

## **Councillor Warboys**

### **East Anglia GREEN Consultation Response submitted to Cabinet 6 June 2022**

#### **Statement to MSDC Cabinet re National Grids Proposals for 110 miles of mostly overhead transmission lines, otherwise East Anglia Green Energy Enablement**

First, the consultation, the response proforma does much to establish the need for and lead us to support this proposal as the UK adopts widespread use of renewable energy, essential to delivering net zero carbon emissions by 2050. So far so good, but this is the only green element of this proposal, and the only significant consultative part. It assumes that we have decided on the car model and now for the options list.

There are no viable alternatives proposed. This consultation is about refining the proposal.

The proposal is about the transmission of power through Suffolk, it is not driven by Suffolk energy needs, the question needs to be asked: "Why through when it can go around?"

Another National Grid project is Sealink which will connect Sizewell with Richborough in Kent, an offshore link.

National Grid identified 23 possible reinforcement solutions and in April 2022 produced a Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study Report.

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/142461/download>

and the appendices

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/142466/download>

East 7 the proposed scheme is not the cheapest, estimated at £2.189 billion, the closest to East 7 but with an offshore link between Norwich and Grain is East 9 estimated at £3.046 billion, a difference of £857 million. An easy decision one should expect however these costs do not factor in the individual cost to every householder within 300m of the route

A study by Dr Sally Sims, a lecturer in real estate and construction at Oxford Brookes University reveals that valuers and agents tend to underestimate the effect that overhead high voltage lines have on property values, usually between 2 and 12%. Her findings confirm that living close to overhead power lines, and particularly pylons, has a negative effect on the resale value of homes, reducing their selling price by as much as 38 per cent. Homes within 300m of an overhead power line sell for as much as a third less than similar properties in the same locality.

In addition, there is the socio-economic effect of planning blight whilst construction is underway.

<https://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/490634/study-verifies-pylon-impact>

An offshore route would not be without its environmental impact but, in its own assessment National Grid claims it is possible to mitigate against this.

Gislingham Ward is one small section, about 10% of the proposed route, the route passes Wickham Skeith, skirts Gislingham, proceeds across the southern end of Mellis Common, passing three historic monument sites in Burgate through Wortham and touching the edge of Wortham Ling – a SSSI- before crossing the Waveney Valley to Bressingham. Wortham alone has 58 grade 11 buildings.

This part of Suffolk retains its medieval settlement patterns interspersed with commons, ancient woodlands and rolling farmland. It is an important asset as an amenity to local residents and also an important aspect of what makes Suffolk attractive to tourists.

This cannot be valued easily but to dismiss it as collateral damage is short-sighted to say the least.

The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy – EN5 - sets out the factors influencing site/route. It states that: “at particularly sensitive locations the potential adverse landscape and visual impacts of an overhead line proposal may make it unacceptable in planning terms, taking account of the specific local environment and context. The IPC will have to balance these against other relevant factors, including the need for the proposed infrastructure, the availability and cost of alternative sites and routes and methods of installation.”

I was invited by Mr Kemp of Spring Farm Gislingham to view the route of the pylons as it crossed his land, North to South across the railway line. We could see a pristine swathe of countryside from Mendlesham mast in the south, Thornham Estate to the East, and across the Dove Valley to Big Wood before it would turn slightly and travel between two Special Landscape areas. Context here is everything, Special Landscape areas cannot exist in isolation, if their context is diminished so are they. This is a part of Suffolk that has been nourished by successive generations, avenues of trees planted, habitats conserved.

Individuals, small groups, and parish councils have all contacted me to express dismay and opposition to the proposals, there is some support for underground cables, and some support for alternative, lower pylons but overwhelmingly the message is that the route should be offshore.

I ask MSDC cabinet to consider rejecting totally this proposal, to appeal directly to OFGEM and the Secretary of State that the offshore route 9 be reappraised, in the light of the excessive costs of the overland route in terms of financial impact, harm to our shared heritage, and loss of amenity to our residents. These factors should be considered in addition to the basic structural costs.

Rowland Warboys

5th June 2022.