

SIZEWELL C NUCLEAR POWER STATION

STAGE 1 - PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION RESPONSE

The consultation documents make very brief reference to public rights of way in Paragraph 3.6 ("Walking and Cycling") and merely mention the current situation. A map showing "Existing rights of way, Access Routes and Accessible Lane" is appended to Environmental Report as Figure 4.4.1 in Appendix B.

Our comments cover three main aspects of the application, first the disruption to existing rights of way and access caused during construction of and following the development, secondly what improvements to the rights of way network and public access facilities might be brought about by planning gain and thirdly aesthetic considerations.

We are concerned about the disruption to the existing rights of way network during construction. Of particular concern would be any temporary closure of Public Footpath Leiston 21 running north to south between the eastern boundary of the power station site and the sea. This path carries both the Suffolk Coastal and Heaths and the Sandlings Walk recreational routes and of course will form part of the English Coastal Path when established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Enquiries elicit confused information on this. We seek assurance that any temporary closure during the construction of the proposed jetty be kept to an absolute minimum and that a means of ensuring safe passage across the jetty approach and along the sea front is maintained at all times once the jetty is built and in use.

The Sandlings Walk recreational route is carried also by the path joining Footpath 21 and running westwards outside the northern edge of the present power station site and onwards through to the network of paths around Goose Hills, Kenton Hills and Leiston Common. It is clear from Figure 4.4.1 that some of these paths in the vicinity of Goose Hill are within the Indicative Main Development Site Boundary. We seek similar assurances that if these paths become unusable, that alternative paths, as near as possible to them, will be made available.

It is noted also that Leiston Bridleway 19 between points TM 453638 and TM 453653 and a long stretch of the quiet U2831 road are within or immediately bordering on to the Indicative Main Development Site Boundary. As the part of the Site implicated is only the proposed location of the preferred campus, we seek assurance that these routes will remain fully available at all times.

Turning to planning gain, that the consultation documents make such brief reference to public rights of way was initially very disappointing but our understanding from Roy Collins, Transportation and Accommodation Manager at EDF is that improvements enhancing outdoor recreational activities would be included among planning gains promised by an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1990 incidental to any Development Consent Order and that suggestions about the way such gains might be directed will be welcomed.

The development could provide an opportunity to enhance the coastal footpath network which is increasingly a reason for tourists to visit our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We have listed below nine locations where improvements might be made. Six of these would lie along the route of the planned National Coastal Trail which in its complete form should run along both sides of estuaries as far as the first permanent crossing (e.g. Snape Bridge). Current intention is for work to commence very soon towards completion of the Norfolk coast section. By 2017 there should be a continuous stretch from Berwick-on-Tweed and it is likely that many walkers will wish to continue their travels on foot by continuing through Suffolk to Essex.

- 1. The Sailors' Path.** This path forms most of the section of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Path Recreational Route between Snape Maltings and Aldeburgh Town. The whole route links Felixstowe and Lowestoft. That there is no safe link at the Aldeburgh end between the small car park at TM443581 and the start of the pedestrian footway on the A1094 at TM448577 is appalling. Walkers using the route are expected to walk in the carriageway. The A1094 is a fast and dangerous road for the walker after it leaves the 30mph limit. The grass verges are narrow, sloping and uneven. They have regular drainage channels cut into them and are totally inadequate for walking. It is understood that Suffolk County Council are in discussions with the Aldeburgh Golf Club with a view to their dedicating a route inside their boundary either on the northern or southern side of the road. However, this may be a short-term permissive agreement only and a permanent right of way is required. The verges on the southern side of the road fronting the gardens between the Golf Club and the small car park also need dedicating. All this requires potential payment of compensation to the landowners and would incur considerable legal and administrative costs which the County Council cannot afford.
- 2. The Aldeburgh-Thorpeness railway trackbed.** This forms part of much walked circular routes taking in Aldeburgh, Thorpeness, the Aldringham Fen and Aldringham Walks. It also presents for walkers and cyclists a safe alternative to the B1122 which is a fast and extremely dangerous road and the only other direct link between Aldeburgh and Leiston. Much of the trackbed appears to be in private ownership but is open, presumably as a permissive path. Permissive paths are unsatisfactory because the permission can be withdrawn at any time. Again, proper Creation Agreements or Orders should be made to secure the route permanently. An ideal solution would be for a bridleway to be created over the track bed as this would provide a multi-user facility for walkers, horseriders and cyclists. Again, this would entail the payment of compensation to the landowners and would incur considerable legal and administrative costs.
- 3. River Wall - eastern side of Butley River.** Something needs to be done about getting the path along the river wall added to the Rights of Way Definitive Map between the points TM393505 and TM396485. Its omission could simply be an anomaly as the route recorded on the Definitive Map as Chillesford Footpath 18 stops abruptly at the Chillesford/Gedgrave parish boundary which is absurd. The proper recording of this route would enable a fine circular walk linking Chillesford and the Butley Ferry. Again, this could entail the making of creation orders and the payment of compensation to the landowners and would incur considerable legal and administrative costs.
- 4. River Wall - Butley Ferry to Tide Guage (TM393481 to TM415484).** This is another section where there is no apparent reason for the route not to be recorded on the Definitive Map. It is freely used (possibly on a permissive basis) but is another instance where a Creation Order or Agreement should be made.
- 5. Alde River wall east of Iken Church (TM412567 - TM443556)** - This is another section of river wall that should be opened to the public as a public footpath to link Iken Church with Public Footpath Iken 7.
- 6. Cliff-top path Thorpeness to Sizewell (Aldringham-cum-Thorp footpath 31)-** There are some serious incidents of erosion along this path which is part of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Recreational Route and affords outstandingly beautiful views. Strengthening work needs urgently to be carried out just to the south of the junction with footpath 32 (TM475616) where the path edge is falling away. Footpath 31 seems now to have been lost between points TM474599 (Old Homes Road) and approximately TM476604. The footpath below the cliffs (footpath 33) is also impassable at high tide in the vicinity of TM475601

