

September 2021

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership post issue specific hearing 12 written submission

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership

This consultation response is made on behalf of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership. The Partnership is made up of around 25 organisations which are committed to the purposes of the AONB designation, to conserve and enhance natural beauty. **For the avoidance of any doubt, some individual members of the Partnership are public bodies or statutory undertakers which have duties to conserve and enhance natural beauty and it is anticipated these members will provide separate representations reflecting their complete interests and responsibilities. Other Partnership members are likely to make their own representations reflecting their purposes.**

Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager, represented the AONB Partnership at the hearing.

The AONB is referenced on the agenda several times, reproduced in bold below) and the following written submissions follow any oral comments made at the hearing.

2. Community, Amenity and Recreational Impacts

(iv) Assessment of displacement of visitors and additional visitors to amenity and recreational areas including the AONB

The AONB Partnership defers to its Partners such as the RSPB, National Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust on the displacement to other recreational areas in the AONB

2. Community, Amenity and Recreational Impacts

(v) Assessment of amenity and recreational effects on the AONB

The Tourism Strategy for the area funded through an EU grant identified the key defined features of the AONB (landscape quality, scenic quality, natural heritage features and tranquillity) as key drivers for the tourism industry-the key reason for people to come and enjoy the amenity of the AONB. These proposals, as recognised by all interests, would cause damage to the AONB if implemented.

The AONB Partnership note that the current (2020 using 2019 figures in its Volume and Value survey using the Cambridge model) tourism business in the AONB is worth over £228M and supports over 5,000 jobs. These are likely to be negatively impacted by the delivery of the Sizewell C proposals.

The AONB Partnership concurs with view of East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council Local Impact Report that REP01 045 that includes the following:

...the development of Sizewell C will have a negative impact on the quality and amenity of the recreation and access network. This could have a consequential impact on the tourism offer in this area.

Impacts will be direct (diversions and closures)

indirect (changes to the amenity value and quality of the user experience due to increased activity such as traffic, noise, loss of views).

The construction phase will have a greater negative impact than the operation phase.

There will be adverse impacts during the construction of the Beach Landing Facilities and sea defences, and this continues throughout the construction period.

4. Effects on Public Rights of Way and Non Motorised Users and understanding of implications for people with protected characteristics

(i) Suffolk Coastal Path

The AONB Partnership note that existing public rights of way on the coast, namely the nationally-promoted Suffolk Coast Path, the proposed England Coast Path National Trail and the Sandlings Walk will all be adversely affected by the construction activities on the beach itself and from the main platform. This will include temporary closures and will negatively impact those wishing to use them.

Although the Applicant's proposals aspire for the coastal access to be maintained, it is recognised that there could be times when it is unsafe to do so and there will be closures.

The AONB Partnership recognises that the applicant has assessed the amenity and recreation effects on the AONB. The enjoyment and attractiveness of this access will be severely diminished as recognised by the applicant in the Environment Statement 17.6. The increased volume of traffic on the wider road network will impact on non-motorised users causing severance and displacement.

The AONB Partnership do not have the resources to assess the implications for people with protected characteristics and would welcome an assessment of this from the applicant.

Simon Amstutz

AONB Manager, On behalf of Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership