

ESTA SUBMISSION ON SIZEWELL C DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER

Following discussion in our committee, and registration of our interest in the proposal, I now have pleasure in sending you our submission.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on Book 6.10, Volume 9, Chapters 1-12.

ESTA is the independent voluntary body for local train and bus users. It is not in our remit to take a position for or against nuclear power. It is in our remit to support improvements to rail passenger services and infrastructure.

There is already a strong case for extra capacity south of Saxmundham and for additional car parking at various places along the line, irrespective of whether Sizewell C is built. The building of Sizewell C will however increase the stress on these resources. There is also a case for restoring Leiston to the rail passenger network.

A financial package from a range of sources should be assembled for such improvements. It would be reasonable to expect EDF to contribute financially towards such enhancements as part of such a package.

Additional signal sections and increased line speeds, such as passive permission for signalling at Wickham Market, would help in the short term. But in the longer term the solution will be better provision of extra capacity for a reliable half-hourly service. This would include at least a dynamic loop and preferably redoubling of track.

We support running construction trains at night if possible, so that these do not interfere with the existing passenger service, provided that any problems of noise, safety and access for track maintenance are also addressed. This would also give flexibility for aggregate and sand traffic that may well come in by sea (such as at Lowestoft) and therefore be tide-dependent.

There will inevitably be more passenger and construction traffic in the area for several years if Sizewell C is built, and that strengthens the case for a rail-led option, for social and environmental reasons, with as much track doubling as possible south of Saxmundham. We are concerned, however, that EDF have not agreed to a full upgrade of the East Suffolk Line and that their most recent statement appears to downplay the rail led option. For our part, we do not exclude the option of certain road improvements as well as the rail enhancement.

Additional freight paths will be needed elsewhere on the network and Network Rail need to be able to guarantee that these will be provided in good time, for example at Ely North Junction.

We support proposals to increase line speeds, remodel Saxmundham Junction and establish a park-and-ride facility at Darsham station.

The track through Leiston should be kept for a possible restored passenger service even after the temporary freight line to the north is built. We therefore welcome

EDF's statement "In the first two years of construction we will operate two trains per day along the East Suffolk Line and the Saxmundham - Leiston branch line. The branch line and level crossings will be upgraded and left as a legacy after construction."

An Ipswich - Leiston passenger service will depend on increasing capacity south of Saxmundham, and we appreciate that this is not currently part of EDF's submitted plan.

Finally, we have previously argued for a protected footpath between the proposed new car park at Darsham and the station and stand by this view.

We shall endeavour to answer any further questions you may have.

Yours faithfully

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Chairman

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