



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Walker

Please accept this letter as my submission to the East Anglia Green non-statutory consultation. The Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force, of which I am a member, will make a separate submission to the consultation. I remain committed to an offshore ring main that minimises the impact of transmission infrastructure on local communities. However, this submission will primarily focus on the impact of the proposed infrastructure on my constituency.

I have received hundreds of emails from constituents who oppose the East Anglia GREEN 'swathe'. I raise four principal concerns on their behalf:

- the impact of new infrastructure on the local countryside, particularly the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting;
- the flawed Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study;
- the decision to locate the Tendring substation in Ardleigh;
- and; the inadequacy of the consultation process.

The environmental and societal impacts of East Anglia GREEN fall disproportionately on my constituents in North Essex, but they see little benefit from this new infrastructure. The first best option remains an offshore ring main. In the absence of this solution, National Grid must modify its proposals to reduce its adverse impacts through undergrounding and the coordinated rationalisation of power infrastructure, both on the network and at the substation site. There must be well-funded schemes of mitigation and community benefit.

Premature consultation process and connection scenarios

The consultation is premature (given the planned offshore review announcement this month), National Grid has already determined its preferred option, and the cost estimates used appear to be flawed. I am concerned that the process therefore does not meet the Gunning Principles, the rules that govern public consultations.

National Grid has chosen the 'swathe' against an undersea option, 'Sea Link 2'. Sea Link 2 was ruled out primarily because of its high projected cost. Constituents rightly highlight there is **ten times** more total mileage of committed offshore transmission cabling in Scotland and the north of England than in the East of England. National Grid must address why the additional cost of offshore grid investment makes sense in these areas but not in the East of England.



It is unclear whether the costs of necessary mitigations will materially affect the scenario planning conducted as part of the Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study. Constituents have highlighted other flaws with these cost estimates. For example, I am unclear why Scenario East 7 is included twice, with two costs, with a £771 million difference. Only 39% of the CAPEX for East Anglia Green is for the sections under consultation, and the Sea Link 2 and Substation costs appear to be missing.

The Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The East Anglia GREEN Project Background Document states the reinforcement will require underground cabling through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The construction phase of undergrounding will impact local habitats, archaeology, and the use of arable land: local farmers are concerned the undergrounding process will disrupt soil layering and impede drainage.

The National Planning Framework States, "development within their [Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty] setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas." I am particularly concerned about the construction to the South of the Area of Natural Beauty, leading to and from the proposed site of the Tendring substation. The double run of pylons will adversely impact the local community.

The location of the substation

I do not understand the rationale whereby a community, Ardleigh, because it already hosts existing infrastructure, a small substation, is therefore best placed to host new infrastructure, the planned Tendring substation. The new substation is much larger, 20 hectares including landscaping, likely spread across three parishes. Two further customer substations may be located nearby. This will place undue pressure on rural lanes during the construction phase, and its height and scale will impact constituents' experience of the local countryside.



The opportunity to minimise the cumulative impact of transmission infrastructure

There are already 132 kV pylon lines across the East of England. There is considerable scope to rationalise the existing network as part of East Anglia GREEN: National Grid should retire old transmission infrastructure that is no longer required as new capacity is brought online. It will require effective dialogue and cooperation between National Grid, UK Power Networks, and Ofgem. I am not convinced National Grid has adequately evaluated the potential of an offshore transmission network as an alternative to the 'swathe' under consultation, and I urge you to consider the proposal put forward by Offset carefully. National Grid must do everything in its power to minimise the impact of new infrastructure on local communities.

The future regime for Electricity transmission infrastructure

The government supports the development of a more robust and effective electricity network, consistent with the objectives of the British Energy Security Strategy, which will reduce the cumulative adverse landscape impacts of transmission infrastructure. The Future Systems Operator will soon supersede National Grid ESO. But, these principles must be reflected in the current approach to planning transmission infrastructure.

Later in June, National Grid ESO will publish the Holistic Network Design document. National Grid ESO and ET should jointly publish an updated statement on the strategic and operational rationale for East Anglia GREEN in light of these findings. There is a strong argument to extend the consultation period to allow consultees to incorporate the report in their submissions. In its current form, East Anglia Green risks undermining public support for the transmission infrastructure necessary to meet net-zero.

Yours sincerely

Sir Bernard Jenkin MP