

Mountnessing Village Council response to EastAnglia GREEN National Grid proposals.

Mountnessing Village Council objects to National Grid's proposals (dated April 2022) to build a new high voltage transmission network between Norwich and Tilbury.

We support the Government's targets towards achieving net zero, and understand that generated and grid capacity will need to double to provide the additional electrical power requirement, and to connect offshore wind farms to the network (and other generation equipment such as tidal and wave generation equipment from the Marine environment.

However, the proposed route would have the effect of hugely disfiguring a wide swathe of beautiful countryside. Other, greener, options are available, such as subsea routes, but they appear not to have been examined by National Grid.

We demand that National Grid holds a full public consultation on all options, with their methodology and costings being made available for public scrutiny, not simply an informal consultation on their pre-selected overground route.

Route Options:

The Council strongly disagrees with the process to select National Grid's preferred corridor and graduated swathe. NG has provided us with a fait accompli rather than options with pros and cons.

The Evaluation Model that NG is using to determine the qualities of one route option over another should be made public. We need to see the detail to be reassured that NG is taking factors apart from cost into consideration.

We understand other options include:

- Subsea routes, similar to the routes NG has already, such as connections from Sizewell to Kent, and as well as much longer international links, such as the North Sea link cables being installed between the UK , Denmark and The Netherlands; in particular an undersea route coming ashore at Bradwell and the taking advantage of the extant, unused 450kV backbone installed for Bradwell Nuclear Power station, this would also be very cost-effective.
- Feedback from National Grid Scotland suggests that undersea may actually be cheaper than going overland using 1950s technology.
- Underground cabling, as in Dedham Vale, although this is known to be extremely disruptive and still would leave a scar on the landscape until the vegetation regrows.
- Added to these there is much scope to uprate the capacity of existing routes.

Local issues:

The option National Grid has chosen will disfigure some particularly beautiful countryside around Ingatestone and mid Essex, for example the Wid valley to the east of Ingatestone. The route seems to cross over, or run very close to, a number of historic buildings, including Writtle Park House, Margaretting Hall, Ingatestone Hall and St. Giles Church (Grade 1& 2 listed), creating a high degree of visual intrusion and loss of amenity in an otherwise picturesque rural area. The area also contains conservation areas and SSSIs.

The route takes a tortuous route round the west of Writtle, with sharp corners, against NG's Holford Rule 3.

Where the route crosses the A127 it appears to pass over Dunton Hills Garden Village which has planning permission for 4,000 homes and is part of the Brentwood & Basildon Local plans. Existing Power cables at this site have already been agreed to be buried, NG had plenty of opportunities to input to the Local Development Plan, recently approved; but did not take part. The final consultation only finished in February; how long have NG spent planning the route?

Where the route passes over the A129 near Hutton is considered of natural beauty and forms the only green break in-between what is a continuous strip of housing.

Simply put, this route is ill-thought out, not in the least GREEN, environmentally friendly or indeed even the cheapest. The plan needs to be rejected outright and thoroughly rethought from scratch.

For & On Behalf of Mountnessing Village Council

June 2022