

Written representation of input to OFH3 on Tuesday 24th March 2026

by Marianne Fellowes, resident of Aldeburgh.

Amidst uncertainty, one looks for constants - for connection to place and community, for peace and tranquillity, to find beauty in nature, do something to make a difference. In fact, that is exactly what social prescribers would prescribe. So this weekend I did a little pick at Benhall adjacent to the area that will be used to construct and access the potential convertor station proposed as part of this project. And I had what is known in theatre terms, as a presentiment. It's a taste of things to come.

With the A12 junction with A1094 completed closed, I witnessed a dangerous increase in traffic and speeds along all the feeder roads that residents and visitors use and navigate. Later on the same day I had to use a diversion route and it was totally inappropriate, a single-track road – which meant that vehicles met head on, parking was not restricted, and HGVs had to mount pavements (where they existed) and verges. This is what it's going to be like if these proposals are accepted. And 7 days a week from 6am in the morning as traffic starts to make its way to compounds, if the Applicant gets its way regarding working hours and preparatory work hours.

Unfortunately, a focus purely on numbers, in traffic assessments which are under-estimated will not prevent a potentially fatal accident caused by just one vehicle in the wrong place, at the wrong speed at the wrong time. The roads around here are not suitable for the sort of industrialisation that is needed for the deliver of the project, and this cannot be mitigated for. There is inadequate monitoring now or proposed, and action will be retrospective to any issue, not preventative. From the deterioration of the surfaces to the need for traffic calming, and alternative routing, road closures and formal TROs – the financial cost and time delay will far exceed any estimate by the Applicant currently. This application if granted would also risk the delivery of the NSIPs already approved.

As ExA during your visits, you will have already witnessed the scale of the disruption this community is experiencing. Your colleagues speaking about SPR EA1N and EA2 cautioned against any further infrastructure. I ask you to consider the people of Friston, Aldeburgh and Saxmundham and those along the cable routes, especially the 25 households of Manor Gardens, the White Arch retirement village of 20 homes, the 54 households in Stanfield and the 190 on the east side of the A12 in Bennell. And all the businesses in this area who are going to face a disproportionate harm to any benefit of this project. The Applicant themselves said it was going to be impossible to mitigate or compensation for some harms. And just because some harms cannot be quantified, we cannot presume they are negligible or insignificant, it could equally be the opposite magnitude.

There is clear evidence between uncertainty and reducing mental health and increased anxiety and depression. This is made worse by perceived poor communication that we've had from the developer, from the early stages of the consultation (which is supposed to be in the 'front ended' part of the NSIP) and their lack of assessment and their inadequate level of detail in this DCO.

The Applicant is being forced now to find other solutions very late within the DCO. As you have seen, in these OFHs and in the volume of individuals registered as Interested Parties, a lack of trust and limited involvement in decision making creates a feeling that personal well-being is not being prioritized. The people most affected are not being heard or considered. How can every harm be downgraded as 'not significant' when to a number of individual receptors - it certainly is. i.e. evaluation not just on overall numbers/volume of harm.

This increased harm is on top of what we are actually already experiencing. Disrespectfully called 'SZC background' by the Applicant. There is guidance and precedence, in the public domain, for the Applicant to be able to do more to support individuals and businesses.

This includes;

1. HS2 Phase Two report to a Commons Select Committee advocated for mental health monitoring and the project set up a Public Advisory group as a 'critical friend' and to give advice from a public perspective.

2. Public Health England now called 'UK Health Security Agency' in 2020 also stated that NSIP schemes can be of such scale in nature (as a result of construction and operational aspects) that they will impact the overarching protective factors or good mental health – which are;

- Enhancing control (or agency for individuals)
- Increasing resilience and community assets,
- Facilitating participation and promoting inclusion.

Going back to my first point – to combat stress caused by these projects we should bathe in nature, walk along quiet footpaths and experience peace and birdsong etc. but these projects are taking away our nature and tranquillity and just adding to the stress not only by the impact of creating the infrastructure needed where there is no industrialisation here, but in the way they are engaging (with no protective factor of feeling engaged or involved) and propose to deliver the elements...their way, 24/7, at the best financial spend level to them (without our inclusion).

Mental health and wellbeing should be assessed. Identified and mitigation provided locked down into the DCO with an adequate contingency to cover what we may face but do not know currently. An estimation of community anxiety and stress must be considered if you are minded to agree. The Applicant proposes to now use the SZC Link Road. Additional traffic added to this and the feeder roads, will also have negative consequences on the same cohort of people, as we travel around this small geographic area, that must be assessed and mitigated. The cost to the Applicant to include these better solutions and mitigate is actually going to be very, very high. I ask them - you may wish to reconsider, pause and reevaluate this whole scheme.

I would certainly ask the ExA to decline to recommend, and enable a pause and re-evaluation to be undertaken and for the project to be located into an area which would not need as much infrastructure put in, on a brown field site where adequate roads exist, and where additional traffic or impacts already discussed at ISHs would not be as negatively harmful. It is in the wrong place. It is the wrong time. It is not needed. Thank you.