

## **Piers Sturridge - Hospitality Consultant Evidence Open Hearing 7 Thursday 28.1.21 2pm**

We are at last beginning to have a better idea of what SPR & NGV are planning, well not planning in the proper sense, they appear to have no coordination, no central planning, no concept of good design, no consideration for the residents and businesses in the area.

### **Cumulative Impact Report.**

SPR has built 34 onshore substations and NGV has more than 340 it is ludicrous for two giant multinational companies to suggest that they cannot put together a robust cumulative impact assessment for what is planned in just one square mile of Suffolk. It would take two senior project managers a few hours to collect the evidence from past projects and industry standards and present it to the Planning Inspectorate. Unless they are as scared by it as we are!

### **Reduction in Impact.**

Six months ago, we suggested that there is a right way to bring power onshore using ring mains and MOGS and offshore substations and delivery to the right place. SPR and NGV said it was impossible, they told John Gummer, Lord Deben it was impossible and 20 minutes later I had shown him that it was possible. Now they are heralding the new age on their websites and congratulating themselves.

If the time lag between what was impossible and it becoming possible was only six months what can they do with longer. All the Friston substation should be included in the BEIS Review since six of the additional planned projects are being included. The reason NG & SPR insisted on Friston was because SPR & NGV thought they could shoehorn all the projects there once they had built EAN1 & EA2 and build a 'Mega Energy Hub'. It has now become apparent they never realistically considered other possible sites for just these two projects. What happens if the BEIS review suggests a different solution to the latter projects? The review must cover the whole of the East Suffolk Mega Energy Hub scheme. One of the major reasons Friston was chosen was because the woods would hide the substations, but this was for EA1N and EA2. If they build the full eight projects, there is insufficient wood.

### **Tourism**

SPR & NGVs refusal to be honest about what they are planning for Friston is already having an effect on tourism in the area.

This is because of the blight created by SPR & NGV's refusal.

- a) to admit to planning a £27B energy hub in one square mile of rural Suffolk.
- b) to acknowledge the transport chaos that ten major energy projects will bring to the area as
- c) to present coordinated scheme for their projects.
- d) to admit exactly what they rush to complete them – but then it is a fifteen year 'rush'.
- e) to consult local businesses or show any respect for their legitimate concerns.

All this is frightening businesses in the area. A new hotel project in Aldeburgh is struggling to be agreed. Other hotels which should be using the downtime to refurbish are holding back for clarity. Seven shops have closed on Aldeburgh High Street.

Covid has already had a devastating effect on Aldeburgh High Street and its true effect will not be felt until later this year.

SPR's Tourism Report by Simon Cleary is flawed and it appears that the author has never visited the sites he compares and that it was written from a desk 400 miles away. Whilst Aldeburgh Sheringham and Worthing have the seaside in common, the onshore infrastructures he tries to compare are totally different in size, proximity, density, capability and all aspects of scale, as well as ease or not of access. He expresses no understanding of the actual tourism of East Suffolk

**a) Sheringham Shoal 314MW**

Minimal visible infrastructure at landfall  
5 acre substation  
21 miles from Sheringham adjacent to existing NG substation  
Construction team: 160  
Access: 3 main (A) roads  
Program 3 years

**b) Rampion/Worthing 340MW**

Minimal visible infrastructure at landfall  
14 acre substation  
16 miles from Worthing adjacent to existing NG substation  
Construction team: 150  
Access: 3 main trunk (A) roads.  
Program 3 years

**c) East Suffolk Energy Hub 10000MW**

Massive visible infrastructure at landfall (substation and docking facility)  
Up to 8 substations at Friston 130 acres  
Sizewell C Construction site  
Construction teams in excess of 4200  
Access: 1 main (A) road terminates at Aldeburgh  
Designated construction traffic route.  
Program 15 **years(minimum)**

I have previously demonstrated that the Energy Hub will damage tourism in the region of £40M per annum and that this will continue well beyond the construction phase. which has now been both extended and increased as the various projects are admitted or alluded to.

NGV and SPR repeatedly chant a mantra about best value for their customers, a point of view not necessarily shared by their executives who were popular in the local restaurants last summer for dining on lobster and fine wine and flashing their company credit cards. SPR and NGV's refusal to upgrade local infrastructure to minimise their impact on the area and repair the damage their massive project will inflict on it is

unacceptable. It should be noted that giving customers good value cannot be by dumping substantial costs on the local people, the local businesses, the local infrastructure, the local area, the local council and the government. SPR's and NGVS shareholders and director's dividends and bonuses must not be funded by Suffolk and the nation.

Scottish Power asserts that there will be a "major beneficial" impact on tourism because construction workers will seek to book holiday accommodation.

If tourists are deterred, as the independent study suggests, construction workers will not mitigate the damage to the visitor economy.

- a) There is a substantial jump between "negligible" and "major beneficial" even if the suggestion is totally false.
- b) The numbers of workers seeking accommodation outside of the campuses does match the expected loss of tourists.
- c) Construction workers' accommodation budgets will not match tourists' budgets,
- d) Workers will not spend in other parts of the visitor economy (e.g. at attractions and bars, cafes, restaurants).
- e) Many holiday lets are controlled by 'special permissions' reducing the number of weeks they can be let per annum or the controlling the length of each stay in order to ensure they remain holiday lets. This has been ignored by the SPR tourism report.

There are major concerns that SPR is changing its proposals to appease concerns expressed by the inspectors and local authorities and residents.

There are still too many decisions being avoided in an apparent attempt to negotiate them quietly once the DCO is granted and avoid local scrutiny.

Take for instance the height of the substation sheds. They were originally set at 18m then rose to 24m and now have dropped to 15m. Were they incorrect originally or wrong in the second instant, is the lower correct, or is it an attempt to appease in the short term whilst the DCO is obtained and then cajole officials to agree to allow them to revert because of 'unforeseen problems' without public scrutiny. Recent substation designs have been at 23m and a new document about Nautilus/Eurolink substation suggests similar.

EA3 has already had six 'non' material changes to their 2017 DCO.

The Applicants have singularly failed to present any credible tourism impact study, they have just attacked those who have and attempt to brush over the situation with false comparisons, 'words of wisdom from a desk' and manipulated data which at best is unhelpful.

East Suffolk is a delicately balanced, economically viable, exceptional part of the countryside.

For the Applicants to pretend that this massive infrastructure project swamping the quiet rural countryside around Leiston and Aldeburgh with its massive structures, over

ambitious transport schemes, lack of infrastructure investment, armies of workers, plus the destruction of the beaches and landscape will go unnoticed by the visitors who come expecting calm, beauty and tranquillity is simply ludicrous.

Piers Sturridge

