

EDF Sizewell C 2nd Stage Consultation – response from Westleton Parish Council

1. Overall Comment

Westleton Parish Council feels that any development of the Sizewell site will have an impact on the local area. The Suffolk Coast contains Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Tourism is the main industry of the area and anything that has an adverse impact on this and the quality of life of the people who have chosen to live here must be avoided. There is still a lack of detail and clarity surrounding many of EDF's proposals. The consultation period itself has been disappointing with 4 years between stage one and stage two which, has fallen across the Christmas holiday period. This has left little time to investigate fully the complex proposals that have been put forward. It would appear that EDF have not given much thought or consideration to the concerns of residents that were raised in the first consultation. Westleton Parish Council have opted not to answer the questionnaire but submit the issues pertinent to them.

2. Environment

There is a lack of information especially concerning the spoil heaps (35m high) and the borrow pits. Visually and environmentally this will have a huge impact on the surrounding area. Also the area around Sizewell is exposed to coastal erosion and flooding. More information is needed as to how EDF will allow for these natural processes without moving the problem further along the coast and how they can guarantee long term site security. Westleton Common is a Dark Sky Discovery site and is used by local astronomical societies. The consultation document offers low impact lighting as a mitigation but it is unlikely that this would allow the continued use of the site for astronomical observations. Therefore, for at least the period of construction if not permanently Westleton would lose one its unique characteristics.

3. Traffic

Westleton is on the B1125, this allows traffic to use it as a cut through from North Suffolk to Sizewell. The village has an overwhelming problem with speeding. The Parish Council has and still is investing money into trying to alleviate this problem. Over the last 12 months 12% of all traffic registered on the Council's vehicle activated sign was exceeding 35mph in the 30mph zone. On this route is the village's popular playground that has to be reached by crossing the road. The problem heightens when Sizewell B performs it's 'outages' and the traffic to and from the site increases. The Parish Council are very concerned therefore that any development will see an increase in traffic using the B1125 as a rat run to Sizewell including HGV traffic. The use of ANPR would go some way to mitigate HGV traffic from deviating from the prescribed route but would not have any impact on car traffic.

Further afield the Parish Council are concerned regarding the positioning of the Darsham park and ride entrance. Although in theory the Parish Council support the park and ride as it would hopefully draw traffic away from Westleton and using the B1125 as a cut through, some thought has to be given to the ingress and egress of the site. Positioned that close to the level crossing and the garage will cause traffic to build up on the A12 in the bottleneck that ensues. Any hardstanding will also have run off and this will need to be carefully managed to not affect the railway line or the A12.

The Parish Council are not convinced that using the B1120 as the main access route to the site is the best option for local residents. Even with a change to the junction at Yoxford, there will still be major delays when the level crossing is in use.

The B1120 itself is a 'B' road and by definition has a lower traffic density. The idea of then sending up to 900 HGVs down a road that is not designed to take this volume of traffic is ludicrous. The impact on Theberton, Eastbridge, Middleton Moor and Yoxford will be huge, noise and air pollution and not to mention the danger of trying to join the B1120 from residential driveways or side roads in this increased traffic flow.

The Parish Council supports the building of the D2 road which by definition will provide relief for these communities and a safer travelling option for site traffic.

The Parish Council are also concerned about the general wear and tear on the County's roads that will be greatly exacerbated by the increase in HGV traffic. It would call on EDF to supplement the Highways departmental budget to allow for this.

4. Temporary Accommodation

The proposed 2400 worker campus proposed for Eastbridge is not a viable option. Not only is the visual, environmental and social impact unimaginable for Eastbridge a village of around 280 people currently but there will be no legacy from it. Westleton Parish Council supports splitting the accommodation and building permanent homes that can be utilised by local Councils in the future.

5. People and Economy

The influx of workers coming to live albeit temporarily in the local area around Sizewell will have the usual impact on services. EDF need to give clearer details on how it intends to mitigate the strain placed on local schools, policing and healthcare whilst construction takes place. Whilst long term employment opportunities are welcome, EDF should ensure that training and apprenticeships are provided to ensure that these opportunities can be kept in the local area.

Conclusion

Whilst Westleton Parish Council are not against the building of Sizewell C, EDF need to go further to ensure that the local area is being put at the front of their planning process. The emphasis on minimising disruption to people and this special part of the UK should be considered along with the legacy that will be left.