

COMMENTS ON THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO THE OPEN FLOOR HEARING (REP1-140)

The Parishes Group notes the Applicant's Response. Due to its summary nature and the methodology used, it is difficult to be sure where the Applicant is specifically responding to the points made by the Group's representative at OFH2. However, the following 2 paragraphs appear to allude to the Group's points:

ALTERNATIVES THAT FOLLOW THE A12 CORRIDOR (page 11):

The Group welcomes the Applicant's acceptance that 'there could be potential benefits from infrastructure being concentrated geographically' and that close paralleling of transport infrastructure would appear 'beneficial in some short sections'. However, most of paragraph then appears to argue against close paralleling the A12 completely, as that would clearly affect a succession of towns villages and hamlets. But that is a different argument - it does not touch upon the Group's point that close paralleling the A12 WHERE THIS IS POSSIBLE is a positive factor to consider in route selection.

The Group's case, set out in its Written Representations at Deadline 1, is that there are a variety of advantages in N2T following the A12 in the 'short section' between Boreham and the Galleywood/Stock A12/B1007 junction.

ALTERNATIVES AT GREAT AND LITTLE WALTHAM (page 11):

In its Written Representations at Deadline 1, the Parishes Group presented a detailed examination of alternative routes to the east and south of Chelmsford. The Applicant's summary comments in this Response shed no real light on its reasons for rejecting this option, without consultation. To avoid repetition, we will not repeat our case now but would be grateful to respond at Deadline 3 should the Applicant be forthcoming with a more illuminating response by then.

At this stage, the Group simply notes that, in particular, the Applicant's Response provides no explanation of the failure to properly consider rationalisation with the existing 440 and 132kv lines to the east of Chelmsford (particularly through undergrounding the 132kv line) either at the outset or subsequently. The Applicant's draft Statement of Common Ground with UK Power Networks (REP1 – 109) reveals that NG has been in discussion with UKPN since 2021 on these issues, so clearly rationalisation was under consideration in principle from the outset.

According to the Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study Appendices (7.18 Errata 2022, p.D21), avoiding 'technical complexity' was a key reason for preferring a north and west route to an east and south route around Chelmsford. We believe it would be helpful for the Examining Authority, as well as other stakeholders, to be able to understand what concrete steps were taken to assess the potential for rationalisation as a way of overcoming these 'technical complexities' in the east and south of Chelmsford option.