



BLYTHBURGH with BULCAMP & HINTON PARISH COUNCIL

SIZEWELL C

STAGE 1 CONSULTATION

Representations from Blythburgh with Bulcamp & Hinton Parish Council

SUMMARY

The main concerns of Blythburgh Parish Council with the Sizewell C proposal are the direct impacts on the village.

These representations concentrate on the specific traffic impacts on Blythburgh, notably safety and linkages within the village. The Parish Council has sought to offer suggested transport improvements to mitigate these impacts.

The unique demographics of the village, its heritage and character, and the importance of tourism, must also be considered by EDF Energy.

EDF Energy should ensure additional information is provided before moving to the Stage 2 'Preferred Options' consultation stage. Supplementary stages of consultation are requested, and Blythburgh Parish Council wishes to remain engaged with EDF Energy throughout this process.

These duly made representations will therefore be put forward as a matter of public record for a future independent Planning Inspector to determine whether EDF Energy has undertaken the correct process and procedure.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These representations are made on behalf of Blythburgh Parish Council.
- 1.2 They were formed in discussions with the Parish Council and local residents, which resulted in a specific meeting held on 31st January 2013.

2.0 CHARACTER AND LOCATION OF BLYTHBURGH

- 2.1 Blythburgh, with its hamlets of Bulcamp and Hinton, is a small village in northeast Suffolk. The village has grown up straddling either side of the main road, currently the A12, since 1785. The population of the village is now at approximately 300 residents.
- 2.2 The village is set in a landscape of outstanding natural beauty with tidal river, marsh, heath, small woods, pasture and arable fields.
- 2.3 Blythburgh is a very historic part of Suffolk with nearly 1,400 years of recorded history. The village has a magnificent medieval church, which commands the valley of the river Blyth and acts as a beacon for travellers on the A12 trunk road that links London and Yarmouth. It also has other areas of special historical importance within the village.
- 2.4 Blythburgh is also a very popular tourist destination. Visitors that are keen to enjoy the cultural and recreational possibilities of the area increase the population of the village at various times of the years. The visitors include church lovers; artists; birdwatchers; music lovers; and others who come seeking relaxation in a rural environment.
- 2.5 Equally, the demographics of Blythburgh are important to understand, as the village has an ageing population. Although this is not uncommon in Suffolk or other parts of the country as a whole, what it means in relation to proposed development of Sizewell C is that the residents of Blythburgh are likely to see and live through the impacts of the construction period, but are unlikely to actually see any of the proposed benefits. Blythburgh Parish Council therefore request this is taken into account during future discussions with EDF Energy in relation to potential improvements for the area.
- 2.6 With its special history, its specific demographics, and its important link to tourism, it is vital that character of the area needs to be carefully considered and protected. Blythburgh Parish Council is therefore keen to ensure that any development of Sizewell C takes this into account.

3.0 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

- 3.1 Blythburgh Parish Council understands that the overall construction and commissioning period could last about ten years with significant construction activity over a seven-year period.
- 3.2 It is understood that any further development at Sizewell will require additional transport of materials and workforce.
- 3.3 The use of sea and rail for transporting freight are supported. However, Blythburgh Parish Council has concerns regarding additional road traffic impacts on the A12 and B1125 to the north of the site.
- 3.4 Overall, it is considered that there is a serious lack of transport information provided with this stage of the consultation process, notably an absence of traffic figures and detailed analysis.

4.0 ROAD

- 4.1 Traffic currently travelling from the 'north' towards the Sizewell site must pass through Blythburgh. Therefore, *any* additional traffic generated as a result of any development at Sizewell C will impact to some extent on Blythburgh.

A12 and B1125

- 4.2 The A12 and the B1125 pass through Blythburgh and there is a genuine concern that Sizewell C will increase the usage on both of these roads by: the workforce (both on and off duty); transportation vehicles; couriers; deliveries; and business associated with Sizewell (either directly or indirectly).
- 4.3 The A12 is acknowledged as a busy main road, and is a single carriageway at Blythburgh. It is expected the usage of this main route will intensify with the development of Sizewell C. The B1125 is already considered to be well established 'rat-run', and there is a fear that there will be further leakage of traffic onto this road that will eventually pass through Blythburgh.
- 4.4 Workers from the north using the A12 to travel to the 'park and ride' will all pass through Blythburgh. It is however accepted that the 'park and ride' should in theory minimise the use by the workforce of minor roads. It is also accepted that the permit scheme EDF Energy are proposing should further discourage the workforce from travelling to the Sizewell site independently. It would be useful to see the statistics of existing 'park and ride' schemes currently in operation to assess their effectiveness.
- 4.5 However, in reality the Northern 'park and ride' is unlikely to solve all of the associated workforce traffic issues. It is noted that current Sizewell workforce pass through Blythburgh on the B1125, therefore it is a fair assumption that this will only increase with Sizewell C.

- 4.6 There is also the fear that Blythburgh could become an unofficial ‘drop-off’ point for car-sharing schemes, which has happened in the past. The provision of a possible designated car park for the village has been identified as a suitable suggestion that would alleviate this problem and would also benefit the village at the same time.
- 4.7 Unless EDF Energy can categorically and legally guarantee that none of the Sizewell workforce (either existing or future workforce) will use the B1125 to pass through Blythburgh it must therefore be assumed that there will be some form of car traffic increase as a result of Sizewell C.
- 4.8 As EDF Energy has also mentioned, the off-duty workforce will also have access to private vehicles. Therefore, even if they are not travelling through Blythburgh for work purposes, there is every likelihood there will be some Sizewell related workforce passing through the village on a daily basis. This also represents an increase in traffic.
- 4.9 As well as the possible increase in workforce traffic, there is also concern about the increase in HGVs, lorries, and light vans passing through the village that would also be associated with Sizewell C. These will not be reduced by the ‘park and ride’ schemes being proposed.

Transport Statistics

- 4.10 Blythburgh Parish Council is concerned by the current transport statistics that are being used by EDF Energy in their Stage 1 consultation process.
- 4.11 EDF Energy are quoted as saying there should be a 5-15% increase in vehicular traffic on the A12, which they consider to be a “*modest addition to daily flows*”.
- 4.12 It does not appear there has been any analysis done on the impacts to the B1125.
- 4.13 Blythburgh Parish Council is in the process of preparing their own Traffic Strategy, which includes traffic counts and data analysis for traffic flows in and around the village.
- 4.14 This traffic strategy is an on-going process, but immediate assessment of the Parish Council’s data would appear to be at odds with the suggested traffic flows from EDF Energy.
- 4.15 The traffic strategy has identified specific ‘Sizewell peaks’ when the current Sizewell workforce pass through the village. The strategy has also identified junction black spots that must require further consideration.
- 4.16 Blythburgh Parish Council would therefore like the opportunity to discuss the transport models used by the developer and to share their traffic data with EDF Energy and Suffolk County Council at an appropriate point in the near future. The purpose would be to aid transport discussions for the local area.

Speeding and Safety

- 4.17 Speeding is a very real issue for the village of Blythburgh, with many vehicles passing through the village in excess of the national speed limits for this area.
- 4.18 As a result of the speeding, there are also very serious safety issues in the village. Like many rural villages in the area, Blythburgh does not have an extensive network of pavements. The result is that the speeding plus the lack of existing pavements means it is already difficult to cross from one side of Blythburgh roads to the other safely and confidently. These factors also discourage people from walking and attempting to cross the A12 in particular, which creates a separation of the village. This issue will only be intensified by any increase in traffic.

5.0 RAIL

- 5.1 It is understood and accepted that the railway must be fully utilised, and the best possible option for linking directly into the Sizewell site is supported.
- 5.2 However, there are concerns about where the anticipated trains will actually be coming from if the railway is extended into the site. There are known railway ‘issues’ in the surrounding area, including tunnels and line problems, which it is unclear if EDF Energy have accounted for or fully understood.
- 5.3 It is therefore suggested that EDF Energy must undertake further analysis of the rail routes being proposed, and also the wider rail network in order to understand the true extent of the impacts with providing rail links directly into the Sizewell site.

6.0 TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS

- 6.1 Blythburgh Parish Council has the following suggestions for transport improvements, which would need to be discussed as part of further on-going transport discussions.
- 6.2 Traffic management is seen to be the key to the resolution of most of Blythburgh Parish Council’s concerns. It must be remembered that existing traffic, plus holiday and tourism traffic, must be carefully managed with any further Sizewell traffic.

Speeding

- 6.3 Possible solutions to tackle the problem of speeding through the village are required. Specific traffic calming measures should be explored for the B1125, with the specific aim of essentially making this stretch of road more unattractive for speeding and rat-running.
- 6.4 Options for potential traffic calming could include: physically reducing the speed limit through the village; improved road markings; road narrowing (to possibly

incorporating additional pavement space); warning lights at the entrances to the village; or additional signage.

