

101485298
Revision 01

ECOLOGY WORKING GROUP (RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE – MITIGATION AND MONITORING PLAN SUBGROUP)

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Meeting:	27 th February 2025, 10:00-13:30
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	James Meyer
Attendees:	<p>Sizewell C Limited (SZC): Steve Mannings (SMan), Natalie Clifton (NC), Alan Lewis (AL), Jack Raven (JR), Nick Stayt (NS) – (Observer) Alison Milward (AM)</p> <p>East Suffolk Council (ESC): James Meyer (JM), Sam Kench</p> <p>Suffolk County Council (SCC): Andrew Muray -Wood (AMW), Jo Kerridge (JK), Annette Robinson (ARob)</p> <p>Natural England (NE): Parick Robinson (PR), Sean Mahoney (SM) – (Observer)</p> <p>Environment Agency (EA): Chris Strachan (CS)</p> <p>RSPB: Adam Rowlands (ARow)</p> <p>National Trust (NT): Emma Hay (EH), Neda Asadfalsafizadeh (NA)</p> <p>Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT): Ben McFarland (BMcF)</p> <p>Forestry England (FE): Colin Finlay (CF) Stephen Whall (SW)</p>
Apologies:	
<p>Meeting Notes:</p> <p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JM welcomed attendees and round of introductions was included noting the new members on the call. <p>Actions and Previous Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions from previous meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SZC to consider how to provide warnings linked to more intrusive pilling trials - Closed SMan to investigate extent of piling along railway line near Kenton Hills, ensuring compliance with Bat License to minimise disturbance. SMan to clarify what these requirements are and involve BM for feedback – to be closed in afternoon session EWG Recreational Disturbance – Mitigation and Monitoring Plan Sub group (the MMP Sub group) to provide heat map to flag areas of concern (5 or 6 areas each). This will aid in highlighting major areas of concern across stakeholders – closed RG and NC to discuss and share data on vehicles and bicycle counters - open NC and RG to liaise on interaction, wardening, and collaboration with the new National Trust project manager role - open Sizewell C to review Dunwich Forest as an area of recreational resource – closed in meeting SZC to share anticipated timing with RSPB in terms of interventions in Kenton Hills and Wild Aldhurst, showing the timelines for delivery – closed 	

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| 8 | Investigate whether adjustments must be made to Ecology Baseline Data monitoring to determine whether there is increased disturbance caused by SZC through displacement in northern bank location – open (written response to be provided) |
| 9 | SZC to determine fast-tracked mechanism to embed stakeholder feedback efficiently regarding mitigation and monitoring priorities - open, to be discussed within agenda below. |
| 10 | SZC to investigate use of a 'quick access fund', available for immediate deployment regarding mitigation and monitoring priorities - closed |
| 11 | Establish connections with relevant commercial teams to help map out what Deed of Obligation (DoO) payment process looks like in practice in terms of commercial exercise - closed |
| 12 | ESC and SZC to discuss and agree Development Consent Order (DCO) Payments reporting process - closed |
| 13 | NC to share recreational survey update paper with EWG for review - closed |
| 14 | Invite Annette Robinson from Rights of Way Working Group (RoWWG) to EWG forum to ensure coordination - closed |

Feedback From the Environment Review Group

- It was noted that the Environment Review Group (EnvRG) have agreed that matters for approval can be raised and approved outside of EnvRG meetings. Also noted that EnvRG had approved the 'quick access fund' in principle.
- Fast track process diagram to be developed. It was noted that the process would require a unanimous decision and if progressed outside of a scheduled meeting would require a response from quorate members to be provided in 5 working days. **Action** - Sizewell C to provide this process diagram by the end of March
- SMan noted the need to define a pot and that discussions have been held between ESC and SZC to discuss the availability of the funds, once approved. It was indicated that it is likely the 'pot' would be made as a payment for ESC to draw down on as necessary up to the ceiling value. **Action** – Sizewell C to provide - A flow diagram in due course once the process is agreed.
- Key decision** - A vote was held on the ceiling value of the 'quick access fund'. The value of £50,000 was agreed. Action JM and NS to present this to EnvRG.

