



The Sizewell C Project

6.4 Volume 3 Northern Park and Ride Chapter 1 Introduction

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This volume (**Volume 3**) of the **Environmental Statement (ES)** presents details of the proposed northern park and ride at Darsham, referred to hereafter in this volume as the ‘proposed development’, and reports on the likely significant environmental effects during construction and operation, as well as when the development is removed and the site is reinstated.

1.1.2 The proposed development site (referred to hereafter as the ‘site’) is approximately 27.9 hectares (ha), predominantly made up of agricultural land but also includes sections of the A12 and Willow Marsh Lane towards the north of the site. It is located west of the village of Darsham and west of the A12, to the east of the East Suffolk line, and to the north of Darsham railway station (see **Figure 1.1**). A detailed description of the proposed development is provided in **Chapter 2** of this volume of the **ES**.

1.1.3 As described in **Volume 1, Chapter 2** of the **ES**, which provides an overview of the Sizewell C Project, two park and ride facilities are proposed: one at Darsham for construction workers approaching Sizewell from the north on the A12, and the other at Wickham Market for those approaching from the south on the A12 (provided in **Volume 4** of this **ES**). Both park and ride facilities would also intercept traffic movements from locations west of the A12. The workforce would be transported to and from the Sizewell C Project main development site by bus.

1.1.4 The proposed development would provide spaces for up to 1,250 cars, and would allow the transfer of a substantial proportion of the construction workforce by bus to and from the main development site, therefore reducing the construction workforce traffic on the roads between the A12 and the main development site. The proposed development is temporary and would be *in situ* until it is no longer required for the construction of the Sizewell C power station (between 9–12 years).

1.1.5 This chapter provides details on:

- the structure and scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed development as provided in **Volume 1, Appendix 6A** of the **ES**;
- the planning policy relevant to the proposed development; and
- an overview of the site and surrounding land uses.

1.2 Environmental Impact Assessment and this Environmental Statement

a) Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment

1.2.1 Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/572) (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations') (Ref. 1.1) lists development for which an EIA is mandatory. Nuclear power stations are listed as Schedule 1 development, and consequently an EIA is required for the Sizewell C Project including the proposed development. Further detail on the requirement for an EIA is provided in **Volume 1** of this **ES**.

b) Environmental Impact Assessment scoping

1.2.2 In June 2014 SZC Co. obtained a scoping opinion from the Secretary of State, under Regulation 8 of the 2009 EIA Regulations (Ref. 1.2). In May 2019 SZC Co. submitted a further request to the Planning Inspectorate for a scoping opinion to include the scope of assessments for the revised Sizewell C Project proposals which were not previously scoped for, as provided in **Volume 1, Appendix 6A** of the **ES**. This also included the scope of assessments for the additional environmental effects to be considered under the 2017 EIA Regulations (in particular, climate change, human health and risk of major accidents and disasters). A scoping opinion was issued by the Secretary of State in July 2019, provided in **Volume 1, Appendix 6B** of the **ES**.

c) Structure of the Environmental Statement

1.2.3 This volume should be read in conjunction with **Volume 1** of the **ES**, which presents an introduction to SZC Co. and the Sizewell C Project; the application for development consent; the EIA process and methodology; the legislative and policy context; the strategic alternatives considered; a description of the other permits and licences required; and a glossary of terms and list of abbreviations.

1.2.4 There are a number of project-wide technical environmental assessments, within which the impacts of the proposed development are considered. These include: socio-economics; transport; radiological, conventional waste management; climate change; health and wellbeing; and major accidents and disasters, and are presented in **Volume 2** of the **ES**.

1.2.5 This volume of the **ES**, for the proposed development is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** Introduction (this chapter).

- **Chapter 2:** Description of the northern park and ride.
- **Chapter 3:** Alternatives and design evolution.
- **Chapter 4:** Noise and vibration.
- **Chapter 5:** Air quality.
- **Chapter 6:** Landscape and visual.
- **Chapter 7:** Terrestrial ecology and ornithology.
- **Chapter 8:** Amenity and recreation.
- **Chapter 9:** Terrestrial historic environment.
- **Chapter 10:** Soils and agriculture.
- **Chapter 11:** Geology and land quality.
- **Chapter 12:** Groundwater and surface water.

1.2.6 This volume should also be read in conjunction with the **Transport Assessment** (Doc Ref. 8.5) which provides further information on the rationale for and the design of the proposed development. In addition, the **Consultation Report** (Doc Ref. 5.1) summarises the responses received from the public and statutory stakeholders to SZC Co's consultations and explains how the proposed development has evolved in response to the consultations.

