

Application No: EN020027

Little Waltham Parish Council response to East Anglia Green Application for a scoping opinion for an Environmental Impact Statement

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

The Council remains concerned that there has not been an effective consultation in relation to the proposals generally with no options provided other than a single overland route, with no other options provided for comment. The Council contends that a fair and transparent consultation should seek views on all possible solutions including an under-sea route rather than presenting one option as a fait accompli.

In relation to an Environmental Impact Statement, the Council considers that the following matters should be covered –

1. The visual impact of the proposals upon the sensitive and historic rural landscape.

Within Little Waltham Parish 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. In addition, in the Parish there is an area of 'Green Wedge' being part of the Chelmer Valley which is protected within local planning policies and Little Waltham Meadows being an Essex Wildlife Trust nature reserve. The impact of the proposals upon the intrinsic character of the area and the existing rural vistas and views will need to be considered.

2. The visual impact of the proposals upon the historic landscape and built environment and heritage.

The proposed 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

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 impacting upon the historic village.

The area generally is known for its roman and iron age remains. The river Chelmer runs through the Parish and was a focus for Roman populations in the area. The proposals could impact upon the archaeology of the area, thus, the impact upon built environment and heritage will need to be considered.

3. The impact of the proposal upon wildlife and habitat

Little Waltham provides habitat for numerous species of animals, birds and insects. In particular the DEFRA map shows that the area is a haven for lapwings and the great crested newt. In addition, there are populations of hare, hedgehogs, dormice and also bats, red kites and buzzards which are regularly witnessed in the Parish. The impact of the pylons and power lines together with noise emitted and effecting these species would need to be assessed. As the proposed pylons would be in the close proximity of Broomfield Hospital there is a concern that it would have an impact upon the Essex Air Ambulance and thus aviation lights may need to be installed on top of the pylons emitting light throughout the night, which may impact upon local wildlife and thus would need to be assessed.

4. The impact upon agricultural land

The Parish contains a substantial amount of agricultural land much of which is already being lost to ongoing development including housing allocated within the Chelmsford Local Plan, a proposed Solar Farm and extensions of quarries. The proposals would mean the use of yet more agricultural land both during the construction phase and for ongoing use and the impact would need to be considered.