

EDF Energy
Sizewell C Community Forum
27 March 2014

Attendees:

Brian Stewart OBE, Chairman

Cllr Marianne Fellows, Aldeburgh Town Council

Cllr Eric Atkinson, Aldringham cum Thorpe

Cllr Raymond Catchpole, Campsea Ashe Parish Council

Joan Girling, Communities Against Nuclear Expansion

Nick Mayo, Community Action Suffolk

Stephen Walls, EDF Energy

Tom McGarry, EDF Energy

Hugh Hutton, EDF Energy

Rebecca Calder, EDF Energy

Ian Bryant, EDF Energy

Roy Collins, EDF Energy

Simon Barlow, Environment Agency

Cllr Ian Norman, Farnham with Stratford St Andrew Parish Council

Maureen Carr, Jobcentre Plus

Cllr Paul Parry, Kelsale cum Carlton Parish Council

Cllr Terry Hodgson, Leiston Town Council

Cllr Peter Chaloner, Little Glemham Parish Council

Cllr Margaret Carswell, Marlesford Parish Council

Cllr Bryony Abbott, Melton Parish Council

Dr Therese Coffey, MP for Suffolk Coastal

Cllr Roy Dowding, Middleton cum Fordley Parish Council

Steve Knight-Gregson, National Grid

Cllr Kenneth Parry Brown, Peasenhall Parish Council

Cllr Jeff Hallett, Pettistree Parish Council

Mary Orhewere, Public Health Suffolk

Cllr Roger Lintott, Rendham Parish Council

Cllr Mike Stevenson, Rendlesham Parish Council

Ben McFarland, RSPB Minsmere Nature Reserve

Cllr Roger Plant, Saxmundham Town Council

Cllr Jon Swallow, Sizewell Parishes Liaison Group

Pat Hogan, Sizewell Residents Association

Miles Vartan, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Simon Amstutz, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Philip Ridley, Suffolk Coastal and District Council

Rachel Fulcher, Suffolk Coastal Friends of the Earth

Leigh Jenkins, Suffolk Constabulary

John Pitchford, Suffolk County Council

Andy Osman, Suffolk Resilience Forum

Alan Miller, Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Cllr John Tesh, Sweffling Parish Council

Tim Rowan-Robinson, TA Hotel Collection

Cllr Clive Brown, Theberton & Eastbridge Parish Council

Cllr Arlette Smith, Westleton Parish Council

Cllr Michael Roseveare, Wickham Market Town Council

Patricia Mulcahy, Woodbridge Town Mayor

Apologies:

Benhall and Sternfield Parish Council

Blaxhall Parish Council

Blythburgh Parish Council

Bredfield Parish Council

Bruisyard Parish Council

Darsham Parish Council

Dunwich Parish Meeting

Friston Parish Council

Gt Glemham Parish Council

Hacheston Parish Council

Highways Agency

Knodishall Parish Council

Leiston Business Association

Natural England

Office for Nuclear Regulation

Snape Parish Council

Tony Cooper, Suffolk Coastal District Council

Trevor Hawkins, Suffolk Coastal District Council

Andrew Nunn, Suffolk Coastal District Council

Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council

Southwold Town Council

Walberswick Parish Council

Yoxford Parish Council

19.00 – 21.07

I. Welcome from the Chairman

Brian Stewart introduced himself as Independent Chairman of the Sizewell C Community Forum and opened its fourth formal meeting. New members were welcomed, and the Chairman asked everyone to ensure their names were clear to him.

II. Approval of Previous Minutes

The Chairman asked the Forum to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 November 2013. The minutes were approved and cleared for publication, subject to minor amends highlighted by Community Forum members, on the consultation website, <http://sizewell.edfenergyconsultation.info>.

III. EDF Energy Project Update

Stephen Walls gave a presentation on the nuclear new build update, noting that progress at Sizewell C was wholly dependent on the final investment decisions around Hinkley Point that would be made later in the year. He noted that the strike price at Hinkley would be reduced if Sizewell C was given the go-ahead, demonstrating that the two were inextricably linked. In response to public demand, EDF Energy had revised the consultation exercise on Sizewell C, increasing it from a two-stage to a three-stage process. Stage 2 would be carried out later in the year, and timed to allow maximum community input. Stage 3 in 2015 would be more technical and would include an Environment Impact Assessment.

The PowerPoint slides, which accompanied the presentation, have been provided to the Community Forum as part of these minutes.

