

WRITTEN REPRESENTATION FOR
SPR EA1N and EA2 PROJECTS (DEADLINE 1)
CONSTRUCTION - ONSHORE CABLE CORRIDOR

Interested Party: Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council

PINS Refs: 20023110

Aldringham-Cum-Thorpe Parish Council fully supports the migration to green energy. However, this area already makes a significant contribution to the nation's energy supply, hosting two nuclear power stations and two wind farm substations, and have therefore already suffered many years of disruption. We are now facing the daunting prospect of many more years of disruption and damage from the following large-scale infrastructure projects – EA1N and EA2 Offshore Wind Farms, Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station, the National Grid Ventures Nautilus and Eurolink and extensions to the Greater Gabbard and Galloper Wind Farms. The cumulative impact to the health and wellbeing of our community brought about by all of these projects should be a major consideration of the examination. Laying enough ducts to accommodate all potential cables when the first project commences would reduce the duration of disruption, unlike the current proposals which will allow each project to lay cables independently and prolong the disruption to our community. Alternatively, limiting the window of development along the cable corridor to 4 years from the first project starting would at least give residents a defined period of disruption rather than leave things open ended.

The extensive area of land required within the AONB, SSSI and Heritage Coast will change our landscape for ever. Large scale developments in this location have the potential to significantly impact the fragile coastal margins, causing further cliff destabilisation, as well as removing many unique habitats which support numerous protected species. It is still unclear how these impacts will be successfully minimised throughout the construction. This, combined with the possibility that other projects will utilise the same cable route, will at best result in a significant loss of these unique habitats for many years. Worst case scenario would mean that that these habitats would be lost for ever. There are a number of species involved that are on the 'at risk' registers, including adders. These snakes will be extremely vulnerable during the cable excavation as the proposed route cuts through their preferred domain.

The scale of these developments will have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of our ageing community. The average age of our community is higher than the rest of the country and therefore more vulnerable to disruptions. People move here to enjoy their retirement in peaceful surroundings. The position of the cable corridor is much closer to the residential titles than previously specified. This, combined with the potential for the entire route to be sequentially utilised at a later date by other energy projects, will condemn local residents to years and years of disruption. Living with constant disruption of noise, dust and vibrations could lead to significant mental health issues, especially amongst the most vulnerable. Despite these concerns being raised at every opportunity it is still unclear how these impacts will be minimised.

This part of the coast has a very high number of visitors, making an essential contribution to maintaining a viable local economy. Disruption to footpaths, general access to the area, air quality, light, noise and dust pollution will significantly impact the local community and the

attractiveness of the area as a holiday destination. It is still unclear how the impact on the local economy will be suitably mitigated.

If these two projects go ahead and our Parish ends up hosting a large percentage of the cable run we insist that after all of the ducts are laid and cables installed the landscape is immediately returned to its original condition. On other similar projects some parts of the haul roads have been left for farmers to use and temporary plant areas re-used as farm storage areas. We do not want this to be the case in our Parish, especially at the 'pinch-point' at Fitches Lane. It is here that a number of mature Scots Pines will be felled and a significant amount of smaller trees cleared. We understand that it is impossible to replant such species or indeed any deep rooted trees due to the cables below, so we feel that a suitable landscape scheme should be provided and approved prior to work commencing.

Another aspect of the construction process that has been quietly overlooked is the 'policing' of site practices. Our parishioners in Sizewell suffered from this lack of control during the construction of the Galloper and Gabbard schemes, where out of hours working was commonplace. Before any ground is broken there should be an agreed complaints process for easily reporting any deviation from agreed working practices, run independently, paid for by the applicant and with enforceable penalties. We also feel the proposed working hours are far too long, with up to twelve working hours on weekdays and ten and a half working hours on a Saturday. These should be reduced, and only increased by exception if the justification is deemed acceptable by the Local Authority.

Good practise should be adhered to when dealing with trees that are intended to be retained, especially in the narrow cable corridor at Fitches Lane, to ensure that their root systems are protected and the trees are not left vulnerable to high winds. The cable route should be kept safe and secure at all times, and promptly restored on completion. It is essential that both EA1N and EA2 should run concurrently and any future cable laying should only be considered if ducted at this time.

A traffic management scheme should be in place governing the amount of vehicle traffic using the centre of Aldringham village. This should be readily at hand with maximum numbers specified and actual volumes carefully monitored.

The council feels that it is impossible to judge this project on its own without bearing in mind the number of similar projects all queuing up to travel the same route. To funnel 25% of this country's electricity output through our small parish towards another even smaller one seems grossly unfair and ill conceived. It is the creation, by stealth, of a large Energy Hub at Friston by National Grid Ventures without a significant enquiry that is very alarming. Perhaps that is the issue that should be decided first?

The current thinking seems to be that Government policy regards this project as 'so far down the track' as to be unstoppable. However, the general consensus is that the authorities should consider a more co-ordinated approach to the problem of getting offshore wind power on land without forcing our parishioners to endure at least ten years of disruption and our precious Suffolk landscape and environment destroyed. Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council fully support the call for a more co-ordinated approach, and object to the uncoordinated approach of these two projects as a thin end of the wedge, resulting in years of misery and disruption to our ageing community. If these applications are not refused their approval must be subject to much more effective mitigation of all areas of concern raised during this process.