1.2.7 In line with the requirements of regulation 14(4) of the EIA Regulations, this **ES** has been prepared by competent experts. A statement of competence outlining the relevant expertise and qualifications of the technical specialists, along with their role in undertaking the EIA has been provided within **Volume 1, Appendix 1B** of the **ES**.

1.2.8 A number of topics have been scoped out from the assessment of the proposed development (as confirmed in the scoping opinion issued by the Secretary of State in July 2019, provided in **Volume 1, Appendix 6B** of the **ES**). These topics are identified in **Table 1.1** together with an explanation for why an assessment is not required.

Table 1.1: Topics scoped out of requiring assessment for the proposed development.

Topic	Reasoning why assessment was not required.
Marine historic environment.	The proposed development does not include any marine infrastructure; there are no pathways which would lead to any likely significant effects on the marine environment.
Coastal geomorphology and hydrodynamics.	
Marine water quality and sediments.	
Marine ecology.	
Marine navigation.	

d) Structure of the environmental topic chapters

1.2.9 The environmental topic, provided in **Chapters 4 to 12** of this volume, contained in this volume have been prepared to a standard format broadly following the resulting structure:

- introduction;
- legislation, policy and guidance;
- methodology;
- baseline environment;
- environmental design and mitigation;
- assessment (for construction, operation and removal and reinstatement);
- mitigation and monitoring; and
- residual effects.

1.2.10 Appendices are provided for each chapter as required, and contain for example, detailed baseline information, assessments and other technical reports.

1.2.11 Cumulative effects arising from the proposed development in combination with other third-party developments, plans and/or programmes are detailed

in **Volume 10** of the **ES**, as well as an assessment of the project-wide effects with other parts of the Sizewell C Project (where applicable).

1.2.12 A **Non-Technical Summary** of the **ES** (Doc Ref. 6.1) has been prepared and is presented separately from this volume.

1.3 Policy context

1.3.1 The overarching planning context for the Sizewell C Project, including an overview of legislation and national planning, energy and nuclear policies which are material to the proposed development, is presented in **Volume 1, Chapter 3** of the **ES**. This chapter of the **ES**, provides an overview of national and local policies which are relevant to the proposed development.

1.3.2 A separate **Planning Statement** (Doc Ref. 8.4) has been prepared and includes consideration of how the Sizewell C Project complies with relevant policies.

1.3.3 Where topic-specific policy differs from the generic policy outlined in **Volume 1, Chapter 3** of the **ES**, this is presented within the topic chapters that follow within this volume. This is limited to legislation, policy and guidance which could influence the sensitivity of receptors, and/or could influence the scope and/or methodology of the assessment.

a) International policy

1.3.4 No international legislation or policy over and above that described in **Volume 1, Chapter 4** of the **ES** is deemed relevant to the assessment for this site.

b) National and local policy

1.3.5 Nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) are determined in accordance with the decision-making framework in the Planning Act 2008 (Ref 1.3), and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are relevant (which may include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 1.4) or local policy).

1.3.6 The NPPF and local planning policy do not contain specific policies for NSIPs, however, the decision maker may determine that one, or both, are important and relevant to the proposed development, and may be a material consideration in making decisions on planning applications.

1.3.7 An overview of the legislation and national planning, energy and nuclear policies which are material to the proposed development, is provided in **Volume 1, Chapter 3** of the **ES**.

i. National Policy Statements

- 1.3.8 The primary policy basis for determining any application for development consent for a nuclear power station is the policy framework set out in the Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-1) (Ref 1.5) and NPS for Nuclear Power Generation (NPS EN-6) (Ref 1.6).
- 1.3.9 In December 2017, the Government began the process of consulting on the preparation of a new NPS for nuclear power stations. In due course, the sites listed in NPS EN-6 (including Sizewell) will be covered by the policy in the new NPS. In the meantime, the Government's consultation on the new NPS for nuclear power stations makes clear that the Government will continue to consider those sites to be appropriate, and that they will retain strong Government support pending the designation of the new NPS.
- 1.3.10 Paragraph 5.13.4 of NPS EN-1 states that where appropriate, the applicant should prepare a travel plan including demand management measures to mitigate transport impacts. The applicant should also provide details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal and to mitigate transport impacts.
- 1.3.11 Paragraph 5.13.6 of NPS EN-1 states that a new energy NSIP may give rise to substantial impacts on the surrounding transport infrastructure and the decision maker should therefore ensure that the applicant has sought to mitigate these impacts, including during the construction phase of the development. Where the proposed mitigation measures are insufficient to reduce the impact on the transport infrastructure to acceptable levels, the decision maker should consider requirements to mitigate adverse impacts on transport networks arising from the development. Paragraph 5.13.6 also states that applicants may also be willing to enter into planning obligations for funding infrastructure and otherwise mitigating adverse impacts.
- 1.3.12 Paragraph 5.13.7 of NPS EN-1 states that
- “Provided that the applicant is willing to enter into planning obligations or requirements can be imposed to mitigate transport impacts identified in the NATA/WebTAG transport assessment, with attribution of costs calculated in accordance with the Department for Transport’s guidance, then development consent should not be withheld, and appropriately limited weight should be applied to residual effects on the surrounding transport infrastructure.”* (Ref. 1.5)
- 1.3.13 Paragraph 5.13.8 of NPS EN-1 requires that demand management measures must be considered before considering new inland transport

