



SIZEWELL PARISHES LIAISON GROUP

30 June 2014

HINKLEY C to SIZEWELL C

A group of Councillors from SPLG has just returned from a fact-finding visit to Hinkley Point C (HPC) in Somerset, the site of a proposed new twin reactor nuclear power station, identical to that proposed for Sizewell. The visit was generously organized by Chris Morgan, West Somerset Cllr, Portfolio for Hinkley and facilitated by EDF. The group from Suffolk included Cllr David Burns, Vice Chair Benhall PC, SPLG, Cllr Gordon Gilbert, Stratford St Andrew and Farnham PC, SPLG, Cllr Jon Swallow, Theberton and Eastbridge PC, Chair SPLG and Su Swallow, Theberton and Eastbridge Action Group on Sizewell.

EDF outlined the current situation at Hinkley, which is about 2 years ahead of Sizewell. A slide presentation was followed by a mini-bus tour of the site, the surrounding villages, and finally Bridgewater to see the location of the main accommodation, park and ride and freight management sites. Later, we met with the local MP, leader of the council, planning officer, police, local councillors and residents. The visit gave us much food for thought.

The overall impressions were that EDF has a larger site to play with at Hinkley, that they are not cramped by the proximity of woodland, protected AONB and SSSI sites, and that the nearest communities have smaller populations than those around Sizewell. The land itself is apparently of poorer agricultural value. The non-home based workforce, at 1500, is half that required for Sizewell (3000).

West Somerset Council has been led by a strong team, including a forthright planning officer, which has helped benefit the local communities in their negotiations with EDF. A detailed planning document "West Somerset Council & Sedgemoor District Council Hinkley Point C Supplementary Planning Document", informed the Local Impact Report submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. We need to know whether SCDC and SCC will prepare a similar robust planning document. Will SCDC also ensure that EDF adheres to Suffolk Coastal's own "Adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies" which insists on **sustainable** development, in particular SP1 and SP1A

Our observations included:

ACCOMMODATION

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- Accommodation for only 500 workers right next to the construction site (though local residents remain very unhappy that any workers are accommodated so close to their hamlets). Workers from this site can walk in to work
- Accommodation for the remaining 1000 workers is on two brownfield sites in Bridgewater: (population nearly 50,000 and rising). One site for 150 with 100 parking spaces, which could be used by adjacent Bridgewater College for student accommodation, i.e. legacy housing and sustainable. Another site for 850 with 550 parking spaces on the site of a former plastics factory. This could also, with a change of use planning application, become legacy housing as it is situated in a large housing area next to a busy road.

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- A single accommodation site on green fields for 3000 on the edge of Eastbridge, a hamlet of fewer than 100 people - surely a totally **unsustainable** proposal
- Sizewell worker accommodation is about 4kms from construction site, so bus transport required
- Why 3000 worker accommodation needed for Sizewell, but only 1500 at Hinkley? Does this mean Suffolk does not have sufficient home-based workforce to draw on?

TRANSPORT

- At Hinkley, the two main park and ride sites lie close to junctions 23 and 24 on the M5. Journey time from park and ride sites to HPC site is debatable – EDF quoted 20 minutes but the AA quote up to 45 minutes. On our visit, considerable congestion was noted on roads between park and ride and HPC .
- The road into HPC is similar to the B1122, and no alternative route will be provided
- No rail link to HPC, all deliveries by road and sea (HPC jetty 500m, plus existing wharf for large loads). Coast is not as unstable as in Suffolk, and large tidal variation is an advantage
- Congestion on the A12 will be unavoidable – worker traffic and HGVs from north and south, and without a Sizewell relief road, the B1122 will clearly not be adequate.

ENVIRONMENT

- Although HPC has some wildlife/habitat issues, the areas affected by the build are not as environmentally sensitive as in Suffolk, nor as highly protected by European designations. There is no equivalent to RSPB flagship reserve, at Minsmere.

TOURISM

- Tourism is a major industry in Suffolk, especially on the Heritage Coast. This is not the case at Hinkley, although some concern was expressed that holidaymakers approaching Somerset may be deflected from the area by the heavy traffic on the M5

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- The benefits in terms of education and employment for young skilled workers seemed to us to be a more realistic outcome at Hinkley, given, for example, the large science-based colleges. In Suffolk, it is harder to see how FE colleges etc. will gain much, given the humanities bias here
- Section 106 agreements, grants and other funding now agreed in Somerset appear significant, and were presumably awarded at least in part due to a great deal of hard work by the SDC HPC team. Who will take the lead on this in Suffolk? Will they give it the expertise, time and energy required to reap the best deal for the affected communities?