



Together Against Sizewell C

Date: 9th August 2021

SSC IP number 20026489

TASC IP number 20026424

Dear Planning Inspector,

Sizewell C Co's potable water fiasco

1. Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) and Stop Sizewell C (SSC) write jointly to you today to express the utter disdain in which we hold Sizewell C Co's attitude towards the supply of potable water over which it has spent at least a decade dithering and obfuscating. Back as far as 2010, the East Anglian Daily Times ([EADT](#)) carried a letter written by one of TASC's members pointing out that to secure sufficient potable water supply for such a huge project as Sizewell C in the most arid of all areas in the UK would be a mammoth task and one which would throw up all manner of problems.
2. Here we are, eleven years later, well into the DCO process, and the Applicant only now seeks to cast around for an answer to its potable water supply problem and comes up with not an answer but yet more questions.
3. IPs have received a letter from the Applicant dated the 2nd August 2021 notifying yet another 'notice of proposed change consultation'. This comes after the notification from Walker Morris, acting for Northumbrian Water Ltd, advising that it cannot meet the Applicant's water requirements, stating that, '...the Blyth Water Resource Zone, within which Sizewell C falls, does not have 4Ml/d of supply headroom that is needed to meet the Applicant's requirements.'
4. We then hear that the Environment Agency has proposed a solution which is equally disconcerting to those witnessing the farce of EdF attempting to justify the building of SZC: the EA have mooted the extraction of water from the River Waveney, identified by the charity Buglife as heavily contaminated with neonicotinoids¹ and recognised as polluted with sewage, pesticides, nitrates and other farm run-off, as most other rivers in the UK^{2, 3}.
5. EdF's preposterous, last-ditch response is to propose a desalination plant for which they have granted stakeholders only a three week period in which to make their views known while apparently maintaining their confidence in being able to present their latest addition to the DCO by the 27th August. Yet again, hard pressed opponents of EdF's plans are being asked to rush to respond to another twist in this ever-more bizarre attempt to build a huge nuclear plant which by its own acknowledgement the Applicant cannot afford to build, in a location affording insufficient space, crippling inaccessibility, too much

¹ <https://www.buglife.org.uk/news/heavy-neonicotinoid-insecticide-contamination-damaging-british-rivers/>

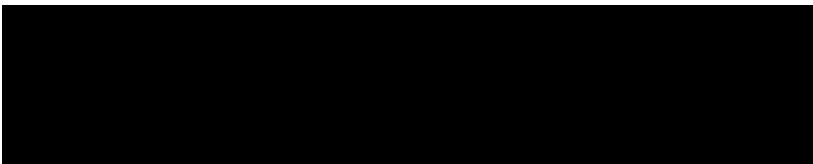
² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/21/raw-sewage-breaches-uk-rivers-10-times-greater-than-watchdog-environment-agency-estimates>

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/17/rivers-in-england-fail-pollution-tests-due-to-sewage-and-chemicals>

opposition, too precious an environment and too many disadvantages to come close to any sort of justification for its electricity which is becoming increasingly expensive and redundant to needs.

6. If the ExA required more confirmation that the Applicant was incapable of making a timely, realistic, responsible, and coherent application to build a £20+bn plant, then the on-going absence of a water strategy after a decade of supposed 'preparation' is surely the evidence it needs. It is nothing short of scandalous that at the eleventh hour, EdF can still not point to a means by which it will meet its potable water needs beyond the fanciful notion that it will have to resort to a process known for its gaseous emissions which include carbon monoxide (CO), nitric oxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂)⁴. These air pollutants can have a harmful impact on public health. There is also concern regarding the large amounts of chemicals stored at desalination plants. Waste in the form of highly concentrated brine may seep underground and damage existing aquifers. Desalinated water itself can be harmful to human health as chemical by-products of the process can contaminate ground water sources and, being acidic, can endanger those who rely on it for consumption.
7. Sizewell C Co acknowledge that the desalination plant, while being of a 'temporary' nature, would be a considerable undertaking, comprising of an intake pipe with screen, an outfall pipe with diffuser, and associated pumping station and plant on shore. This would add to the already significant impact SZC is expected to have on the environment in terms of impingement of marine biota and chemical effluents and discharges. No time is given to define the 'temporary' nature of the desalination plant.
8. The plan would also mean the delivery of water to the site by tanker in the initial 4 – 8 months required to construct the desalination plant, an additional burden to the fragile transport infrastructure which faces breaking-point numbers of HGVs and which will require an overhaul of the transport strategy which is already considered unviable. It should be noted that the period of time needed for using tankers to supply water could easily extend to 9 – 12 months during holiday periods. It is self-evident that this proposed 'solution' to the Applicant's potable water dilemma will add significantly to the cost of the overall development as well as to its carbon footprint.
9. This 'last ditch' attempt by the Applicant to solve a problem which is has known about for more than 10 years really is another slap in the face for hard-pressed interested parties who have been preparing to make their case on the issue of potable water, only to find that the focus of the discussion has been changed out of all recognition, requiring yet more research, document preparation and late nights trying to meet a deadline arbitrarily imposed by the Applicant.
10. TASC and Stop Sizewell C urges the ExA to accept the inevitable: in addition to the raft of issues which have been raised since the start of the inquiry which indicate this project represents the wrong development, in the wrong place at the wrong time, without the availability of a secure, environmentally safe and sustainable supply of potable water to the site for the next 12+ years of construction and then for the 60+ years for which the plant is expected to be operational, the SZC proposal cannot go ahead, that EdF is not a fit and proper Applicant and that the planning application is thrown out forthwith.

Sincerely,



CEO Stop Sizewell C

Chairman, TASC

⁴ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1936-704X.2005.mp132001003.x>