

Introduction: This submission is on behalf of the Westleton Parish Council (WPC). Westleton is a village 6 or so miles north of the proposed Sizewell C site. There are 403 residents on the electoral roll.

WPC is seriously concerned that the development of Sizewell C will be the cause of significant environmental, economic and social damage to the local area and to the Westleton itself.

WPC are not able to quantify and qualify the environmental and economic damage that the construction and operation of Sizewell C will have on the local area, but we do endorse the views of all local organisations (in particular Stop Sizewell C, TASC, RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Coastal FoE) which have the relevant knowledge and expertise. We are though flabbergasted that a proposal is being made to construct a new nuclear power station in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, next to an RSPB nature Reserve, that cuts across a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is sited on the beautiful, but also eroding, Suffolk Heritage Coast. This landscape is the home of Westleton's residents – and we are very concerned that it and our enjoyment of it and life generally will be irreparably damaged by the impact of the:

- Construction: because of the noise, dust, light pollution, air pollution, the spoil heaps, the accommodation campus and the thousands of daily vehicle movements on the main and local roads.
- The power station: i.e. the long-term threat it poses to the stability of the coastline, the marine ecosystem and the natural habitats in the local area.

WPC is equally concerned that the construction will not deliver the economic benefits which EDF claim. Rather, we sense it will impact terribly on the local economy as tourism brings millions of pounds to the area each year – much of which will surely disappear as tourists realise that they have no desire to holiday next to the biggest building site in the country and be caught up in HGV traffic each time they want to explore the area¹. Instead, we anticipate with dread the influx of thousands of workers putting undue pressure on local emergency, health and leisure services and placing upward pressure on house rental and purchase prices. And while EDF takes pride in explaining that they will use the local workforce, we are concerned that the effect will be to deprive residents of services provided by local traders – and/or result in higher prices because of reduced supply.

Concerns specific to Westleton - traffic: The B1125 is a road which links the B1122 in the south with the A12 at Blythburgh. It travels directly through Westleton. It has traditionally been used as a rat run by workers travelling from the north down to the Leiston – many of whom are undoubtedly workers at the existing Sizewell sites. Much of this traffic travels through Westleton much faster than the 30mph speed limit. Consequently, WPC has had to invest in a speed radar gun operated by a Community Speed Watch team and two Vehicle Activated Speed Signs. While these do have some impact, drivers speeding through the village continues to be a serious road safety concern. In April 2021, VAS data showed that on average throughout the day 18% of vehicles were travelling at more than 35mph and that rose to 33% during peak hours; for traffic going just one way, 1746 vehicles were logged travelling faster than 40 mph, and 69 faster than 50mpg – one was logged travelling at 60mph. In March, the percentages were similar – but 2 cars were logged at travelling faster than 60

¹ [Sizewell Economic Statement - Response Report 17082020 FINAL \(stopsizewellc.org\)](#)

mph and one faster than 65mph. These percentage figures are representative of the month-on-month experience pre-Covid traffic as well, although of course traffic numbers were greater then.

EDF's stage 4 consultation document states that: *"Aside from the A12 and B1122, the largest proportional increases in traffic arising from the construction phase under the integrated strategy, are predicted to occur near Leiston and Saxmundham, and in Westleton..."*. Their projection is that an additional 650 vehicles will travel along the B1125 through Westleton every day as a consequence of the construction. WPC suspect that this will prove to be a conservative figure. The consultation paper also states: *"In some locations there is a large proportionate increase in traffic compared with the reference case (without Sizewell C), such as ... the B1125, however these increases are from low existing levels and the road capacity would not be exceeded."* With this statement EDF is suggesting that its projected uplift of 650 vehicles per day (up to an 22% increase in daily traffic), is not a problem as current traffic volumes through the village are low. We disagree, as does the Department of Transport whose 2018 Statistical Release notes on page 21 that average daily traffic flows on rural minor roads (i.e. rural B roads) is 1,000 vehicles per day². This means that the B1125 traffic flow through Westleton is already significantly above the national average for minor rural roads as EDF's consultation document calculated 2,400 vehicles daily in 2015 and projected 2,950 vehicles per day prior to construction beginning. These figures seem reasonably accurate according to our VAS data.

Westleton is a small village with an above-average age population. The village drafted a parish plan in 2006 and speeding through the village was one of the top concerns of the residents – hence our investments in equipment designed to slow the traffic. However, as our data shows, speeding remains a problem. WPC is therefore keen to avoid an unnecessary/avoidable increase in traffic as it will undoubtedly result in higher numbers of speeding vehicles as well as being the cause of additional noise, pollution and road safety concerns within the village. A further concern is that the additional traffic will increase the wear and tear of the roads. Already the state of the B1125 either side of the village is poor and it unfortunately proves challenging to get the Council to make timely repairs – the increased traffic will only exacerbate this problem.

To sum-up: WPC Council is firmly opposed to the construction of Sizewell C because of the environmental, social and economic damage it will cause to the area and because of the road safety and environmental concerns which it will in particular present to our village.

However, if Sizewell C is given approval (even though this would be counter to the wishes of East Suffolk parishes, environmental organisations, local elected representatives and many local businesses), WPC does have five specific asks:

1. That the D2/W relief road be built instead of the Link road. The D2/W relief road is the most appropriate route to alleviate the local traffic concerns and has the support of Suffolk County Council.
2. a 4-village by-pass must be constructed on the A12 – the proposed 2 village bypass is not sufficient. The increased numbers of HGVs will substantially increase the congestion and pollution – particularly through the villages and significantly increase the road safety risk.

² [Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682112/2018-road-traffic-estimates-great-britain.pdf)

3. All road and park and ride infrastructure must be completed before the start of the Sizewell C build. It is wholly unreasonable to impose the traffic volumes projected for the so-called “early years” on the existing road network.
4. The accommodation campus needs to be re-thought. Building what is, in effect, a minor town on the edge of a small village is unacceptable from a visual, an environmental and a social standpoint.
5. If the Link road is constructed, EDF do not need to build the planned short connecting road between the Link Road and the B1125 (which would be just north of Theberton). This would encourage northbound traffic to take the shortcut rat-run along the B1125 and through Westleton - instead of remaining on the Link road. If this happens, the projected 650 additional vehicles per day through Westleton will turn out to be a very significant underestimate. This planned connecting road would serve no real purpose, would surely further increase traffic through Westleton and so need not be built.

In conclusion, WPC reiterates its firm opposition to Sizewell C. It is being planned in parallel to a series of other energy projects by Scottish Power which also require infrastructure in the area. This has led to efforts to rebrand the Suffolk coast the “energy coast”. This is not welcome – the Suffolk coast is rightly denoted as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and must remain so. WPC hopes that the planning process considers not only the cumulative negative impacts of the Sizewell C project but also the cumulative impacts of these alongside the other energy projects and WPC urges that you recommend to refuse development consent to Sizewell C.