

A Catalogue of Unresolved Issues at Deadline, 8

Introduction

Firstly, I'd like to thank the Inspectors for their patience and understanding, and for their efforts to make things clear and understandable for members of the public. We as lay people have done our best to respond in the face of an unimaginably huge volume of complex and unaccustomed documentation.

I stand by my objections to Norwich to Tilbury on many grounds, and while agreeing we need further transmission of power from the wind farms (the project upon which we were consulted), still maintain there are better ways of doing it, on which we should have been consulted.

Gunning Principles state that consultations should take place when proposals are still at a formative stage. OHLs are purely a starting presumption. As it was, we were presented with one pre-determined project, which has barely altered during the four wasted years since it was introduced. The power remains unnecessary in East Anglia, and should go straight to London

Whilst the best option would have been a coordinated offshore grid, we still have the option of modern upgrades, and HVDC undergrounding. It should certainly not be the old fashioned huge-trenching, expensive HVAC, but – like many other NG projects - HVDC should be employed on this long route, with cable ploughs/narrow trenching.

The disastrous wildfires worldwide, but of particular note on Suffolk Heath and at smaller local sites: Middlewick Ranges and various farmland, cause catastrophic environmental and ecological destruction to all kinds of wildlife. It is noted that some of these fires are electrically triggered.

In view of so many habitats going up in smoke, any new infrastructure to be built needs even more to protect and preserve the environment and take climate change into account. Pylons are an unnecessary industrial intrusion into wildlife corridors and habitats, and should be abandoned to the detritus of the early twentieth century.

Comments on the Applicant's responses at Deadline 7, 8.14.16, Tbl 2.1 pp71-73.

For the first time, I have to thank NG for a stand-alone response, free of document- and other references. However, they are still not listening and are still repeating that they are right about everything. *All I can do therefore is to respond very briefly that I disagree with their standpoint.*

As NG are continually repeating that they “disagree with this position” in an obdurate fashion, we have no choice now but to retaliate with the same phrase. We have spent four years explaining, and analysing, patiently and rationally, but to no avail. Barely listened to and feedback mostly ignored – whilst we're told that they are listening. They are not; the community is ignored.

All the following disagreements might be seen to call into question several of the judgements which the Applicant has chosen to make:

- As our ESNP Deficiencies Report proves, and with which an earlier Opinion of Lord Banner KC agrees, the Consultations have been deficient. *So, I disagree with The Applicant when they say they were not. We were presented with a pre-determined project.*
- We are told that they have “genuinely listened and responded”. *I disagree.*
- We are told that they have “engaged and made changes”. But the lack of consistent engagement has caused untold confusion, concern and worry among the community. They have not engaged constructively throughout the four weary years of consultations. *Minimal and limited engagement and changes, so again I disagree.*
- NG do not agree with the extremely erudite report on local Heritage from Bidwells. I consider Bidwells judgement likely to be more accurate, under the circumstances, than Historic England, whom we have found to be less than helpful with regard to protection of some wonderful heritage assets and particularly their settings in East Anglia. *Once again, I disagree with the Applicant.*
- NG also disagrees with the three Independent Reports on the local Colne Valley landscape, completed with local knowledge, and would rather take notice of Natural England with generic rules and without local knowledge. *Again, I disagree.*
- Ford street/Colne Valley, flooding. *“... the Applicant has assessed the risks of flooding ... Environment Agency flood model outputs confirm that the location is not at risk of routine flooding from the Colne. It is therefore likely that the observed conditions link to poor draining and waterlogged soil conditions”.* Incorrect, as stated by locals who know the area, as the position of pylon TB050 is flooded, on the water meadow near the river, every year, The compound behind the Maltings should be re-sited. Photographs were sent at an earlier point, more accurate than an EA flood model. *Again, I disagree with the Applicant.*

Colne Valley

1. **Bird Collisions** There need to be assessments to discover the birdlife along the potential pylons route, including farmland birds. It has been proved that small birds as well as large are likely to fly into wires, they don't see them. A few of those that are known to have been affected by OHLs, and are likely to come into the Colne Valley either on daily or seasonal migrations are: geese, little egret, barn owls, swans, mallards; buzzards, red kites, kestrel, swallows larks. (I included local Red List spp. previously)
2. **Holford Rules** In spite of endless verbiage on the part of the Applicant, I am still concerned by the inability to avoid visual destruction across the Colne Valley; like so many other “commitments” which should have been made in the DCO by NG, many of which appear to be simply deferred intentions only. All a bit just ‘wait and see’ how it works out on the day... The Holford Rules in the Colne Valley make no sense and pylons will be clearly visible in most places, where mitigation is impossible, and not helped by trees and hedges being removed.
3. **Cumulative effect** This has been mentioned several times, so I will just list the interconnected issues: River Colne and its floodplain, wetland, grassland, woodland habitats, mature trees, hedgerows, pasture, water birds established flight paths. Also heritage approaches to historic settlements Fordstreet Conservation area, listed buildings and settings and PRoW and recreation routes
4. **Respect for the Roman River LNRS** The pylons would cross this area, and it seems to have been paid minimal attention.
5. **Masterplans in Aldham/Fordham** Need to be discussed with local communities and landowners, not just approximate sketch plans full of inaccurate guesswork as to what and where to “enhance”.
6. **Loss of trees and hedges** This really worries me from the ecological point of view, and is so unnecessary. Undergrounding would remove most of the need.

7. **Future screening** If pylons should go ahead, there appears to be yet more 'hoping for the best' from NG with regard to how they will be hidden from view/screened. Once again, the plans are very vague.
8. **Aldham proximity to pylons** If they went ahead, they would be worryingly close to housing and the main population of the village. Again, use HVDC underground, and it becomes less of a problem in every way.
9. **Construction Noise** Having heard hours of discussion at the recent hearing about the noise issues, it also sounds hit and miss. Yet another issue which will not be concluded before the end of the DCO, and will cause untold misery to some areas for months if not years, over seven long days every week, and from a project which has nothing to offer the local communities except misery.

Conclusion

There are just so many, unsurmountable, problems to be worked around, it would be so much simpler and better to employ HVDC cable plough undergrounding across the entire route. Had there been more sensible projects than pylons offered at the outset, the transmission construction could now be well underway.

In the meantime, I would respectfully request that the Applicant is asked by the ExA finally to resolve the unsolved issues listed by me above at 1-9, under Colne Valley. They are among hundreds of unresolved issues which we have all been hearing of over the last four years, and during the DCO. Amongst the Applicant's obfuscation, it appears that many, many issues remain unresolved; without whose resolution, I suspect the project could not be recommended for acceptance.