infrastructure to deal with remaining transport impacts. Paragraph 5.13.9 goes on to say that the decision maker should have regard to the cost-effectiveness of demand management measures compared to new transport infrastructure, as well as the aim to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development when considering mitigation measures.

- 1.3.14 Paragraph 5.13.11 of NPS EN-1 states that the decision maker may attach requirements to a consent where there is likely to be substantial HGV traffic to “*control numbers of HGV movements to and from the site in a specified period during its construction and possibly on the routing of such movements*” (Ref. 1.5).

ii. National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.3.15 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policy at the national level. As set out in paragraph 5 of the NPPF, it does not contain specific policies for NSIPs.

- 1.3.16 Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals so that, amongst other things, the potential impact of development on transport networks can be addressed and the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account. The proposed development, together with the other associated development sites, demonstrates that the potential impact of the Sizewell C Project on transport networks can be addressed. **Volume 2, Chapter 10** of the **ES** provides an assessment of potential transport impacts associated with the Sizewell C Project.

iii. Local policy

- 1.3.17 The local development plan recognises that the transport effects of a new nuclear power station at Sizewell would be assessed in line with policies set out in the NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-6 (paragraph 3.116, Core strategy and Development Management Policies, 2013 (Ref 1.7)). The proposed development is one of the associated development proposals, which will contribute to mitigating the transport effects of the Sizewell C Project. **Volume 2, Chapter 10** of the **ES** provides an assessment of potential transport impacts associated with the Sizewell C Project.

- 1.3.18 Within the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (Ref. 1.7) and the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (Final draft, 2019 (Ref. 1.8)), which is intended to be adopted by East Suffolk Council, the site is located within the countryside and is not allocated for a specific use. The emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan however states at paragraph 3.15 that the Council will take a positive approach to land allocations which are required to meet the demands of Sizewell Nuclear Power Station, and that are well related to the

A12 and A14 corridors. The emerging Local Plan recognises that these land requirements may be in excess of that outlined in the Employment Land Needs Assessment, and notes that any additional allocations will need to be justified by specific evidence relating to the demand.

- 1.3.19 Policy SCLP3.4 of the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (Final draft, 2019 (Ref. 1.8)), which is intended to be adopted by East Suffolk Council, concerns proposals for major energy infrastructure projects. It states that such proposals will require that *“appropriate road and highway measures are introduced (including diversion routes) for construction, operational and commercial traffic to reduce the pressure on the local communities”* (Ref. 1.8).
- 1.3.20 The emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan refers to the “need for park and ride facilities to be created” as a theme relevant to the consideration of energy infrastructure proposals (Table 3.6).
- 1.3.21 Paragraph 12.520 of the emerging Local Plan (2019) confirms the local planning authority’s support for employment uses on the site by stating: *“Land to the north of the station, in between the railway line and the A12, is being promoted by SZC Co. as a possible site for a Park and Ride facility associated with the proposed Sizewell C power station. However, this site is also considered a suitable location for employment development. Depending on future need to support the development of Sizewell C, development for employment uses will be supported”* (Ref. 1.8).

1.4 The site and surroundings

- 1.4.1 The site is approximately 27.9ha in size, and is located to the west of the village of Darsham and the A12, to east of the East Suffolk line, and to the north of Darsham railway station (see **Figure 1.1**), and is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference: TM404697. The site is approximately nine kilometres (km) to the north-west of the main development site. **Figure 1.2** shows the existing site and its surroundings.
- 1.4.2 The existing land use on the site is predominantly agricultural, although it includes sections of both the A12 (at the north-east of the site) and Willow Marsh Lane, which runs through the site towards the north. The western boundary of the site is defined, in part, by the East Suffolk line and Little Nursery woodland, a parcel of semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The northern boundary is defined by agricultural fields and Willow Marsh Lane, except at the north-eastern corner where the site’s boundary crosses Willow Marsh Lane and encompasses a section of the A12. The eastern boundary is defined by the A12 at the northern and southern end, and in the middle follows the line of the rear boundaries of the properties along the A12 (Moate Hall, Darsham Cottage and White House Farm). The north-

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

eastern corner of the site encompasses the A12 carriageway and pavement, including an existing abnormal load lay-by on the western side of the road, east of White House Farm.

