

Little Waltham Parish Council response to East Anglia Green Consultation by the National Grid.

Little Waltham Parish Council (the Council) wishes to make the following comments and representations in relation to this consultation.

The Council supports the production of green energy and in particular the North Sea Wind Farms which are able to generate clean energy and contribute to energy security for this Country and appreciates that this energy needs to be delivered into the National Grid. However, the Council opposes the proposals set out in this consultation for new overland transmission lines for the majority of the route, and in particular through the Parish of Little Waltham, carried by large, visually intrusive latticed metal pylons.

Councillors have considered the literature produced by the project, but are very concerned that the consultations starting point is to seek views on a single overland route, rather than one where all options remain available for comment. The Council contends that a fair and transparent consultation should seek views on all possible solutions rather than presenting one option as a fait accompli. The current consultation does not allow for comments to be made on other options such as offshore routes or use of existing corridors thus restricting the possibility of public scrutiny and residents commenting upon such proposals.

The Particular grave concern of the Council is the impact of these traditional pylons upon the environment of this Parish and contends that the pylons would have an adverse landscape and visual impact on the sensitive and historic rural landscape and biodiversity of the Little Waltham Parish as well as an adverse impact upon the wellbeing of residents.

Due to the dimensions of the pylons they will be highly obtrusive and indeed intrusive in both the impact upon homes and residents and the character and views of the historic rural environment of this Parish. There is also an issue of noise pollution from the pylons.

The purple swathe enters the Parish at its northern tip directly in conflict with listed buildings on Braintree Road and the historic hamlet of Chatham Green which again has a number of listed buildings. Properties such as Liberty Hall, Hyde Hall, Bakery Cottage, the row of cottages along the main centre of Chatham Green and Baileys Farm and all grade II listed properties. On the other side of the A131 there is a row of houses which although not all are listed would be within only a matter of feet from the proposed pylons thus blighting those homes. The area is criss-crossed by public footpaths and bridleways including the Essex Way which provides walkers with access to the beautiful and historic landscapes of the area which includes not just farmland but wooded plantations and provides habitat for numerous species of animals, birds and insects. The installation of pylons would have a severe and detrimental impact upon the intrinsic character of the area by scarring the existing rural vistas and views. Residents have voiced their dismay and concern as to the impact not just upon their homes but upon the rural character of this area.

The purple swathe is effectively a pinch point as it passes through the Parish following the B1008 and will be in extremely close proximity to the Little Waltham village centre.

The village is a prime example of a historic north Essex village and contains a large number of grade II listed properties. Indeed, the historic and architectural value of the village centre has been recognised by being designated a Conservation Area. The purple swathe passes in extremely close proximity to the Conservation area and the pylons would be clearly visible thus again having a severe and detrimental impact upon the historic village. Planning law recognises that not just a listed building but its context in the environment is relevant when considering impact and thus the impact of views of the pylons in such close proximity to grade II listed properties would be clearly unacceptable.

The purple swathe then follows the B1008 towards Broomfield and would mar the views from the Chelmer Valley which form part of the Green Wedge.

The Council's preferred option would be for offshore cabling as this would avoid blighting yet more countryside with hundreds of extra pylons and reduce environmental damage and disruption.