

Issue Specific Hearing 7: Biodiversity and Ecology

These submissions are made by Josie Bassinette on behalf of the Walberswick Parish Council.

Number: 20025708

The following is a summary of oral submissions and other issues of concern being provided in writing.

Terrestrial Ecology

1. Overall, we would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by Mr. Collins that the core of the problems associated with biodiversity and ecology is that the site is too small to accommodate the construction of two nuclear reactors and therefore it requires the taking of portions of the AONB and SSSI by EDF. We are concerned by arguments to justify this taking based on claims that the AONB and SSSI can be encroached and denigrated in an acceptable or mitigable way. These designations exist precisely to protect them in their entirety and there can be no justification for their destruction. Perhaps EDF has no other place to build its two nuclear reactors. But that does not substantiate their argument for its development. Rather, it is a simple and straight-forward rationale for stopping it.
2. **SSSI:** We would like to associate ourselves with the comments made by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Dr. Low on the real risks to the water levels, water quality and the combination of species in the SSSI and the unsuitability of the proposed monitoring and mitigation offered by the applicant. The point of an SSSI is its uniqueness and, by its very nature, inability to be replaced. That is why it is protected and must not be damaged by permitting this development to go forward.
3. **Minsmere, Walberswick SPA and Marsh Harriers:** We remain unconvinced by the proposed mitigation measures by the applicant. In particular, we would like to associate strongly with the statements of the RSPB, the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and others that the combined impact of all the work – at the site and associated developments -- cannot be mitigated.
4. In terms of the specifics of the Marsh Harriers, we find the proposal of the applicant, to replace the lost Sizewell marshland with agricultural land to be taken in Westleton, as inappropriate mitigation. The applicant's explanation that the Marsh Harriers will thrive by leaving their nests in the marshes, flying 4 kilometers inland to find the mitigation site, successfully hunt against inland foxes, domestic cats and other predators, and then return to their nests in the marshes, is not credible. If the Marsh Harriers of Sizewell and Walberwick marshes used these inland sites now, perhaps a sensible argument for this 'mitigation' could be made. However, that is not the case and it remains with the applicant to prove that there are other examples where Marsh Harriers simultaneously live and hunt successfully in such different locations and that they can find these sites despite the activity associated with building two nuclear reactors. According to the RSPB website, Marsh Harriers were saved from extinction in 1971 by protecting them at

Minsmere. The irony cannot be lost that the birthplace of the current stock of Marsh Harriers should now be destroyed by the construction of Sizewell C.

5. **Marine Ecology:** We would strongly associate ourselves with the comments made by Mr Henderson on the extraordinary risks to the fish stocks and the incomplete and inaccurate assessments and mitigation proposals offered by the applicant. We note in particular that there is no room for miscalculation given that meaningful mitigation and compensation from the nuclear reactors, once operational, is impossible. It is wrong for the applicant to suggest that should the risk to fish stocks prove greater than planned (which according to all experts outside of EDF will be the case) that they could use compensatory measures such as those used to limit commercial over-fishing. Unless the Deed of Obligation includes the shutdown of the nuclear plant permanently, the impact on marine life cannot be mitigated and the impact will be devastating for the entire ecosystem along the length of the Suffolk coast.

6. **Bio-diversity:** We strongly associate ourselves with the comments made by Mr. Collins which expose the faultiness of the approach taken by the applicant, the devastating impact of the development on bio-diversity, why the analysis offered by EDF is incorrect and why there is no possibility of realistic mitigation.