

My name is Julian Cusack and I am Chair of Middleton cum Fordley Parish Council for whom I am speaking

Middleton lies three miles north west of the site of Sizewell C and has the B1122 running through it on its way from Yoxford to Leiston. The B1125 runs from Blythburgh through the east of the village to join the B1122 to the south.

The parish comprises three distinct areas. The first is the main village to the north east of the Parish. The second is Middleton Moor on higher ground to the west.

There are 13 homes on or near Middleton Moor. Some of the smaller homes front directly on to the main road and will be subject to major hazards from noise, vibration and pollution if construction traffic is routed along the B1122 as is proposed in the early years of the project.

Middleton Moor itself is highly valued and an important habitat supported by grants from Natural England. It comprises seven and a half acres of common land and includes wildlife rich ponds. Experience during the pandemic has confirmed the importance of green spaces such as the Moor to well-being and good mental health.

The third area is Fordley which is a smaller settlement which will be severed from Middleton by the proposed link road of, which more later.

Like many other communities there is growing interest in preserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the village environment and in the encouragement of cycling and walking. Recent initiatives by the Parish Council have included a bid for quiet lanes status on a number of our minor roads and an agreement with Highways to defer the cutting of verges. These gains are threatened by the applicant's proposal to develop a huge industrial site visible from the higher points of our Parish and to route vast numbers of vehicles through our village along the B1122 in the early years of construction. The proposed link road will sever the Quiet Lanes and severely restrict walking and cycling routes to the south.

Before I get into an examination of our position on mitigation, I would like to tell you about a meeting I had yesterday with a lady who lives alone on a small farm which will lie immediately south of the proposed Sizewell link road. She is in her 80s and has lived there all her life. Like many of our residents she is knowledgeable and appreciative of the diverse local wildlife and she directed me to a pond in a spinney that will be within metres of the new road and which is a proven habitat for great crested newts.

I would also like to tell you about a couple who bought a property on Fordley Road. The link road was proposed after they completed the purchase and now they are facing the devastating prospect of this road going right past them. One of them suffers from asthma and is very concerned that poor air quality from multiple HGV exhausts will adversely affect her health and well-being.

I have also spoken with one of the farm owners whose land will be bisected by the proposed link road. Farming is one of our principal local business sectors. As well as losing valuable

Grade 2 agricultural land to the proposed new road he will experience increased costs of working from the disruption of farm access routes.

If the applicant's proposals go ahead, it will be at the expense of these individuals. It will be at the expense of all those who live along the B1122 and the B1125 who will be in the front line of dealing with increased noise and pollution.

But similar effects in one way or another will be experienced throughout the Parish.

In preparation for this submission, I and my fellow Councillors have spoken to over 120 residents of Middleton in the last few days.

We can therefore report that nearly all of our residents are opposed to the construction of SZC. The opponents include some who work or have worked in the nuclear industry but are unconvinced by the business, environmental or engineering case for SZC.

The Parish Council does not accept that there is a need for a new nuclear power station at Sizewell and it is our view that the negative impacts of the proposed development of SZC are so severe that adequate mitigation is not possible.

While many of our residents are very concerned about the environmental and social impact of the main site development, we consider that there are other interested parties better able to address those concerns. This also applies to concerns about the impact on tourism and the quality of the visitor experience which is a concern to the several accommodation businesses in our village.

I will therefore spend the rest of our time talking about the proposed link road and its implications for our residents.

1. Based on our current survey results we can confirm that if SZC is approved then we do want a relief road to be provided to take construction traffic away from the B1122 through Middleton Moor. This is particularly essential for the peace and health of the people living along the B1122.
2. There is disbelief that the applicant does not propose to complete the SLR until well into the construction period and we demand that this timing be reconsidered
3. Not surprisingly, the majority view is that the Link Road should not be routed through Middleton but taken on a route leaving the A12 further south. We appreciate that the applicant has rejected this route, but we request that they be asked to re-examine it
4. The proposed route of the link road will sever 4 minor roads leading to the south which are of particular concern to us. We have found from our survey that the most used route for trips by car to Saxmundham and beyond is Pretty Road which leaves the B1122 in Theberton to our east. We support proposals advanced by Theberton and Eastbridge PC to keep Pretty Road open by way of a bridge over the SLR.
5. The next most used of the minor routes is Fordley Road. The current proposal is to stop this up on the north side but not on the south. Fordley Road is a single carriageway road with little provision of passing places. It is already occasionally congested if traffic held up on the A12 seeks a cut through to the B1122 east bound. This risk is perceived to be increased if SZC goes ahead. Some of our residents would therefore support the proposed stopping up of the road and indeed would extend that to the south side of the SLR.

The Parish Council is highly sympathetic in particular to the plight of the residents who live on Fordley Road nearest to the SLR and who do want the road stopped up.

However, there are many of our residents who use Fordley Road as an alternative vehicle route to Saxmundham albeit not as many as for Pretty Road. Some of these accept, if reluctantly, that if Pretty Road is kept open they can live with the closure of Fordley Road. But some would like it kept open by bridge or underpass which may also assist with farm access.

6. There is growing use of Fordley Road by walkers and cyclists. We therefore request that if it is closed to motor vehicles there should be a lightweight bridge over the SLR suitable for walkers and cyclists to gain access to the south.

7. Our survey also covered mitigation for the impact of increased levels of traffic forecast for the B1122 and B1125 particularly in the early years before the SLR is complete. There was strong support for the provision of segregated foot and cycle paths. Specifically we would like to see these along the B1122 from Middleton Moor to Mill Street and from Rectory Road north to the footpath known as Black Slough and potentially all the way to Westleton. We would also like to see a 30mph speed limit on the B1125 between Westleton and Middleton.

8. We have also consulted residents on the proposed B1125 extension to the SLR. Many are concerned that this will generate additional traffic along the B1125 and consider that this risk outweighs any benefit.

In talking to our residents about the SLR we have encountered denial, dis-belief and real distress that we are being asked to make impossible judgments about how to deal with the severance of our Parish by a major new road. Emotions have run high and it has been at times difficult to reconcile different opinions on some issues. There is strong empathy with those who live along the B1122 who would be worst affected if there is no relief road. Many think the solution is to build the relief road elsewhere. Others ask whether this isn't just exporting the problem to somewhere else where it may cause just as much upset.

Most are unconvinced that there is any strong case for a new nuclear power station at Sizewell and resent therefore being asked to make impossible choices about how to best mitigate the effects of the SLR on our residents, our farm businesses and our valued landscapes.