

PLANNING INSPECTORATE OPEN FLOOR HEARING
NORWICH 12/2/26
TACOLNESTON PARISH COUNCIL
Transcript of Representation

I represent the parishioners of Tacolneston who, whilst we understand the imperative to get offshore energy to London, we feel that we've not been properly consulted from the beginning. If we had, there are innovations we would have suggested; a long cycle route from Tilbury to Norwich, with the buried cables underneath. This would provide a massive bonus to communities along the line in terms of tourism and the economy.

Our beautiful, well-wooded historic village of Tacolneston is listed in the Domesday Book. It has a Conservation Area which is quite rare in South Norfolk. It has 33 listed buildings, including the Grade I 13th Century All Saints Church and three manors. There's the Great Field with evidence of Saxon strip farming and archaeological finds running the gamut through the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlements. A fine mount from a sword scabbard from about 850AD made of gold and cloisonné garnets was found on the Great Field.

The Great Field is the site of National Grid's proposed pylon numbers 33, 34 and 35 between these sites the pylons and accompanying construction haul, roads, etc. the archaeology is vulnerable to destruction.

Real harm to our environment is inevitable if this project is allowed to go ahead. For example, we recently made a tree protection order on the Stickfer Oak, which is an ancient tree with a girth of over five metres, situated next to pylon number 33 on the haul road. I know that the TPO will be superseded if the project is allowed to go ahead.

There are many examples of wildlife; wild red deer herds, great crested newts, rare crayfish and we also have maternity colonies of Barbastelle bats.

Our objection is based on the overwhelming and irreparable harm that the development will inflict on the natural environment. The visual amenity of the landscape and the well-being of our community. The proposed route cuts directly through the heart of the unspoiled and tranquil rural landscape. Tacolneston is situated within a predominantly agricultural and ecologically sensitive area. The introduction of 50 metre high steel lattice pylons will irrevocably industrialise this beautiful landscape. The sheer scale of the pylons will constitute an unacceptable, dominating and permanent scar on the horizon, destroying the character of the countryside, which is valued by both residents and visitors. The parish council maintains that this visual intrusion is disproportionate to the perceived national benefit, and represents a failure to respect the local environment.

The construction and presence of this vast infrastructure will result in significant and unavoidable ecological damage. The construction phase alone will involve heavy vehicle movements, habitat fragmentation and disruption to local watercourses and soil health. Furthermore, the permanent pylon highways and the maintenance requirements will require the clearance of natural vegetation, disrupting established ecosystems and local wildlife corridors.

Our council strongly objects to the assumption that an overhead line is the only viable solution, given the project's magnitude and the proximity to existing infrastructure, the preference for overhead lines over underground or sub-sea cabling represents a short-term, cost-driven decision that disregards future-proofing, long-term environmental value and community impact. We assert that the national significance of the landscape demands that most modern and least intrusive solution, that is undergrounding, be mandated, as is common practice in other sensitive areas internationally.

The proposed route will result in direct impacts on residents, including;

Property Devaluation.

Severance of Land, - the agricultural land being severed, making farming operations less efficient and potentially unviable for local businesses

Disruption of Amenities.

We urge the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State to reject the current proposal for overhead line development. The long-term detrimental and irreversible impact on the landscape and community far outweigh the arguments for the chosen route and method.

We demand that National Grid re-evaluates the entire scheme and adopts a policy of full undergrounding.

We look forward to receiving confirmation that our objection has been considered.

Thank you.