

Written submission from the Alde and Ore Association covering its presentation at the Oral Floor Hearing, Second hearing on Tuesday 18th May 2021 (shortened version)

The Alde and Ore Association, with some 2000 members, seeks to preserve and protect the estuary and its banks for the benefit of the public and seeks to do this by assessing major policies or projects likely to impact on the well-being of the area.

This project is going to have a massive effect on the area as the many oral and written presentations are showing.

The Project is to be sited in the middle of the unique Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Beauty which consists of the Suffolk Sandlings country running south to containing the Alde and Ore estuary and areas further south. It is an area which has many visitors.

Although geographically Sizewell C is some 6 miles north of the Alde and Ore Estuary, it could impact substantially on the estuary area, both in the short, medium and long term.

First concern: The Applicant's papers at best dismiss the need to consider anything but the immediate shoreline. But SZC would be built on one sub area of the Suffolk Heritage Coast, which is **not** a series of bite size self-contained segments. It is all of a piece and has a long integrated geomorphological history of natural evolution: it is subject to many continuing dynamic forces, principally wind, waves, sea surges and sea level change working on the young geology.

This integrated history is evident from its changes over time. (details in Written Submission for Deadline 2). The Association is puzzled that the Applicant 's papers maintain that the Greater Sizewell Bay is a self-contained zone and the coast to the south will be unaffected by what is a very long term project. This needs examining more closely in the Issue Specific Hearing on the coast.

Further, the entire coastline is a fragile and dynamic one. There is major concern about unseen consequences of manmade interference on a fragile part of the Suffolk Heritage coast resulting in accelerated change or changes in the coastal dynamics which could impact badly on the coast to the south, not only the immediate and vulnerable settlement of Thorpeness but Aldeburgh and the eastern bank of the Alde and Ore estuary.

Added to the dynamic geomorphological history, climate change is now bringing two further factors affecting the vulnerability of the coast: -

- sea level is forecast is to rise by 0.6-1m by the year 2100, not just the isostatic rebalancing which has long been known about, but a greater rise resulting from climate change. This rise will exaggerate the impact of the many sea surges, already experienced in winter, and storms, and
- climate change is also bringing a far greater frequency of storms and rain,

These two additional factors will increase the impact of the sea on the coast in a way not experienced up to now. Have these really been taken into account?

Little or no work appears to have been done on the potential consequences for the neighbouring coastline of a new construction south of Sizewell Bay. The latest SZC plans, aired in outline last November/December, mean that there will be an even more extensive projection of a manmade construction into the bay, and a period of shingle recycling affecting coastal dynamics for a few decades and then a potential build-up of shingle to the north of the construction. But there seems to have been no further consideration of the impact of these changed plans on the nearby coast and that to the south. Comments on the unknown and unquantified impact of design plans, such as the Hard Core Defence Front, will also be addressed in the Issue Specific Hearing.

Second concern: Against this background of unassessed impacts and indeed unknown impacts, is that **plans for Coastal Monitoring and Mitigation** of any impact on the coastline of whatever turns out to be the final design of the project, simply ignore the possibility of any adverse impacts south of the Greater Sizewell Bay, despite centuries of documented coastal evolution —But why? The project is not a temporary one lasting a few years when it might be argued that there could be no lasting impact on coastal flows: the construction will be there for well over a century and a half, probably far longer. Should longshore drift be interfered with, the shoreline be changed and the eastern bank of the Alde and Ore Estuary, made of shingle transported south, diminish and become even more vulnerable to the sea, the loss of the estuary would impact upon the economic life, leisure and the unique environmental area. There needs to be a Monitoring plan of proper geographical scope and for appropriate funding in the event that Mitigation is needed.

Third concern: Another key concern, at least a short to medium term one, relates to the **economic fallout of consequences of access to the area being affected during the long 10–12-year, possibly longer, construction period**. The Alde and Ore Area is a very popular one for visitors. In 2013 the AOA repeated, at a 10-year interval, an economic study of the value of the AO economy, which involved both desk studies and on-the-ground surveys of what people did, valued and spent in the area. This revealed a local economy worth at a minimum about £100 million a year: and we know it was an understated valuation because of data we subsequently obtained. Of this £100 m, tourism and related activities brought in £79 million.

When asked to give five words to express why they valued the area the top words from 275 people were **scenery, peace, tranquillity, countryside, beauty**. If access becomes difficult for visitors, and tranquillity is also lost, even a 10% fall off would cost the area, updating the 7-year-old figures, possibly about £10 million a year in lost revenue and all the related employment. Nor is the tourism a summer only phenomenon, as the area is very popular with visitors in most months of the year.

Access to the estuary area depends upon the limited capacity of the A12, which is not even of trunk road capacity, and branching off the two roads of minor A road status, and two modest B roads all of which are vital to local access. The project, being we are told the largest building site in Europe, will involve a substantial extra amount of traffic, including

HGVs, travelling particularly on the A1094 for many years. Despite, the Applicant's recent consultation sought to identify ways minimise the impact, the sheer volumes involved mean the area's capacity will be overwhelmed. Further, HGVs do not fit with the width of the local roads, the hidden dips and narrow bends, nor will the many countless smaller vehicles providing services, or out of hours leisure time travel by those working on the site. All these which will considerably hamper the normal movements of residents and tourists, schools, emergency vehicles for ambulance and fire. It is very likely that tourists seeking peace and tranquillity will go elsewhere rather than get stuck in long traffic jams or snarl ups.

Finally, there is the issue of cumulative effect of traffic access. In addition to the SZC project currently there are plans for a huge on shore windfarm construction, far bigger than many to date with it seems the likelihood for up to a half dozen other projects following in its wake. The cumulative effective of all the energy plants will swamp this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and undermine daily life and the key economic business of tourism providing employment in the area.

To summarise, in considering the site, the impact on the coastline seems not fully examined, nor the greater forces of climate change and sea level rise affecting the natural evolution of the coastline, the local economy will be damaged by the massive traffic requirements, and account needs to be taken of the cumulative effect of all energy projects in this area. These place question marks over the suitability of a third Sizewell project but if it goes ahead, the plans for Coastal Monitoring and Mitigation should be changed to enable damage limitation over a far wider area way south of Aldeburgh to Shingle Street and should not ignore the integral coastal evolution of the area.

Slightly shortened version of OFH delivery for D2 submission

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