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Your reference number **FC49B5FD1**

County Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

18-11-25

1. The decision-making process underlying selection of the overground cable alternative. This is stated to be on the basis of cost and timing, in that it is reportedly less expensive to overground the cables and it would not be practical to meet a deadline for installation by 2030 which is driven by the net zero decarbonisation target of same date. My concerns centre on (a) cost comparisons have been made on face value, are not transparent to the public and do not reflect the real wider costs to the British tax payer; (b) apparent lack of consideration for qualitative comparisons such as damage to the environment, socio-economic effects, wellbeing and mental stress, and related effects of infrastructure anticipated ancillary to the main pylon line.

The human factor seems to have been discounted, and the imperative to continue with the present option is being undermined as the costs and realities of achieving artificial targets such as that of the Government's 'Pathway to 2030' target to decarbonise the grid are being revealed.

2. Cost /benefit analysis. The financial criteria for favouring the preferred overground routing have not been provided other than in the broadest terms (see 1.). The figures (£) used to compare the 3 potential transmission options (underground, overground and marine), are not directly comparable as they do not consistently or at all take into account wider societal costs. The costs provided are those to be incurred by National Grid rather than the British Public - these are two very different entities with differing contexts within which decisions must be made - that is, costs experienced by National Grid's shareholder base are very different to those experienced by both tax payers and people affected by the proposal in both the short, medium and long term.

Ultimately, the British tax payer and electricity purchaser pays the bill for this project and has had a very disproportionately minor role to play in decision making. There has been enormous opposition to the present proposal by MPs, Councils, stakeholders and citizens along the route which seems to have been ignored, or brushed off.

3. Lack of consideration for indirect effects relating to other associated projects. In the longer term, National Grid may benefit financially from related developments such as contracts to support other renewable infrastructure projects whereas the public would stand to lose in the longer term because real property is known to be substantially devalued by proximity to such projects (such as solar farms, substations and battery storage) and to the pylons themselves, and public enjoyment of landscape and tranquillity provided by the beauty of Suffolk's relatively unspoilt visual resources would be undermined. Future anticipated costs of installing associated infrastructure are not accounted for and would need substantial public subsidies to be supportable.

4. Lack of due consideration for effects on airspace. The assessment of impacts on flying are (in my opinion) inadequate. The proposals considers effects on Civil Air Authority (CAA) registered airfields but has not addressed smaller unregistered airfields, does not take into account private flying clubs nor the

needs of gliders, nor does it discuss the eventuality of aircraft malfunction. These activities would be of necessity curtailed by 50-m pylons and even where not directly affected, all airfields and flyers within the proximity of the pylons would experience increase in insurance premiums which, I understand, would put many of them out of business. Insurance companies assess risk according to their own criteria, the risk of accidents would naturally need to be reassessed and not in favour of the insured. Also, the assessment does not (again in my opinion) take proper account of military flying needs nor the flexibility that is required by military operations. I understand, from military leaders at RAF Honington and USAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall that military training operations may not be fully aware of the implications of the proposal, these entities should be directly and fully briefed. Military bases in Suffolk host important low flying training as well as guest nations from other countries, given the state of world unrest they are frequently on high alert. I have seen low flying military aircraft myself in the area of the proposal (Gislingham/ Wortham) which would be compromised by 50-m pylons. It is vital that all current and potential future flying activities be given ultimate flexibility in terms of flight paths, taking into account the possibility that sometimes things go wrong in the air and another hazard such as is proposed would be very unwelcome.

5. Net Zero Targets. At present, Government has committed to various carbon reduction targets and actions to meet net zero by 2050, including complete decarbonisation of the grid by 2035 and more recently an ambition to decarbonise by 2030. These artificial targets are driving decisions that are based on a carbon accounting system with deep flaws, and are driving decisions which would have profound negative effects on the future of this country if scaled up. Given the political and technical uncertainties around net zero it seems unreasonable rely on this accounting system to drive decisions of such lasting implication, particularly when there are arguably better ways to provide clean energy with base load (mainly by means of new nuclear) and reduce global warming effects which it is agreed are essential for national and global stability.

Overall, I object strongly to the proposal for 50-m pylons stretching from Norwich to Tilbury and to the related and incompletely described ancillary developments that this would spawn. This is not good value for the public, whose long term interests must take precedence over the short term superficial costs that accrue to the privately owned National Grid Electronic Transmission which naturally prioritises the interests of its shareholders over the British public.