

Sizewell C Church Meeting speech

Along with other organisations such as the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Preservation Society and statutory consultees including the AONB, Environment Agency and Natural England, Minsmere Levels Stakeholders Group complained at Stage 3 that there was insufficient Preliminary Environmental Information regarding the effects on Minsmere, Sizewell Marsh and the AONB.

This means that we have little confidence in EDF's understanding of the complex interactions of water levels and coastal process. As a result, we are not confident that at present, EDF are able to show that they will be able to avoid detrimental effects either during construction or once the completed station is operating.

We were also concerned with the inadequate nature of the coastal defence that is proposed as it stops over 3.5 metres above mean low spring tide, which inevitably leads to the undermining of the defence over time.

It was for these reasons that we pressed for a further round of consultation, so EDF would have the opportunity to rectify these gaps in their proposals and evidence.

Unfortunately, EDF has not used Stage 4 to close these gaps and instead has ploughed on with changes to aspects of its plan that have minimal impact on the issues facing the AONB, Minsmere and Sizewell Marsh and no answers regarding the sea defences.

There have been some proposals regarding flood assessment compensation by proposing the creation of further wetland habitat in the South Minsmere Levels close to the sluice path, three proposed sites for additional Marsh Harrier foraging habitat and some compensation sites for fen meadow lost to the Sizewell C Platform.

The agricultural land for additional Marsh Harrier foraging would be set aside to acid grassland/lowland heath development.

Where this sort of compensation is planned, EDF is required to provide evidence that the compensation will in fact achieve the desired result.

EDF have already set aside some of their own land for this purpose but no evidence has been produced showing an increase in Marsh Harrier foraging compared to when the land was arable.

These sites on EDF land and the sites behind Eastbridge Farm will be close to borrow pit and spoil heap workings as well as the campus site. The workings and movements at these sites will almost certainly reduce any effectiveness of these sites.

One of the proposed fields at Eastbridge Farm would result in closure of the registered campsite, that has ~2000 pitches rented per year, which contributes significantly to tourism in Eastbridge.

Two other fields would also be closed where the Simmental herd are overwintered and their winter feed is stored, adding serious complications for the operation of the farm.

The fen meadow compensation sites are in the Fromus and Blyth valleys and have no direct connection to Sizewell Marsh where the losses occur and there is concern that these sites

will not be available and functional before the habitats are lost at Sizewell. It is a requirement that compensation sites are available and functional in advance of the loss.

There is nothing in the Stage 4 Consultation regarding the hard coastal defence and coastal erosion. However, a difference of opinion seems to have arisen inside EDF.

In the Stage 3 Consultation, EDF New Nuclear Build showed a model of a breach occurring some 200-300 metres north of the tank traps and northern mound, with the implication that this was the most likely location for such a breach. The breach went directly west into Minsmere Levels where the Leiston Drain travels to the Minsmere Sluice.

In EDF's application to East Suffolk Council for the relocation of SZB facilities, a supplementary flood risk model was submitted, following questions from the Environment Agency, stating that the "worst case" breach would occur at the tank traps and proceed into Sizewell Marsh, Minsmere Levels and Leiston Drain at the Northern Mound.

The sacrificial dune at these points are of similar height, so it is likely both points would breach.

The land behind the sacrificial dune is significantly lower and is in flood zones 2 and 3 and will connect these two breach positions at the northern mound.

The water from the northern breach would initially travel south, connect with the tank traps breach and then travel west at the northern mound and head straight to the Leiston Drain, Minsmere Levels and the unprotected Causeway crossing at the neck of Sizewell Marshes.

If a breach is sustained at these points, the Leiston Drain and Minsmere Sluice would be compromised, and the Minsmere Levels and Causeway crossing would also be damaged.

We had argued this in our Stages 2 and Stage 3 responses and, in their confusion, EDF has confirmed potential for a double breach.

The modelling that is being done is inadequate in both cases as the effect of the lower land in flood zones 2 and 3 connecting the two positions is not accounted for.