

WESTLETON PARISH COUNCIL

EDF Energy Sizewell C 3rd Stage Consultation – Response from Westleton Parish Council

Overall Comment

It is the belief of Westleton Parish Council (WPC) that the development of the Sizewell C as proposed at this final stage 3 public consultation will have a negative impact on the local area. This part of the Suffolk Coast is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and tourism is the main industry. Every effort must be made to reduce the impact on this, and on the quality of life of the people who have chosen to live here. The response of the public to stage 1 public consultation in 2012 and the later stage 2 has been a request for more information on which to make judgement, particularly the effect on the ecology of the area and the impact on the surrounding area due to a massive increase in traffic. There has been constant opposition to the proposed transport arrangements and the accommodation campus sited adjacent to the area of AOND. Although EDF have at this late stage responded to transport concerns, to a degree, they have chosen to ignore the overwhelming opposition to the concept and design of the campus that have not been properly mitigated by the latest EDF proposals.

Environment

There is a lack of information especially concerning the spoil heaps and the borrow pits. Visually and environmentally this will have a huge impact on the surrounding area. Stage 3 has introduced further detriment to the visual impact as the earlier proposed underground power cables will now be carried on towers the height of the turbine hall. The area around Sizewell is exposed to coastal erosion and flooding. More information is needed as to how EDF will allow for these natural processes without moving the problem further along the coast and how they can guarantee long term site security.

Westleton Common is a Dark Sky Discovery site and is used by local astronomical societies. The consultation document offers low impact lighting as a mitigation feature but it is unlikely that this would allow the continued use of the site for astronomical observations. Therefore, for at least the period of construction, if not permanently, Westleton would lose one its unique characteristics.

Transport

For many residents of the area their main concern regarding the building of Sizewell C is the impact increased road traffic will have on their daily lives during the 10 – 12 years of construction. For this reason, the abandonment of the initial marine-led strategy and the limiting of rail movements, with a consequential increase road usage, has raised so much ire.

Westleton is situated on the B1125, a road that provides a convenient cut through for traffic coming or going from the North to Sizewell. Residents of the village raised this problem at both stage 1 and 2 consultations and were assured that this would be addressed at stage 3, with at one time a suggestion that number plate recognition could possibly be used. Downloads from the Vehicle Activated System (VAS) purchased by WPC have been supplied to the Sizewell team showing a constant average of 17.4% of all traffic passing the playing field traveling at 35mph in the 30mph zone. We now come to stage 3 and the only information we find is a projected increase of 22% due to Sizewell traffic.

No information has been given on how the assumed natural increase of 23% in traffic was determined. (The Westleton VAS shows no evidence of natural increase from May 2015), or the determination of 650 a day due to Sizewell C traffic. The percentage increase of an extra 650/day on the EDF current 2,200 is 30%. It appears that EDF have no plans to address this increase in traffic through this attractive holiday village with a bottle neck at the centre.

Further afield WPC are concerned regarding the positioning of the Darsham park and ride entrance. Although in theory WPC support the park and ride as it would, hopefully, draw traffic away from Westleton, but we see the closeness to the rail level crossing and the A12/ B1122 roundabout leading to possible gridlocked traffic when the rail barrier closes at time of high traffic flow. It is extremely disappointing to learn that there are now no plans to retain a residual parking facility for the Darsham rail station.

We are pleased that EDF have at last accepted that the B1122 from Yoxford through Theberton is not suitable as the main road route to the Sizewell C site. There has obviously been detailed investigation leading to the EDF choice of the Link Road compared with the variations on the preferred choice of Suffolk County Council, D2, going back to the 1980's. There are pros and cons on the variations of D2 (now designated W), but we cannot accept the EDF statement in 10.6.4 that states. *For this reason, and in accordance with the conclusions of EDF Energy's high-level appraisal outlined in section 10.5, EDF Energy does not consider route D2 (W variants) to be a viable alternative to its preferred route, Route Z South.*

The W route is;

- (a) Far less damaging to local communities and environment.
- (b) Far shorter route to site in that it eliminates the need to bring traffic from the south, projected to be far greater than that from the North, to Yoxford.
- (c) Far less impact on houses
- (d) Of long-term benefit/legacy to Leiston. The proposed Link road runs closely parallel with the B1125 and will be largely redundant on completion of the build.

Temporary Accommodation

Although stage 3 proposal shows a reduction in the maximum height of 5 to 4 stories EDF have been intransigent in resisting opposition to the 2400 worker campus and calls to disperse this in local urban areas with legacy value on completion of construction. The

campus is on a green field site close to the hamlet Eastbridge with a population of some 50 residents. Not only is the visual, environmental and social impact unimaginable for Eastbridge residents, a village of around 50 people, and the nearby Theberton with 279 residents. WPC supports splitting the accommodation and building permanent homes that can be utilised by local Councils in the future.

People and Economy

The influx of workers coming to live for some 10 to 12 years in the local area around the Sizewell construction will have a powerful negative impact on services. EDF need to give clearer details on how it intends to mitigate the strain placed on local schools, policing and healthcare whilst construction takes place. Whilst long term employment opportunities are welcome, EDF should ensure that training and apprenticeships are providing to ensure that these opportunities can be kept in the local area.

Conclusion

As the understanding of the severity of the impact on the very special part of Suffolk has become clearer, and the momentous increase in other forms of renewable energy, WPC has come to believe that EDF has been unable to demonstrate that the benefits of this proposal to the local area and the county as a whole are not justified by the devastating impact to this area. WPC also makes claim to the fact that EDF have failed to produce sufficient detailed data required to justify many of their decisions.

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