

Yoxford Parish Council (20026527)

Written Submission

Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station

2nd June 2021

1. Executive Summary

Yoxford Parish Council do not support the Sizewell C proposals as they currently stand. In summary, our objections are:

- 1.1 The benefit the development will bring in new jobs is more than offset by the harm the development will do to the tourism sector and disruption it will cause to communities including Yoxford.
- 1.2 The early years impacts in advance of mitigation measures (A12 link road and Yoxford roundabout) are unacceptable. Those mitigations need to be in place before HGVs travel to the development site in significant numbers.
- 1.3 The increased traffic in and around Yoxford are both understated and insufficiently mitigated.
- 1.4 The intention of taking 800 current tourist beds for worker accommodation is not acceptable.
- 1.5 The loss of amenity of the Coast and Heaths AONB is too great.

2. Overview of Yoxford and Its Setting

Yoxford is a village of over 700 people at the junctions of the A12 with the A1120 and B1122. It is approximately six miles north west of the proposed Sizewell C development site. Most properties in the village lie along the A1120 and side roads immediately from it. Properties are also on either side of the A12 and some are on the B1122. There are also outlying properties away from the centre of the village but within the parish of Yoxford. These are a mixture of working farms, former farm houses and converted farm buildings and miscellaneous other buildings.

Yoxford is surrounded by the landscaped grounds of three large country houses, Cockfield Hall, The Rookery and The Grove. The three country houses, their grounds and most of the centre of the village form a conservation area. Only the newest developments are excluded. The conservation area was [reappraised](#) in 2019 and almost one hundred buildings were identified as either listed or making a positive contribution to the character of the village. These mainly lie along the High Street (A1120) and A12.

The village has various amenities – a village hall, two pubs, a restaurant, a café, four antiques shops, a gallery, a primary school, a church, a village shop, a vehicle repair shop, a hairdresser, two beauticians, a cricket club and pitch, a bowls club and green and two tennis courts.

Yoxford depends on tourism. It has several B&Bs, a caravan site and many holiday-let properties. The village's interesting architecture and its amenities make it a popular base for visitors to East Suffolk. In addition to the businesses providing accommodation, the pubs, restaurant, café, antiques shops, gallery and village shop all depend on trade from tourists.

The remainder of this representation covers the impacts, issues and concerns of Yoxford Parish Council under headings by topic.

3. Roads and Transport

- 3.1 We share the concerns of other interested parties that the proposals place too much reliance on roads and HGVs rather than rail and marine solutions. This will cause noise and congestion over a wide area of East Suffolk with the resulting negative impact on quality of life and tourism. Other parties will express this issue better than Yoxford PC so we will not elaborate the point here.
- 3.2 In Yoxford, HGVs from the north (approximately 10% to 15% of HGV traffic) will use the B1122 throughout the development. Houses in Yoxford directly adjacent to the B1122 will suffer noise disruption for the whole development period with no mitigation. We think this is unacceptable.
- 3.3 During the early years, before the A12 link road is constructed, all HGVs from the south will pass through Yoxford on the A12 and head towards the development site on the B1122. This represents a very significant negative impact on the people living along the A12 and B1122. It risks high pollution levels and congestion at the A12/A1120 and A12/B1122 junctions. This is less than 200m from Yoxford Primary School. It will also add to congestion at the B1122 / A12 junction. Yoxford PC believe this impact is not acceptable and the only appropriate mitigation is to complete the link road and Yoxford roundabout prior to the development requiring HGV journeys to site.
- 3.4 Depending on the exact timing of the completion of the accommodation campus and park and rides, it is likely that traffic to and from the campus, the main development site and temporary park and ride at LEEIE will also use the A12 or A1120 and B1122 in advance of the link road completion. This will exacerbate the previous point.
- 3.5 The problem will be further exacerbated by congestion caused by the construction of transport mitigation schemes. In particular, the A12 link road and Yoxford roundabout.
- 3.6 The applicant's proposals forecast an increase in non-HGV traffic on the A1120. This is the main residential road through Yoxford and it is also the location of the businesses that attract passing trade. It is the location of many historically significant buildings and of interest to tourists. The road is narrow, with narrow pavements. In places there are no pavements. Most buildings are not set back from the road and some buildings are less than one metre from the edge of the road. As many properties do not have driveways, there are many parked cars making two-way traffic difficult in many places. The number of parked cars increases during peak tourist season as passing trade stops to use the amenities in the village. The increase in traffic associated with the development will increase community severance, increase the risk of car v pedestrian and car v car collisions, increase anxiety for pedestrians (especially amongst older residents), will cause congestion and increased journey times and will increase road noise audible in the homes and gardens of people who live along the A1120. For which there is no mitigation.
- 3.7 The previous issue also applies to the narrower stretch of the A12. Although the road is wider and there are pavements on both sides of the road, the traffic volumes are higher. The severance caused by the increase in traffic due to the development should be mitigated by a crossing near the Kings Head public house.
- 3.8 We are concerned that baseline traffic forecasts do not properly capture the impact of tourist traffic. The A1120 and A12 are much busier during the summer and Easter holiday periods. The traffic surveys that created the baselines used in the proposals were carried out in May 2015 and

do not capture the tourism impact. We believe that the combination of peak tourist season and development traffic will cause congestion along the A1120 and at the junctions of the A12/A1120 and A12/B1122. We ask that this is investigated further, that tourist season baselines are created alongside rest of year baselines, and the impact of the development on top of peak tourist season is properly understood.

