



TERLING AND FAIRSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Frankie Killby

3 Pilgrims Court, Cuckoo Hill, Bures, Essex CO8 5LF

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Terling & Fairstead Parish Council's response to National Grid's East Anglia GREEN Energy Enablement Proposal

It should be noted that the Parish Council, along with its residents, has only had a very short time to respond to the scheme, in what has been an inadequate consultation process.

Consultation Process

- The East Anglia Green consultation process is inadequate, there are errors and inconsistencies, and it is deemed to have been presented as a fait accompli, instead of presenting options.
- The consultation does not cover the apparent decision already made by National Grid for the new pylon line to be overground, when it was specifically chosen against a viable undersea cable route, without any public engagement or explanation. New offshore generated electricity should be transmitted offshore, coming ashore as close to the target population centres, in this instance at Tilbury, for transmission to London.
- Our community feel there is insufficient evidence to make an informed response.
- The consultation is also premature, given the offshore transmission review due to be published imminently, and the forthcoming consultation for Sea Link.
- Public exhibitions were held mostly during office hours when many potential attendees would be at work. Not everyone within 1km of the swathe was contacted. Most of the available information was online which precludes many of our residents from accessing it. We believe the consultation process should be re-evaluated. There is a need to go back a step to allow for a more effective consultation.
- With this in mind, a low response from the public should not be interpreted as a lack of interest.

Alternative Options

- Why are other alternatives not being considered, such as an Offshore Grid.?
- Pylons are thought to be very much a 20th Century solution to a 21st Century problem.

Planning Policies

- It is understood that The National Grid is to undertake an assessment process when developing its proposals, that seeks to meet National Grid's duties and follow both National Planning policy and the Holford Rules.
- National Planning Policy which states settlements should be avoided has been ignored and in identifying a preferred route over the settlement of Fairstead, and in particular, the more southern course, south of St Mary's Church (Grade 1 Listed), National Grid is also in breach of Holford Rule 2. This states that smaller areas of high amenity value should be avoided and that routes should minimize the effects on the setting of areas of architectural, historic and archaeological interest including Listed Buildings. The landscape and visual impact of the scheme in this sensitive area must be considered.



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- South of Fairstead Church, on The Essex Way, an extremely well-used Public Right of Way, has a very fine view. A pylon route across here would fundamentally change the rural setting of the 12th Century Church, 'setting' being highly relevant in the protection of a heritage asset. Additionally, it would severely impact the amenity of those walking The Essex Way, spoiling one of the most iconic views of a rural church on this popular walking route. If the southern route was selected, (the area identified under the darkest purple part of the swathe), in total 24 properties would be severely affected, at least 10 of which are listed.

Other Points to Note:

- If Ofgem are to be cited for exerting pressure on National Grid to provide a most cost- effective solution to consumers, it should be noted that that the preferred solution of an offshore grid, which the Government has already committed to delivering, is the most reasonable and effective route. National Grid has published data estimating savings of £6bn to the consumer.
- The current route would have a cumulative impact on the area, where arable land is already being affected by major infrastructure projects, including the A12 widening scheme, A120 widening, Longfield Solar Farm and Chelmsford Garden Village plan. It should therefore be expected that the impact of the proposed transmission route be carefully considered in light of other existing and proposed developments in the vicinity and would require joined up thinking with other DCO's. The disruption and impact of these combined schemes is of great concern.
- Also affected by the current route would be ancient agricultural land, known as the Terling Farmland Plateau and would very likely dissect several protected lanes, in particular Fairstead Hall Lane and Fairstead Road, as well as dwarfing lower-level settlements. Also, the proposed route would run very close to Ivy & Troys Woods, two ancient woodlands. There appears to have been no reference to DEFRA maps, which clearly show proposed routes running over SSSI's along the River Ter.
- The installation process and existence of the Pylons would have a detrimental effect on bio-diversity which no level of mitigation can ease.
- The Parish Council is concerned about the adverse impact this scheme would have on residents and the blight from noise pollution emitting from pylons.

Alternative Pylon Routes (on the assumption that an offshore link is ignored)

- IF (and this is a very poor alternative) this proposed overland route were to be built, the preservation of areas of outstanding beauty and historic importance cannot be ignored. These pylons will be fixed on the skyline for generations to come and have a massive long term negative impact on our wonderful Essex countryside. T pylons and undergrounding should also be considered as an alternative if no other options are deemed possible.
- The alternative route National Grid have identified, towards the northern edge of the graduated swathe should be encouraged over the southern route as it would have less dramatic impact on the majority of Fairstead properties and residents, (including Grade I listed Fairstead Church).



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- Whilst Fuller Street has, quite rightly, been spared the brunt of the proposals, it is important for the route to be taken as far to the north of Fuller Street as possible to avoid a concentration or 'wirescape' (to ensure compliance with Holford Rule 6). Fuller Street already has two power lines and a third close to the hamlet with converging routes would indeed create an undesired massing.

In Summary

- The information made available to date does not provide fully considered proposals for the undersea option, which may or may not have already been considered by National Grid. As such it could be argued that the consultation has missed the first step in engaging with a wider community on possible options for transmission and instead, has already narrowed its focus to a single overground overhead powerline option. This options analysis must be carried out and public engagement undertaken on it before any further detailed consideration can be given to the overground option forward.
- New offshore-generated electricity should be transmitted offshore via an offshore grid. There is absolutely no point in creating greener energy offshore and then creating an extremely Carbon heavy infrastructure via pylons to transmit the electricity to its destination.
- There is clearly a strong need to create a HV transmission network in the Eastern region. An offshore grid would help to future proof the infrastructure and allow for easier connections for additional wind farms, allow for easier maintenance access without impacting on residents, businesses, communities and, importantly, nature.
Lord Debden, Chairman of the Climate Change Committee has said he is in favour of undersea cables linking renewable energy sources together.
- Iberdrola, through its subsidiary Scottish Power and National Grid has already built Western Link, an 850 Km high voltage cable, 770 km of which are undersea, connecting Scotland with Wales & England. We therefore know this is achievable and believe this precedent should be followed to protect East Anglia.
- Whilst it is important that the fight against climate change should be supported, as should the drive for green energy to achieve net zero by 2050, this does not mean that all proposals which assist in reducing climate change are approved at any cost.

"Ethical decisions ensure that everyone's best interests are protected. When in doubt don't."

At this present time the Parish Council cannot in any way support this planning application as other options, ie undersea cabling, have not been sufficiently explored, the Consultation Process has been rushed and inadequate and there has been no consideration of the impact on those living on and close to the proposed route, not just in Terling and Fairstead, but throughout East Anglia as a whole.

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