



Earl Stonham Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Jennie Blackburn

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Dear Sir/Madam

Earl Stonham Parish Council Response to East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN)

Earl Stonham Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on the National Grid proposals to reinforce the high voltage electricity transmission network between Norwich and Tilbury. Our response has been compiled following a public meeting attend by more than 50 people who live in the Parish.

We feel that the consultation as presented is fundamentally flawed. One of the Gunning Principles, established in a court case in 1985 and reinforced in subsequent legal decisions state that proposals should still be at a formative stage and that a final decision should not yet have been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers. In addition, the Government's own Consultation principles published in 2018 state that consultations should be informative and give enough information to ensure that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses including validated impact assessments of the costs and benefits of the options being considered.

Yet it seems that National Grid has predetermined its preferred option and is consulting solely on delivering a solution via a pylon bearing network along a specific geographic corridor. Other than for Dedham Vale AONB, it has ruled out alternative options such as a sub-sea route or buried cables based on cost yet has not presented the detailed costs or impact assessments of different options within the consultation document itself. Those being consulted are therefore unable to form an independent view of the relative costs, impacts, or benefits of different options.

The consultation document highlights the number of significant generation projects in our East Anglia region as part of its case for reinforcement of the high voltage transmission network. We understand that 10% of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects with 30% of the UK's energy come through Suffolk. It also appears that a significant proportion of the increased flow and resilience is to benefit the needs of London. The consultation does not appear to acknowledge the bigger picture of the consequent impact of all these developments on our landscape with little or no benefit accruing to local communities.

Whilst we recognise the need to meet growing demands for energy, and are fully supportive of the concept of offshore wind farms to generate abundant, cheap, clean energy, we do not believe that the proposal as presented is fit for purpose, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed pylons at 45m to 50m high are significantly larger than the existing pylon network which passes through our parish. They will dominate the landscape on which they will sit both in terms of the footprint required for their siting and their height and visibility across the parish and surrounding areas. The A1120 over which they will pass is a designated tourist route – hardly designed to encourage tourists to visit the area. Whilst Dedham is a designated AONB we would regard our own landscape as equally beautiful and significant to our communities



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2. The corridor as proposed is effectively presented as a 'fait accompli' with no alternatives presented on which to express a view. Therefore, all we are left with is the opportunity to comment in the future on the proposed siting of individual pylons within the corridor, potentially pitting neighbour against neighbour when pylons are proposed for their land or property.
3. The proposed corridor passes through prime agricultural land and adjacent to businesses and properties, some of which are listed or have architecturally significant features. In addition to its dominance over the landscape there will be significant disruption and damage to the ecology of our area, its flora and fauna especially during the construction phase which we would expect to last for several years.
4. The construction of the transmission network will result in severe disruption to our community. This phase will require the building of temporary roads and other facilities to enable construction of the network. Farmers will lose access to portions of their land for a prolonged period (and some of it forever), public footpaths and rights of way will be closed, and the daily lives of the local community will be impacted for several years.
5. The impact of these proposals will be widely felt in our community. Not only in terms of the visual aspects and the impact on the landscape and ecology previously highlighted but on the people who live or work in our community. Given that the proposals are now in the public domain, properties along the route are likely to be blighted and either impossible to sell or significantly reduced in value. Farmland may be unavailable for periods at a time resulting in a loss of production and consequent impact on incomes. There are also concerns about the effects of extremely low frequency electromagnetic fields (ELF-MF) on the health of people living close to pylons.
6. Although the FAQ section on the website refers to socio-economic and community benefits and the National Grid Community Grant Programme it is unclear what mitigation will be put in place for individuals and local communities and how this will be realised.

Given that much of the power generation in Suffolk is located offshore or adjacent to the shore (Sizewell B and C) we ask that National Grid reconsider its proposals and adopt a coordinated offshore approach which will minimise onshore infrastructure by running subsea cables. If National Grid continue to argue that costs of this approach are prohibitive, we would prefer to see the new pylon transmission network sited immediately parallel to the existing corridor to minimise further impact on the landscape.

Yours sincerely

Mark Gillett

Chair, Earl Stonham Parish Council

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