



Together Against Sizewell C

C/o Wood Farm, Westward Ho, Leiston IP16 4HT

21st January 2025

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with some of the TASC committee members on 12th December to discuss some of our concerns regarding the Sizewell C project progressing by stealth without the appropriate checks and balances nor recognition of the huge environmental cost. You will no doubt recall that a major concern of TASC is the huge amount of environmental damage being inflicted by the project across vast swathes of the East Suffolk countryside, despite no final investment decision having been made.

On 6th January 2025 Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) wrote to the National Audit Office calling on them to review the funding level committed by Government for the Sizewell C project prior to a final investment decision being made – a copy of the letter is attached. According to the specific Sizewell C development subsidy scheme a final investment decision could be as late as June 2026. However, there is the possibility that a final investment decision for Sizewell C may never be achieved – it is grossly irresponsible for government to continue the current arrangement of handing out a billion here and a billion there whenever the developer, French-government owned EDF, demand.

As you are no doubt aware, the UK government currently has outright control of the Sizewell C project, owning over 80% of the development, has already splurged £3.7 billions of taxpayer funds on the development and, in the last budget, allocated a further £2.7 billion in the 2025/26 financial year. Sizewell C Ltd is spending money aggressively and at pace, with long lead items being ordered, acting, with taxpayer money, as if a final investment decision has already happened, even though without full financial backing Sizewell C will not be built.

Throughout East Suffolk, Sizewell C Ltd are undertaking works which, without Sizewell C, are not justified and are totally unnecessary, e.g.:-

- the Sizewell Link road,
- Sizewell access road,
- SSSI Crossing,
- green rail route,
- two-village bypass,
- five roundabouts,

- park and ride sites,
- car parks, offices and laydown areas.

These projects have resulted in the felling thousands of trees, grubbing out miles of hedging and covering vast areas under concrete and tarmac, devastating the biodiversity-rich environment, Heritage Coast and the AONB landscape in the process. This amounts to wholesale environmental vandalism, especially when the project still not only lacks a final investment decision but also a final design of the all-important sea defences, has no guaranteed sustainable supply of potable water essential for its 60 years of operation, and with the nuclear site's ground stabilisation trials remaining unfinished. Sizewell C's incomplete design will likely lead to delays, cost overruns and is already putting billions of public funds at risk. EDF's EPR design has a very poor history with all other EPR projects (Olkiluoto, Flamanville, Taishan, Hinkley Point C) having experienced huge cost and time overruns¹ but the UK Government choose to ignore the evidence and are pressing ahead with this risky project anyway. If the project does not go ahead, the writing off of billions worthlessly invested and the cost of remedial work to make good the damage Sizewell C has caused to East Suffolk, will fall on the public purse. For this reason, the project should be halted now as the outstanding issues may never be resolved.

Recent media reports have cast further doubts regarding the viability of the project, citing a doubling of the construction costs to £40 billion, the French state auditors calling on EDF France to concentrate on the French nuclear programme² and new ground trials highlighting the difficult site conditions. On 17th January TASC wrote again to the National Audit Office advising of these developments reinforcing our concerns, quoting one of the articles,

“British nuclear project Sizewell C could be in jeopardy after EDF was asked by the French state auditor to reconsider committing to the power station - and instead focus more on domestic nuclear projects.”²

At our meeting you stressed that it is Labour Party policy to get Sizewell C built and this was why you refused to entertain the possibility that a final investment decision would not be made. Yet, the recent strong recommendation to EDF from the French state auditors, Cour de Comptes, that the company *“should slash its financial exposure to the Hinkley Point C project before making a final decision regarding its Sizewell C investment”*; demonstrates there are external factors that are outside the control of the UK government that mean the project might not be completed. However, it is in Labour's gift to halt the project until there is, if ever, a final investment decision, stopping any further potentially unnecessary environmental damage, reducing the mental stress on Suffolk Coastal residents and allowing the vibrant local tourism businesses to continue/recover.

TASC are extremely disappointed to also learn that the Secretary of State has refused an invitation from East Suffolk Council³ *“to discuss the cumulative impacts of delivering multiple, national energy projects affecting communities throughout the district and beyond.”* the

¹ Article including further detail of EPR cost overruns <https://medium.com/@kennedymaize/flamanville-end-of-the-line-for-french-nukes-and-elsewhere-3bf21bbdc032>

² The £40 billion cost of building Sizewell C was reported by various media outlets including this one from Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/business/2025/01/15/uks-sizewell-c-nuclear-plant-in-doubt-as-edf-told-to-focus-on-france>

³ <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/news/east-suffolk-council-government-energy-project-concern-response-frustration/>

Council's statement saying, *"in a three-line response to the letter, Cllr Topping was informed that the Secretary of State was too busy and no discussions would be considered."* The Sizewell C project is the major development currently affecting local communities and with a construction period in excess of a decade will have a major contribution to future cumulative impacts with the other NSIPs. Ministers from the previous Conservative government did visit East Suffolk to meet with local NGOs, Parish Councils and other stakeholders to discuss their concerns about Sizewell C so we hope that the same courtesy will be afforded by this Labour administration.

Together Against Sizewell C ask you to:-

- call for a halt to all building work on Sizewell C until, if ever, a final investment decision is made,
- support TASC's request to the National Audit Office for them to carry out a review of the government's value for money and risk assessments supporting the use of public funds for Sizewell C's pre-final investment decision costs, and
- arrange for a government minister to visit East Suffolk to meet with all stakeholders concerned about the adverse impacts of Sizewell C, including representatives of the local authorities, NGOs and residents.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Wilson on behalf of TASC