

**Unconfirmed**



Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the **Full Council** held via Zoom, on **Thursday, 3 September 2020** at **6:30pm**

**Members of the Committee present:**

Councillor Melissa Allen, Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Edward Back, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Jocelyn Bond, Councillor Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, Councillor Norman Brooks, Councillor Stephen Burroughes, Councillor Peter Byatt, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Judy Cloke, Councillor Maurice Cook, Councillor Tony Cooper, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Janet Craig, Councillor Mike Deacon, Councillor Graham Elliott, Councillor John Fisher, Councillor Tony Fryatt, Councillor Steve Gallant, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Louise Gooch, Councillor Tracey Green, Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Mark Jepson, Councillor Richard Kerry, Councillor Stuart Lawson, Councillor Geoff Lynch, Councillor James Mallinder, Councillor Frank Mortimer, Councillor Trish Mortimer, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Keith Patience, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Carol Poulter, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Keith Robinson, Councillor Letitia Smith, Councillor Rachel Smith-Lyte, Councillor Ed Thompson, Councillor Caroline Topping, Councillor Steve Wiles, Councillor Kay Yule

**Officers present:**

Stephen Baker (Chief Executive), Lisa Chandler (Energy Projects Manager), Karen Cook (Democratic Services Manager), Nick Khan (Strategic Director), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Meeken (Political Group Support Officer (Labour)), Brian Mew (Interim Finance Manager), Agnes Ogundiran (Conservative Political Group Support Officer), Philip Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management), Deborah Sage (Political Group Support Officer (GLI)), Hilary Slater (Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Steve Thacker (Project Manager/Business Analyst)

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**1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Cackett, T Gandy, T Goldson, R Herring, C Mapey, D McCallum and M Rudd.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Gooch declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 3, as a member of the Together Against Sizewell C Pressure Group, and as a doner towards the Friends of the Earth Campaign Against Sizewell C.

Councillor Bond declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 3, as one of the ward members for the affected area (Aldeburgh and Leiston).

Councillor Byatt stated that he possibly needed to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, as his son had recently taken up a course at Lowestoft College related to the energy coast and various allied developments.

Councillor Mallinder declared a local non pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 3, as Vice Chairman of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

### **3 Development Consent Order for EDF Energy / SZC CO. Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station - Response of East Suffolk Council - Draft Relevant Representation**

Full Council received report ES/0475 by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development. Prior to the presentation of his report, the Leader of the Council took the opportunity to remind Full Council that the Sizewell C twin reactor nuclear power station proposal was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by EDF Energy (EDF) on 27 May 2020 and was accepted for examination by the Planning Inspectorate on 24 June 2020. The nuclear power station, if permitted and once operational, would provide 3.2 kilowatts of reliable low carbon power for a minimum of 60 years; this was equivalent to powering six million homes or 7% of the UK's electricity need. The station would help to provide the base load capacity needed to replace coal and gas stations and would support the future growth in renewables. If consented, along with the offshore wind proposals and the existing nuclear power station at Sizewell B, this would mean approximately 25% of the UK's electricity supply coming through East Suffolk.

The Leader acknowledged that this application brought significant challenges for the district, but also significant opportunities. He gave a commitment that if the proposal was consented, he would seek to ensure that the programme of works to construct the station had the least possible impact and the best possible mitigation in place.

It was important, the Leader added, to keep in mind East Suffolk Council's (ESC's) part in this process; it was not the deciding authority. There were no doubt debates to be had about the necessity of nuclear energy, the question of Far East funding, the inclusion of international involvement in UK infrastructure projects, the cost of the build process, and the cost per megawatt for end users; these were all real and relevant issues, the Leader stated, but these were not issues for members to consider at this meeting. The Leader stated that ESC was charged with looking after the interests of East Suffolk, protecting its communities, its built and natural environments and promoting and enhancing the economic sustainability of the district.

Members were present to examine the draft relevant representations; the report before members set out the concerns and acknowledged the ambitions of ESC. It would bring to the attention of the Planning Inspectorate and subsequently the Secretary of State the potential impacts on East Suffolk. It would challenge EDF to offer further mitigation and compensation, or risk refusal of the application.

The Leader stated that he was pleased to support the setting up of this extraordinary Full Council meeting as he believed it was right that the Cabinet, prior to agreeing the

final document, took into consideration the views of all members and, indeed, the wider community.

The Leader stated that, like other members, he had received numerous emails, both for and against the project, and many of the concerns highlighted were reflected in the draft document. Cabinet would, the Leader added, ensure that the comments and representations that were made at this meeting, together with those already received, were given careful consideration before the final document was agreed.

The Leader reminded members that ESC was working to a tight timescale; the final relevant representations document needed to be submitted by 30 September 2020. The Leader stressed that this would not be the end of the Council's involvement; it was, rather, the start of negotiations with the Planning Inspector. As the examination progressed, ESC would be submitting more detail, more evidence and more challenges.

The Leader advised Full Council that he wished to give fair warning that he would be seeking the Chairman's agreement to waive the call-in process of the final document agreed by Cabinet at its extraordinary meeting on 21 September 2020. This could be accommodated under paragraph 12 of ESC's Constitution. In conclusion, the Leader reminded members that they could attend the extraordinary meeting on 21 September, they could ask questions and join in the debate.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development presented his report, firstly stating that the approach adopted was to seek to maximise the benefits whilst minimising the negatives. He commented that there were omissions in detail that precluded giving a message of full support for the project; equally, the potential benefits for the district were too large to dismiss and he was of the view that ESC should commit to working with EDF to achieve these outcomes.

The Deputy Leader commented that the scale and scope of the application was significant and had the potential to affect many aspects of people's lives, both positively and negatively. The construction site would be approximately 300 hectares within the AONB for a period of 9-12 years, after which EDF would have to reinstate or improve the land. During construction there would be at peak 7,900 jobs with 600 jobs at the associated development sites. Within the report the extent of the permanent and temporary components of the application could be seen. This development could generate £100 million per annum investment boost to the regional economy and £40 million during its operation. Where harm had been identified mitigation and compensation would be sought, and in addition to this, recognition would be sought from EDF of the multiple intangible and residual impacts that such a development would impact on residents' quality of life, including a Community Fund.

The Deputy Leader stated that the relevant representations went into great detail with regard to environmental impacts. They contained concerns with regard to noise, vibration, air quality, lighting and ecology. Furthermore, they highlighted the phased impacts of these, for example the need for the two-village bypass, at the earliest possible opportunity, to address the air quality at Stratford St Andrew.

The Deputy Leader reported that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment would add further perspective to the environmental considerations. However, at this point, he wished to comment in respect of Aldhurst Farm; this project was something that he became aware of that was linked to Sizewell, consented to in 2014 and completed in 2015, 67 hectares was re-modelled to include reed beds which had flourished over the last few years, the majority of the site had been laid to heathland with grasses and was maturing well. A small element of the site had been opened for recreational access by EDF to a scheme agreed that promoted public access to the site but that ensured large areas of the site were protected from dogs. EDF were proposing this site as partial replacement for loss of SSSI because of the platform site, Natural England would determine if that was appropriate, it could not replace Fen Meadow but it was possible as a replacement for the reedbeds to be lost. This contrasted with other environmental mitigation that was planned to be implemented rather than Aldhurst Farm.

Flooding and water concerns were also explored, the vast coastline presented challenges to safely defend all that was held dear. The Deputy Leader stated that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management would comment further. From the socio-economic impacts that had been identified, and concerns to community safety, Leiston would be at the heart of this construction, public health and social services, the emergency services must be able to respond to call outs, the Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health would add to this.

The vast concentration of people into an area had the potential to impact the local housing sector and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing would speak on this.

The Deputy Leader commented that he had seen at Hinkley Point C the tremendous opportunity, proper investment into skills, education and employment, and he had the same expectations that East Suffolk residents should be able to receive the skills to work and progress their careers; he wanted to ensure that whilst EDF rightly sought to learn and evolve from their construction at Hinkley, this was not to the detriment of a potential East Suffolk employee or business.

Turning to the supply chain, the Deputy Leader commented he knew that East Suffolk businesses had the talent to succeed and the will to compete. Nonetheless, he was pushing for maximum local spend on supply chain to take place locally and regionally. East Suffolk could see £100 million uplift during construction and £40 million during operation.

