



# The Sizewell C Project

## 6.7 Volume 6 Sizewell Link Road Chapter 1 Introduction

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**None provided.**



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This volume of the **Environmental Statement (ES)** presents details of the proposed Sizewell link road, referred to hereafter in this volume as the ‘proposed development’, and reports on the likely significant environmental effects during construction and operation.

1.1.2 The Sizewell link road site (referred to hereafter in this volume as the ‘site’) is approximately 101 hectares (ha) and is located to the south of the B1122 and east of the A12. The site passes to the south of Middleton Moor and Theberton.

1.1.3 The proposed development would comprise a new, permanent, 6.8 kilometre (km) single carriageway road, with a design speed of 60 miles per hour, which begins at the A12 south of Yoxford, bypasses Middleton Moor and Theberton before joining the B1122 (see **Figure 1.1**). A detailed description of the proposed development is provided in **Chapter 2** of this volume of the **ES**.

1.1.4 Once operational, the proposed development would be used by the general public as well as construction workers arriving by car, park and ride buses from both the northern and southern park and ride sites, and goods vehicles (both light and heavy) delivering freight to the Sizewell C main development site. See **Figure 1.1** in **Volume 1** of the **ES** (Doc Ref. 6.2) for the locations of these sites.

1.1.5 This chapter provides details on:

- the structure and scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed development;
- 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 to the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/572) (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the ‘EIA Regulations’) (Ref. 1.1) lists developments for which an EIA is mandatory. Nuclear power stations are listed as Schedule 1

development, and consequently EIA is required for the Sizewell C Project, including the proposed park and ride development. Further detail on the requirement for EIA is provided in **Volume 1** of the **ES**.

b) **Environmental Impact Assessment scoping**

1.2.2 In June 2014 EDF Energy obtained a scoping opinion from the Secretary of State, under Regulation 8 of the 2009 EIA Regulations (Ref. 1.2). In May 2019, EDF Energy 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 (see **Volume 1, Appendix 6A**). 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 (see **Volume 1, Appendix 6B**).

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 EDF Energy 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; Conventional Waste Management; Climate Change; Radiological, Health and Wellbeing; and Major Accidents and Disasters, and are presented in **Volume 2** of the **ES**

1.2.5 This volume (**Volume 6**) of the **ES** for the proposed Sizewell link road is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** Introduction (this chapter).
- **Chapter 2:** Description of the Sizewell link road.
- **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 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 EDF Energy’s consultations and explains how the proposed development has evolved in response to the consultations. 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**.

1.2.7 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 see **Volume 1, Appendix 6B**). These are identified in **Table 1.1** together with an explanation as to why an assessment is not required.

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

Topic	How The Requirement Has Been Addressed.
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

1.2.8 The environmental topic chapters (**Chapters 4 to 12**) contained in this volume have been prepared to a standard format:

- Introduction.
- Legislation, policy and guidance.
- Methodology.
- Baseline environment.
- Environmental design and mitigation.
- Assessment (for construction and operation).
- Mitigation and monitoring.
- Residual effects.

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

1.2.10 Cumulative effects arising from the proposed development in combination with other third-party developments, plans and/or programmes are detailed in **Volume 10**, as well as an assessment of cumulative effects with other parts of the Sizewell C Project (where applicable).

1.2.11 A **Non-Technical Summary** of this **ES** 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**. This chapter 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**, 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 policy over and above that described in **Volume 1, Chapter 4** is deemed relevant to the assessment for this site.

#### b) National and local policy

1.3.5 National infrastructure projects are determined in accordance with the decision-making framework in the Planning Act 2008 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. 1.3), or local policy).

1.3.6 The NPPF and local planning policy do not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIP), 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.

#### i. National Policy Statements

1.3.7 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 for Nuclear Power Generation (NPS EN-1) (Ref. 1.4) and National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (NPS EN-6) (Ref. 1.5).

1.3.8 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.

- 1.3.9 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.
- 1.3.10 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.”*
- 1.3.11 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.
- 1.3.12 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’.
- ii. [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- 1.3.13 The NPPF sets out the government's planning policy at the national level. As set out in paragraph 5, the NPPF, it does not contain specific policies for NSIPs.



1.3.14 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 is one way in which the potential impact of the Sizewell C Project on transport networks can be addressed. **Volume 2, Chapter 10** provides an assessment of potential transport impacts associated with the Sizewell C Project.

iii. **Local policy**

1.3.15 The local development plan recognises that the transport effects of a new nuclear power station 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. 1.6)). The proposed development is one way in which the transport effects of a new nuclear power station would be managed. **Volume 2, Chapter 10** provides an assessment of potential transport impacts associated with the Sizewell C Project.

1.3.16 Within the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (contained within Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (Ref. 1.6)) and the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (Final draft, 2019 (Ref. 1.7)), 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.