- 3.9 We are also concerned that the traffic forecasts do not capture the full effect of non-work-related journeys made by non-home-based workers. In the local area there will be 3000 workers staying at the campus and campsite, 1200 workers in the private rented sector and 800 workers staying in what is currently tourist accommodation. Those people will not stay in their accommodation all the time they are not working.
- 3.10 880 workers are forecast to buy homes and live in the owner-occupied sector. The proportion who will move into new builds, the proportion moving into existing properties and exactly where is difficult to forecast. However, near Yoxford, a development of 110 new homes is being planned for the area south east of Darsham station bounded by the A12, Westleton Road and the railway line. The proximity to the proposed northern park and ride combined with the proposed housing mix makes the development very suited to Sizewell C workers. The site is included in [East Suffolk District Council's Local Plan](#), site reference SCLP12.47. Scott Properties recently ran a public consultation on their proposals. The consultation website is www.darsham.mscott.co.uk. If the Sizewell C development is approved it appears extremely likely that this housing development will also go ahead and will support the Sizewell C project aim for 880 workers to buy homes and live in the owner-occupied sector. The housing development will add to traffic on the A12, A1120 and B1122 in and near Yoxford and should be factored into traffic forecasts.
- 3.11 The route of the proposed A12 link road provides no legacy benefit and is likely to need to be removed after development completes. Alternatives are available and should be used. We are aware that the proposed link road route includes a road connecting the B1122 to the link road to bypass Middleton Moor and Theberton from HGV traffic originating from the north. We believe that Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council would accept that traffic passing through Theberton if the link road route was changed to one further south with legacy benefit. As HGV traffic from the north will use the B1122 in Yoxford whichever route is used for the A12 link road we support the position of Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Council.
- 3.12 We accept the need to upgrade the A12/B1122 junction and have no reason to question the choice of a roundabout. We do not have the expertise so we have to rely on the views of Suffolk County Council. We do question whether the roundabout has to be so big. A roundabout sized for the development will provide plenty of spare capacity once the development has completed so we believe the roundabout should be no bigger than that needed to support the development. We would also like to be reassured that pedestrians and cyclists can safely use and cross the road at the roundabout site.

4. Loss of Amenity

- 4.1 The coast and heaths AONB provides a significant amenity for the people of Yoxford and tourists visiting the area. People from Yoxford visit the coast from Southwold in the north to Aldeburgh in the south every day for various recreational activities. During the development that amenity will be lost completely close to the development site and significantly impacted further away. There will be negative impacts as far away as Southwold and Aldeburgh.

- 4.2 When understanding that impact it is important to understand that the coast and heaths AONB is the local amenity. People in this area forgo other attractions that might be found in cities because they enjoy the coast and heaths AONB. These proposals expect local people to lose the thing that is most special with no mitigation. That price is too high.
- 4.3 It is also worth understanding that the loss of amenity will be for ten to twelve years or more. As the population in this area is much older than the UK average, for many that loss will last for the rest of their lives and for the rest of their active, healthy lives for many more.
- 4.4 There will be a negative impact to RSPB Minsmere and visitor numbers are expected to fall significantly. Yoxford B&Bs and holiday lets have repeat visits from guests who travel here specifically to visit RSPB Minsmere. There will be a direct impact on those businesses with little mitigation.
- 4.5 The proposed use of new pylons to carry an overhead export line for connection to the grid will adversely affect the visual impact of the completed development. The completed development will be bad enough without these additional, very tall pylons. We understand that alternative solutions are available. We have no expertise in this matter and rely on Suffolk County Council to represent this view.
- 4.6 The development will make it harder for people in Yoxford to access the recycling centre and Leiston.

5. Environment

- 5.1 We support the views of other interested parties that there is insufficient mitigation of the risks from climate change, rising sea levels and flooding.
- 5.2 The noise, dust and light pollution during construction will significantly impact RSPB Minsmere's role as a key tourist destination.
- 5.3 The proximity and scale of the finished construction will devastate the character of the local area and be a blight on the AONB and the Minsmere Nature Reserve, its wildlife, environment and associated tourism forever.
- 5.4 The noise and light pollution from the northern park and ride will adversely impact some Yoxford residents with no mitigation.

6. Economic, Social and Accommodation

- 6.1 EDF have recently described how re-contracting Hinckley Point C workers will reduce costs for Sizewell C construction. This will mean fewer jobs for local people and a reduced economic benefit for the local area. It will also lead to more incoming people requiring accommodation locally.
- 6.2 The proposals assume 1200 non-home-based workers will seek accommodation in the private rental sector and 800 will seek current tourist accommodation. The demand will be greatest near to the development site and park and ride sites.
- 6.3 The accommodation need will distort the private rental sector of the local housing market making it harder for local people to secure housing. That will have a knock-on increase on demand for social housing from local people. We do not understand how this problem will be effectively mitigated.

6.4 The housing need will encourage the repurposing of current tourist accommodation for Sizewell C workers reducing the number of tourist beds in the area. Fewer tourists will negatively impact tourist focussed businesses not involved in accommodation. This will have a significant negative impact on Yoxford. We believe more needs to be done to reduce the uptake of tourist accommodation. A plan assuming 800 workers take tourist accommodation is not good enough. More project accommodation and better incentives for workers to use project accommodation should be considered. This represents an existential risk to some businesses in the village. We do not understand how a tourism fund will mitigate that risk.