Turning to tourism, the Deputy Leader commented that the Destination Management Organisation's study showed the potential and perceptions that such a project could have on East Suffolk's much valued tourism sector and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism would convey the aspirations as to best protecting and mitigating the negative impacts.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport would speak regarding the transport impacts of the project, 40% of goods would arrive at site by rail or sea and he had pushed repeatedly to ascertain why this could not be higher, and he would

continue to seek every opportunity to maximise rail usage. Following this there were site specific relevant representations, of the main development site, land east of Eastland Industrial Estate, the Link Road, two-village bypass, Northern and Southern Park and Ride sites, Freight Management Facility and the Green Rail Route.

At this point, and with the permission of the Chairman, the Deputy Leader invited Cabinet Members and the Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, who spoke in the absence of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health, to speak in respect of their individual portfolios.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment spoke first, he stated that he had major concerns in respect of the project, he did not see the environment at the core of the decision making process and that frightened him. It was not a binary relationship, for example choosing a tree over a building, they should and could work together and he felt that there needed to be a move away from profit, looking at the concerns of communities and the environment, all should be equal, and in looking at carbon neutral solutions to energy, the impact on other environmental concerns could not be ignored. Councillor Mallinder stated that this generation was the first to understand the issues; however, it would be the last to have time to act. Councillor Mallinder commented he was sure that after the construction workers had left, a new nature reserve would be established and taking one step back it was possible to take two steps forward. Councillor Mallinder further commented that there had to be a move away from fossil fuels to a diverse energy portfolio. It was, he said, the secondary pollution that he had issues with. Turning Turning to transport policy, there would be more air pollution, light, vibration, and congestion; Councillor Mallinder commented that if EDF cared for the environment they would pledge clean energy source for their transport needs. If the project was handled correctly it could create a new dawn of responsible engineering. Councillor Mallinder commented that he could not allow what was important to all in East Suffolk to be destroyed by this project which, in his view, needed a complete re-focus on ensuring environmental mitigation was not the minimum but went above and beyond what was needed. In conclusion, Councillor Mallinder stated that if the Planning Inspector ruled in favour of EDF the Leader of the Council would be courageous in his determination to challenge EDF to do more.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing stated that there would be an impact on all types of housing if the project was given the go ahead because the workers coming in would be seeking to live in the area and the campus would not accommodate all workers. The money asked for to help bring back empty homes into use would help to mitigate some of that. Councillor Kerry stated he did not believe that there would be a legacy left behind when the workers left because the campus would be taken down and so ESC must do the best that it could for the residents in the local area to help to mitigate what would be challenging times for all housing services.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance stated that EDF had been subsidising the resourcing of officer expertise on this project for some time through a Planning Performance Agreement; this had enabled teams across the Authority involved in the project to backfill officers' time spent on the project and bring in specialist consultants where needed. This funding was agreed until the end of this

year; the team would then discuss with EDF a contribution to forecasted costs during the six-month examination process. There were a number of funds proposed to mitigate adverse impacts of the project with existing in-house expertise in managing large sums of monies such as through the Community Infrastructure Levy, the team was well placed to put itself forward as the lead governance for the majority of these funds. Beyond mitigation and direct compensation, the team would seek from EDF recognition of the many intangible impacts a project of this scale would cause on the quality of life of local residents. This was expected to be in the form of a Community Impacts Fund similar to that which EDF provided in relation to the Hinkley Point C development. In addition, given the location of Sizewell C, the councils expected a compensation fund in response to the residual environmental impacts of the proposals. The team would seek to continue to work with local communities and EDF in order to ensure that a Community Fund would meet the recognised and residual impacts of the development on the local community. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance added that Sizewell B was the largest business in the district and the county in respect of business rates. However, the position regarding Sizewell C and business rates was unclear, it was uncertain whether the business rates system would operate in its current form in the timeframe of the development. The current position was that nuclear power stations remained in the local rating lists of billing authorities and were not in the Government's central rating list, but they were not categorised as renewable energy projects whereby local authorities retained 100% of business rates. ESC and SCC would not necessarily see any significant direct benefit in business rates terms from Sizewell C under the current arrangements, because the system was reset at periodic intervals to take new developments into account, but would expect any Community Impact Fund arrangements to reflect a share in additional business rates income.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Customer Services and Operational Partnerships stated that there would be opportunities for existing and potential new partnerships arising from the development and he would consider every element of that. He referred to the duty of the Council to fight the corner of its residents and he referred to the existing partnership with Places Leisure and how they could benefit from additional facilities to be funded by EDF. Councillor Burroughes stated that there may well be opportunities for Norse, another one of the Council's partners, in respect of the construction and future operational phases of the development. Councillor Burroughes acknowledged that this was a difficult decision, but he welcomed the opportunities and legacies that the construction of Sizewell C could bring to East Suffolk.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport stated that transport and traffic associated with this project had probably been the area of most concern to most of the communities in East Suffolk. It was acknowledged that the site was remote, and it was inevitable given the scale of construction that there would be disruption on the transport network. It was disappointing that the submitted scheme would provide only 40% of goods by rail or sea. Additionally, there was the large workforce to get to the construction site. Further, the submitted details proposed their "integrated strategy" which did not provide any upgrades on the East Suffolk rail line. Nevertheless, Councillor Brooks stated, the scheme submitted had to be considered and it was appreciated that EDF had taken on board some of ESC's concerns and proposed a two-village by pass and a link road to the site from the A12 just south of Yoxford to remove

traffic from the B1122. There were also numerous other junction and other improvements being proposed. Councillor Brooks stated that these measures were welcomed and it was also acknowledged that the delivery of the rail strategy was not deliverable in the timescales necessary to support construction of the power station and that if this was proposed, and not delivered on time, the impact on communities would be unacceptable. Therefore, Councillor Brooks stated, he supported the proposals in the submission relating to transport but asked that EDF and SCC work closely with all parties to ensure that the mitigation was delivered on time. In conclusion, Councillor Brooks stated that through himself and officers, ESC was raising significant concerns on the cumulative impacts of works all along the A12 from Seven Hills to Lowestoft, and continued to press National Rail for improvements to the rail network.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management advised members that he was also the Chairman of the Suffolk Coast Forum; he stated that should this project go ahead he had serious concerns; in Suffolk there was a dynamic and changing coastline and areas of severe erosion. At the moment, the Sizewell frontage was one of the more stable parts of the coast but, for the full life of the project, it was important to look many generations ahead. The Coastal Partnership East Team had worked on this project for many years and had engaged with all of the specialists in the marine technical forum. It was disappointing, Councillor Ritchie stated, that the full engineering details of the hard coastal defence feature were not available and this meant that it was not possible to be fully assured of both its effectiveness to protect the station and its impact on the coast. Therefore, Councillor Ritchie stated, if the station was to be built, it would be important to have mechanisms in place to ensure continual monitoring of the defences and the coast, Councillor Ritchie suggested to the north as far as Walberswick and to the south as far as Aldeburgh. It would be essential, he added, for EDF to consider the Minsmere levels and the Thorpeness frontage; a legal framework should be put in place, with funds available, to enable further mitigation to be provided. Councillor Ritchie added that he was also concerned that the details of the coastal defences were proposed to be signed off by the Marine Management Organisation with ESC as a consultee; this matter, he said, would be taken up directly with EDF and, if necessary, in the Examination. Councillor Ritchie stated that more information was needed; a wider area needed to be taken into consideration; and a robust monitoring and mitigation plan, which was legally tied down as part of the DCO process, was required.

Turning to Planning issues, Councillor Ritchie stated that it was important to ensure that funding for the Council was maintained, both during the determination stage and also into the future, as Planning would be the main body to discharge most of the requirements and monitoring of the project. The Council would also need to consider how the proposal would impact on the planned growth within the Local Plans and also how the housing requirements for the permanent staff when operational would be addressed.

