

Notes from a meeting with Dan Poulter regarding Pylons at Offton Village Hall on 15th September 2023

Attended by 50+ constituents

Comments from DP

- We met 7-8 months, at Offton Village Hall and are very unhappy at what National Grid [NG] has come up with
- We believe there should be a push for an offshore network
- Dan Poulter [DP] and MPs will continue to push for offshore
- No evidence has been provided by NG; no costings, one proposal only with a pre-determined route. Nothing provided why offshore not considered
- In other parts of the country, e.g. Scotland, NG have gone for offshore
- Concern that there appears to be no interaction with Wattisham airbase
- Now an independent NG ESO report is underway, which is due to publish its recommendation before any statutory consultation
- Energy select committee has been reformed to Energy Security and Net Zero. This will look at energy transmission, including the balance between best value for the taxpayer and environment. DP is a member.
- So there are two strands going forwards
 - i. ESO report and recommendations
 - ii. Select Committee Enquiry
- DP preferred option is offshoring.

Q&A

The North Sea to Norwich links and comment on Tilbury to Norwich line

- North Sea links may now be oversized due to the withdrawal of Vattenfall and to a lesser extent Orsted from wind generation projects. This issue should be referred to the Net Zero and Energy select committee
- NG not explained why route, not underground or parallel lines. No evaluation, very difficult to accept

What are Timelines leading up to next consultation

- Recent development of the Select Committee
- Starting to pull committee together
- ESO report must complete before Statutory consultation
- ACTION: DP confirmed that he understood that the independent ESO report would be completed and published before the Statutory consultation by National Grid on any proposed Norwich to Tilbury Route began.

Costings. NG quoting offshore 4x cost from consultation

- NG has only given indicative figures, no breakdown, no indication where figures have come from
- From the floor - Offshore Survey. On a link from Brazil of 4000 miles cable laid offshore simple and costs much cheaper than alternatives, as well as quicker to lay
- A good example of speed and cost of undersea cabling

Contract with farmers – offering payments

- Work done must be with an open mind otherwise NG lays the ground for a Judicial review (and is therefore self-defeating)

Who is NG responsible to

- Ultimately their shareholders

- Do have to go through a process, involving planning inspectors (amongst others) therefore can be challenged

NG legal framework used for Norwich to Tilbury

- Framework set up in the 1980s/1990s
- What Government cannot do is retrospective legislation
- Existing legislation cannot explain why NG is doing things differently in Scotland or other parts of the country
- Don't understand what evidence NG is using
- NG proposals need proper evaluation – with options and costings

Cost balance between cost and protecting environment

- Select Enquiry should look at the balance between costs and impact on the environment

NG claims there has been a consultation

- This not met normal consultation process

Status of NG proposal

- Work is required to re-evaluate what NG is saying
- NG has not been open and transparent
- Select committee to investigate
- Write in to select committee as they take written evidence beforehand
- ACTION: DP confirmed that the new Energy and Net Zero parliamentary select committee of which he was a member, was also planning to launch an inquiry into energy transmission in the U.K. - dates of inquiry are yet to be confirmed
- ACTION: DP to provide details on how to write in to the Select Committee with written evidence when it begins its inquiry and calls for evidence

What happened to the Whitepaper and Wattisham involvement

- DP has raised with the MOD and asked questions
- NG has now made reference as a reason for its revisions
- ACTION: DP to meet with Defence Minister (date for meeting TBC) re concerns relating to operating issues at Wattisham airbase that will result from the proposed pylons.

Wholey ineffective consultation process

- NG has not been listening

November Meeting

- By that time we would hope for a report back from the Select Committee including timelines.
- ACTION: DP to confirm a date for potential November meeting or a later alternative date to align with when the Select committee has something to report following the conclusion of its inquiry and publication of its report

ACTIONS:

The below merges these notes with those taken by our MP's staff. The actions which Dr Poulter has taken away and signed off are as below:

1. DP confirmed that he understood that the independent ESO report would be completed and published before the Statutory consultation by National Grid on any proposed Norwich to Tilbury Route began.
2. DP confirmed that the new Energy and Net Zero parliamentary select committee of which he was a member, was also planning to launch an inquiry into energy transmission in the U.K. - dates of inquiry are yet to be confirmed.

3. DP to provide details on how to write in to the Select Committee with written evidence when it begins its inquiry and calls for evidence.
4. DP to confirm a date for potential November meeting or a later alternative date to align with when the Select committee has something to report following the conclusion of its inquiry and publication of its report.
5. DP to meet with Defence Minister (date for meeting TBC) re concerns relating to operating issues at Wattisham airbase that will result from the proposed pylons.