

I would like to draw attention, as many others have done, to the completely inadequate response of EDF to the objections that have been made over many years to their previous proposals. They produced the fifth planning consultation far too late - indeed in the run-up to Christmas - to make any meaningful response possible. They refused to wait until the end of the Covid crisis to have face-to-face consultations - the impression given is that this suited their purposes very well. And this despite assertions to the contrary on their website, and on the propaganda they put through our doors, where they claim to be sensitive in engaging with the public and nature conservation groups such as the RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

I was appalled to note the following statement on page 156 of EDF's Community Impact Report dated May 2020

“During the operation of the Sizewell C Project, combined noise and vibration, air quality and/or landscape and visual effects are likely to lead to an increased sense of disturbance and additional significant adverse effects to the following residential or representative residential receptors in Saxmundham:

Eastbridge
Potters Farm
Potters Street•

As residents of Eastbridge we have received the generally available publicity about EDF's proposals but has this included no mention of any adverse effects beyond the construction phase. And in this, the only statement we have indirectly received from them about permanent adversity, there is no explanation of which of the above adverse effects we should expect. So much for consultation!

EDF describes residents as “residential receptors”, and while this may well be a technical term, they make no attempt to soften its disempowering undertones. You will have noted how their legal advisor, Mr Philpott, referred to some interested parties as “Important Interested Parties” - leaving the rest of us to conclude that we were the unimportant ones! This arrogance and absence of communication have characterised their approach throughout the years of “consultation” - as you will have heard from many contributors to these hearings.

Mitigations of blight to the area

Minsmere Bird Reserve, the AONB and SSSI

This whole area is one of outstanding natural beauty, tranquillity and dark skies; Minsmere Nature Reserve and the Minsmere Levels are home to over 6,000 species of animals, plants and fungi. They attract a large number of visitors, who make an important contribution to the economy of East Suffolk. Many people love Minsmere; 104,000+ signed the RSPB petition to oppose Sizewell C and the list of signatures was still growing when it was closed.

The RSPB reserve of Minsmere, founded in 1947, has won international awards for excellence, and is responsible for bringing such species as the Marsh Harrier back from the brink. But these well-known larger species depend on a whole ecosystem of aquatic and insect life, which in its turn depends on these fragile and beautiful marshes. It is extremely likely that Sizewell C would adversely affect the water levels of these marshes. Expert opinion varies as to whether they would be over-drained, flooded or both - but the least likely outcome is that water levels would remain the same - or indeed that the water would not be contaminated. This would have a

catastrophic impact on all the wildlife. EDF is planning to reduce the area of wetland and the RSPB considers the mitigation habitats offered by EDF to be inadequate.

During oral representations, we were interested to hear a expert on the robotic maintenance of acoustic fish deterrents (AFDs). He disputed EDF's argument that the maintenance of underwater AFDs was impractical. According to RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife's estimate in their Summary of Concerns, Sizewell C would kill more than 3,000,000 fish a year in its cooling system and through toxic chemicals. The dead fish and toxic chemicals discharged into the sea would pollute the water, affecting the flocks of Red Throated Diver that congregate every winter in the sea near Sizewell. This would also starve and poison the Terns that currently thrive in the area, as well as other species, including the Kittiwakes. It is very clear that an acoustic fish deterrent should be mandatory.

Again, it was instructive to hear how Coronation Wood was felled - all but one or two trees - before EDF acquired a bat licence, so they could claim to have waited for proper authorisation. As was pointed out, there wasn't any point in withholding the licence once there were no trees there for the bats! There is a population of the extremely rare and threatened Barbastelle Bat in the area, and, like many of the species in the area, it needs to be properly protected. EDF's erection of 40 bat boxes, while felling some of the trees that support the ecosystem they depend upon, is inadequate and cynical in the extreme.

All in all, I am sceptical about their solutions to concerns raised about the natural environment, and and I fear that they are more aimed at fobbing off opposition, than dealing sensitively with genuine environmental concerns.

2. Local Communities

Eco Tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy - all the more so since the Springwatch and Autumnwatch programmes about Minsmere on BBC television. By EDF's own calculations Sizewell C would drive away 29% of these tourists and according to the Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation this translates to a loss of 400 jobs and Â£40m a year.

The independent research and analysis consultancy Development Economics states that EDF's claims of economic benefits flowing from Sizewell C are 'over-optimistic, unproven or misleading'. They say EDF frequently omit the evidence behind their figures, which are consequently often misleading. They conclude, critically, and I quote:

'EDF's Economic Statement fails to meet the minimum requirements of the legislation, with no serious attempt to measure the deterrent effect on tourists and their expenditure, traffic congestion or competition for skills and labour. The National Policy Statement EN-6 requires that applicants for major nuclear energy projects take into account 'potential pressures on local and regional resources, demographic change and economic benefit'. [paras 3.11.3 and 3.11.4]

One need look no further than Leiston to see that the so-called economic benefits brought by Sizewell B are exaggerated. Leiston is run-down and suffers from a drugs problem dating from the construction of Sizewell B.

According to DrugRehab.com, 'the construction industry employs more workers with substance abuse disorders than any other profession.'

To sum up: the claimed economic benefit from the generation of jobs is highly questionable, as such jobs as are generated would be poached from local businesses, and also many of them

would be taken by workers imported from Hinkley Point - for whom they propose to build accommodation in the fields next to the hamlet of Eastbridge. The economic and social damage that would be caused by loss of income from tourism would be real and lasting.

3. Traffic

Even when the rail and sea options are working EDF is expecting each day at least 640 HGVs, 10,000 car journeys and 756 bus journeys. The Orwell Bridge and parts of the A12 are already often struggling. Sizewell C will make things dramatically worse as will other energy developments in the area.

We have no confidence in EDF's predictions, and we expect congestion to be every bit as bad at Sizewell C as it already is at Hinkley Point C.

For us as senior residents of Eastbridge, we fear for the time that it will take us to get to hospital should that be necessary.

4. Security

The security implications of this project alone would justify rejecting the proposal. When I attended one of EDF's local briefing meetings I asked about nuclear waste disposal, to be told that the waste would simply be buried on site. When I questioned this, I got the easy reply, "Oh, but that's what everyone else does"! I consider that to be unsafe in any location, but geologies do vary, and that of the Suffolk coast is probably more insecure than any other for storing nuclear waste that will remain on site till 2140. The coast is composed of soft sandstone, which is being rapidly eroded by the sea - a process that is accelerating due to global warming and rising sea levels. And of course the East coast is slowly sinking, while the West coast is slowly rising. There is even the possibility that if the Norwegian shelf collapsed, it would cause a tidal wave, which would engulf the power station.

The thought of burying nuclear waste at Sizewell, or even building a nuclear power station in the first place, is frankly hair-raising under these conditions, and it would be a simply horrific legacy to leave our children and our children's children.

And the nightmare doesn't even stop here. Given EDF's dire financial circumstances, it is very likely that they will sell SZC on as soon as it is built, so ridding themselves of all further responsibility for the project. It is clear from their French financial report published earlier this year that their shareholders are getting restive and see this project as a financial liability. So we face the possibility of an even more worrying future with a new owner who has no promises or responsibilities to honour.

And this brings me on to my last point: in our aim to become carbon neutral, do we really need any more large nuclear power stations - particularly EPR ones, whose design is obsolete and much too complex, and none of which has been successfully built in Europe and become operational? If you believe we do (and increasingly large numbers of people now do not), why not go for the small modular reactors like the ones Rolls Royce make - and which Dominic Cummings was in favour of? They are at least a tried and tested technology, which would deliv