where new gabions have been installed. This part of the problem is eased by the fact that people have for many years been able to walk freely over the grassland between Thorpeness Common and the cliffs and along the existing tracks to reach Byway 20 or North End Avenue, Thorpeness. However, this area is not recorded as Access Land nor are there any public rights of way over it recorded on the Definitive Map. Creation of permanent rights of way over these tracks would enable signage to be installed and them to become part of the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Recreational Route.

7. Reckford Bridge - Another very useful creation would be a path of 0.12 mile between Reckford Bridge (TM436677) and the start of Black Slough (TM438679). If a path were created inside the hedges of the farm land, that would provide a safe alternative to walking along the busy carriageway of the B1125 between Public Footpath Westleton 25 and Bridleway Westleton 26 and enable valuable circular walks around Middleton, Eastbridge, Minsmere and Westleton to be walked safely.

8. Kenton Hills and Sizewell Belts - This small network of permissive paths mentioned above exists over this area and we feel that these paths should be dedicated and become permanent public rights of way.

9. Ramsholt to Bawdsey - This stretch from Ramsholt on the Deben to Bawdsey along the river wall should be made available to the public to connect two existing routes and be part of the future National Coastal Trail. This section of river wall is not currently open to the public but could be made a public footpath with a minimum of alteration and expenditure with no inconvenience to the landowners. Such a path would have a good deal of support from local residents as well as visitors.

As to public access, the land between the power station site and the sea is a well used facility for recreation by the general public and it is believed that the land where the car park and adjacent field are situated was given or made available for use by the public when the first power station was constructed in the early 1960s. Although the land between stations A and B and the sea is not currently designated as "open access" under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (because it is not "mountain, moor, heath or down") the land is currently well used and as mentioned above, carries part of two promoted long distance paths. In the fairly near future it is probable that the National Coastal Trail being introduced by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (a future magnet for tourist visitors throughout the year) will be routed here with associated "spreading room" hopefully extending up to the present boundary line of Stations A and B. It is very important that a through beachside route is maintained at all stages of construction thereby supporting the tourism businesses along the coastal AONB. We feel that the land between the eastern boundary of the power station site and the sea, in so far as it is vested in EDF, should be dedicated as Access Land under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The charitable objects of our organisation concern not only rights of way and access but protection of the beauty of the countryside. Whereas the housing structure (dome) of the Sizewell B reactor has some architectural interest, the C station would appear to have none at all. We consider that efforts should be made to make its design less intrusive on the landscape.

We hope that our suggestions are seen as viable at a time when so much emphasis is placed by the Government's health advisers on the importance of physical recreation and we will copy these suggestions to Andrew Woodin, the Countryside Access Leader, Economy, Skills and Environment, Highway Network Improvement at Suffolk County Council and to Bill Jenman, Interim Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Manager.

This response must in no way be construed, nor be counted in any statistic, as being in support of or as an objection to the general principle of the proposed development

We should be very pleased to have the opportunity of meeting with EDF representatives to explain our ideas more fully.

RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION - SUFFOLK AREA - ALDE VALLEY GROUP
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