to our village.

That said, if Sizewell C is given approval, we do have five specific asks.

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<sup>1</sup> [Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682222/road-traffic-estimates-great-britain-2018.pdf)

Firstly: that the D2/W relief road be built instead of the Link road. This is the only solution which might mitigate the impact of the Sizewell C HGV, bus and worker traffic as it will avoid substantial increases in traffic concentrations in the roads servicing and surrounding the Sizewell area. It could also be used by the other energy projects planned for the area which will require significant infrastructure development. Importantly, it would also leave a valuable legacy from the project as well as providing a suitable and necessary emergency access route to/from the completed power station.

Secondly, a 4-village by-pass must be constructed on the A12 – the proposed 2 village bypass is not sufficient. The increased numbers of HGVs will substantially increase the congestion – particularly through the villages and significantly increase the road safety risk.

Thirdly, all road and park and ride infrastructure must be completed before the start of the build. It is wholly unreasonable to impose the traffic volumes projected for the so-called “early years” on the existing road network.

Fourthly, the accommodation campus needs to be re-thought. Building what is, in effect, a minor town on the edge of a small village is unacceptable both from a visual and social standpoint.

And lastly, if indeed the Link road is constructed, EDF do not need to build the planned short connecting road between the Link Road and the B1125. This road (which would be just north of Theberton) would be an encouragement to traffic to take the shortcut rat-run north along the B1125 and through Westleton - instead of remaining on the Link road. If this happens, I can only assume that the projected 650 additional vehicles per day through Westleton will turn out to be a very significant under-estimate. The planned connecting road would serve no real purpose, would surely further increase traffic through Westleton and so need not be built.

I will conclude with a core point: Sizewell C is being planned in parallel to a series of other energy projects by Scottish power which require significant infrastructure in the area. This has led to efforts to rebrand the Suffolk coast the “energy coast”. This is not welcome – the Suffolk coast is rightly denoted as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and must remain so. We hope that the planning process considers the cumulative implications of these projects – and of course we hope that you recommend to refuse development consent to Sizewell C .

Thank you.