

To National Grid plc.

BRAMFORD TO TWINSTEAD REINFORCEMENT PROPOSALS CONSULTATION

RESPONSE OF NAYLAND WITH WISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Nayland with Wissington Parish Council commends the changes to previous plans to a proposal that includes undergrounding throughout the DSV AONB. However, we feel strongly that the sections close to the boundary of the AONB and in the proposed extension to the AONB should be included in the plans for undergrounding. The opportunity to underground additional sections will not come again. The proposed extension of the DSV AONB would be enhanced by such undergrounding.

Visual Impact of proposal on landscape

The visual impact of pylons on the area within the AONB does not stop at the boundary. The topography of the valley is such that the line of taller pylons in the areas covered by Polstead, Leavenheath and Assington will also have a visual impact on the landscape and amenity of locations within the AONB such as Nayland and Wissington. Additional underground sections would remove the need for two of the expensive and unsightly sealing compound infrastructures in areas within a short distance of each other. We feel strongly that the visual amenity of the whole area needs protection and we understand that there is concern in parishes located within the proposed extension of the AONB that the proposal will be damaged.

This Parish Council does not believe that there has been an adequate Environmental Impact Assessment along the whole route of the reinforcement or during the four-year period of consultation. The importance of views and the negative effects on the visual impact on the surrounding Countryside have not been inadequately assessed.

Impact on local economy and tourism

There does not appear to have been an adequate consideration or assessment of the importance of tourism in the whole Dedham Vale and Stour Valley area. Apart from the obvious importance of local agriculture, one of the main aspects of the local rural economy and employment involves holiday accommodation, hospitality and retail, heritage sites, and recreational activities such as long-distance footpaths and river activities, all of which are of importance to businesses within Nayland with Wissington. Visitors are attracted to the Essex and Suffolk Dedham Vale by the existence of the AONB in a unique rolling landscape views and rural activities. They also help support rural shops which helps them to remain viable for local people. Tourism value of £2,143,797,750 was contributed to the Suffolk economy in 2019. (*Economic report of Tourism Suffolk Report – destination Research: 2019*). The removal of pylons, within views of the Vale, will significantly restore the landscape to a primarily rural AONB attracting visitors from non AONB locations across the country and from abroad.

Impact on rural road network

Transport networks during construction are a cause for concern as many of the roads in the rural network of the Dedham Vale are narrow, often single track, used by horse riders, walkers, cyclists as well as normal traffic and large agricultural vehicles. Although the proposal will provide new 'haul road' construction routes for four years, there is bound to be a negative impact on the adjoining rural network.

The construction compound near the A134 in Leavenheath is close to the boundary of Nayland with Wissington. The A134 cuts through the Parish. The Parish Council feels that we need more information about the impact of this on the A134 and adjoining parishes. It is essential that there is a comprehensive protocol of routing, access and amenity impact, agreed between the constructors and the Local Authorities as well as Highways England. Its purpose would be to protect the landscape, the current ongoing rural economy as well as the amenity of the communities affected. The knock-on effect of construction should be to:

- a. Enhance the efficiency of current road network serving rural communities e.g. Nayland with Wissington
- b. Maintain and possibly improve the current deteriorating road surface & safety.

It has been difficult to visualise the impact of the increased height of the pylons and impact of the sealing and construction compounds from the flat maps provided during the consultation but there is no doubt that they will have a detrimental visual effect on the local landscape.

Conclusion

Nayland with Wissington Parish Council would therefore request that additional undergrounding of the Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement be included in your final plans before going through the application process.