

[REDACTED]

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Wendy McKay and team,

I was unable to complete saying everything I wished to share at the meeting so I have sent you a copy of my intended words for this evening.

“I am speaking as a Theberton resident and homeowner, a parent and a primary school teacher but please note that I am not speaking on behalf of any particular local school and my own views are not to be seen as representing the profession. I have worked in education for the last seven years in this local area and want you to consider how the proposed development would impact the precious years of childhood here. It being potentially 12 years that our children would not get back.

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified in 1989, clearly states in Article 3 that the best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. I do not believe that the current plans for SZC are in the in best interests of the child and that children have not been viewed as the top priority in the decisions that have been made that would affect their lives. Our children have the right to access what they need to have a good life and I believe the applicant’s plans contravene all that is protected by the UN Convention. As a teacher with duty of care for the safeguarding of all children, I am also highlighting our government’s own Statutory Guidance for safeguarding, Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018, updated 2020), that states “nothing is more important than children’s welfare.”

I live in [REDACTED] – a small crescent of sixteen houses – which would be significantly and negatively impacted due to its close proximity to the Sizewell Link Road and the SZC build.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] it is one of many roads in this local area with a high concentration of families living here full-time. Not second homes, not holiday lets – just your regular Suffolk families – with all the typical work and care responsibilities that that brings.

To give you one example of what life is like here: the only peak noise reading we get above safe levels on our decibel reader are from thunderstorms, church bells [REDACTED] the regular visits from the ice-cream van, the swifts whizzing around on their summer vacation here and the sound of our children playing outside. It’s that type of place. Theberton may not have any street lighting, public transport or any shops within walking distance – we have only a few hundred metres of pavement but our children benefit from living here. It is where they learn to talk to people of all ages and feel part of a community. It’s a safe place to be a kid, where they learn to cycle, go for a run and climb a tree. Doughty Wylie Crescent is surrounded by farmland and trees. Theberton and Eastbridge are places for children to see and hear many animals – even alpacas - and learn about nature. Children here are able to see the stars in the night sky. They have good air quality 24/7 and silence at night to sleep well. Children here live in a child-friendly community where any local decisions are made, whether by local councils, committees or businesses, with families and children

[REDACTED]

in mind. You only have to visit our local pubs, The Theberton Lion and the Eels Foot, and RSPB Minsmere to see how families with children, both living here and visiting on holiday, are always made to feel welcome and have their needs met. I think you can tell we all really like living here.

But like so many places in this area, [REDACTED] can walk to their nearest school. Like so many children in Suffolk, their nearest school or nursery is over two miles away from their home and therefore these children are reliant on road transport. I do not believe the applicant has even considered, for example, how a Suffolk child would get to school on time without having to reduce their amount of sleep or leisure time to accommodate the SZC traffic in their twice daily commute. I think at least 68 of the current home-to-school bus services would be seriously affected by SZC and that is just the state schools.

The remapping of the road network and the inevitable increased traffic detailed in these plans would dramatically increase all children's home-to-school journey times in most of Suffolk. And of course, it would impact all of those adults working in their schools too: the teachers, support staff, office manager, cleaner, Ofsted inspector, governor, cook, school nurse, SENDCO or as one of the many instructors moving from school to school throughout the school day: the music tutors and PE coaches. EDF may be a large employer in the area but the Education sector arguably employs far more people in Suffolk than EDF.

Our local children currently have at most a 15-minute trip in the car to access the nearest bit of beach which brings me onto Wellbeing. It is not only children's Education but nearly every social visit to a friend or relative or out-of-school activity that would be impacted by this development. Without this their mental health suffers as we have witnessed in lockdown. All sorts of activities are available in our wonderful Suffolk for children but they are completely reliant on their families being able to drive on our low traffic roads to be doable at all. Many families here also rely on grandparents and childminders being only a quick drive away to provide them with the necessary childcare in order for the parents to work at all. I do not believe that this type of trip-chaining, often provided by mothers, has been included in the applicant's traffic modelling at all.

Nor has the applicant, I would argue, considered children's access to health services and the role of maternity services. Our area, as applauded I recall in parliament by the then MP for Suffolk Coastal John Gummer when I had my daughter, has a higher than national average number of homebirths. This is reflective of our rural location and the current transfer times for labouring mothers: 30 mins to Ipswich hospital and 40mins to James Paget. I do not believe the applicant has considered the rights of the unborn child in our area to access a safe and uncomplicated birth whether at home (supported by midwives) or via a transfer to a maternity unit.

Neither have they considered that in the event of a mass evacuation of the area due to an incident at SZB, how impossible it would be for families to collect their children from schools and nurseries quickly in order to leave the area if the roads are as busy as planned.

On a more prosaic level, local families here organise their lives by having goods home-delivered. Their main grocery shops are regularly transported by road from the big supermarkets such as Asda and Morrisons in Lowestoft, Sainsburys in Ipswich and Tescos in Martlesham. Providing the basics for our children – food, clothes, shoes - is going to become considerably harder for all our families.

And finally, another huge concern for me as a mother of a teenage girl is how the demographic profile would change with thousands of construction workers imported into our child-centred community. I believe this poses a serious safeguarding issue for the wellbeing of our young girls especially in an area with no police presence.