Q&A on Project Update

The first question came from Simon Amstutz. He asked whether there would be enough detail available at Stage 2 for the community to be able to make a realistic contribution with regard to the construction phase and the impacts on the AONB. Ian Bryant responded that EDF Energy would give an update and respond to the feedback they had received in Stage 1, and would also be doing further work on how to mitigate the construction footprint of the development through planting, bunding and screening on the periphery of the site. The plans would be upgraded from 2D to 3D at Stage 2, showing cross sections where applicable.

Pat Hogan stated that the community was very anxious about the development overall. With regard to the visitor centre, she was very pleased that EDF Energy had not gone back to the previous two options that had been on the table. She asked how they were going to address access issues if the visitor centre was built in Coronation Wood. Ian Bryant replied that their environmental appraisal would include looking at access.

Mike Stevenson said he had a 'big picture' question, and referred to the recently announced Ofgem investigation into the 'big six' energy companies and how this could affect future investment. He asked if it was likely to impact on EDF's decision making. Paul Newman replied that he could not offer any guarantees, but he said that it was unlikely to have any impact on this project.

Therese Coffey said she had received an email from EDF Energy that morning endorsing the Ofgem investigation. She sought clarification on the architectural design principles for the main site. Ian Bryant stated that EDF Energy had asked two leading development and landscape architect firms to establish a set of principles that would guide the design of the project if it went ahead. The principles would take into account technical, safety and environmental considerations. They would be setting these principles out at Stage 2.

Jeff Hallett noted that there had been reference to 'reptile mitigation' in Stephen Walls' presentation and wanted clarity as to what this meant. Stephen Walls clarified that it meant ring fencing areas and establishing appropriate habitats within them so that reptiles could then be moved from the development sites to the new habitats.

Therese Coffey wanted to know whether there would be sufficient information at the Stage 2 consultation so that Parish Councils would be in a position to make a reasonably informed response to the issues raised. She reminded EDF Energy that there had been frustration at Stage 1 about the lack of detail that had been provided. Stephen Walls said that their intention was to provide as much information as possible, but could not guarantee there would be answers to all questions. He repeated Ian Bryant's comment that many of the plans would have evolved from 2D to 3D and that there would be more details on all aspects of their proposals, which should enable a meaningful debate to take place. Roy Collins added that with regard to transport they intended to publish their predicted traffic increases for the construction period, which had been one of the biggest concerns.

Terry Hodgson asked whether Stage 2 would give a range of options or whether some would have been closed down by that point. Stephen Walls said that for the most part the options would be closed down, although in certain areas some may still be in play.

Raymond Catchpole said some of the questionnaires had not been sent to all the relevant Parish Councils. He stated that Campsea Ashe would be affected by the park and ride scheme, yet they had not had the opportunity to give feedback because the scheme itself would be located in Wickham Market. He asked if this was because EDF Energy had presumed to know what the response from Campsea Ashe would be. Tom McGarry stated that EDF Energy would not presume anything. He said it had been made clear in the last newsletter that they would approach the Parish Councils where the lead development sites were located. He said they would be keen to hear the views of Campsea Ashe residents and would be happy to give them a copy of the questionnaire. He stressed that this was the informal stage and that there would be further consultation at Stage 2. Raymond Catchpole said there was no point in giving Campsea Ashe the questionnaires now, since the deadline for their return had already passed. He sought confirmation that they would be included in the future. Tom McGarry said they would, and that even though the deadline had passed they would still take any views into account. He stated that their office was always open, and reminded the Forum that their announcement of an additional consultation stage was to ensure that everyone could have their say.

Marianne Fellowes echoed Raymond Catchpole's point about parishes located alongside proposed development sites not being given enough information. She referred in particular to the campus. Tom McGarry said they had been clear at the November meeting that they would approach the parishes within which the developments would be taking place, and at the time that had been well-received. He said that Stage 2 would be the opportunity to look at all the options and that neighbouring councils would then have the opportunity to provide detailed feedback. Marianne Fellowes said she welcomed the Stage 2 consultation, but was disappointed that it had been pushed into the same timeframe and sought assurance that they would be able to give a meaningful contribution to Stage 2. Stephen Walls said that Stage 2 would be likely to begin in the autumn. EDF Energy would provide resources for parishes and this would be discussed with the local authorities. Marianne Fellowes said this did not give them long to get things on to Parish Councils' agendas. Stephen Walls noted the comments and said they could have further discussions on timeframes after the meeting.