The Assistant Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health stated that the increase in workers during the construction phase of Sizewell C had the potential to impact on healthcare provision in local areas. Leiston, had one doctors' surgery that

could easily be over-whelmed by an influx of 2400 workers in a campus and additional in the private rented / tourist sector. In order to ensure that this did not happen, EDF were working with the emergency services and local clinical commissioning groups to ensure that an appropriate level of on-site provision in the form of a medical centre was provided as part of the construction site, a facility that may be offered to the wider community. This would service all workers on the Sizewell project including home-based workers and would therefore reduce potential impact. One potential area of discussion was whether there was any value in seeking EDF support for a community hub. Councillor Jepson stated that in relation to the potential impact on crime and disorder, this would be considered through the Community Safety Partnership; he would seek EDF support in formulating a plan for the duration of the construction, particularly concentrating on areas of prevention and the safety of all. In conclusion, Councillor Jepson stated that, if approved, he was confident ESC could deliver a plan that would keep the workers and community healthy and safe.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism stated that a project of this scale would naturally bring challenges. Significant work had been undertaken and significant learning had been taken from the impact of Hinkley and from Sizewell B. EDF would provide the necessary funds to support initiatives tailored for communities to manage and improve wellbeing. One aspect that was particularly welcome was the delivery of an on-site health provision. Having seen and heard the positive impact that this had brought at Hinkley this needed to be built on and a better scheme delivered at Sizewell. Councillor Smith stated she was pleased to see that there was a commitment to provide funds for non-identified impacts on communities that could be bid into. Councillor Smith wanted to try and ensure that the work was centred around ESC's community partnerships and ensure that it would be locally driven. Councillor Smith also welcomed the delivery of improved sports facilities in Leiston; this would improve the integration of the workforce into the communities and leave a legacy for the town. Turning to tourism, Councillor Smith acknowledged that this area was of significant concern, especially businesses, and more so because of the challenges that had been brought about by the Covid emergency. In conclusion, Councillor Smith stated she was aware that the DMO study and its conclusions were seeking to positively resolve matters to ensure a robust tourism sector, both during the construction periods, and beyond. EDF were proposing a Tourism Fund to be spent on supporting this sector; this should also be looked at alongside other aspects of the programme, including supporting the housing sector.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Elliott, firstly, made a comment in respect of the Leader's opening remarks; he said that the Leader had said that Sizewell C would generate 3.2 kilowatts of reliable low carbon power for a minimum of 60 years; this Councillor Elliott suggested was an error in that the Leader should have referred to 3,000 megawatts.

Councillor Elliott expressed concern regarding any subsidising of ESC officers to put together the response to EDF; he asked how this could be seen as impartial. The



Deputy Leader commented that this was the summary of ESC's relevant representations; it would be an unfair expectation for a local authority to produce this without support. EDF had recognised that and had provided support with officer time. As such, there was more capacity to critically assess the application.

Councillor Elliott referred to business rates and there potentially being no financial benefit to ESC from Sizewell C; he sought clarification and it was explained by officers that Sizewell B was the largest ratepayer in the district, but it was taken into account as part of the overall business rates system of which 50% went to Government and 10% to SCC. It was also built into the baseline assumption of income that the Council received. Because of this there was no inherent benefit of it being within the rating base for the area. Variations in the rating could have impacts one way or the other but, essentially, there was no basic benefit from it being within the area. Councillor Haworth-Culf, prior to asking her first question, took the opportunity to thank everybody that had contacted her; she had received approximately 500 communications, all of which had been against Sizewell C.

Councillor Haworth-Culf reported that a chairman from a local council had pointed out that unlike other ESC Full Council agendas, this agenda did not allow for questions from the public. Given the importance of the issue, he wished to query this; he also wanted to record the concerns of many towns and parishes and question whether it was right to have the delegation in place as per the recommendation within the report thereby, effectively, excluding many members of the Council.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, prior to responding to the points raised by Councillor Haworth-Culf, apologised that she had not been able to speak at agenda items 1 and 2; this was due to technical issues. In respect of agenda item 1, Mrs Slater confirmed that there were 47 members present. In respect of agenda item 2, Mrs Slater confirmed that all declarations given by members were local non-pecuniary and, as such, all members were able to speak and vote. Mrs Slater then referred to Councillor Haworth-Culf's question and stated that ESC's Constitution gave provision for questions from members of the public, but this was for ordinary meetings, and not extraordinary meetings, of the Council.

Councillor Haworth-Culf commented that many people looked to their ward councillors to be their voice, to represent them and to answer their questions. Therefore, Councillor Haworth-Culf asked the Deputy Leader to answer, in detail, the points raised in an email dated 27 August 2020 to all members of the Council.

The Deputy Leader, in respect of feedback from members of the public, referenced the many opportunities that had been available for feedback to be provided, this included a meeting for towns / parishes, the Joint Local Authorities' Group (JLAG), and the recent Coast Forum. The Deputy Leader also referred to the email address that was available for anyone to use and, of course, all points raised would be considered.

Turning to the email of 27 August 2020, referred to by Councillor Haworth-Culf, the Deputy Leader provided detailed answers to many of the points raised.

Councillor Fryatt expressed concern regarding a lack of attention being paid to the park and ride scheme at Wickham Market/Hacheston; he commented that if Sizewell C was to go ahead he did not know what would happen to the local roads, in particular the B1078 and Wickham Market. Also, Councillor Fryatt referred to the possibility of a four-villages by-pass and commented that he would support that. In response, the Deputy Leader referred to the four-villages by-pass and commented it had been disappointing that the Government could not support that.

In response to a question from Councillor Bond, who asked if EDF's proposed transport strategy was sustainable, the Deputy Leader referred to pages 60 to 67 of the report and said that a consideration of his, in respect of the sustainability of what was suggested, was that, equally, it needed to be deliverable.

Councillor Bond asked if ESC believed that there would be significant areas where the effects of the project would be beyond mitigation, and she quoted the meaning of "mitigation". The Deputy Leader commented that if there was a specific question with regard to an aspect within the relevant representations, he would be happy to provide further detail. He commented that he was unable to provide a broad answer.

Councillor Poulter commented that she was disappointed to hear the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Transport say that the rail option was not deliverable within the timescale, and Councillor Poulter commented that she knew and was very encouraged by the fact, that the Deputy Leader had already met with EDF to discuss this. However, Councillor Poulter commented that her concern was that EDF had not dealt with this in a timely manner. Councillor Poulter requested that the Deputy Leader ask EDF, when they first engaged with Network Rail, for the date of the meeting and for the minutes of the meeting. The Deputy Leader, in reply, stated that he had been involved in a combined meeting with EDF and Network Rail to seek reassurances and to ask questions. The Deputy Leader commented that he would explore the date of the meeting that Councillor Poulter referred to.

Councillor Byatt commented that EDF claimed there were in excess of 1400 companies registered on their supply portal. Councillor Byatt asked if it was possible to find out how many were local companies and the Deputy Leader, in response, said that he understood the list was held by the Suffolk Chamber and he would ask for further detail. Further, he understood that 19 Suffolk companies had already obtained contracts with Hinkley and they were worth £10.7 million.

Councillor Byatt referred to the risk of flooding; he assumed that some modelling work had been undertaken, and he asked for information to be shared in respect of the

maximum risk that could be there due to extreme flooding. The Deputy Leader referred to the excellent Coast Forum that had taken place and was confident that he could provide further information.

Councillor Byatt referred to accommodation and suggested that more specific detail was required in respect of accommodation units. The Deputy Leader commented that there would certainly be flexibility and, referring to the Housing Fund, he was sure that there would be suitable flexibility so that should there be unexpected demand in certain areas, the Housing Fund could react and respond as quickly as possible.

In response to a further question from Councillor Byatt in respect of biodiversity and what the net gain would be, the Deputy Leader referred to the relevant representations on page 37 of the report.

Councillor Byatt asked where EDF proposed to move its freight facility to. In response, officers stated that the freight management facilities that EDF were proposing were at a site just off the A12/14 junction at Seven Hills on the south eastern quadrant.

Councillor Byatt asked if anyone had referenced the concerns that were raised in the 1950s about Sizewell A and in the 1980s about Sizewell B, and he asked if there were any common issues that needed to be learnt in order to better consult the public. The Deputy Leader commented that this was heavily set out by legislation, and he had commented on that, as could be seen on page 12, of his report.

Councillor Gee commented that she had read a report that stated that EDF had failed to make provision for necessary sea defences. Councillor Gee asked if this statement was true, and if it was, she asked if it was wise for approval to be granted without having ensured that adequate sea defence remedies were provided. The Deputy Leader referred to page 68 of the report, where the concerns related to sea defences had been set out. The full designs were not yet available and so a final view could not be taken at this time. ESC would work with EDF, in the future, in respect of protecting the coast. The Deputy Leader provided clarification that ESC would not take the final decision, that was for the Secretary of State.

