



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

This is the sixth 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 briefings 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. This update is being sent to you before the first preliminary meeting for the Planning Inspectorate's examination of SZC Co's application, which will take place next week.

You may be aware that the Sizewell C Project Team has been meeting with parish councils to discuss the key issues for communities outlined in their relevant representations to PINS. While we have obviously reached out to parishes where physical development is proposed, we are also meeting other parish councils as well.

No community is excluded from this process. If your parish council is interested in meeting with the Project Team, then please do not hesitate to contact Steve Henry, Community Relations Officer at [info@sizewellc.co.uk](mailto:info@sizewellc.co.uk) or call 0800 197 6102.

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. However, we would encourage all parishes to engage in the PINS process. It is open, transparent and operates to clear deadlines.

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

Following submission of the application, PINS confirmed that the applicant (SZC Co) had satisfied the legal responsibility to adequately consult during the pre-application consultation stage and formally accepted the application in June 2020. The Section 56 (s56) Notification Stage then ran between 8 July and 30 September.

Since submission of the application, in light of feedback from stakeholders like 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 further 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 consultation ran from Wednesday 18 November to Friday 18 December 2020. Over 400 responses were received, which informed an application for proposed changes to the DCO that was submitted to PINS in January 2021.

The proposed changes include 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 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 STAGE...**

The next key milestone in the process is the examination of the Sizewell C application. PINS has appointed an Examining Authority made up of five members who will lead the examination.

PINS have issued a 'Rule 6' letter: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/EN010012/EN010012-003148-Rule-6-Letter--Combined.pdf>

This very useful document outlines the draft programme for the examination, the issues that will be considered and how you can get involved. The programme will be finalised following the Preliminary Meetings, and will be the basis on which the examination will be run. The examination process is intended to be conducted principally in writing but there will be public meetings and hearings.

To summarise, the main dates for your diary follow below. However, please be aware that the process is led by PINS and dates could change. It is always best to refer to the Rule 6 letter and visit the Sizewell C page on the PINS website for regular updates.

**23 March & 14 April:** Preliminary Meetings. These meetings will focus on the procedure of the examination and take place online. At these meetings the Panel will confirm if they accept the Change Application. If so, you will have the opportunity to submit relevant representations on the Change Application. These relevant representations will be in addition to those you submitted on the DCO submission – they do not override them.

**15 April:** Start of the Examination

**19 – 21 May:** Open Floor Hearings. You can find out more at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-8-6-virtual-examination-events/>

**26 May:** Deadline for the submission of Written Representations.

**July:** Issue-specific hearings take place. If the national plan for easing lockdown restrictions proceeds as outlined, then these hearings will take place at a local venue.

**14 October:** The Examination closes after six months, in line with the timetable set in the Planning Act 2008.

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:** SZC Co. has submitted the DCO application to build Sizewell C to the Planning Inspectorate. SZC 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 (BEIS) 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.

## WHAT HAPPENS AND WHEN?

There are six stages for the application process (with two additions for the proposed change application):

DCO PLANNING STAGE	STATUS
Pre-application consultation	
Submission of Application for a Development Consent Order and Acceptance of Application	
Pre-examination / Section 56 Notice Period	
<i>Consultation on Proposed Changes to DCO</i>	
<i>Submission of Change Application</i>	
Examination	15 April – 14 Oct 2021
Decision	
Post-Decision	

Following the Examination, the next steps are:

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

The Examining Authority will prepare a report on the application to the Secretary of State, including a recommendation, within three months of the close of the examination stage (i.e. 14 January 2022). The Secretary of State for BEIS has a further three months to make the decision on whether to grant a DCO (i.e. 14 April 2022).

### 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)