

EAST SUFFOLK TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

[www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk](http://www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk)

## SIZEWELL C CONSULTATION

Dear Sirs

We welcome the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Our association is a well-established independent voluntary body for train and bus users in eastern Suffolk. It is not in our remit to argue for or against nuclear power; but we consider that if a large construction project such as Sizewell C goes ahead, public transport must be used as much as possible; and the legacy for the local community must also be taken into account.

We note that there is now a choice between a "rail-led" and a road-led" strategy, both of which would make some use of the East Suffolk Line between Ipswich and Lowestoft. Although the rail-led strategy is stated to be £80 million more expensive, no evidence is provided to explain this difference. The rail-led strategy would however mean fewer lorries on the roads, it would limit the hours of lorry operation and require some improvement in rail infrastructure - notably extra line capacity south of Saxmundham, such as a passing loop.

We therefore consider that a rail-led strategy will benefit the environment and the local community and so we support it.

It is important to increase the capacity of the East Suffolk Line, and the speed of trains, to encourage modal shift for social and environmental reasons.

Investment by EDF will help towards this end, while we appreciate that EDF can only reasonably be expected to pay for the enhancements needed as a direct result of the building of the power station. Thus a passing loop - preferably a dynamic loop, at or near Wickham Market will be advantageous for freight trains. Of the 3 options, we would prefer option 2, which would reduce the length of single track and hence the time needed to traverse the section such that it could be possible to run freight trains at 20mph maximum line speed.

However, we also urge that costings be produced for the complete redoubling of the line between Woodbridge and Saxmundham, or between Melton and Saxmundham, with the additional work funded by other bodies, such as Network Rail, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Train Operating Company. This would be logical as it would bring additional benefits to passengers (including staff moving to the area to work at Sizewell C) and therefore to the local economy.

We support proposals to increase the line speed for freight trains over level crossings, especially if the only capacity improvement is one extra passing loop. If drivers' line of sight is improved at crossings, this could also mean passenger trains travelling at higher speeds.

ESTA supports proposed remodelling at Saxmundham Junction but questions the alleged need for strengthening Norwich Road and Bramford Road bridges in Ipswich.

In our submission to the earlier consultation, in January 2017, we welcomed the proposed establishment of a Park & Ride site alongside the A12 just north of Darsham station, particularly because of its potential legacy value. We are therefore pleased that this project is included in the new consultation and that it will also include a bus facility. There should, however, be direct access to it from the southbound platform.

Finally, we urge that the option of a restored passenger service to Leiston must be kept. Such a service should link Leiston with Ipswich (hence also the importance of adequate capacity between Woodbridge and Saxmundham) and would encourage modal shift. It could also mean a mixture of stopping and semi-fast trains on the southern half of the line. The track through Leiston is due to be used for some construction trains until a new freight line is completed to the north, straight on to the construction site. It is important that the track through the town is not then abandoned.

Finally, the consultative document advocates express bus services running directly from the centres of Lowestoft and Ipswich to the construction site. We question the potential for this, as the express buses would not service intermediate places such as Kessingland or Woodbridge. Either a service with additional stops should be provided and /or a shuttle from Darsham or Saxmundham stations.

We trust that you will find our comments useful and we would also be happy to expand on them.

Yours faithfully,

Trevor Garrod  
Chairman

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