



WRITTEN REPRESENTATION FOR SPR EA1N and EA2 PROJECTS (DEADLINE 1)



Interested Party: The Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation Ltd (TSC)
PINS Refs: 20024735 & 20024732

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Issue: 1

Background

The Suffolk Coast Destination Management Organisation ('TSC') was formed in 2012, with the purpose of promoting the Suffolk coast as a visitor destination. TSC has a volunteer board of representatives from significant local businesses, 1.9 staff (FTE) and a membership of c. 220 businesses. TSC does not cover a fixed and formal geographical catchment, but is broadly responsible for marketing the tourism assets of East Suffolk.

The value of tourism within East Suffolk is approximately £695M per annum (14,600 jobs). Within the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, tourism is worth £228M per annum, supporting c. 5000 jobs (2019 Volumes and Values study, produced by Destination Research).

TSC acknowledges the important part that renewable energy can provide in the nation's energy mix.

Independent tourism impact study

In 2019, and in response to growing and vocal concern from its membership, TSC commissioned an independent survey to measure the impacts on tourism of the two SPR projects (East Anglia North One and East Anglia Two) and the EDF Sizewell C project. The survey was carried out by leading consultants BVA-BDRC, and was informed by 1700 online respondents, 69 face-to-face respondents and 113 business.

The survey produced these key findings:

- Suffolk is first and foremost perceived as a place to relax and escape in a natural setting. 84% of respondents considering a visit, cited nature-related activities as their main reason for visiting the area.
- 29% of the regional market said they were less likely to visit during the construction phases of the projects.
- Having heard about the projects, 11% of those surveyed said they were "a lot less likely to visit".
- One third of respondents (33%) worried equally about the two SPR projects and Sizewell C.
- There was evidence that, beyond the construction phase, some respondents were still significantly less likely to visit than before the work commenced.

- The major areas of concern to the regional market are “loss of tranquillity, nature and unique charm” and “road and traffic problems”.
- The majority of business respondents were in the accommodation sector. 72% of all businesses are either “fairly worried” or “very worried” about the developments. 75% of those already aware of the developments expect their turnover to decrease.
- Although outnumbered by those less likely to visit, a small minority of respondents (3%) suggested they would be a lot more likely to visit East Suffolk during this period.
- The cumulative impact of these energy projects could be a reduction of £24m - £40m per annum.

For more information on the full report please visit <https://www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk/tourism-research-and-reports>.

Summary of TSC’s concerns

1. Because of the findings of the report, TSC is highly concerned that both the perception and reality of East Suffolk as a highly attractive visitor destination will be damaged by the onshore impacts of the Scottish Power projects (East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two). This will result in a smaller number of visits.
2. TSC does not consider that the tourism socio-economic effects of the Scottish Power projects have been properly assessed in Chapter 30 of the Environmental Statement, particularly given the independent report referred to above, that was commissioned by TSC despite its tiny scale relative to SPR. SPR has made no equivalent effort. Given the importance of the tourism economy to East Suffolk, it is wholly unsatisfactory that SPR has not produced any proper evidence of impact. The Trip Advisor assessment in Chapter 30 is highly unconvincing.
3. Scottish Power has made no real effort to enter into discussion about mitigating the impacts on the visitor economy, such as creating a Tourism Fund.
4. Traffic. The A12 is the only major route to East Suffolk, and is already heavily congested particularly in peak holiday periods. Further overloading the road network will cause damage to both the perception and reality of East Suffolk as a tranquil and attractive visitor destination. TSC believes that the traffic and transport assessment (Chapter 26) does not adequately acknowledge the fragility of the existing road network, and how the projects will adversely affect the visitor experience.
5. Generally, the cumulative impacts of EA1N, EA2 and Sizewell C have not been given sufficient consideration.
6. Scottish Power asserts that there will be a “major beneficial” impact on tourism because construction workers will seek to book holiday accommodation. If tourists are deterred, as the independent study suggests, construction workers will not satisfactorily mitigate the damage to the visitor economy. Firstly, construction workers’ accommodation budgets will not match tourists’ budgets, and workers will not spend in other parts of the visitor economy (e.g. at attractions and bars, cafes, restaurants).

Conclusion

TSC fundamentally disagrees with the assessment that the projects will have “negligible” or “major beneficial” impacts on tourism (chapter 30, p.140).

Given the likelihood of significant damage to the East Suffolk tourist economy, and the absence of a robust and independent assessment of the potential damage, TSC has major concerns about the onshore infrastructure plans and therefore objects to both of the Scottish Power projects, EA1N and EA2.

TSC will attend the planning inspectorate hearings, and is available for discussions with officers.

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