1.3.17 Policy SCLP3.4 of the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (Final draft, 2019), 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*”.

## 1.4 **The site and surroundings**

1.4.1 The site is approximately 6.8km long, and starts at the A12 south of Yoxford, bypassing Middleton Moor and Theberton and extends to join the B1122. **Figures 1.1 to 1.4** show the site and the surroundings. The most western end of the route is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference: TM389673.

The most eastern end of the route is located at Ordnance Survey grid reference: TM444648.

- 1.4.2 The topography of the site descends gradually from approximately 40 metres (m) Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) at the A12 at the western end to approximately 10m AOD at the B1122 at the eastern end.
- 1.4.3 Individual dwellings and farms are located along the route, with the closest residential properties being Vale Cottage, Oakfield house, Coronation Cottages, Annesons Cottage, Hawthorn Cottages, Trust Farm, The Red House Farm, Rosetta and Fir Tree Farm.
- 1.4.4 The land within the site is predominantly used for agricultural purposes. The site also intersects Plumtreehills Covert (a deciduous woodland), as well as hedgerow between field boundaries. One designated heritage asset lies within the site boundary, the Grade II listed Gate and Gate Piers at the junction of Leiston Road and Onner's Lane.
- 1.4.5 Two Main Rivers (tributaries of the Minsmere Old River) are crossed by the proposed development, as well as three other unnamed watercourses, and surface water drain. From the west, the first Main River (referred to as the 'Middleton Watercourse') would be crossed at the Fordley Road junction with the B1122. The second Main River reach would be crossed in Theberton (referred to as the 'Theberton Watercourse'). The majority of the site is located in Flood Zone 1, except for a small section on the north side of the site adjacent to Fordley Road which is within Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 1.4.6 Sixteen public rights of way are located within the site boundary, comprising (named from west to east):
- Footpaths E-344/012/0, E-344/013/0, E-344/014/0 and E-584/016/A to the west of the East Suffolk Line;
  - Footpaths E-396/014/0, E-396/017/0, E-396/020/0, E-396/023/0 and E-584/016/0 towards the centre of the site, between the East Suffolk Line and Hawthorn Road; and
  - Footpaths E-396/015/0, E-515/003/0, E-515/004/0, E-515/005/0, E-515/007/0, E-515/012/0 and E-515/013/0 in the east of the site, between Hawthorn Road and the B1122 (Leiston Road).
- 1.4.7 In the wider surroundings, the site sits on the boundary between National Character Area 83 (NCA83) South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (Ref. 1.8) which form the higher ground to the west, and National Character Area 82 (NCA82) Suffolk Coast and Heaths to the east (Ref. 1.9) (see **Figure 6.3** in **Chapter 6** of this volume for the boundaries of the NCAs).

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

- 1.4.8 The Yox river valley, and part of the valley sides to the north-east of the site, are locally designated as a Special Landscape Area and some of the new link roads at the eastern end of the proposed Sizewell link road would be adjacent to this area. The Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located approximately 1.1km to the east of the eastern end of the proposed Sizewell link road.
- 1.4.9 The land use in the vicinity of the route is predominantly arable farmland, with well-defined hedgerow field boundaries, interspersed with scattered woodlands and copses.
- 1.4.10 There are 12 statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance within 5km of the site. These are: Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SSSI (525m north-east), Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SAC, SPA and Ramsar site (1.5km north-east); Sizewell Marshes SSSI (2km south-east); Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI (3.5km south); Sandlings SPA (3.5km south-east); Southern North Sea SAC (3.5km south-east); Outer Thames SPA (3.5km south-east); Potton Hall Fields SSSI (4.4km north-east) and Dews Pond SAC and SSSI (4.4km north). There are also 15 non-statutory designated County Wildlife Sites within a 2km radius of the site boundary.
- 1.4.11 The Minsmere Old River catchment (water body reference GB105035046270) is located approximately 2km north-east of the site at its closest point.
- 1.4.12 Further detail on the site and the environmental baseline is provided in **Chapters 4 to 12** of this volume.

## References

- 1.1 Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/572) (as amended) HMSO.
- 1.2 Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (SI2009/2263) HMSO.
- 1.3 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.4 Department of Energy and Climate Change. Overarching national policy statement for energy (EN-1). London: HMSO, 2011.
- 1.5 Department of Energy and Climate Change. Overarching national policy statement for nuclear power generation (EN-6). London: HMSO, 2011.
- 1.6 Suffolk Coastal District Council. Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy and Development Management Policies. 2013.
- 1.7 Suffolk Coastal District Council. Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. Final Draft. 2019.
- 1.8 Natural England, National Character Area profile: 83. South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (Sheffield, 2014).
- 1.9 Natural England, National Character Area profile: 82. Suffolk Coast and Heaths (Sheffield, 2015).