

From: [REDACTED]
To: [SizewellC](#)
Subject: Response to The Examining Authority's First Written Questions, deadline June 2nd 2021
Date: 07 May 2021 12:38:06

EN010012 - The Sizewell C Project

Name: Caroline Price
Interested Party ref. no: 20025986
Ref: my Relevant Representation (RR-0178)

Response to The Examining Authority's Written Questions and requests for information (EZQ1) under the Rule 8 Letter: Part 2 of 6: Bio.1.35

Dear Sir, Madam,

Regarding my reference in my Relevant Representation to the Grayling butterfly, I see that Natural England and the Applicant are invited to respond, and I would like to make my own comments. I think I may have caused some confusion over my naming, and would like to clarify that the two places in Suffolk where the Grayling population is concentrated are the Brecks and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, the second of which includes Sizewell Belts.

By 'Sizewell Belts' I'm referring to the Nature Reserve of the same name managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, which comprises a variety of habitats, described on their website as follows: 'Marsh, reedbed and wet woodland with adjacent heathland and beach - Sizewell Belts has just about everything!' The Sizewell Belts dykes are within the Reserve and also form part of the Sizewell Marshes SSSI.

The Grayling butterfly (*Hipparchia semele*) is found on sheltered, sunny and dry sites with sparse vegetation; typical sites include heathland, sand dunes and coastal grassland. Fine grasses on sandy soil provide the larval foodplant. The butterfly has suffered serious declines nationally over the long term (-72% over 43 years) due to habitat loss, and is now classified as a UK BAP priority species, ie. among the species identified as being most threatened and requiring conservation action under the Biodiversity Action Plan.

In Suffolk, the species is struggling and appears to be losing its foothold in the Brecks. In his report 'Sizewell C - A Prime Site for Lepidoptera' in *The Suffolk Argus* (Summer 2019), Rob Parker, Conservation Officer for the Suffolk branch of Butterfly Conservation, writes: 'Grayling has undergone a serious decline across England and in Suffolk, where it has abandoned its former flight areas in the centre of the county and moved towards the coast to find the sparse grassland on sandy soil that is its favoured habitat. For some years it has been quite common from Kenton Hills, through Sizewell Belts and particularly amongst the grass and shingle belt between the sea and Sizewell B. The work along the sea wall could be a significant threat to this declining species...'

For the past nine years, a butterfly transect on the Reserve, the 'Sizewell Belts transect' - running from Lover's Lane, between Leiston Common and the Sizewell Belt dykes and round Reckham Pits Wood to Sandy Lane - has been walked at regular intervals to monitor the butterflies, and the Grayling has been recorded regularly during this transect.

I myself have seen Grayling in the car park off Lover's Lane, in the area between Sandy Lane and Leiston Common, on the Goose Hill sandy rides and along the coast and dunes adjacent to and north of Sizewell B. The beach area is classified as a County Wildlife Site

(CWS), as is the Sizewell Levels and Associated Areas, which includes Goose Hill. Although the designation CWS doesn't confer statutory protection, it does 'affirm a site's importance and value for wildlife in its county context.' Both these sites are incredibly important to me as a local person. And yet if the planned work on SZC goes ahead, the entire beach (ie Bent Hills sand dunes) will be dug up for new defences; and almost all of Goose Hill and all its rides will go under concrete for the construction site. The loss of Grayling habitat in these places would be total.

I reiterate my concern that a butterfly which is already threatened nationally and on a county level can only be made more vulnerable by the projected work, which will cut into the heart of its remaining Suffolk stronghold. It is a butterfly whose precious and increasingly rare heathland habitat should be being preserved, not reduced or destroyed.

I love this whole area and return regularly to walk its footpaths. One of the highlights for me each summer is to walk along the coast between the Sluice and Sizewell B. The experience of strolling on tracks through dunes and heather with dozens of Grayling (not to mention other species such as Small Copper, Small Heath, Common Blue and the Six-spot Burnet moth) flying around me is one of the most extraordinary and uplifting I know. It is something I look forward to each year, and each year I am filled with the same wonder. How many places are left now in England where one can walk freely amongst dozens of butterflies in their natural milieu? It is an experience which is beyond quantifying, one that I would want everyone to be able to have, one that I believe we will be poorer without.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Price



Virus-free. www.avg.com