

Review of EDF Energy's rail proposals in the Sizewell C DCO application by Aecom / Cadenza, September 2020

We are pleased to present this study which will provide input and evidence for Suffolk County Council's response to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for Sizewell C.

On the basis of this report, the Council considers that there is every expectation that a higher proportion of materials for Sizewell C could reasonably be delivered by rail, and that rail transport solutions which improve on the one proposed by the applicant can and should be pursued.

We have been extremely disappointed that the freight transport proposals put forward in the DCO submission have moved away from sea-borne or rail-led solutions, as was proposed in previous rounds of consultation. This has resulted in a significant increase in Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) deliveries which will impact our road network and adjacent communities. The Council has pressed EDF Energy for many years to pursue a rail-led strategy, raising at numerous occasions its concerns about lack of progress and lack of full consideration of the measures required to implement a rail-led strategy. It is frustrating that now, at submission, we have reached a point where Network Rail considers it impossible to implement the line upgrades necessary for the previously proposed "rail-led" strategy within a timescale which would mitigate Sizewell C's construction transport impact.

The County Council commissioned this report to seek expert advice on realistically achievable options to deliver a freight transport strategy with a much higher rail element and as a result a reduced impact on our road network.

The report sets out that there are ways to shorten the delivery timetable for making the rail improvements required to implement the "rail-led" strategy proposed by EDF Energy at Stage 3 and Stage 4 consultations. Further detailed work would have to be undertaken to fully establish the potential time savings and whether this could still meet the timescales required by EDF Energy.

It is more promising that the report also proposes a number of options to increase the share of rail deliveries that warrant full exploration and do not require the same levels of upgrades to the East Suffolk line as the "rail-led" strategy would. These options include the use of longer freight trains, increasing the number of train deliveries at night from three to potentially five trains, having deliveries by rail seven days per week and amending the passenger train timetable to allow for additional day-time deliveries. In taking account of these options, careful consideration will need to be given to the impacts of revised proposals on our communities, to be balanced against the wide-ranging benefits of reducing the number of HGVs on our roads.

This technical report is being supplied to the applicant for its consideration at the time of finalising our Relevant Representation and a response will be awaited. With this report as additional evidence, Suffolk County Council asks EDF Energy, Network Rail and ultimately the Examining Authority to continue to fully explore whether changes could be made that would allow a greater proportion of traffic to use rail as well as sea.

Cllr Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection and Cabinet lead for Sizewell C

Cllr Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs

Suffolk County Council, 18 September 2020