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Dear Stephen

SIZEWELL C NEW NUCLEAR POWER STATION – EVIDENCE PLAN

Thank you for consulting Natural England on this matter; your consultation was received on the 23rd September 2014.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Paragraph 16 of the published guidance for 'Evidence Plans for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' (Defra, 2012) states that:

The evidence plan is a non-legally binding agreement between the applicant and relevant SNCB(s). The applicant prepares and maintains the plan on an ongoing basis until it is considered complete. The initial plan is agreed within 3 months, unless a longer timeframe has been agreed between the applicant and relevant SNCB(s).

Natural England is the Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB) in respect of this proposal, with the responsibility of agreeing the initial plan with NNB GenCo and effectively concluding Stage 2 of the process.

This response constitutes our agreement and endorsement of the initial Plan, noting that the Evidence Plan will evolve further as the project develops.

Natural England commends NNB GenCo on the manner in which it has conducted the Evidence Plan process thus far. The inclusion of local authorities, the Environment Agency and selected non-governmental bodies has ensured that issues have been thoroughly aired from a range of perspectives. It has helped build a shared understanding of the evidence and data needs for the process and, in addition, the impacts and pathways

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that need to be looked at in detail as part of the ongoing Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Natural England agrees the content of the Sizewell C Evidence Plan and acknowledges the considerable effort and resources that NNB GenCo have invested in the Stage 2 process. In drafting the first terrestrial Evidence Plan, NNB GenCo has set the bar high and in so doing set a standard for future plans for major NSIPs.

In taking forward a major national development such as this, it is important that the environmental impacts are very thoroughly assessed and their implications (both those where agreement is reached and those where agreement may not be possible) are clearly set out to inform the decision reached in due course by the Secretary of State.

Natural England looks forward to participating in subsequent stages of the Evidence Plan process secure in the knowledge that this Evidence Plan will help all participants navigate the process in a scientifically robust and clearly evidenced manner.

Kind regards,



Dr Des O'Halloran
Principal Adviser, Sustainable Development