

THE ALDEBURGH SOCIETY

Registered Charity Number 262239 www.aldeburghsociety.org.uk
47 Park Road
Aldeburgh
IP15 5EN

PLANNING INSPECTORATE EXAMINATION OF THE SIZEWELL C APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT CONSENT BY EDF

FINAL STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION BY THE ALDEBURGH SOCIETY 11 October 2021

As the civic society for the historic coastal town and cultural centre of Aldeburgh, the Aldeburgh Society has registered its grave concern over this DCO application for the construction of two further nuclear reactors at Sizewell. The objects of the Society are to encourage public interest in and care for the character of the town and its surroundings, and the preservation, development and improvement of general public amenity in the area. EDF's proposals conflict with the fulfilment of these objects.

The Society is not opposed to nuclear power, and it supports the Government's net zero target for energy production. However, it views with great concern the damage to the Suffolk Heritage Coast which the construction of this very large industrial project would entail. Sizewell enjoys a unique location, sandwiched between the two small and very special historic coastal towns Aldeburgh and Southwold, and adjacent to the internationally renowned RSPB Minsmere nature reserve and the National Trust's Dunwich Heath clifftop estate. Such a massive industrial project in this location would be totally wrong, and we oppose it for the following reasons:-

- The area is in the middle of a nationally designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- If there were no existing nuclear power station on this coast, the proposal to develop one here would be unthinkable in today's heightened awareness of environmental issues;
- The Suffolk coast is eroding, and subject to frequent cliff falls and to periodic storm surges which will only become more frequent as a result of climate change, making this an unsuitable area for heavy construction and long-term storage of nuclear waste;
- Construction at Sizewell could also have damaging impacts upon the beaches and the marine environment all along this fragile coastal area;
- The process of constructing the proposed power station would cause severe damage to the surrounding area because of traffic disruption, noise, vibration, and light pollution over a period of at least 10 years;
- These damaging impacts would threaten the year-round tourism and visitor sector upon which the local economy of Aldeburgh largely relies;
- Employment in our local hospitality businesses, already under stress following Brexit, would be threatened by the offer of higher paid jobs at Sizewell C;

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- The proposed transfer of more senior professional and technical staff from Hinkley Point would place considerable strain upon housing markets, both for rentals and purchases, in the surrounding area;
- The proposed accommodation campus at Sizewell, providing lodging for a population more than double that of Aldeburgh, risks creating serious social tensions due in part to the limited retail and entertainment offerings in the surrounding area;
- The failure of EDF to provide for steps to ensure an adequate fresh water supply for the construction period, and thus its very late proposal to install a desalination plant based on unproven assumptions and creating added environmental risks, further damages confidence in this DCO application;
- The proposed EPR reactors are of a type not yet functioning successfully anywhere in Europe and subject to technical failures as currently being experienced at Taishan, China;
- In the event of a major nuclear accident, such as have happened at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima, a substantial part of this special coastal area and its hinterland would be rendered uninhabitable for several years.

We believe that this project is based upon an outdated concept that was developed before the viability and full potential of renewables was recognised. The future of energy generation should now lie in wind, solar and tidal power, together with the option for smaller-scale nuclear units now being developed, combined with new forms of electricity storage capacity.

Whether or not combined with the cumulative impact of Scottish Power Renewables' proposed onshore installations and numerous additional National Grid connections, this project would be excessively damaging to our area. It would wreak damage on the natural and built environment. It would harm our inhabitants. It would threaten our businesses. And it would drive away the visitors our economy relies on. Green energy (if indeed it could be called that given the unresolved nuclear waste issue) cannot be allowed to wreak such seismic trauma in our collective march towards net zero.

We have followed the Planning Inspectorate Examination process with care and we value its thoroughness. However, none of the explanations we have heard and none of the changes and mitigations proposed can persuade us that this project is sustainable or desirable. **We therefore urge that it should not be recommended for development consent.**

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