

Richard Cooper

To:

Tom McGarry, EDF Tom.McGarry@sizewellc.com

Cc:

Brian Stewart OBE, Chair of Sizewell C Community Forum, [REDACTED]

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Planning Inspectorate SizewellC@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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Dear Tom,

Re: Sizewell C Community Forum

Thank you for your Letter of 12th January and my apologies for the slight delay in replying. And thank you for your New Year wishes – it seems a bit late in January to be wishing you the same, but nonetheless I hope 2021 is a better year for all of us, on many fronts.

I appreciate your careful explanation regarding the lack of a Community Forum in 2020 and I appreciate that Brian Stewart had signalled that March 2020 was likely to be the last, but there are two points I would make. Firstly, whilst I agree that we were all getting to grips with virtual meetings in the early stages of lock-down, most people took to the technology quickly and had EDF been minded, I think it would have been perfectly possible to organise a Forum meeting prior to submission of the DCO.

The second point is that Brian could not have anticipated that EDF might decide to make significant changes to their original submission, as they did in November 2020. You say in your letter, “the Forum was an element of the pre-submission public consultation”. As the changes resulted in a consultation, pre-submission, there was a good case for EDF to arrange another Forum. For whatever reason they chose not to hold one, but I can confirm that it would have been welcomed by a wide range of parishes (and not just those that are going to be most affected by EDF’s Sizewell C plans). It would have provided a chance for a constructive engagement between EDF and the wider community. I regard this as a missed opportunity on EDF’s part.

You say in your sixth main paragraph, “We believe that if Sizewell C goes ahead, the detailed issues of concern to local communities are best addressed through direct meetings with the parishes involved, rather than a large meeting like the Community Forum,”. We, in our letter of 23rd December, were of course referring to the cancellation of the March 2020 Forum and the absence of other Forums over subsequent months. We very much regret the fact that that none were held. If EDF were now minded to hold a Community Forum, I know it would be welcomed and I don’t believe that there is anything to preclude that happening simply because the DCO and the recent changes to it are now with PINS.

Does what you say in your paragraph referred to above suggest that EDF is not contemplating holding Sizewell C Forums in the future? If so this seems to be at odds with what is happening at Hinkley, where I believe two Community Forums were held in May and September of last year and a further three are scheduled for this year including the one held yesterday. I am assuming that EDF are not intending to treat the East Suffolk community in a different way to their approach to North Somerset, but perhaps you can clarify?

You refer to the work done between EDF and Wickham Market and surrounding parishes. It is a good example of addressing specific concerns and whilst slow, I believe that some progress is being made in

addressing local traffic issues, although this does not remove the overarching problem that the B1078 is wholly unsuited to carrying the additional volume of traffic, but that matter will be dealt with elsewhere. I know that you are trying to set up a meeting with a very small number of Wickham Market Councillors (although I note that neighbouring parishes are not included), can you confirm to how many other parishes an invitation to meet has been extended, how many have accepted the invitation and how many are yet to be invited to meetings with EDF and which parishes are involved? Will there be a standard agenda for each meeting, or will it be bespoke?

In summary I know that parishes would welcome a Community Forum meeting with EDF. Crucially, it would provide an opportunity for those who have hitherto not been as closely engaged with EDF but are nonetheless affected by the plans for Sizewell C, to hear at first hand from EDF how matters are evolving.

I endorse EDF's willingness to meet with parishes, but it must be seen to be done on a collaborative basis. EDF should not appear to be prescriptive and dictating the terms of these meetings. If adopted, this approach simply reinforces the view that "EDF will get what they want, in whatever way they chose" and that is a perception that I am sure EDF would want to avoid.

As I have said before, I am very willing to keep the channels open to ensure that the community is as fully informed about EDF's plans as is possible. If there is anything that you feel I can do to help that process, please let me know.

Kind Regards