Jon Swallow welcomed the Stage 2 consultation. However, in terms of the campus proposal, he felt that just looking at the detail was like 'rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic', and that the whole scheme needed fundamentally rethinking.

IV. Accommodation Strategy

Hugh Hutton gave a presentation on the accommodation strategy, summarising that there would be a peak workforce of 5,600 of which 3,600 would be non-home based. He said workers could bring benefits to an area but there could be negative impacts, and that it was important to strike the right balance. Hugh Hutton accepted that there were concerns in relation to building a single campus, but that this was EDF Energy's preferred option. He explained that they would be able to provide better more cost effective facilities and that it would have less traffic impact. Their favoured location was at the entrance to the main construction site. At Stage 2, they would present the preliminary campus master plan and that the feedback they received would determine its further development.

Q&A on Accommodation Strategy

Therese Coffey stated that she was shocked by the presentation and that it seemed that EDF Energy had not listened at all to the concerns of the community. She said EDF Energy's preferred campus site was certainly not the preferred option of local people. She thought EDF Energy needed to 'get real' about the needs of the people who were going to live with the development for over 10 years. She said EDF Energy should look at what had been done in Somerset, and questioned why people in Suffolk were being treated differently. She said she would be following this up separately. Hugh Hutton said that EDF Energy had listened to everyone in Somerset, everyone in Suffolk, and to its workers. He stressed that if they did not provide what the workers required it would not be used, and this was a problem faced in Somerset.

Jon Swallow echoed what Therese Coffey had said and described EDF's plans as a 'travesty to common sense' and their consultation methods as 'window dressing'. He said there had been growing opposition to a single campus since Stage 1 and questioned why the example of Hinkley Point could not be followed. Hugh Hutton said they had not reached a conclusion on the right number of beds at the campus. They had set an upper limit, but hoped to come down from that figure. EDF Energy will produce a gravity model of where they expected people to live and once their plans were developed further this should give them a better idea of how things would play out in reality. EDF Energy did not want to understate the numbers and then let them 'creep up'. He stressed it was about balance. In terms of listening to the community, Hugh Hutton said that the feedback from Stage 1 demonstrated that there was a preference for the site entrance location. He understood that those living in the immediate vicinity were against it but that their findings reflected the views of the whole community. He maintained that the location of the campus in relation to the site was no different to the campus option at Hinkley.

Marianne Fellowes said the difficulty with the single campus proposal was that there was no legacy and the community would not benefit. She said the cost/benefit analysis had not included anything apart from the cost of doing it. She said there was also a negative cost of doing it, and if the community was not left with any legacy housing or tourist facilities then their analysis was flawed. She said the consultation process was meaningless because people had only been given a certain number of options, so Hugh Hutton's point about people being in favour of a single campus was incorrect. In her view this was a deal breaker that could stop the project going ahead and could force EDF Energy to build accommodation outside of the AONB. Hugh Hutton replied that cost was not the only determining factor. He repeated his point about the need to provide a campus which was attractive to the workforce, which was why Ipswich and Lowestoft had been ruled out. If workers did not use the campus then local accommodation would be overstretched, leading to worse problems than the single-site option. Referring to the legacy point, he said current planning rules forbade infrastructure projects from providing housing. Marianne Fellowes stated that she had asked the government to review that.

John Pitchford said Hugh Hutton was correct about the planning rules, but said that EDF Energy could apply for housing under ordinary planning legislation.

Terry Hodgson said only three accommodation choices had been provided to them, and that EDF Energy was being disingenuous in saying that people could have looked to other options. He asked whether work was still ongoing on the other possible sites. Hugh Hutton responded that Sizewell Gap had been discontinued, the site east of Leiston was the reserve site, and the only site that work was ongoing on was the one at the entrance to the development.

Ben McFarland wondered how EDF Energy was going to manage the road going towards Eastbridge, with regard to residents and visitors to Minsmere, as the campus would generate a lot of pedestrian traffic. Hugh Hutton related that EDF Energy was looking at how that could best be managed. There was nothing formal on the table as yet, but there would be concrete proposals at Stage 2 illustrating how they would deal with it.

Kenneth Parry Brown pointed out that traditionally workers at sites like these would be accommodated in mobile homes. He asked whether there were any plans along these lines. Rebecca Calder said they were looking at this option. She said there were planning restrictions in terms of opening times throughout the year and maximum occupancy levels. They would be working with local authorities on this to see if restrictions could be relaxed.

