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The decision about whether to build Sizewell C on the Suffolk coast is rapidly approaching. The French owned power company EDF have decided to continue with their application for a Development Consent Order and this application is now out for public consultation. If it is built, we shall be living with the construction phase of Sizewell C for over 10 years. So, I felt it was important to set out my thoughts about whether Sizewell C is a good thing for Suffolk.

In the absence of an alternative, and until we can find better ways of storing the electricity produced by renewable sources such as offshore wind and solar energy, nuclear power will remain an important form of UK electricity production. At a time when we are all striving to be more environmentally conscious and the Government has committed to meet climate change and carbon reduction targets nuclear energy has the advantage of being carbon neutral and helps to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

I am also mindful that the construction of Sizewell C will bring job opportunities for people in Suffolk at a time (post COVID-19) that may be economically challenging. The Suffolk coast is already leading the way in creating jobs in the renewable energy sector and the construction of Sizewell C will undoubtedly provide future job opportunities for our children and grandchildren.

But even when considering the environmental positives of nuclear energy and the promised local jobs boost to Suffolk, I still have serious reservations about the proposals for Sizewell C. I am concerned about the potential damage to our beautiful Suffolk coastline and the impact that this will have upon the rare species and habitats that exist there. In my view, this environmental damage is not sufficiently mitigated by the current construction plans which have been put forward by EDF.

I am also concerned that EDF have done little to reduce the impact that construction traffic will have upon East Suffolk's communities. EDF's decision to move from sea to land based delivery of building materials has not been adequately considered as there will be a need for substantial road and rail improvements to support this change in the construction plan. In this respect, I am very concerned that EDF has failed to listen to the views of Suffolk's parishes and communities.

The East Suffolk train line and the A12 are vital transport routes for those of us who live and work in central and eastern Suffolk. The A12, is also an important access route for tourists who spend millions of pounds in our area and visitors must be able to reach Suffolk without encountering delays and congestion caused by construction traffic.

Finally, I have concerns about the potential security implications of Chinese financial involvement in such a major energy project, for which I have not to date, received adequate reassurances.

For these reasons, and having considered the matter carefully, at this time, and on balance, I am unable to support the current proposals for Sizewell C but I shall continue to monitor developments very closely. August 2020