Sizewell C Project Update

- SMan provided an overview of the current status of the site and key activities/indicative milestones for 2025.
- BMcF queried works related to Bridleway 19. SMan confirmed that an alternative link is being provided as set out in the DCO (details to be agreed via DCO Requirement 10) as it is retained but not open to the public during construction.

Stakeholder Updates

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- **RSPB:** Have reviewed fly parking proposal to inform ongoing work. RSPB noted the previous action on reviewing Dunwich Forest as a recreational resource. ARow noted this area has been subject to ongoing restoration of open habitat by RSPB and any intervention (if decided appropriate) is congruous with that
- **Forestry England:** CF noted that Forestry England have been exploring the use of 'Place and Informatics' which uses GPS data from mobile data which can be used to track people (anonymously) through an area and to a point of rest. FE are looking to undertake a trial of this to review use of certain areas managed by Forestry England. SMan cautioned use of any such method would not replace SZC's existing survey methods although there may be a targeted need for such a survey in certain areas. **Action** – CF to organise a meeting for demonstration and members from NE, EA, NT, RSPB and Sizewell C to attend.
- **National Trust:** have reviewed the information provided feedback on materials provided. Identified people counters are being installed and monitoring annually. The National Trust are also using an anonymous GPS tracking system to examine use of the Dunwich Heath site to identify areas where improvements to footpaths are required. NA noted that the National Trust are looking at Deer Management at Dunwich Heath and SMan noted SZC and RSPB are working closely on this.
- **Natural England:** SMah noted that NE have a broad role on the project but have nothing specific to raise with respect of recreational displacement.
- **Environment Agency:** CS also noted that similar to NE, the EA have a broad role on the project but have nothing specific to raise with respect of recreational displacement.
- **ESC:** SK noted that two "Wildlife Wise" rangers have been appointed and there is a need to coordinate with the SZC warden. SK noted that the Suffolk Coastal RAMS is progressing well. SK also noted collaboration with NC and JR at SZC. Queried if it would be possible to bring project opportunities to this forum for consideration. It was agreed that this was a matter for discussion at the next meeting, noting the purpose of the European Sites Access Contingency Fund related to the SZC Project.
- **SCC:** AMW noted contributions on the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), but SCC have nothing specific to raise with respect of recreational displacement, other than to add to the discussion later on fly parking.
- **SWT:** BMcF noted the importance of parts of Dunwich Forest for work undertaken by SWT so if this was identified this area has experiencing increases in recreational pressures this would need to be considered.
- A number of matters were raised by stakeholders on recreational pressures related to changes to the use of the Pontins site for Sizewell C Construction staff. SMan responded that the 500 existing units that are to be used by SZC workers will have a lower risk of recreational pressure than when used by the public so no action is needed in that respect, and that any additional units will be subject to its own planning application/controls and that this would trigger the Habitats Regulations Assessment process for the additional units.

MMP Implementation Plan Update and Action Review

- NC, SM and JR provided an update on the implementation status of the initial measures.
- JR noted feedback that has been received from the National Trust ahead of the meeting on the signage and welcomed other feedback. ARow provided a number of considerations including the clarity of the messages (including timing and ecological sensitivities).

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- JR noted that free parking at Sizewell Beach commences on 3rd March for a period of 12 months. JR noted that the same limitations on parking still apply (i.e. no overnight parking).
- NC provided an update on the Automated People Counters (APC) and timeline for installation.
- **Action** - NC and NA to arrange separate discussion monitoring.

Key topic Discussion - Stakeholder Areas of Priority for Mitigation

Overview

- NC provided an overview of the objectives of this section of the meeting and intention to identify interventions to be ranked in terms of effectiveness and identify areas to be taken forward for intervention.
- It was noted for each specific location, the highway boundary would need to be reviewed. SMan noted that SCC Highways would need to advise on those identified to be within 'highway' and if they were acceptable e.g. from a safety or maintenance perspective.
- ARow noted that it is important that these issues are reviewed over time as project progresses rather than deciding on intervention now and not reviewing again in the future.