Councillor Haworth-Culf referred to the impact on tourism and highlighted her concerns in this regard; she also commented that within the local area there were very few empty homes. However, there were a lot of people in privately rented accommodation. Councillor Haworth-Culf was concerned that they may be forced out of their homes due to the pressure from workers; she asked that this be referenced robustly within the representations. The Deputy Leader, in response, stated that the tourism sector, within East Suffolk, was something to be proud of, and the DMO study had highlighted the potential impacts of this. The Deputy Leader referenced the representations at page 60, where concerns were set out with regard to tourism and the need to ensure that this asset was protected in every way possible; he stated

that a Tourism Fund for the East Suffolk area should be appropriate and there should be clear triggers so that should things deteriorate, there would be suitable compensation. Regarding the housing aspects, the Deputy Leader agreed, stating that there were concerns, and the Housing Fund would be designed to react accordingly.

Councillor Yule stated that her concerns and questions were related to Woodbridge Town Council, and residents, and the inconsistencies and missing information associated with this application and the amount of work still required at this late stage, still needed by EDF and others, to address it. Councillor Yule expressed concern in respect of rail route noise, and possible alternatives to the use of night time trains; road traffic impact, specifically the impact of additional traffic south of Woods Lane to the Seckford roundabout and also the impact south to the A14 and the residential urban areas of the Woodbridge Town Council and Melton Parish Council. Councillor Yule commented that the draft relevant representations document was not strong enough; it was put forward as work in progress, but there were still more concerns and questions than answers at this very late stage.

The Deputy Leader suggested to Councillor Yule that, as she had referred to a broad range of points, and in some detail, perhaps she could contact him and they could discuss what specifics she wished to be added to the relevant representations.

Councillor Byatt referred again to biodiversity, commenting that at present EDF contributed significantly towards the maintenance of the AONB, and possibly Minsmere too; he referred to the pylons that ran across the ground and asked if they could go back to putting them underground. Councillor Byatt also commented that if eventually EDF withdrew from the site, if consent was not given, and when Sizewell B was decommissioned, would those AONBs lose their support so that there would be a biodiversity loss, rather than a gain. Officers stated that EDF, as a whole, operated Sizewell B, and they owned a lot of land around their stations which was within the AONB; officers were not aware of EDF financially contributing to the AONB by any other means other than looking after the land that they owned. Again, officers were not aware of any financial contribution that they made towards Minsmere. In respect of decommissioning, officers stated that the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority was involved, and discussions were ongoing in respect of who would take responsibility of existing nuclear power stations. Sizewell B would be operating for approximately a further 20 years.

In response, and with regard to the pylons, the Deputy Leader referred to page 75 of the report and said that his ambition was to see that further work was undertaken to mitigate the effect.

Councillor F Mortimer stated some people were claiming that the vast number of jobs available to local residents would be lower skill jobs; he asked what ESC was doing to ensure that all local residents would have access to all jobs. Councillor Mortimer also requested that young persons within East Suffolk be given the opportunity of an

apprenticeship. In response, the Deputy Leader stated that it was an important aspect that local residents could obtain access to all skills levels and, equally, he referred to an email that he had received from a union representative at Sizewell, who commented that the highly skilled and semi-skilled jobs provided at the stations had been across many skill sets, and these jobs had offered well paid, long term, secure employment, to vast numbers of people who had worked on the sites over the years. From that, the Deputy Leader took great reassurance. The Deputy Leader also referred to page 56 of the report and the apprenticeship scheme, potentially, he commented, there could be 1000 apprenticeships.

Councillor Gooch asked if there was provision within the submission regarding the DCO for a recorded element of which councillors were in favour, in general, of the project, and which were not. The Deputy Leader, in response, commented that the relevant representations were to pick up issues that ESC wanted the Examiner to consider; he therefore did not necessarily see the relevance of advising the Examiner how members had voted. Councillor Rivett also highlighted that individuals could provide their own relevant representations.

*The meeting was adjourned at this point to allow for a short comfort break.*

Upon return, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development proposed the recommendations contained within the report; these were seconded by the Leader of the Council, who reserved his right to speak further during debate.

Councillor Elliott requested that there be a recorded vote in respect of the recommendations. In accordance with the Constitution, over seven councillors requested a recorded vote.

Councillor Byatt called for a suspension of Standing Orders for the purposes of debate stating that, otherwise, members would be limited to three minutes and one speech only. The Chairman advised that all members would be able to speak for five minutes; Standing Orders would not be suspended.

The Chairman opened debate and indicated that he would firstly invite the leaders of the opposition groups to speak on behalf of their respective groups.

Councillor Byatt advised that he was not speaking on behalf of the Labour Group because the Group had decided that it would have a free vote on this matter. Councillor Byatt stated that as local businesses recovered from Covid-19 this was an opportunity to ensure that ESC kept local businesses involved as much as possible; Councillor Byatt stated that now was not the time to discuss the rights and wrongs of nuclear power; however, he did comment that Labour national policy was to

have a mix of renewables, sustainables etc. Councillor Byatt commented on future employment opportunities for young people, the impacts on communities etc and stated the importance of balance; this, he acknowledged, was difficult.

Councillor Elliott stated that a member of his Group would be proposing an Amendment to the recommendations and he suggested that it would be useful for the Amendment to be proposed at the earliest opportunity.

Councillor Beavan proposed an Amendment to the recommendations, to add a third paragraph as follows:

“Notwithstanding any of the above, the Council urges the Government to recognise that, on balance, this development will benefit neither East Suffolk nor the country.”

The Amendment was seconded by Councillor Smith-Lyte.

Councillor Smith-Lyte requested that there be a recorded vote in relation to the amendment. The Chairman referred Full Council back to the earlier request for a recorded vote and confirmed that all votes in respect of this decision would be recorded.

Councillor Beavan stated that he was not ideologically opposed to nuclear power, 10 years ago he thought nuclear power was needed to control carbon emissions, but today offshore wind was available at half the price and nuclear fission was a failing technology. Advanced economies like Germany were replacing nuclear with renewables and the game changer of nuclear fusion was just around the corner.

This was the most important decision, Councillor Beavan stated, to affect the district for a generation, and he had spent the summer canvassing opinions from parish councils, businesses, experts and ordinary people.

The benefits seemed uncertain, Councillor Beavan stated, it would take until 2040 before Sizewell would start to contribute to carbon reduction because of the emissions from the construction. Gas powered stations should be stripping carbon from their emissions by then, so Sizewell would not have a chance to make a positive impact on global warming.

The £20 billion investment and associated jobs would be very welcome, but this needed to be balanced against the loss from the tourism industry. Councillor Beavan quoted Andy Woods of Adnams, saying that there would be a loss of much more than the £40 million annual estimate. Tourism in Norfolk and Suffolk was worth £5 billion and employed 100,000 people. Councillor Beavan questioned how much of the investment would stay in place and he referred to natural habitats possibly being lost

forever.

Turning to costs, Councillor Beavan stated that only three things were certain, it would cost more, take longer and have unexpected side effects.

The birdsong of Minsmere would be silenced by constant noise and light pollution from the construction. The A12, country lanes and villages would be clogged with lorries and commuters. Putting two reactors on the eroding coast was full of uncertainties and Councillor Beavan said that any local fisherman would refer to the Dunwich and Sizewell banks moving, confirmed by the Mott MacDonald 2014 report.

Councillor Beavan questioned what would happen to the coast if Sizewell C intercepted the southerly flow of sand. Sizewell C would be built on soft alluvial soil in an old riverbed, not the hard coralline crag that underpinned the existing stations. Hinkley had found that expensive.

Councillor Beavan stated that 90 years ago, Sizewell was shaken by the UK's worst earthquake. 8000 years ago, a land slip in Norway caused a 25-metre-high tsunami, bigger than the one that disastrously closed Japan's Fukushima plant in 2011. EDF said that Sizewell would withstand a one in 10,000-year event; it would not however have survived those two events that occurred within the last 10,000 years.

Councillor Beavan stated that EDF admitted, and he quoted, "Shoreline change is driven by several factors whose importance and interaction several decades into the future cannot be accurately predicted." EDF asked seven anonymous experts to extrapolate from present trends to arrive at a "plausible" worst case scenario. At best, an educated guess; at worst, a finger in the wind. Nick Scar, one of the few experts not gagged by the EDF payroll, Councillor Beavan stated, criticised them for assuming a sea level rise of only 0.5m, not the 2m recommended by the Department for the Environment. They were banking on a sea level threat which was only 0.7m above the 1953 flood levels. Councillor Beavan felt that their sea defence plans were sketchy, and he described them as a couple of sketches with no dimensions, elevations, materials or foundations.

In conclusion, Councillor Beavan questioned why ESC should harbour this uncertain investment on its treasured coast and countryside, just for the privilege of paying double for electricity.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Beavan; there were none.

The Chairman invited Full Council to debate the proposed Amendment.

In response to a point of order raised by Councillor Pitchers, who commented that an

amendment could not negate the original proposal, the Monitoring Officer stated that she had considered that point and she was of the view that the Amendment provided additional wording to the recommendations, it did not negate paragraphs 1 and 2 of the recommendation because it was not suggesting that the Council did not endorse, for example, the draft relevant representations. As such, it was a valid Amendment.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw stated that even the most ardent supporter of Sizewell C would have to acknowledge the impact it would cause to the natural environment. There had been good representations, she stated, on why an area of outstanding beauty and biodiversity should not be decimated and she hoped they would be taken seriously.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw stated that she wished to elaborate on one significant point and that was that despite the assertions of EDF, supporting this project did nothing to bring East Suffolk closer to meeting its net zero target and would not help to mitigate the climate emergency. The estimated build time of Sizewell C would bring East Suffolk into the early 2030s providing everything went to plan, and it was known that large infrastructure projects were frequently delayed, by East Suffolk's own calculations and commitments the energy supply would already need to be carbon neutral by the point Sizewell C came on-line.

Some might argue, Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw stated, that this power station might be worth having in the future even if it did not help mitigate the emergency, however even this event tonight was an illustration that Sizewell C was an archaic distraction from what East Suffolk should be doing to prepare for the future, as other forward thinking countries were abandoning nuclear and looking to a prosperous future, harnessing cheap and effective renewables, East Suffolk was arguing about a technology that fitted the needs of a population and planet in the 1950s and 60s.

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw added that every pound the public and private sector spent on the development of this project was a pound not spent on the alternatives that would mitigate the climate emergency. Every moment obsessing over the details were hours that should be spent developing and supporting the technology which benefited the population, existed in harmony with the environment and did not threaten the very core of what made Suffolk so special and beautiful.

Councillor Bird stated that Councillor Beavan's proposed Amendment said there were no benefits for East Suffolk. There was a definite benefit for the world, Councillor Bird stated, to save it. Barely a month passed without a new record set for warmest month or driest month and East Anglia had only one third of its usual rainfall since April. The UN had an objective of being carbon neutral by 2050; this meant eliminating all fossil fuel energy generation by that date. There were currently 440 nuclear power plants in the world, to replace all carbon generated power by 2050, and a nuclear plant somewhere every day between now and then was needed.

In the 1970s, Councillor Bird stated, irresponsible short-term thinking was indulged in, with the bonanza of North Sea oil and gas. The French, without the North Sea boom, more sensibly built nuclear stations, for far less cost than was the case now. They now



had 80% of their electricity generated by nuclear. Alternatives such as wind turbines and tidal barrages would only ever play a marginal part. A nuclear plant could deliver 7% of the country's electricity generation. Looking at the maths, Councillor Bird stated, build only 14 Sizewells and it would be job done, all electricity supplied reliably, pollution free, carbon free.

For 30 years after 1945 the country readily invested in infrastructure; now the country had endless years of negotiations and consultations before a single brick was laid. To support modern lifestyle, Councillor Bird stated, generating stations were needed. Councillor Bird thought that post-Covid young people would be looking for any employment Sizewell could provide, low skilled or otherwise.

By all means negotiate, Councillor Bird concluded, for the maximum mitigations from Sizewell, the obvious example being a four-villages bypass. What the Secretary of State must do was to give Sizewell the go ahead and also authorise a dozen more in the UK.

Councillor Elliott stated that he agreed with Councillor Beavan in that this was not an ideological debate, adding that he was not arguing against nuclear power, even though members should always be aware of the background issues that, while not material planning considerations, did have a serious impact on the longer term benefits and disbenefits of the Sizewell project. Councillor Elliott stated that members needed to be aware of the cost of the project, and the future cost of the electricity would be outrageously high at the precise time that costs of renewable energy and energy storage was falling rapidly.

Members also needed to be aware that there was no solution in place, or even on the horizon, for the safe treatment and disposal of nuclear waste and that it would take too long to build to be any use in the fight against climate change. EDF had admitted that it would be 2040 before Sizewell C would make a net contribution to the country's net zero targets.

Members also needed to be aware of the risk to national security of Chinese involvement in an asset of this scale and strategic importance.

However, Councillor Elliott stated, those issues needed to be put in the background for now. This was a planning application, and it required a planning decision.

Of course, Councillor Elliott added, if the project went ahead, the benefits needed to be maximised and the damages needed to be minimised. The draft Council response went some way to addressing the impacts of the proposed development, but it did not go far enough. Councillor Elliott felt that the impacts of the proposed development were too great and the benefits were overestimated and too uncertain. In his view, the planning balance was tipping clearly against the proposed development.

The proposed Amendment was simple Councillor Elliott stated, and he thought that it was supported by the vast majority of the residents of East Suffolk. It continued to allow ESC to seek to maximise mitigation measures but it also gave a firm steer to the Secretary of State that refusal was far better than any amount of mitigation.

Councillor Elliott went on to provide quotes as follows, the Executive Chairman of Hopkins Homes said “The Suffolk Coast will lose its sparkle if this monstrous project goes ahead. That is not good for local people, for the visitors we welcome, and certainly not good for business.” The Chief Executive of Adnams said “Tourism is the lifeblood of our wonderful part of the country. It supports thousands of jobs and families across Suffolk making a huge contribution to the health and wellbeing of our economy. All of this is threatened by an uncertain project at enormous scale and cost with highly questionable economic and environmental benefits. Once added to a legacy of more than 100 years to deal with its toxic waste the project becomes unsustainable, uneconomic and unwelcome.”

In conclusion, Councillor Elliott stated, ESC needed to do more than mitigate some of the impacts of the development; it needed to try and stop it from happening. Councillor Elliott urged members to support the Amendment proposed by Councillor Beavan.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that what she was about to say represented the views of those who had, at her invitation, chosen to respond to her from the ward which she represented.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that around 3,400 kilogrammes of fish were forecast to be killed in cooling systems, which would result in spreading dead and dying fish over a wide area of the sea at Sizewell; this was bad news, of course for the fish, but also for tourism and fishermen too. Turning to the AONB, Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that DEFRA saw fit to extend it by 9.5% and this was after 25 years of campaigning, indicting how highly the Government valued these national landscapes. Sizewell C would swallow up so much of that said AONB.

Jobs at any cost could not be justified for this and Councillor Smith-Lyte commented that some locals had been misled that there would be jobs in the construction phase itself, which was not the case. It was true to say, Councillor Smith-Lyte stated, that many of the jobs would come from the existing workforce already in place at Hinkley Point.

Turning to the temporary workers’ accommodation, Councillor Smith-Lyte commented that this demanded too high a carbon footprint.

Councillor Smith-Lyte commented on the future, saying that it was sad to say that by the time that the sea was possibly as high as 26 degrees and the air temperature perhaps 40 degrees, with more storms, with that scenario in mind, how would the fuel rods in the reactors be cooled.

Turning to road traffic, this would have an impact on the ward of Melton, as well as other wards, which were already struggling to cope with existing traffic levels.

Councillor Smith-Lyte quoted from Energising the East, Dr Karen Barrass, Dr Andrew Boswell, Jonathan Essex 2020, "It is 10 times as carbon intensive as wind power because of the built itself."

Councillor Smith-Lyte commented on issues with regard to irreplaceable heathland and other habitats which were already vulnerable, birds, bats and other protected species could not just go somewhere else, they were territorial; the effect on tourism, air quality, and the quality of life for residents in general. These were not nice to have things, they were essential to wildlife and their eco systems. They were also important to humans too.