Roger Plant said an itinerant workforce of around 3,000, bound by a code of conduct, would be impossible for the local constabulary to police. Rebecca Calder said EDF Energy would use its own extensive security teams and would work closely with the local police. Roger Plant recalled that during the construction of Sizewell A, Leiston was 'like the Wild West' because of the itinerant workforce. Rebecca Calder said things had changed since then: all workers would be drug and alcohol tested and EDF Energy would work to strike the right balance between keeping the workers contained and encouraging some sort of social mixing and contributing to the local economy.

Mike Stevenson asked if it was realistic for there to be limited 24 hour working, as he recalled that during the construction of Sizewell B there was 24 hour working for five years. Hugh Hutton said that with Sizewell B the predominant working pattern was a double day shift with no night shift, with limited 24 hour working periods. The proposals for Sizewell C were for double day shifts with a very small night shift to carry out preparation for the following day. There would be short periods of continuous working, such as concrete pouring for the reactor raft, which would take around 72 hours.

Simon Amstutz asked about the external appearance of the campus and its impact on the AONB. Hugh Hutton said there were not many details on this at the moment and that there would be scope to adjust the visual impact of the site at Stage 2.

Joan Girling said she had heard a lot which she had not wanted to hear, particularly about the campus. She felt that they were being asked to simply accept things with 'a few sweeteners'. She had a particular objection to the access road because it crossed the AONB and the SSSI and wanted to know why the campus and access road had to be in that particular area. Hugh Hutton sought to provide clarity on their approach to the overall development. He said the logical site of the development was immediately north of Sizewell B and that all their other decisions were based on that. The AONB and SSSI meant that there was a very limited amount of land that could be used, and they were trying to find the optimum way of developing it.

V. Transport Strategy

Roy Collins updated the Forum on transport issues. He recapped that at Stage 1 they had tried to contain traffic impact through park and ride developments, sea and rail options, freight management and lorry park facilities. There had been concern about the scale of potential traffic increase and the desire for legacy highways infrastructure. The design for the proposed temporary jetty, the preferred rail routes and related infrastructure plus the road traffic impact estimates would be presented at Stage 2.

Q&A on Accommodation Strategy

Marianne Fellowes asked whether the traffic modelling had looked beyond construction to the operational phase. Roy Collins said they would be looking at this, but explained that as the impact during construction would be the greater of the two this was where EDF Energy was currently focusing its attention.

Raymond Catchpole raised the Campsea Ashe freight loop. He was delighted that there appeared to be light at the end of the tunnel and understood that Network Rail was considering dualling that entire section of line. He called on EDF Energy to lean on Network Rail to ensure this happened, as it would obviate the need for the freight loop and also leave Campsea Ashe with a legacy platform. Roy Collins said EDF Energy would be continuing their discussions with Network Rail and that he would raise the issue at the next meeting.

Kenneth Parry Brown asked what roads were included in the base traffic model. Roy Collins offered to go through the roads on the map after the meeting. He said the model covered the whole of the local area, and extended to Lowestoft in the north, Ipswich in the south and also to the west.

Pat Hogan noted that EDF Energy was proposing to move reptiles to more suitable locations and asked if people would also be offered the option of moving home if they were not happy with the impact of the development on their current properties. Stephen Walls said no decisions had been made in that regard yet. Such considerations had been made at Hinkley Point, so EDF Energy would look at what could be suitable for Sizewell C.

Margaret Carswell asked for assurance that the jetty would be built and fully functional before work began on the power station. Roy Collins said EDF Energy could not give that categorical assurance due to the fact that the jetty was part of the DCO. They would have to wait until after consent was granted to begin building it. He stated that it would be a priority to build it as soon as possible. Hugh Hutton said they hoped to construct the jetty in the first months of the project before they started significant movement of materials so that it would be available to bring in aggregates by sea. He confirmed that there would definitely be a jetty, although it may vary from the current proposals.

Joan Girling stated that they had not heard anything about lighting. She also wanted to know whether the jetty was going to come on to land across the beach or on to the beach. Hugh Hutton said they recognised lighting was an important issue in an AONB and that they would produce an outline strategy at Stage 2. Turning to the jetty, he said they were expecting the structure to over-sail the area of the coastal path, thereby allowing people to walk underneath the jetty unobstructed.

VI. AOB

The Chairman confirmed there was no further business to discuss.

The next meeting was scheduled for the start of the Stage 2 consultation in the autumn, with the precise date to be confirmed later. He requested that any agenda item suggestions should be submitted to the Secretariat.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

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