Eastern Locations (Minsmere Road)

- The National Trust presented their identified locations on Minsmere Road. A discussion was held on these and the issues that arise as a result. It was noted that the raised issues were primarily related to the use of 'passing spaces'. BMcF noted that the use of signage to note 'passing spaces' has been known to be successful where applied elsewhere. PR queried if there was any guidance on how frequent these 'passing spaces' need to be, but was supportive of the formalisation of passing spaces. JK noted that SCC would general not be supportive of bollards and spoil mounds are preferred and confirmed there is no guidance on the provision of 'passing spaces'
- EH noted that it would be useful to develop a table/proforma to justify why options are taken forward or discounted. SMan agreed with this and suggested a number of criteria that could be used. **Action** – Sizewell C to share a matrix and Red-Amber-Green (RAG) scoring system.

Southern Location

- AR talked through locations provided and summarised the RSPB's experience on this matter, noting that its often successful when areas are targeted rather than individual locations. AR noted that RSPB are looking to install 'passing place' signage as part of a wider signage update across the Minsmere site.

5 Ways Car Park Location

- PR clarified that Natural England do not own the 5 ways car park. NC noted that the maintenance should be on the owner rather than Sizewell C. There were suggestions on the call on who the landowner was. AR stated that making this area more attractive would draw users from other areas to this car park, but noted other sensitivities associated with drawing more visitor. These sensitivities were supported by BMcF and noted that capacity would be a key and

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should not be increased if interventions are proposed. EH supported that improving this area could provide some benefits. Further discussion required prior to speaking to landowner.

Other Locations Raised

- Other locations were discussed, including Westleton Car Park. PR noted that there was capacity at the site and there was a need to improve signage and improved bunds. **Action** – NC to reach out to Natural England site manager to discuss these matters
- BMcF noted the importance of monitoring invasive non-native species.

Shingle beach from Dunwich to Walberswick

- The next location discussed was the seasonal fencing between Walberswick and Dunwich. PR noted that this focus here was improvements to signage to keep people on the front of the beach, this was supported by BMcF who noted that the message on the signage is very important on engagement. AL queried if there could be an option to extend the fencing further south to provide greater protection to these habitats however ARow noted there is a need to be reactive as a result of the nature of the shingle. PR noted that if interventions are proposed here all organisations would need to be involved. SMan noted that the issue of engagement across all relevant topics is already being addressed as part of existing wider workstreams.

River Blyth

- NC raised that the areas surrounding the River Blyth was raised by Natural England. PR noted this is a National Nature Reserve and that there are already issues with fly parking (Lodge Lane) and Natural England believe this could be an area which could experience increased footfall. **Action** – NC to discuss this site further with Natural England site manager.

Next meeting dates

- 21st May 2025 – 10 am

AOB

- No AOB was raised .

Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
27 Feb	FebSG-1	Sizewell C to provide this process diagram for approvals to be provided outside of meetings	SZC	End of March 2025
27 Feb	FebSG-2	Sizewell C to provide a flow diagram of drawn down from the 'quick access fund' in due course once the process is agreed	SZC	Next Meeting

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27 Feb	FebSG-3	CF to organise a meeting for demonstration of 'Place and Informatics' and members from NE, EA, NT, RSPB and Sizewell C to attend	CF	No timeframe set
27 Feb	FebSG-4	NC and NA to arrange separate discussion monitoring	NC/NA	Next Meeting
27 Feb	FebSG-5	Sizewell C to share a matrix and Red-Amber-Green (RAG) scoring system relate to the identification of interventions.	SZC	End of March 2025
27 Feb	FebSG-6	NC to arrange a discussion with the Natural England site manager to cover a range of sites identified.	NC	No timeframe set

Author: Nick Stayt (SZC)