Councillor Smith-Lyte stated that alternative sources of truly renewable power generation, such as wind, solar and tidal, must be prioritised.

Finally, the impact of any additional build at Sizewell must be properly weighted, particularly due to the site and setting within the national landscape of a protected area, Suffolk Coast and Heaths, AONB, and also SSSI.

Councillor Gooch, speaking in support of the Amendment, firstly stated that it may complicate matters in terms of there being three points, in that members would vote for all three at the same time, because the tone was quite distinct. Notwithstanding that, Councillor Gooch stated, this should be taken in the wider context, bearing in mind that members were accountable to residents in terms of being the custodians of this beautiful strip of countryside. It was important for members to understand why they had received emails from residents; they viewed this meeting probably as the most important Council meeting of this whole Administration. Councillor Gooch stated that the idea that ESC could pass to one side the issue of whether or not members approved of nuclear was preposterous.

Councillor Gooch commented on the importance of speaking out on behalf of residents and said that not wishing to detract from the fastidious work of officers and cabinet members in scrutinising the density of the information provided by EDF, she felt ESC was trying to make the best of a bad situation.

Councillor Gooch stated that she had carried out her own research and commented that in looking at carbon neutrality of nuclear, ESC should be looking at the work of Keith Burnham, who was Emeritus Professor of Physics at Imperial College London, who had questions in respect of any kind of carbon neutrality in terms of nuclear power development.

Those that had looked at the French nuclear trap would have serious concerns in terms of the viability of this project, especially if examples were looked at of Flamanville in and Olkiluoto.

Turning to the green credentials of the project itself and the ethics of custodianship, Councillor Gooch stated that anybody with any familiarity of the work of the local environmentalist, Simon Barnes, Ben McFarland of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Rachel Fuller of Friends of the Earth, would have grave concerns.

Turning to earlier comments by Councillor Smith-Lyte regarding the perpetual churn damage to marine life, Councillor Gooch commented that this was tragically calculable. There were also concerns about the consumption of the portable water too.

Councillor Gooch commented on the threat of coastal erosion and referred to a headline in the press in September 2019 that stated “erosion of Suffolk’s coastline is amongst the fastest in Europe”. She expressed concern regarding the reassurances that had been given that this would not be a problem.

Councillor Gooch commented in respect of wind opportunities that existed to generate genuine clean and green energy and she added that in the Daily Telegraph in August 2020 the editor wrote extensively about the likely redundancy of nuclear technology.

In conclusion, Councillor Gooch referred to the work of Mark Z Jacobson, Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Stanford, and his forthcoming book ‘100% Clean Renewable Energy Storage for Everything’, chapter 3 took apart why he had not included nuclear in this. Councillor Gooch stated that she endorsed the proposed Amendment.

Councillor Byatt referred to the proposed Amendment and suggested that it seemed to negate the first two paragraphs of the recommendations; he added that it seemed to suggest that ESC would be saying to the Secretary of State, ignore what ESC has said to the Inspectorate which does not matter, ESC wants you to override it.

The Leader, in referring to the words of Councillor Byatt, commented that, in his view, the Amendment was suggesting that there would be no benefit to either East Suffolk, or the country as whole; this, he said, was incorrect. The Leader referred to the many examples from previous representations about the benefits that would be there. The reality was, he stated, that members represented some 250,000 people in East Suffolk, not just the 100 or so that had sent emails to ESC against Sizewell C. The Leader also commented that not all emails received were against the project, some were in favour. The Leader also acknowledged that there were dis-benefits of Sizewell C and

he stated that it was incumbent on ESC to do what it could to mitigate those dis-benefits. In conclusion, it was ESC's job to get the best deal possible, should it happen, for East Suffolk residents.

Councillor Craig, in support of the Amendment, stated that she realised there were some benefits, but she felt that these were greatly outweighed by the dis-benefits. Councillor Craig also commented that she was disappointed with Councillor Rivett's earlier reply to Councillor Gooch's question regarding the proposed Amendment in respect of the number of councillors in favour or opposed to the project.

Councillor Pitchers stated that during the summer months he had taken the opportunity to talk to a number of university students, and ex-students, from a wide variety of professions, everyone, he commented, was in favour of Sizewell C.

Councillor Fisher, commenting on the proposed Amendment, felt that the key words were "on balance". He added that, of course, there were benefits, but there were also costs, in his view the costs would exceed the benefits. Councillor Fisher commented that one of the issues that he saw with Sizewell C was that the site size was only 32 hectares, compared to 66 hectares at Hinkley Point and currently they were using 160 hectares as the working area. This meant that the impact would be felt much more at Sizewell, on the AONB around it.

Councillor Fisher also referred to any long-term benefits; he commented and referred to when Sizewell A and B were built, people were told that the benefits would live on beyond the construction phase. Councillor Fisher did not know why new benefits were required if there had already been benefits from A and B.

Councillor Topping acknowledged that there would be benefits and dis-benefits from Sizewell C; she referred to the fact that ESC had declared a Climate Emergency.

The Deputy Leader, in his right of reply, stated that in his view any claim that there would not be any benefits was not credible; he provided an example of a benefit in that there could be 1000 apprenticeships. The Deputy Leader urged members to vote against the Amendment.

The Chairman invited Councillor Beavan to sum up.

Councillor Beavan thanked Councillor Fisher for drawing members' attention to the words "on balance". It was, he said, a question of assessing the benefits against the costs. Councillor Beavan acknowledged that there would be benefits but he added that the costs would outweigh the benefits. In respect of jobs and apprenticeships,

Councillor Beavan referred to a green recovery, stating that there would be plenty of jobs putting insulation into houses which would reduce energy bills for people and save global warming etc. Councillor Beavan referred to earlier comments made by Councillor Bird and stated that global warming would not be helped by Sizewell C. To say that renewables were marginal, Councillor Beavan stated, was untrue. Germany was getting rid of nuclear and moving towards renewables and Councillor Beavan referred to the maths and stated that the present cost of nuclear power from Hinkley Power Station, which was £92.00 per megawatt compared to the present cost of power from the wind farms, which was £39.00 per megawatt. That, Councillor Beavan stated, would impact on poorer families. It would also affect businesses trying to sell goods around the world.

Councillor Beavan concluded by saying that he agreed with the recommendations within the report, but he added that members were elected representatives; if members felt that the project would be bad for East Suffolk, they had a duty to say so. Councillor Beavan urged the Council to go one step further, to tell the Secretary of State, that ESC thought that this uncertain investment was wrong, economically and environmentally.

At this point, with the Amendment having been proposed and seconded earlier in the meeting, it was put to the vote. Members had requested a recorded vote earlier in the meeting, the results of which are shown below:

**Councillors who voted for the Amendment**

D Beavan, E Brambley-Crawshaw, J Craig, G Elliott, J Fisher, L Gooch, R Smith-Lyte, E Thompson, C Topping, K Yule (10)

**Councillors who voted against the Amendment**

M Allen, P Ashdown, E Back, S Bird, C Blundell, J Bond, N Brooks, S Burroughes, P Byatt, J Ceresa, J Cloke, M Cook, T Cooper, L Coulam, M Deacon, T Fryatt, S Gallant, T Green, TJ Haworth-Culf, C Hedgley, M Jepson, R Kerry, S Lawson, G Lynch, J Mallinder, F Mortimer, T Mortimer, M Newton, K Patience, M Pitchers, C Poulter, D Ritchie, C Rivett, K Robinson, L Smith, S Wiles (36)

**Councillors who abstained**

(0)

**Councillors who had left the meeting**

Councillor Gee (1)

The Amendment was therefore declared lost.

At this point and in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, and following a proposal by the Leader of the Council, which was seconded by the

Deputy Leader, it was

## **RESOLVED**

That the meeting be continued over three hours duration.

Upon return, the Chairman opened debate in respect of the recommendations, which had been proposed and seconded, within the report.

Councillor Robinson, speaking about transport issues, commented that trucks were an absolute necessity. With the freight management plan, working from Seven Hills, it was possible with responsible planning, to smooth out any potential traffic chaos by sensible logistics. Turning to possible pollution, Councillor Robinson commented that if EDF insisted that all the trucks were of modern specification that would assist. It was also important, he stated, that all of the various road improvements were completed prior to the commencement of the construction of Sizewell C.

