

PINS Ref: EA1N-20024475; EA2-20024476

Dear Examining Authority,

it is with a heavy heart and a sense of relief, that we come to the end of this Examination. Despite the time, energy, financial and mental health costs, for the residents of Friston, Knodishall, Aldringham, Thorpeness and outlying villages likely to be affected if EA1N and EA2 are given consent, there are still many unanswered questions, there is still a lack of trust in the developers: the Applicant, Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) and National Grid (NG) and there are still so many disagreements amongst 'experts'.

I think it is fair to say that we are still unclear as to why the Examination was extended (and rumours are flying around about this), but what this has given the residents of Friston, the site of the proposed substations, and those people living along the proposed cable corridor and proposed landfall site is 'a taste of things to come'. The once arable agricultural fields to the North of Friston, home to a variety of wildlife, looks like a Martian landscape, or as one passer by said "it looks like the Somme"! The Applicant is keen to proclaim that they were not responsible for spraying the fields, which clearly made their investigative works simpler, but the villagers are at a loss to understand why this has happened in fields, which, in their memory, have not been 'sprayed' before. There are countless villagers who cannot bear to walk along the footpath to the North of the village as it makes them both sad, and at the same time, angry. No longer do the skylarks sing, in fact there is a deafening lack of noise, other than that of heavy machinery; what was once fields teeming with butterflies and bees is now a series of trenches, soil piles, portakabins and workers cars – and where have the badger setts gone? Then, of course, is the signage informing drivers, cyclists and pedestrians of 'Works Access' – I know you have received evidence of the dangerous and inappropriate location of many these signs: too close to the road (which resulted in at least one vehicle, to my knowledge, being damaged), actually located in the road at a dangerous junction, placed in someone's garden without their permission and even sited on footpaths. What angered me most however was the wording: warning pedestrians of work traffic – surely it would have been appropriate to have warnings for the site traffic that there were pedestrians around, those of us who have to walk the country lanes as there are no pavements!

There has been much talk by the Applicant about a 'cost v benefit' analysis for their project. Understandably the Applicant is keen to keep costs low, they are, of course to be held to account by their shareholders who want maximum financial profit for their investment. But it has become clear throughout the Examination that SPR is being driven by 'the cheapest' option as opposed to the 'greenest' option. We are faced too with NG advocating the use of Gas Insulation Switchgear (GIS) as opposed to Air (AIS) technology – again clearly NOT a green option but one which they think might placate residents as it requires smaller infrastructure. The Applicant still justifies the benefits of their plans as job creation, but we know the few jobs created will be in Lowestoft and Felixstowe both in excess of 20 miles from Friston, there are NO benefits to the people who are to be directly affected by the construction and operation of EA1N and EA2. Indeed it has become apparent since we became aware of the Applicant's plans back in 2018, that there is little or no concern for local residents. Consultation by the Applicant was a sham and by NG non-existent. A reluctance to investigate the risk of flooding to the village, an unwillingness to reduce

working hours to lessen the impact on lives of the villagers, a refusal to accept that there will be noise emissions which villagers will hear, the destruction of hedgerows and consequent loss of habitat and biodiversity and the closure of footpaths will affect the lives of people who live and holiday in the village – not to mention the further effects on locals of cable routing and landfall drilling sites.

There can be no doubt that to select Friston as the ‘best’ (or might SPR say ‘least worst’?) site for the proposed developments was simply a mistake – WRONG! It is a location which frequently floods, it is on the edge of a tranquil medieval village tracing its history back over 1000 years, it is surrounded by listed buildings, it borders an AONB and SSSI, it is an arable green field site, its local lanes and roads are not built for heavy traffic, of alternate possible sites compared it had the most footpaths – now facing temporary or permanent closure or diversions. Coastal Suffolk, where the landfall, cable corridor and substations are to be located, depend on tourism for their survival –should consent be granted the human cost will be immense.

Faced with the Government’s recent statements concerning the protection of local communities and bio-diversity, the need to move to carbon neutrality and reduce the effects of climate change, it is difficult to see how this Application can be consented. For the Applicant to try to bring forward their timetable to ‘escape’ the recommendations of the BEIS review and the calls for a better, integrated system to harness the technology is disgraceful.

It is clearly in the public domain that should consent be granted that in future years, Friston will become the hub for further infrastructure – let’s not kid ourselves that we are talking about a ‘short-term’ project! There has been too little consideration of the cumulative impact of other projects eg Sizewell C, this alone is surely grounds to refuse consent.

I have been amazed by the strength of feeling and the numbers of people who have responded and become involved in the fight to stop the Applicant’s proposals. It is clear, that with the exception of East Suffolk Council, based in Lowestoft, and local landowners who stand to gain financially from the Applicant, that there is nothing but opposition to the plans for EA1N and EA2. The work of SASES, SEAS, SOS, Natural England, Historic England and other pressure groups is to be applauded: they have given so generously of their time and expertise, our thanks go out to them and those people who have supported them financially - it is no mean feat for ordinary villagers, faced with such limited resources to fight such a large multi-national company.

We, in Friston, support green energy but EA1N and EA2 are NOT green energy projects, if they were, many of the arguments raised, and issues outstanding, would not still be on the table. There have been calls for a ‘split decision’ – consent the off-shore infrastructure but not the onshore infrastructure; surely this demonstrates the willingness of local people to ‘go green’. The decision for recommendation to the Secretary of State lies in the hand of the Examining Authority, we the ordinary folk of East Suffolk can do no more. We just ask that common sense prevails and that which we see as obviously wrong and unsatisfactory is upheld. We wish to protect our natural environment: historic landscapes, wildlife habitats and our village. We want our families and tourists to enjoy the peace and tranquility of our

villages and the Heritage Coast for years to come, where cyclists, pedestrians and car drivers alike feel safe on small local roads.

Should the Examining Authority see fit to recommend consent, then we ask that an Independent Design Review be part of the DCO, that working hours on sites be reduced to lessen the impact on homes, that proper meaningful two-way discussion/consultation with local residents takes place and that local Parish Councils are actively sought out to be involved in both mitigation and compensation issues.

I thank the Examining Authority and its background case team for its work over the past months.

Marie Szpak.

Friston resident.