



Date: August 2026

The Planning Inspectorate
By email

**PROGRESS POWER (GAS FIRED POWER STATION) ORDER 2015 – NON-MATERIAL
CHANGE APPLICATION**

RESPONSE OF MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

This is the response of Mid Suffolk District Council to the consultation on the non-material change application, NMC3, to the Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015 (the Order), received 5th August 2026.

Introduction

In accordance with the National Infrastructure Planning Guidance this response focuses on the change that is being proposed and does not go into details of wider matters relating to the underlying principles of a project. It does, however, offer comment on other matters directly related to the change applied for to aid the Secretary of State's decision on the application.

Consultation

In December 2025, Mid Suffolk District Council wrote to the Planning Inspectorate to challenge the applicant's proposed reduced consultee list as the proposed removal of work 7 from the Order would affect the provision of a benefit to the community by way of access works serving Yaxley Lake and allotments and may have indirect consequences for Parish Council owned land. Mid Suffolk District Council therefore requested that Yaxley Parish Council, Thrandeston Parish Council and Eye Town Council included as consultees on the proposed non-material change application.

As the Secretary of State has accepted the applicant's reduced consultee list and the named Parish Councils have not been consulted, Mid Suffolk District Council has undertaken to consult these parties to draw their attention to the publication of the application, the opportunity for public representation and to inform the Council's response.



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Comments on the proposal relating to Work 5: NO OBJECTION

The proposed non-material change in respect of work 5 proposes to transfer the liability of the provisions and requirements of the Order in respect of Work 5 from the applicant, Progress Power, to National Grid.

Mid Suffolk District Council considers National Grid, as the high voltage electricity network transmission operator, to be best placed to take over liability for the elements of the Order that comprise Work 5 in order to ensure effective, efficient and appropriate long term management of the substation infrastructure.

On this basis Mid Suffolk District Council raises no objection to the application insofar as it relates to Work 5 only.

Comments on the proposal relating to Work 7: OBJECTION

The Order and original assessment:

Both Works 5 and 7 of the consented development, The Progress Power (Gas Fired Power Station) Order 2015 were designed solely for the purposes of enabling the connection of power generated by the Progress Power generating station to the National Grid electricity transmission network, with associated access to the substation for the purposes of that operation as a single, standalone development, based on a transport assessment for that purpose, at a time when there were no other reasonably foreseeable developments that would be expected to connect or require access to the substation.

Unsuitable access:

As the Order currently stands, in specifying the works for the alteration of the A140 highway for Work 7 as temporary alternation of layout in Schedule 3, Part 2, the means of permanent access to the substation reverts to access via either the Leys Lane highway or the Old Norwich Road highway (assuming the permanent alteration of layout works at Schedule 3, Part 1 of the Order are completed). Neither of these highways are considered suitable for permanent access to the substation for the volume and type of vehicles associated with construction, maintenance and operation of the substation as a result of this change in generation, storage and stabilization, and all the reasonably foreseeable connecting developments that are material considerations in the determination of this non-material change application.

As the existing, permitted and reasonably foreseeable developments connecting to the Yaxley 400kv substation include electrical installations, traffic movements associated with these developments would reasonably be expected to include HGV and abnormal indivisible load (AIL) movements to transport components, which cannot be accommodated by either Leys Lane or Old Norwich Road.

Cumulative effects:



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Since 2015, the landscape of electricity generation, storage and grid stabilisation demand, development and operation has changed considerably and beyond reasonable expectation, in response to the Government's commitments to the Net Zero agenda and Clean Power 30 objectives. This has resulted in a significant number of projects seeking connection agreements to connect to the Yaxley 400kv substation as a sought-after point of connection to the transmission network, in order to deliver renewable energy generation and storage, as well as associated grid stabilisation infrastructure.

The cumulative effects of permitted and reasonably foreseeable developments in the area connecting to the Yaxley 400kv substation has resulted in a materially different planning context for decision making since the 2015 Order was consented which have not been appropriately assessed in the Environmental Statement submitted with the original application for the Progress Power development. Such developments include:

- EcoPower solar and BESS NSIP
- Conrad Energy synchronous condenser
- Field BESS
- Zenobe Yaxley BESS (TEC register entry 1st Sep 2026)
- Lightsource Yaxley PV (TEC register entry 1st Sep 2026)
- NatPower Yaxley Green Energy Park (TEC register entry 1st Sep 2026)
- Noventum Yaxley (TEC register entry 1st Sep 2026)
- CONNECTID 2 LTD (TEC register entry 1st Sep 2026)
- Yaxley GEC (Ethos Green) (TEC register entry 1st Sep 2026)

There are other reasonably foreseeable developments that MSDC are aware of which are not yet in the public domain.

Unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and rights of way users:

Mid Suffolk District Council encourage the Inspectorate to visit the site to witness the condition of these highways (please refer to photographs attached) which, due to their narrow width and proximity to residential properties houses would result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of residential occupants by noise, vibration, dust, emissions and disturbance from such vehicle movements. The dense vegetation enclosing the highways together with the designation of Leys Lane as a public right of way bridleway would result in right of way users being unacceptably impacted by the conflict of facing oncoming large vehicles with no safe refuge.

Loss of community benefits:

As none of Work 7 to the east of Leys Lane has yet been constructed, the proposed removal of Work 7 from the Order would also result in the loss of committed community benefits from the Progress Power development as detailed as works of permanent alternation of layout in Schedule 3, Part 1 of the Order, insofar as these works would provide improved access from Old Norwich Road to Yaxley lake, the Quiet Sports Fishery recreational fishing lake and the Yaxley Parish Council allotments.

Mid Suffolk District Council consider this loss of benefit to be unacceptable.



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Consequential reliance temporary access:

It is also necessary to consider the consequences of the proposed removal of Work 7, and the unsuitability of Leys Lane and Old Norwich Road as accesses to the substation, in terms of the reliance such a decision will place on the existing temporary access from the A140 to the north-east, that is due to be reinstated by Progress Power / Conrad in accordance with their respective conditional planning permissions.

The grant of permission DC/19/02267 for a temporary construction access for use, by Progress Power, for the construction of the substation (Work 5) was considered acceptable due to the short term and reversible nature of the development. The planning permission includes conditions to control the removal of the temporary access works and reinstatement of the land prior to the final commissioning of Work 5.

Subsequent to this, an application for permission for a synchronous condenser development, to be constructed using the same temporary access and to be delivered within a similar timeframe as the construction of Work 5, was granted subject to the same condition for the removal of the temporary access works and reinstatement of the land.

Mid Suffolk District Council understands that both Work 5 and the synchronous condenser development may have been substantially completed and the temporary access has not been removed at the time of writing, in breach of the conditions of the respective planning permissions. We respectfully suggest the Secretary of State satisfies themselves that there is no conflict in this respect in terms of the decision taken on this non-material change application before determination.

It is also relevant to note that Mid Suffolk District Council are aware of further developments connecting to the Yaxley 400kv substation, as application / pre-application submissions or otherwise reasonably foreseeable that are proposing to use the temporary access or with no access details yet confirmed. These developments include the EcoPower Suffolk solar NSIP, grid scale Battery Energy Storage Developments and other electrical infrastructure developments.

The temporary access was not intended for this volume and nature of traffic and is not considered suitable to support such developments as a permanent access for reasons including:

- The access design has not been informed by an appropriate transport assessment for permanent use by the volume and nature of traffic expected to use a permanent access including AILs.
- The bellmouth from the A140 highway has proven to not be functionally practicable or adequate for the vehicles currently using the access for Progress Power / Conrad, as evidenced by overrunning of the highway verge.
- Additional traffic will increase the risk of harm to the non-designated heritage asset dispersal apron by deterioration of its surface.
- There is uncertainty regarding the structural capacity of the culverted watercourse to support the volume and nature of traffic expected to use a permanent access.



- The access lies in an area of open, elevated plateau landscape and within an equivalent scheduled status co-axial field system, the harm to which has not been appropriately assessed.

Appropriate permanent access solution:

There is an immediate and growing need for an appropriately designed, sustainable permanent access serving the Yaxley 400kv substation that is capable of supporting the nature and volume of traffic movements associated with all reasonably foreseeable developments in the area connecting to, and requiring access to the substation for construction, maintenance and operation.

Should the Secretary of State determine that Work 7 remain within the Order, or the liability for Work 7 be transferred to National Grid as operator and liable party for Work 5, Mid Suffolk District Council is committed to working constructively with the liable parties, Suffolk County Council, the Parish Councils and other respective stakeholders to design and delivery and appropriate alternative access to the substation.

Conclusion

Mid Suffolk District Council has no objection to the application insofar as it relates to the transfer of liability for Work 5 to National Grid.

Mid Suffolk District Council objects to the application insofar as it relates to the removal of Work 7 for the reasons outlined above.

Mid Suffolk District Council Consider the impacts of the proposal are such that it amounts to a material change to the Order and should be considered by way of examination in public to allow appropriate assessment of all considerations and impacts.

Notwithstanding the objections above, should the Secretary of State consider it appropriate to remove Work 7 from the Order, Mid Suffolk District Council respectfully request that those elements of Work 7 comprising the works of permanent alteration of layout described at Schedule 3, Part 1 to improve Old Norwich Road and the access road serving Yaxley Lake be completed by Progress Power.

Kind regards,


Director of Place
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