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Your Ref

Humphrey Cadoux-Hudson & Richard Mayson
Managing Director & Director of Planning
EDF Energy
The Qube
90 Whitfield Street
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Dear Humphrey and Richard,

We write following West Somerset's Full Council meeting on Wednesday evening, which considered our Councils response to the Stage 2 Update consultation.

Attached is this Council's and Sedgemoor District Councils joint response to the consultation. It is with regret that the report continues to highlight a large number of areas where there remain significant disagreements between EDF Energy and the Council. This is the main purpose of writing to you directly.

We have shown recently through our discussions on Site Preparation Works that through sensible conversation, and pragmatism from both parties, key issues can be resolved. The work conducted by our teams in relation to the Regulation 19 letter and the recent face-to-face discussions on transport matters demonstrated this to us. We also note the comments from Vincent de Rivas to the Nuclear Development Forum which support our conclusion.

It is therefore, extremely disappointing to note that there continue to be such significant gaps between us as we approach the last few weeks before you intend to submit your application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission.

While we understand and accept to a point that there are matters where the business needs of EDF dictate a certain approach there remain a range of issues where **we truly feel that, through similar, sensible pragmatic conversation, that the differences between us could be resolved prior to the submission of the DCO application.**

Our response attached goes into our detailed views. However, West Somerset Council would particularly draw your attention to the following issues that we believe can be resolved:

Accommodation

We remain very concerned with the balance between the various accommodation options that are being promoted.

The effect on our Tourist Accommodation during peak months could have very serious long-term implications for our District. Our fragile economy relies upon the tourist trade heavily and any adverse impact to this will have untold consequences for years to come. We do acknowledge the boost that workers could provide during the winter months and want to work with you to develop a mutually agreed strategy for striking what will undoubtedly need to be a fine balance in this critical area.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Similar sensitive approaches must also be developed when it comes to the private rented sector. West Somerset faces an almost impossible task of providing affordable housing for local people who wish to remain living in our area. Our waiting lists for such housing are very long and many of those in need are currently living in the private rented sector. Indeed this form of housing also hosts many of our young people who are not currently receiving benefits. Displacement by workers who will earn higher wages and potentially drive up rental prices is a huge issue for our Council. We also face the same problems in relation to owner occupied housing utilised by your workers. Our Council has very few priorities which do not relate to Hinkley Point and the wider housing need problem is one of them. While some progress has been made, we remain fearful of the impacts that the project may have.

Finally it will come as no surprise to you that we remain uneasy about the size and location of the on-site campus. Our fierce support for the people who live closest to the site remains constant and the justification for the approach to this element of the main build is not convincing, albeit that contractors will see it as an attractive solution.

In simple terms the answer to all of these issues is, in our view, investment in new local housing. Our Council has suggested three sites in West Somerset, two of which have planning permission already (in Watchet and Stogursey) and one that, we understand from your team, offers a reasonable investment prospect (in Williton). To facilitate EDF receiving planning permission for the site in Williton, we have published two draft documents, our Joint HPC Supplementary Planning Document and our Williton Masterplan, which both seek to provide you with certainty.

We have realised for a long time that a combination of all 5 different types of accommodation (campuses, private rented, owner occupied, tourist and crucially new housing) is the right solution. While we recognise the role that the Housing Fund could play, the absence of new housing from your strategy is reason why we may well enter the IPC examination with conflicting views on this key issue.

Transport

Recent developments in the transport workstream are encouraging, namely the pragmatic approach to that infrastructure necessary to allow your proposed site preparation works development to proceed, and the emerging realisation of how important it will be to build-in community aspirations on key local routes around the site. We urge that this positive approach is continued into discussions about the main DCO application transport issues and matters such as the early delivery of the Cannington Bypass. Residents' ability to get to and from destinations locally as they go about their daily lives will be a key aspect of your integration into the area and we press you to consider your approach carefully.

There are some very simple solutions in this area, which would go a long way to demonstrate that EDF is listening and responding positively to residents. Your current plans to route buses through Stogursey village is a classic example in this regard, where a small change could make a significant difference.

Provision of Local Facilities

The scale and impacts of the project provide many challenges and we realise that the economic benefits brought into the area by the development will help to address potentially negative effects. However, in the Stogursey Parish, the Parish closest to the site and most affected, we struggle to see how any significant economic benefits will be realised. Here we believe strongly that providing enhanced facilities for villagers would go some way to offsetting the impact of the development. We have worked with and listened to the community to reflect their thoughts and feelings on this matter. Our draft SPD looks to explain what we think is possible and we would very much welcome the opportunity to work more closely with your team to deliver financially sustainable, sensible and carefully considered solutions within the Parish.

Working Hours and Arrangements for Local People

The extended working hours set out in the Stage 2 Update are of huge concern to us as community leaders. Many, many residents have contacted the Council to express their deep misgivings about this considerable change. In this context it is important for us to receive early information to substantiate your proposals, which are not set out at all in the latest consultation material.

Overall, the proposals are considered to represent a fundamental shift in the nature of the local environment, from a quiet rural setting towards that of a more urban / industrial environment with activities 24 hours / 7 days per week. Thus your proposals cannot be supported.

We understand that the shift in working patterns has resulted from your further analysis of the build at Flamanville 3 in France and can understand, given your timescale for delivery, that you have drawn the conclusion you have. However, the physical characteristics and relationship with surrounding properties is quite different from Flamanville and this does not seem to have been given necessary weight in your decision-making. We urge you to re-consider the proposals.

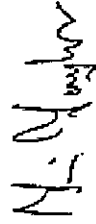
Fundamentally this change must be considered in cumulative terms alongside the size and position of the on-site campus and the other issues we have highlighted in relation to Stogursey Parish. In our view the ability to mitigate the impact of the project is very limited for those living closest to the site and therefore EDF must do all it can to create a system, through its property price support scheme, to allow all those wanting to move away without any penalty to them financially. This however, is not the only answer and this is not a 'one-size-fits-all' issue. The Council will continue to do all it can to support those who live closest to the site and we must see demonstrable progress on these issues.

Conclusion

We certainly acknowledge the effort that your team has been making to ensure progress on a whole range of fronts and feel that with a final, joint push we could enter into the IPC examination with a very limited number of issues between us.

We will, as always, instruct our Officer team to discuss these matters with your team in more detail and will make ourselves available should you wish to discuss any aspect of the above.

Yours Sincerely



**Cllr Tim Taylor
Leader**



**Cllr Chris Morgan
Deputy Leader and
Lead Member for Environment**



**Adrian Dyer
Chief Executive**



**Andrew Goodchild
Planning Manager**