



## **BRIEFING ON THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR SIZEWELL C: UPDATE – January 2021**

This is the fifth update to this briefing document on the planning process for Sizewell C since the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build the new nuclear power station was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in May 2020.

These updates are sent mainly to parish councils in East Suffolk and aim to provide an explanation on the next steps in the process and signpost interested parties to where they can get answers to any questions.

### **THE PROCESS SO FAR ...**

Following submission of the application, PINS confirmed that Sizewell C Co had satisfied our legal responsibility to adequately consult the public in advance of submitting the proposals and formally accepted the DCO application in June. The Section 56 (s56) Notification Stage then ran between 8 July and 30 September.

Following the s56 Notification Stage and the relevant representations from stakeholders such as East Suffolk Council and parish councils, the Sizewell C Project Team (with the benefit of a larger group of civil engineers and contractors) identified opportunities to address concerns and reduce the impacts of construction. In advance of seeking approval from PINS to amend the application, the proposed changes to the DCO application were subject to public consultation.

The 30-day consultation ran from Wednesday 18 November to Friday 18 December 2020. The consultation operated in strict accordance with COVID-19 pandemic guidelines and we are grateful to everyone who provided feedback. Over 400 responses were received.

Since the close of consultation, team members and contractors reviewed the responses and this informed the submission of proposed changes. This is now complete and has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, who will now consider the submission.

The proposed changes submission includes increasing rail and sea deliveries during construction to reduce the number of HGVs on local roads. The Project also plans to reduce the use of land within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on the Sizewell estate by working closely with Sizewell A, which is being decommissioned, and by using existing land within the Sizewell nuclear licensed area for critical buildings that need to be moved to allow construction to get underway.

In addition, a proposed new design to the crossing over the Sizewell Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will result in less of the SSSI being used for the project.

## NEXT STEPS ...

PINS will now consider these proposed changes in advance of the examination later this year. Should they accept the submission it will be published on the Sizewell C page on the PINS website (<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/Eastern/The-Sizewell-C-Project/>). Like the DCO application, it will not be published until PINS accept it but we will notify you when that happens.

The next key milestone in the process is the examination of the Sizewell C application. PINS will announce a preliminary meeting.

The Examination period will begin after the close of the Preliminary Meeting. The Examining Authority will publish the timetable and arrangements. The Planning Act 2008 requires the examination of the application to be completed within six months. The process is intended to be conducted principally in writing but there will be public meetings and hearings. Registered interested parties can send written comments to PINS and can ask to speak at public hearings.

Town and parish councils can be assured that the Sizewell C Project is available to answer questions, attend council meetings and will continue to send regular planning briefings to parish clerks of all East Suffolk parishes and SALC. However, we would encourage all parishes to engage in the PINS process. It is open, transparent and operates to clear deadlines. PINS can answer inquiries and we do not want to disrupt or confuse the process of examination by organising meetings on the same high-level issues that will be considered in the process.

Recently, some parishes inquired about The Sizewell C Community Forum and asked if it will meet again. The Forum, as outlined in the Statement of Community Consultation for the pre-DCO submission period, only operated during that period for the purpose of public consultation. It was intended that the final meeting would take place prior to submission but the date for meeting was mid-March last year and unfortunately it could not go ahead due to the early response to the COVID pandemic.

We are now focussing on direct engagement with parishes at their meetings or through working groups.

Should you have any further questions or would like to discuss any aspects of the planning process, please call the Sizewell C Community Freephone line on 0800 197 6102 or email us at [info@sizewellc.co.uk](mailto:info@sizewellc.co.uk).

## NEXT STEPS IN THE DCO APPLICATION PROCESS

### WHO IS INVOLVED?

**The Applicant/Developer:** Sizewell C Co. has submitted the DCO application to build Sizewell C to the Planning Inspectorate. Sizewell C Co. is the applicant for the DCO and all environmental permit applications. EDF is the current owner of 80% of Sizewell C Co.

**The Planning Inspectorate (PINS):** Responsible for examining the application and making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as to whether or not development consent for the Sizewell C Project should be granted.

**Statutory Stakeholders:** Statutory stakeholders are defined in the Planning Act 2008 as having a key role in the consultation and examination of a DCO application. Some have particular responsibilities during the process, such as the local authorities (Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council) who will be asked by PINS if the applicant's pre-application consultation was adequate.

**Interested Parties:** Anyone with an interest in the DCO application for Sizewell C who has registered their interest on the PINS website through a short, written summary of their views. Those registering can then take a full part in the examination itself if they wish. Any party with an interest in the land affected by the application is automatically registered.

**Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS):** After receiving the recommendation from PINS, the Secretary of State has three months to announce the decision.

### NEXT STEPS?

There are six stages for the process:

DCO PLANNING STAGE	COMPLETED
Pre-application	✓
Acceptance	✓
Pre-examination	Current stage
Examination	
Decision	
Post-decision	

### **EXAMINATION (up to six months)**

The Examination period commences after the close of the Preliminary Meeting. The Examining Authority will publish the timetable and arrangements. The Planning Act 2008 requires the examination of the application to be completed within six months. The process is intended to be conducted principally in writing but there will be public meetings and hearings. Registered Interested Parties can send written comments to PINS and can ask to speak at public hearings.

### **RECOMMENDATION (up to six months) and DECISION (up to three months)**

PINS will then prepare a report on the application to the Secretary of State, including a Recommendation, within three months of the close of the six-month Examination stage. The Secretary of State for BEIS has a further three months to make the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

### **POST-DECISION (up to six weeks)**

Once the Secretary of State has issued a decision, there is a six-week period in which the decision may be challenged in the High Court. This process of legal challenge is known as Judicial Review.

To get more information on the planning process, including information on how to get involved, go to the PINS website at: [www.infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk)