

Norwich to Tilbury Deadline 8 – Comments on further information received by Deadline 7

By the North-West and South-West of Chelmsford Parishes Group

Introduction

1. North-West and South-West of Chelmsford Parishes Group ('the Parishes Group'/'the Group') is an alliance of 9 parish councils: Broomfield, Chignal, Great Waltham, Highwood, Ingatestone and Fryerning, Little Waltham, Margaretting, Roxwell and Writtle.

Applicant's Comments on any Further Information or Submissions Received by Deadline 6 [REP7-481]

2. On pages 76-78 of this document, the Applicant responds to our REP6-160 regarding the Applicant's lack of engagement with the Alison Farmer Associates Landscape Report (the 'AFA Report').
3. The Parishes Group welcomes this, albeit belatedly at the final stage of the Examination. In particular, the Group notes the Applicant's comment that the ES also shows:

'that there will be significant heritage and landscape effects, with potential for effects on landscape character, heritage assets, views including from long-distance walks'

along the Preferred Route west of Chelmsford as a result of the Application. This is welcome as it indicates a measure of common ground between the Parishes Group and the Applicant.

4. However, the Applicant's comments do not go on to address the main thrust of the Report, which lies in the section comparing the Preferred Route with a 'close parallel' route within Corridor L and then into the western part of Corridor Q.
5. Nothing in these comments suggest that the Applicant disputes the conclusions of this comparison, i.e. that the close parallel alignment would result in considerably less harm than the Preferred Route. Rather, the Applicant's comments show it continues to reject the east/south alternative mainly for reasons of '*technical complexities*' - there is no explanation of the economic and environmental factors that are briefly referred to.
6. From the reference to tunnelling, it seems likely that the 'technical complexities' refer to Sandon village, where the Applicant has made a similar comment before. On this point, the Parishes Group would draw the ExA's attention to the wide range of potential alignments within Corridor L – these are mapped in the Group's Written Representation [REP1-261]. Only one of these alignments would route through Sandon. Another potential alignment (Map 1b, variation I – J) would keep the OHL to the eastern side of the A12, bypassing the complexities at Sandon altogether.
7. Regarding the Applicant's other comments:
 - The Group agrees that the AFA Report is not an LVIA. But, as explained in the introduction, it is sufficiently detailed to provide a reasonable understanding of the likely impacts and to enable route options to be compared, which is its purpose;
 - The Group also agrees that the Report reviews the PEIR rather than the ES directly. However, when the ES was published, AFA reviewed this too and found no changes that would affect the points raised in the Report or its conclusions
 - The Group has already raised and responded to points about the Applicant's use of neighbourhood plan evidence base documents in [REP3-102], [REP5-260] and [REP7-566].

8. The Parishes Group welcomes this graphic representation of the zone affected by significant effects. It is helpful to see this plotted in map form, although it is somewhat difficult to make out the specific roads and smaller neighbourhoods beneath the yellow zone. The Parishes Group is grateful to the ExA for requesting the data to be shown in this format.
9. The map indicates the wide zone in the Parishes Group's area that would be impacted by significant effects. In our area, it stretches significantly beyond 1km from the OHL and appears to cover whole villages – Little and Great Waltham, most of Broomfield, the north-western slice of the Chelmsford urban settlement area, Chignal St James, Writtle, Highwood, almost the entirety of Hylands Park, Margaretting and the northern half of Ingatestone (not to mention smaller hamlets and properties in between).
10. In the Group's opinion, this strengthens the case for re-examining other route options in the Chelmsford area that the Applicant rejected at an earlier stage. It would be particularly useful to re-examine route options where topography and the effect of existing infrastructure might minimise the additional visual impact of the Application, such as Corridors L and Q to the east and south of Chelmsford; or indeed other means of transmission, such as HVDC underground cabling for the whole route.
11. The Parishes Group also questions why Viewpoint VP6.14 has been rated as 'not significant'. This clearly falls within the area where significant effects are identified. It looks due west towards pylon TB150, which appears to be an angle tower. It also sits within the Valued Landscape west of Church Green Broomfield, a sensitive landscape area identified in the Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan and supporting studies. The Group holds that Viewpoint VP6.14 should therefore be classified as significant. It also notes that this map supports the points about the impact on the Valued Landscape which the Group has made in REP7-566, para.s 5 – 7.