Safety

- 6.5 Any opportunities for improving safety in the village would be very much welcomed by the Parish Council and residents of Blythburgh.
- 6.6 This could include introducing additional pavements, or increasing existing pavements.
- 6.7 Some form of pedestrian crossing should also be considered at a suitable point(s) on the A12 within the village. This could be on a similar principle to that already used in Farnham.
- 6.8 Introducing ‘crossing islands’ into the middle of the road at either end of the village, would provide people an element of safety and security while crossing the road. This would assist both the elderly and the young in crossing the road, and would also increase the linkage between both sides of the village.

Alternative Options

- 6.9 Complementary to these proposals is the improvement of the B1387 from the Water Tower crossroads to the Toby’s Walks junction with the A12. This would provide a ‘Blythburgh southern bypass’ for traffic displaced by measures taken to minimise the use of the B1125 through the village.

Overall

- 6.10 It is acknowledged that any transport improvements would need to be discussed and agreed with Suffolk County Council.
- 6.11 Blythburgh Parish Council would therefore request that further discussions take place between EDF Energy, Suffolk County Council, and the Parish Council to discuss these issues as part of the on-going dialogue between developer and stakeholders.

7.0 NOISE, VIBRATION AND LIGHT POLLUTION

- 7.1 There are concerns regarding potential noise, vibration, and light pollution associated with the proposed Sizewell C development. Some of these will have a direct impact on Blythburgh, such as a result of any increased traffic, while others will have a much wider impact on the surrounding area.
- 7.2 It is understood that various measures will be undertaken to mitigate these issues, such as bunding and planting at, for example, park and ride sites. However, the lack of information and detail at this stage makes it difficult to assess these impacts.

- 7.3 Appropriate noise, air quality, vibration, and light assessments must be prepared by EDF Energy in order to provide a full understanding of the impacts proposed on Blythburgh and other affected villages.

8.0 EDF ENERGY OPTIONS

- 8.1 Blythburgh Parish Council remains largely indifferent to the options for developments away from the village, such as new road and rail links and the location of an on-site campus. The council nevertheless recognises the indirect benefit of housing a high proportion of the workforce on-site. Their main concerns are however related to the direct impacts to their village, notably through the increase in traffic.
- 8.2 Of the ‘park and ride’ options being proposed through the consultation, Blythburgh Parish Council are most interested in the Northern options.
- 8.3 Blythburgh Parish Council’s preference is for Option 2 at Darsham off the Northern ‘park and ride’ options presented. The benefit of the site being located adjacent to the existing railway station is seen to offer the best and most suitable option, with the potential for the longer-term improvement of parking arrangements at Darsham station.

9.0 IMPACTS ON TOURISM AND LOCAL SERVICES

- 9.1 Blythburgh Parish Council is also very concerned about the impacts on local services, especially the tourist industry in the area.
- 9.2 Blythburgh is a very historic place, and benefits greatly from tourism in the area at various points throughout the year. This includes walkers, and those who stop off to use the village public house and shop.
- 9.3 It is hoped that any development at Sizewell C will actually benefit the village, by the increase use of its public house, shop and facilities. However, an increase in traffic, and wider impacts of the Sizewell C development could actually be detrimental to the tourist industry in the region. This would have a knock-on effect on villages such as Blythburgh.
- 9.4 Any increase in population into this part of Suffolk as a result of Sizewell C will also have an impact on the services in the surrounding area. This includes: police; health; schools and education; and other emergency services. It is expected EDF Energy will consider any responses from these organisations very carefully, as they are best placed to advise on impacts to their services. The Parish Council is also concerned about a possible reduction in availability of tradesmen to the local population, and cost inflation.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Blythburgh Parish Council is concerned about the impacts on their village as a result of any development of Sizewell C.
- 10.2 Transport impacts are of serious concern, and must be properly addressed. This must include assessment of speeding and safety issues.
- 10.3 Any future development at Sizewell will have an impact on the surrounding area, local communities, visual appearance, and amenity facilities. These will collectively have an impact on tourism in this area of Suffolk, which will have a knock-on effect on Blythburgh.
- 10.4 The important heritage of Blythburgh, plus its general aging population must also be taken into account.
- 10.5 Blythburgh Parish Council has taken the opportunity to offer some suggestion to mitigate these issues. Together with their additional transport analysis, Blythburgh Parish Council hopes these issues can be discussed with EDF Energy and Suffolk County Council as part of an on-going dialogue with the affected villages during this consultation process.
- 10.6 Further detailed information and additional stages of consultation are requested before EDF Energy should progress to the Stage 2 consultation.
- 10.7 It is expected that feedback and experiences from Hinckley Point will be learned from, and should assist EDF Energy through future consultation stages.

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