

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 of 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 as 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 little mitigation against the five 50 metre high pylons that will loom over this Grade 2 Heritage Asset (Pylons TB1, TB2, TB3, TB4 and TB5). They provide no mitigation for the actual house forming part of the heritage asset.

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.

National Grid has previously conceded that they see no possible way of mitigating the impact on [REDACTED] Farm, which is a Heritage Asset. The owners of the property have proposed that the EACN be moved some 300 metres to the east, which would give some relief. However, NG has not responded to this suggestion. Nor have they responded to the suggestion that the EACN substation be built underground to reduce noise. This is despite National Grid’s evidence to the DCO examination document 6.14.A3 which described [REDACTED] Farm as “the worst affected Noise Sensitive Receptor” affected by the Scheme. It concludes that the specific sound level at [REDACTED] Farm is predicted to exceed the night time background sound level by 14dB unless mitigation is put in place.

There has been no mention of the wirescape that will be completed by the siting of the EACN substation, next to the North Falls and Five Estuaries onshore substations, together with the existing 132kV pylons and power lines feeding the substation at Lawford. Indeed, it is ironic that NG have described the site for the North Falls and Five Estuaries substations as being an area of “mitigation proposals” without explaining what these words mean. Why not be upfront and call the whole area a wirescape.

NG is trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the Planning Inspectorate. It has, once again, failed to do any credible research in relation to mitigation for the Grade 2 Heritage Asset, [REDACTED] Farm. It has seen the preparation of the master plan as nothing more than a box-ticking exercise. NG need to rethink and return to the drawing board.