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Subject: East Anglia One and Two
Date: 29 June 2021 13:08:18

My reference 20024368

I write once again (third time) to protest at the Scottish Power proposals to build two electricity sub-stations at Friston, Suffolk with associated cable network, inter-connectors etc.

I have been a regular visitor to the Friston area over the last 25 years, as I have close friends who live on the outskirts of the village and will be directly affected by the Scottish Power proposal. Over the last 3 years I have watched the growing distress and anger of them and their neighbours - not just over the destruction of the glorious countryside and the adverse impact on the way of life of all who live there, but also at the behaviour of Scottish Power (and its active undermining of the planning process and government policy) and the failure of local and national government to care (or perhaps even to recognise) what is happening.

This completely undermines confidence in (i) the planning system generally, (ii) central government process and (iii) those currently in power who appear to be allowing action that runs counter to its own stated policy (in Energy White Paper) which is 'To minimise the impact on local communities, we will implement a more efficient approach to connecting offshore generation to the mainland grid'. The opposite of this is happening in coastal Suffolk.

So for me it is not just an issue of the loss of beautiful countryside around Friston, damage to the fragile cliffs at Thorpeness (an AONB) and the impact on the 9km of the cable corridor in between them. It is the breach of trust between governed and government, both local and central. Locals (and the British population at large) recognise the need for off-shore (and other green) power if this country is to meet its carbon targets but not at the expense of other things we value, including good governance and fairness.

There must be better ways to connect the wind farm(s) to the National Grid (and there are alternatives to Friston locally eg at Sizewell). And power companies should work better with central and local government to come up with these alternatives, even if the costs are greater. At the moment, individual power companies are carving up large areas of the countryside and no one is assessing the cumulative impact of all these projects on local communities and the countryside.

BEIS recognised this and announced a Review (which is very welcome) but Scottish Power appears to be doing its best to avoid the Friston plans being included within it. They brought their plans forward by two years as soon as the Review was announced, so they could claim that the plans are "too far advanced" to be included. Plans which have not even been given development consent cannot be considered as "too far advanced" not to be included. If Scottish Power has chosen to spend money on the project (eg on the ground investigation work described below), then that is a financial risk it took on and the consequences of any delay should be borne by it, not the local population contrary to government stated policy. And if central government accepts the Scottish Power argument, then the BEIS Review is flawed from the outset.

Scottish Power have also abused the planning process. A few examples:

The assessment used to justify the choice of Friston in the first place was flawed - Historic England (the Government's advisors on the historic environment) have confirmed that SPR did not adequately take into account the heritage loss.

The adverse impacts to the local community (eg fragility of the cliffs at Thorpeness, the flooding at Friston - which I saw myself 10 days ago) have been dismissed by Scottish Power without justification. It has used flawed legal documents to "gag" landowners, telling them that if they want to receive compensation for their land they must not object to the plans - if landowners had previously objected to the planning inspectors those objections must be withdrawn. This means that valuable evidence from people who really know and understand this landscape has not been presented at the hearings resulting in a flawed process. The plans that have been submitted by Scottish Power ask for an area of land much larger than that which would be needed for their own projects - raising local suspicions that more substations and related infrastructure are planned; if this is the case, then this is a flagrant abuse of process, and will further undermine the integrity of

the BEIS Review.

The unexpected and unjustified extension of the hearings by three months gave an unfair advantage to Scottish Power with its significant financial resources. The local groups opposing these plans had no warning that the hearing would be extended and had to raise yet more money in order to respond to Scottish Power's new submissions. This was procedurally unfair and reinforced the existing disadvantage faced by local people fighting the plans.

I visited Friston 2 weeks ago - for the first time since the pandemic- and was aghast at what I saw. Scottish Power has started extensive "ground investigation work". Acres and acres of fallow land have already been sprayed with poisonous chemicals, scattering wildlife and destroying public footpaths. Their workers have showed arrogance to the locals, blocking farmers' access tracks and footpaths, refusing to talk to locals about what they are doing.

The groups opposing the scheme accept that the government will wish the overall project (bringing wind power on shore) to go ahead in light of its net zero carbon target, and have suggested a compromise - namely a 'split decision' which would allow Scottish Power to start construction of the offshore element of its proposals but delay the onshore element until a better solution is found. The local MP Therese Coffey supports that. This would allow the Friston proposals to be considered in the wider context of the BEIS Review, and the government's commitment to 'minimise the impact on local communities' and 'implement a more efficient approach to connecting offshore generation to the mainland grid'. Allowing Scottish Power to proceed with its onshore proposals before that Review has reported will undermine its integrity (if one of the biggest current proposals is deemed out of scope) as well as destroying confidence in the government's willingness to meet its policy commitments.

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