1.4.3 The surrounding area is dominated by agricultural fields separated by hedgerows and pockets of woodland, with the closest residential properties located along the A12. Darsham service station and Darsham Nurseries, including shop and café, are located opposite the site to the east, adjacent to the southbound A12 carriageway.

1.4.4 The site is relatively open and there are views across the site from individual properties in close proximity, as well as adjoining roads and nearby footpaths. The topography of the site slopes generally north to south, occupying a local ridgeline running east to west towards the valley of the River Minsmere and the River Yox.

1.4.5 No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are located within the site boundary. There are however a number of PRoW in the vicinity of the site, including:

- Footpath E-216/008/0 directly to the south of the site running towards Trustran's Farm;
- Footpath E-216/009/0 on the opposite side of the A12 to the east of the site;
- Footpath E-584/010/0 approximately 0.5km to the west of the site; and
- Footpath E-216/002/0 which lies directly to the east of the site. This footpath runs from Priory Farm approximately 0.5km east of the site to the site boundary on the A12.

1.4.6 Specific detail of these routes can be found in **Chapter 8** of this volume of the **ES**.

1.4.7 An on-road Sustrans link to a National Cycle Route runs from Darsham railway station, northwards along the A12 immediately east of the site, and then turns west along Willow Marsh Lane north of the site.

1.4.8 An unnamed ordinary watercourse originates to the north-west of the site. The watercourse crosses the East Suffolk line to the south of Willow Marsh Lane, and flows southwards along the western boundary of the site. The channel crosses back beneath the East Suffolk line to the south of Little Nursery woodland, and flows to the west of Darsham railway station and ultimately joins the River Yox, which runs approximately 150m to the south-east of the site at its closest point.

- 1.4.9 The site is within Flood Zone 1, and therefore has a low risk of flooding from tidal or fluvial sources. Risk associated with groundwater, sewer and reservoir flooding at the site are also considered to be low. The Environment Agency’s long-term flood risk mapping shows the majority of the site is also at a very low risk of surface water flooding. However, an area of high surface water flood risk is located at the northern end of the site. There are also smaller isolated areas of low to high surface water flood risk are also located within the site.
- 1.4.10 Further detail can be found in the **Northern Park and Ride Flood Risk Assessment** (Doc Ref. 5.3) for the proposed development.
- 1.4.11 There are 11 kilovolt (kV) UK Power Networks overhead power lines running over part of the site, which will need to be diverted below ground and new substations provided. The location of the substations will be fully assessed when a formal application is made to UK Power Networks. UK Power Networks has indicated that a location on-site, close to the boundary, can be agreed but it would also depend on the location of the low voltage cable feeding it. In any case, a solution can still be agreed with minimum impact on existing agricultural operations.
- 1.4.12 All other utility connections (such as electricity and data) would be made in the public highway where practicable.
- 1.4.13 There are no statutory designations or listed buildings within or immediately adjacent to the site; however, the following designations and features characterise the wider surrounding area:
- The site is within the ‘Ancient Estate Claylands’ landscape character type, as identified in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 1.9). This is an ancient wooded landscape of arable farms, associated with low lying valley floors and undulating glacial plateaus.
 - The site is characteristic of National Character Area 83 (NCA83): South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands. NCA83 covers a large area of central East Anglia and is predominately flat clay plateau incised by numerous small-scale wooded river valleys.
 - The landscape transitions into National Character Area 82 (NCA82): Suffolk Coast and Heaths to the southern extent of the study area. NCA82 shows characteristics of gently undulating farmland with areas of woodland and forest plantation in the surrounding area.
 - The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located approximately 4km to the south-west of the site.

- Ecological sites, namely: Dew's Ponds Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (approximately 1.7km north-west of the site), Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SAC, SPA, Ramsar site and SSSI (approximately 3.2km east of the site, at its closest point), and Potton Hall Fields SSSI (approximately 4.1km east of the site).
- Built heritage features, including Grade II listed Oak Hall which lies approximately 60m to the north-east of the site boundary.

1.4.14 Further detail on the site and the environmental baseline is provided in **Chapters 4 to 12** of this volume of the **ES**.

References

- 1.1 Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (SI2017/572) (as amended) HMSO.
- 1.2 Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (SI2009/2263) HMSO.
- 1.3 HM Government. Planning Act 2008. London: HMSO, 2008.
- 1.4 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.5 Department of Energy and Climate Change. Overarching national policy statement for energy (EN-1). London: HMSO, 2011.
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- 1.7 Suffolk Coastal District Council. Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy and Development Management Policies. 2013.
- 1.8 Suffolk Coastal District Council. Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. Final Draft. 2019.
- 1.9 Suffolk County Council. Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment 2008, revised 2011.