

Hacheston Parish Council. Deadline 2 Representation

SIZEWELL C: Application for Development Consent Order

1. Introduction

Hacheston Parish Council (HPC), reflecting the views of the majority of residents, has consistently opposed the Southern Park and Ride (SPR) which would bring no benefits to the village and would have a damaging impact on the community and the environment.

Hacheston is a small village of about 350 people which is 14 miles from the site of Sizewell C. The proposed site of the SPR is almost wholly within the parish to the east of the A12. Most of the village, which is situated 1 mile to the north, is a linear development along the B1116, whilst Lower Hacheston, also part of the Parish, is close to the SPR site on the B1078.

2. Executive Summary

HPC agrees that a park and ride facility would reduce the number of workforce vehicles in the area between the SPR and the main construction site, but it would considerably increase the impact of traffic on Hacheston.

HPC does not agree with the proposed location. The visual impact of the site and the noise and air pollution would have an adverse impact on the lives of local residents and light pollution is likely to have a serious detrimental impact on the dark skies of the surrounding area. The combined impact of over one thousand additional vehicles, 7 days a week on local roads plus a large increase in HGVs on the A12 would seriously affect the daily lives of Hacheston residents.

3 Southern Park and Ride

3.1 Location

We are convinced that the SPR should be situated further south on the A12. On the basis that 1 bus can replace up to 50 private cars, this location could remove hundreds of cars from the busiest section of the A12 around Woodbridge, part of which is single carriageway. It is anticipated that junctions on this route would operate at over capacity during construction.

A more southerly site for the SPR would considerably reduce traffic in the village of Wickham Market where serious congestion is likely. The search for acceptable

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solutions continues to occupy the developer, the County Council and Wickham Market Parish Council.

We would ask the developer to investigate the existing Park and Ride facility on the A12 at Martlesham which appears to have unused capacity.

3.2 Visual and Environmental Impact

The proposed site for the SPR is inappropriate. The elevated site is in a special landscape between two protected (1) river valleys. The proposal is for 26.4 hectares of parking and infrastructure plus a Postal Consolidation Facility and Traffic Incident Management Facility. There would be parking for 1,250 cars, 80 motorcycles, minibuses, bicycles and in addition a number of buildings. (2) We do not agree that the developer has sufficiently considered the adverse landscape and visual impact of this industrial development in a rural setting.

The elevated site would be visible from many properties in the area both during the day and at night. We do not agree with the applicant's assessment of the visual impact to nearby residents of Hacheston and Lower Hacheston and would bring to the attention of the Examining Authority the report of The Landscape Partnership (3), a consultancy commissioned by HPC in collaboration with 3 neighbouring parish councils.

We do not agree with the measures proposed by EDF to mitigate the impact on the environment and ecology of the site. We wish to see the bunding which was proposed at Stage 4 reinstated and the planting and conservation of trees and hedgerows given more careful consideration.

3.3 Light Pollution

Hacheston Parish Council does not agree with the applicant's assessment of the impact of lighting. The proposed facility would operate 20 hours in 24 and at night would be illuminated by lighting columns 6 metres high on the site and 10 metres high on the access roads. (4)

Hacheston has no street lighting and residents value the dark skies. We think that at night the SPR would be visible over a wide area and light-spill will considerably detract from the rural character of the village.

3.4 Noise Levels

HPC does not agree that noise during the construction of the SPR would have negligible impact on the neighbourhood. Outside rush hour this is a very quiet location.

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3.5 Air Pollution

We do not agree that the air pollution caused by the construction and operation of the SPR would be harmless. We expect EDF to set up air-quality monitoring at the Fiveways roundabout where traffic would be heavy and a bus shelter is in daily use by schoolchildren. We would like to see a bigger commitment to sustainable forms of transport such as electric vehicles and the provision of charging points.

4 SPR Traffic Impact

The operation of the proposed SPR would generate 1,784 vehicle movements in the day in addition to 900 at night (5) with peaks which coincide with the busiest times of normal traffic.

Since very little public transport serves the village, all residents rely on cars to travel to work, schools, shops and medical treatment. We do not agree that the impact of the SPR on local traffic would be negligible. In addition to congestion and road traffic incidents, an increase in the volume of traffic will raise the levels of pollution and noise.

We accept that EDF have carried out detailed traffic modelling but with limited resources and the continuing impact of Covid on working hours, HPC is unable to produce evidence to challenge the predictions in the DCO application.

4.1 Re-routing

To avoid the anticipated serious congestion on the A12, drivers would seek alternative routes along unsuitable narrow lanes in the district and could be tempted to speed through the village. Most of the housing in Hacheston is on either the B1116 or the B1078, footways are narrow or non-existent and speeding traffic is an important issue for residents.

4.2 Fiveways Roundabout

Fiveways roundabout is the junction of the B1116 and B1078 with the A12 slip road to the proposed site. It would carry all the SPR traffic from both directions including buses and vehicles serving the Postal Consolidation Facility. HPC does not agree that the extra vehicle movements will have negligible impact on traffic flow. The roundabout is likely to be a pinch-point and hazardous for walkers and cyclists. EDF should plan mitigation measures.

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4.3 Local Involvement

Hacheston Parish Council welcomes the proposal to set up local transport and traffic groups (6) linking the community with the developer and SCC in dealing with problems caused by SZC traffic. Hacheston Parish Council wishes to be included as a member of the group dealing with the SPR should the development go ahead.

5 Freight Management Strategy

5.1 HPC agrees with any strategy which would minimise the number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on the A12. We agree with the proposal to strictly constrain the routes used by HGVs. We do not agree that the developer has sufficiently explored the opportunities which a beach landing facility could offer to reduce the number of vehicles delivering bulk materials and loads in addition to the largest components.

5.2 HPC is of the view that increased heavy goods vehicle traffic on the A12 will have a seriously detrimental effect on the inhabitants of Suffolk and in some places will cause structural damage. There will be congestion on the A12 causing increased traffic on the local network of minor roads. The air and noise pollution will be significant and congestion will impact the lives of residents.

6 Cumulative Impacts of Major Infrastructure Developments

6.1 The construction phase of the Scottish Power project for a new offshore wind farm and connection to the national electricity grid, is likely to overlap with the Sizewell C Project. In addition, there are major residential developments planned along the A12 including at both Saxmundham and Martlesham. (7)

6.2 HPC does not agree that the existing major road network will prove capable of carrying the increased heavy traffic and that the effect of re-routing on the network of minor roads will not be noticeable (8). HPC is a small parish council and does not have the expertise and resources to challenge the developer's conclusions, rather we fear that traffic will adversely impact the daily lives of residents for many years.

7 Conclusion

Hacheston Parish Council does not support the proposal for a park and ride facility in Hacheston. The construction and operation of the SPR would be an unwelcome industrial development in a village which cherishes its rural setting and character.

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References

1 Special Landscape Areas protected by local designation until 2020 Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan

2 DCO volume 4 Chapter 2: 2.2.6. Project library APP 380

3 Sizewell C Southern Park and Ride, Hacheston, Suffolk Review of landscape and visual aspects of planning application (This has been submitted to PINS)

4 DCO Volume 4 Chapter 6: 6.5.4. Project library APP 390

5 DCO Volume 4 Chapter 4: 4.6.28. Project library APP 384

6 DCO 8.5 Transport Assessment: 13.5.8. Project library APP 602

7 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 23rd September 2020

8 DCO 8.5 Transport Assessment: 8.7.10. Project library APP 602