

Necton Parish Council (EN010079) Response to Vattenfall Letter Dated 12 May 2020

Jake Laws has submitted a letter on behalf of Vattenfall to the Planning Inspectorate dated 12 May 2020 in response to the Secretary of State extending the timescale of the Boreas examination by five months to the 12th October 2020.

Necton Parish Council (NPC) wholeheartedly welcomes the extension given by the Secretary of State.

In their letter Vattenfall made a number of points that NPC consider to be biased and not consistent with an open and transparent process. The Applicant states that all interested parties have had the opportunity to participate in Issue Specific Hearings and an Open Floor Hearing (OFH). Although an OFH was held in Norwich, the one scheduled to be held in Dereham was cancelled. Norwich is a venue not easily accessible to residents of Necton and cancelling the Dereham OFH was a significant curtailment of the accessibility of the process to those who will be affected by the presence of huge substations for the life of the Boreas project.

The Applicant also states that all 22 Statements of Common Ground have now been finalised and that the few matters that remain unresolved are matters of principle for the Secretary of State to consider in the decision-making process. NPC specifically asked for a Statement of Common Ground during the examination process. This request was ignored. NPC stated to the Examining Authority that Breckland Council were not representing their interests during the examination process. NPC asked for additional screening in the form of high tree-lined earth banks strategically placed to ensure mitigation of the visual impact of these huge buildings that are projected to be placed on the highest piece of ground in the area. This was ignored by the applicant and by Breckland Council. A lower site was suggested, also ignored. A representative of Breckland Council visited Necton (to one of the most affected residences) last week for the first time during both the Vanguard and Boreas examination processes. Effective representation of the interests of people cannot be done from a distant office where visualisation of the heights of the ground are only imagined.

The applicant is ignoring the fact that when the construction phase of the project is completed, the only significant effect on Norfolk residents and visitors will be the existence of the massive substations that will be built close to the village of Necton. NPC believe that the inadequate mitigation of the substations (both the National Grid infrastructure and the converter halls) proposed by the Applicant is a significant shortfall of the project.

Allowing the views of Necton residents to be heard during the examination is an important part of the process that the Applicant ignores in the content and flavour of the letter submitted on 12 May 2020 and NPC endorses the position of the Secretary of State in making sure the process is completed fully, albeit in a virtual manner.

Necton Parish Council
23 May 2020