

National Grid has issued a paper entitled “Document: 8.4.12.2 Response to ISH2 Action Point 27 – Masterplans” – Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027. Appendix D is supposed to show opportunities close to the EACN at Ardleigh, and purporting to set out plans to introduce tree planting and other mitigants. The owners of the Grade 2 Listed Heritage Asset, [REDACTED] Farm, situated in Hungerdown Lane, Ardleigh, and with a boundary just 10 metres away from National Grid’s boundary (order limits) are, once again, extremely concerned to note the lack of any form of realistic mitigation. [REDACTED] Farm is shown as having a border of woodland on two of its boundaries – this is correct, and was planted by the current owners approximately 35 years ago. However, it should be noted that the trees are 95% deciduous, and will provide no protection against noise pollution during the winter months. They will also provide no mitigation against the five 50 metre high pylons that will loom over this Grade 2 Heritage Asset (Pylons TB1, TB2, TB3, TB4 and TB5). And this is after National Grid has referred to [REDACTED] Farm in its Vol.6 Environmental Statement, 14.7 Operational Noise Assessment, P. 9 of 22 as “the worst affected receptor.”

The proposed EACN substation is shown on National Grid’s “Action Point 27: Ardleigh and Little Bromley – Draft Opportunities Plan” as being surrounded by the EACN Environmental Area. As this Environmental Area is immediately opposite, extremely close to and in full view of the Grade 2 Heritage Asset, [REDACTED] Farm, the EACN Environmental Area should be specifically stated. To call it just the “EACN Environmental Area” and to show a pretty picture with green colouring is far too woolly.

Heading north from the proposed EACN Substation site, and directly towards the wood belonging to the Grade 2 Heritage Asset, Hungerdowns, there is an arrow which indicates “opportunities for links to local nature recovery strategy, strategic areas.” This will directly take in the land belonging to a business, Holly Tree Nurseries. Has any effort been made to consult with the owners of this business? Have they been made fully aware of NG’s proposed plans? It is highly unlikely.

Heading north east from the north east corner of the wood belonging to Hungerdowns there is an arrow which indicates “opportunities for connective green infrastructure enhancements.” What a curious form of mitigation! Is National Grid aware that this area of Hungerdown Lane consists of 30-40 individual properties? These properties mostly already have mature hedges facing the lane, and it is difficult to see what further mitigation NG is proposing. If NG proposes to place “connective green infrastructure” further away from the lane this seems ambitious, if not impracticable. It would require negotiating with 30-40 landowners to give up part of the back gardens, so that the “connective green infrastructure” could be created. In addition some of the owners run businesses from the properties, such as organic vegetable supplies and equestrian centres. This strongly suggests that NG has failed to do any credible research.

Furthermore the Grade 2 Heritage Asset, [REDACTED] Farm, situated with a boundary of just 10 metres from NG’s boundary and surrounded on nearly 3 sides by NG’s boundary, has been offered no such mitigation. The site of [REDACTED] Farm is immediately opposite, extremely close to and in full view of NG’s proposed EACN substation. What mitigation is NG proposing to offer to the owners of [REDACTED] Farm, and why has it not been included in the “Action Point 27: Ardleigh and Little Bromley – Draft Opportunities Plan?”

It would seem to the owners of the Grade 2 Heritage Asset, [REDACTED] Farm, that NG has made no serious attempt to respond to the Inspectorate’s request. Where is the communication and so-called consultation from NG to explore opportunities and mitigation? Where is the desire to engage with communities that NG would seem so eager to promote? Again, the suggestion is that NG has failed to do any credible research either for the Grade 2 Heritage Asset, [REDACTED] Farm, or for the 30-40

landowners further to the north in Hungerdown Lane. It would appear that the preparation of the master plan by NG is nothing more than a box ticking exercise, and that, once again, NG is showing the typical arrogance and lack of consultation that has been apparent throughout the whole of the Norwich to Tilbury process. Properly thought-out biodiversity enhancements and mitigation are essential in relation to this project. Put quite simply, NG needs to return to the drawing board.