Councillor Haworth-Culf stated that she appreciated there may be some positives from Sizewell C, which were yet to be proved. She added that she was still struggling with the fact that this project was within one of the most beautiful and most important AONBs in the country, and areas did not receive that designation without very good reason. It was, Councillor Haworth-Culf added, one of the main tourist areas of East Suffolk, and indeed the country. Councillor Haworth-Culf stated that she had no choice, but to be the voice of the local people. It was important to listen to the views of local people and to be robust in response to the Government because, good or bad, there was so much still unknown and so much detail still required. In conclusion, the negatives outweighed any positives.

Councillor Wiles referred to the possible impact of the project on the economy; whatever the outcome of the Inspector's deliberations, he said, ESC must look to the future and Councillor Wiles referred to Covid-19 having changed the economic landscape. People were now adapting to change; naturally people were concerned when change was proposed but adapting to change brought success. Councillor Wiles stated that he was sure whatever the decision, everyone present wished economic strength and stability for the region. If Sizewell C did go ahead ESC would be looking to develop partnerships with all business sectors and maximise economic benefits for the district.

Councillor Deacon stated that he found himself with a dilemma in that he appreciated to meet the nation's future power needs additional sources of supply would be required, the nuclear option being one of several alternatives. Councillor Deacon added that he understood the enormous financial benefits to the District should Sizewell C be given the go ahead, and the potential local employment opportunities, but he questioned at what cost.

It concerned Councillor Deacon that the development would have an adverse effect on the AONB, would be damaging to the Minsmere Reserve and would equally damage the tourist industry. Councillor Deacon had concerns regarding the transport arrangements during the construction phase, its impact on the environment and residents' well-being. He was disturbed to read, and he genuinely did not remember where, that the plan was based on the use of labour from EDF's Hinkley Point site with local labour, and he quoted "being used for low skill work". Councillor Deacon invited EDF to respond to the comment and if indeed this was the case, he certainly had greater aspirations for the local workforce.

Councillor Deacon expressed concern about the viability of the scheme, questioning whether EDF would be able to complete it on time, within budget and whether they would be able to meet their mitigation obligations.

Councillor Deacon stated that he believed nuclear power had a role to play in the future of electricity provision, but he wanted to see future generations being able to throw a switch and the lights come on.

Councillor Deacon, in conclusion, stated that he had expressed his reservations and he could only support the recommendations given that it was still work in progress; he would reserve his final decision until he had further facts.

Councillor Bond stated that, to date, she had received approximately 450 communications from organisations and individuals, none in support of Sizewell C. Councillor Bond echoed some of Councillor Haworth-Culf's sentiments relating to work in progress and said that she would do her best to reflect the views put forward by those who had elected her. By far the most important point was that all but a very few people who had been in touch cited their disappointment at EDF's apparent inability to provide sufficient information, and that much of the information EDF had supplied appeared to require significant further in-depth interrogation.

Middleton-cum-Fordley, Theberton and Eastbridge Parish Councils believed that ESC should withdraw its support for Sizewell C, and they were not alone. It was suggested this was the only way forward based on EDF's failure to provide adequate information on the impacts of the project. Yes, Councillor Bond stated, there was the potential for some gains that could provide pockets of benefit for the ward, on offer by EDF, but also insufficient evidence to underpin these and many other undertakings.

Should the much advertised and promised skills and apprenticeships materialise however, it had been requested they be conditioned to provide primacy to Alde Valley Academy and the College on the Coast as the area so negatively impacted otherwise.

Should this DCO be approved, Councillor Bond stated, damage would include partial decimation of Minsmere, a SSSI, the AONB, shoreline, all would be national losses. Councillor Bond reminded members that as a RAMSAR site, Minsmere's status implied international loss and damage.



Councillor Bond referenced impacts on livelihoods, for example tourism, currently generating tens of millions in revenues and an East Suffolk success story. Negative publicity for the East Suffolk area would inevitably reduce its overall desirability.

Commenting on transport, Councillor Bond stated that utilising road over rail was an appallingly lazy 60–40 split that was agonising or unimaginable to those who remembered Sizewell B road usage. All aggregate, Councillor Bond understood, arrived then by sea, the dramatic increase in pollution rather than the decrease aspired to; that the vast majority of the region's transport would have to compete for the poorly designed A12 would unavoidably damage the industries and the workers already so heavily dependent on it now.

The B1122, the alternative route suggested by residents would have had legacy value, however this chosen one was just a parallel road with its own additional cost and pollution issues.

Should this be approved, it was essential and conditioned that all improvement infrastructure, particularly but not exclusively relating to Leiston, was in place before commencement of construction.

In conclusion, Councillor Bond stated, National Policy Statement EN-6 referred repeatedly to 'local', and how that should be defined. Councillor Bond defined this as the area where the residents she represented lived, worked, and contributed to society, paid taxes, in other words, it was home.

*Councillor Blundell left the meeting at this point.*

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing stated that his feelings on nuclear power were irrelevant; as the Cabinet Member for Housing, he wanted to ensure that a robust housing policy would be in place was Sizewell C to be given the go ahead. It was important not to let local people down, and he understood the concerns of members from the local areas. Councillor Kerry saw the housing issues being fluid because ESC must have a policy that would be adaptable to change.

Councillor Green referred to apprenticeships and skills and noted that the Hinkley Point training programme operated with one college, she felt it was important that, should Sizewell C go ahead, the EDF investment in skills and training be at colleges accessible to the children and young people of East Suffolk. If EDF awarded their training programme to West Suffolk this would have no benefit to the people who members represented.

Councillor Cooper stated that he would be doing a dis-service to his community if he just said no to Sizewell C. It was important to keep voicing concerns and continue discussions with EDF and the Inspector, subject to Government's approval. As to issues that it was felt needed to be addressed, and compensation for the community, Councillor Cooper stated that he had seen many changes to the town of Leiston, some good and some bad, Sizewell A and B had brought many benefits. It was important to ensure that what was put in place would not adversely affect the community.

Councillor Cooper referred to the many emails and telephone calls that he had received and he quoted from an email "Over the past 60 years Sizewell A and B have not just generated carbon free electricity to the nation, they have also generated jobs and prosperity for people living in the surrounding communities and beyond. The stations have played a key part in securing the nation's electricity supply and provided thousands of jobs in design, construction, operation, decommissioning of the UK's nuclear fleet of power stations." Councillor Cooper concluded that he therefore supported the recommendations; to object he said would not allow ESC to continue to press concerns and issues.

Councillor Poulter stated that she was not against nuclear power; however, she was against damaging the environment, not managing transport systems and also affecting adversely the quality of life of East Suffolk residents. Councillor Poulter stated that two of her parish councils had made good strong submissions, they were Wickham Market and Marlesford. Councillor Poulter urged all members to read them because they gave in great detail why they had raised concerns about the proposals.

Councillor Poulter commented that she had been lobbied in recent weeks, both for and against the proposals. Councillor Poulter emphasised that it was indeed late in the day for ESC to be looking at this; she was very cheered by the fact that the Leader and the Deputy Leader had obviously read the submissions and that they had mentioned some of the points in them. However, the environmental issues, that most people were concerned about, were that EDF had not given sufficient consideration to the environmental impact of the construction of both the northern and the southern park and ride sites in Wickham Market. With reference to the southern site, EDF must endeavour to achieve the best environmental protection and landscape outcomes. Councillor Poulter referred to the consultation exercises that had taken place and commented that the screening bund that was proposed for the north-west side of the boundary had been reduced by some 50% in length, with no consultation whatsoever. Apart from that, the vegetation was not indicated on the current plans and it was unclear what existing features would remain. Also, Councillor Poulter assumed that the park and ride would have continuous activity over 24 hours and that had not been taken into account. There were many other issues, Councillor Poulter commented, and they were all included within the assessments already mentioned. Councillor Poulter commented that she found it disappointing that EDF were saying now that it was too late to consider the rail option, because that would solve many of the questions. In conclusion, Councillor Poulter commented that she had been very encouraged by what the Leader and the Deputy Leader had said, and she did not doubt their sincerity; however, she was not convinced that EDF would meet the requirements of East Suffolk residents.

Councillor Fisher stated that he wished to propose a further amendment to the first recommendation, in that the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment be added to the proposed delegated authority.

Speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Leader stated that he was content with the recommendations as they stood; he had a close working relationship with the Cabinet and if Sizewell C was progressed he would continue to ensure that Cabinet was kept apprised of all matters, together with updates being provided to Full Council and JLAG. Councillor Fisher agreed to withdraw his proposed amendment.

Councillor Lynch stated that he too had received many communications, both for and against the proposals. Councillor Lynch commented, as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, that if Sizewell C did go ahead the Audit and Governance Committee would need to see a clear governance structure; this would be vital to enable East Suffolk to be able to hold EDF accountable for all of their promises. It was important, Councillor Lynch stated, that ESC had a route for communications with EDF and any other party involved.

Councillor Ashdown stated that ESC was ready to pursue the best options for the residents of East Suffolk, whatever the decision may be. Councillor Ashdown referred to employment opportunities and improvements to infrastructure that were required with minimal damage to the beautiful countryside. This project had the capability for East Suffolk to grow its communities for many years to come. ESC agreed to become a greener district and to look to the future not using fossil fuels and wanting to be carbon neutral as soon as possible. To achieve this, clean electricity was needed; however, perhaps under the present climate conditions solar power and wind power could not provide that and therefore a new power station would be a valuable use for this resource. Councillor Ashdown stated he was confident that should the Government decide that Sizewell should be built ESC would work to ensure that the outcome for East Suffolk would be the best that it could be.

Councillor Coulam stated that while Sizewell B was being built, she owned a hotel and public house in Lowestoft and during that time she and many others in hospitality benefited quite considerably from it. She added that should Sizewell C and the Third Crossing progress they would benefit East Suffolk.

Councillor Byatt stated all members had more time to submit further representations, if they wished to, to the Deputy Leader. It was also important to encourage members of the public to do the same. It was vital to ensure that the people of East Suffolk, in respect of the Sizewell project, did not feel that it was being done to them. This was work in progress, not the final document.

Councillor Elliott stated that there were some fundamental problems with this application. He firstly referred to the site being too small, he compared it with the Hinkley Point power station, which used a much larger site, and said that Sizewell C would not fit without spreading the impact over a much wider area.

Councillor Elliott emphasised that he was arguing against Sizewell, not nuclear power. The impact on the AONB and the SSSIs was too great and could not be fully mitigated. Councillor Elliott referenced Planning Committee meetings where minor development in the AONB was frequently resisted but, here, the Council was taking a neutral view on the biggest building site in Europe in the middle of the AONB.

Councillor Elliott referred to the "tourism offer", as referenced within the report. Tourism was vital to the East Suffolk economy and Councillor Elliott stated that his view was that the impact on the tourism offer would be devastating.

Councillor Gooch reiterated that members of the public needed to see this issue fully scrutinised; she stated that members were not dealing with a planning application; they were dealing with the long-term legacy of this particular project. Councillor Gooch stated that she appreciated that members were currently dealing with the Council's submission to a higher authority that would take the final adjudication, but she commented that members must take a focussed view of this. Councillor Gooch referred to the research project by a nuclear physicist who had said that the Council needed to be mindful of the fact that the Government was still looking for a long term nuclear repository. Councillor Gooch quoted "We are still casting about for a community that is willing to host a £12 billion geological disposal facility for nuclear waste for the next 100,000 years it will take for the radioactivity to decay to safe levels."

Councillor Gooch commented that if ESC was not prepared to host that repository then ESC should not be aiming for the benefits. If this was going to be a worst case scenario, where this was approved, Councillor Gooch commended the work of the officers and cabinet members to try to mitigate the appalling damage that would be caused, both on surface level, at deep focussed level, and at geological level in the community too.

Councillor Bird, in referring to the recommendations, stated that it was not in respect of being for or against nuclear power and the Sizewell application, or EDF, or the benefits or dis-benefits; it was about giving delegated authority to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to submit the relevant representations and thereafter to negotiate for mitigations and monitoring.

Councillor Beavan stated that, at some point, the Council needed to have the courage to state its opinion on what would be the most important development in the district for a generation. Councillor Beavan suggested that ESC could come back to this, early in the new year, and have a constructive debate after it had looked at the information and reflected on its views, and give a lead to the people of East Suffolk because that was what the Council was there for.

Councillor Ceresa stated that as a business owner within the tourism and hospitality industry she wanted to mention the benefits that she had found. Although Sizewell was a 45-minute drive to Lowestoft, the workers liked to stay in Lowestoft because they could go out for meals, visit pubs, go to the cinema and visit many attractions in the local area. Also, people working at Sizewell who had relocated there was another benefit to the community as it raised the aspirations of young people. Councillor Ceresa stated that she was thankful for the energy sector as during the Covid pandemic they had kept many businesses viable.

The Deputy Leader thanked all councillors for their participation. He, with officers, would reflect on the comments made, and Cabinet would consider his report at its meeting on 21 September 2020.

The Leader, firstly, thanked Councillor Elliott for pointing out his error at the beginning

of the meeting. The Leader, again, stated that the draft document before members was by no means the end of the council's involvement, it was in fact the start of negotiations with the Planning Inspector. As the examination progressed more detail would be submitted, there would be more evidence and, importantly, more challenges. In order to do this ESC would need to be agile and responsive, hence the need for the delegation contained within the recommendations. Each and every point could not be brought back to the Council for a full debate. The Leader noted Councillor Beavan's representations in respect of having a further debate in the new year, this was something that had already been raised by the local ward councillors and it was something that due consideration would be given to. However, the reality was that once the process started the Council would need to act at pace.

The Leader gave a reassurance that he, together with all Cabinet Members, would work together to seek to ensure that the programme of works, if consent was given, had the least possible impacts and the best possible mitigation in place.

The Leader referred to the many passionate, useful and relevant comments made by members and he gave his further assurance that there would always be due consideration to include members in the next and hopefully the final draft of the document that would be presented to Cabinet.

The Leader particularly acknowledged the valuable input from the local ward members and he stated that he knew they would continue to represent the views of their local communities and to ensure that the focus of ESC kept them firmly in mind.

The Leader further promoted all ward members to ensure that their local town and parish councils made their own relevant representations.

The Leader urged all members to endorse the continued ambition to achieve the best deal possible and, as such, to vote in favour of the recommendations moved.

Finally, the Leader reminded all members that they were not voting for or against the building of Sizewell; they were voting for or against the recommendations contained within the report.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That Council endorses and supports the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development in conjunction with the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in seeking delegated authority from Cabinet at its meeting on the 21 September 2020 in order to:

I. Be able to respond promptly to requests for information and documents during

the Development Consent Order process for the Sizewell C proposal including representing the Council/authorising technical officers to represent the Council at Hearings; and

II. Be authorised to deal with post consent discharging of requirements and monitoring and mitigation (Section 106).

2. That Council recommends that the draft Relevant Representation be;
- i) endorsed as a work in progress
  - ii) considered by the Deputy Leader Cabinet Member for Economic Development and the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, along with any updates/revisions to the said document, as detailed in the discussions at the meeting,
  - iii) reported for consideration by Cabinet on the 21 September 2020, along with the updates/revisions and discussions at the meeting, when it agrees the formal Relevant Representation submission.

Members had requested a recorded vote earlier in the meeting, the results of which are shown below:

**Councillors who voted for the Recommendations**

M Allen, P Ashdown, E Back, S Bird, N Brooks, S Burroughes, P Byatt, J Ceresa, J Cloke, M Cook, T Cooper, L Coulam, M Deacon, T Fryatt, S Gallant, T Green, C Hedgley, M Jepson, R Kerry, G Lynch, J Mallinder, F Mortimer, T Mortimer, M Newton, K Patience, M Pitchers, D Ritchie, C Rivett, K Robinson, L Smith, S Wiles (30)

**Councillors who voted against the Recommendations**

D Beavan, E Brambley-Crawshaw, G Elliott, J Fisher, L Gooch, R Smith-Lyte, E Thompson, C Topping, K Yule (9)

**Councillors who abstained**

J Bond, TJ Haworth-Culf, J Craig, C Poulter (4)

**Councillor who had left the meeting**

C Blundell, A Gee, S Lawson, C Poulter (4)

The Chairman thanked all members for their attendance and then closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 10:20 pm

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Chairman