

Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Response

The Process

We continue to be very disappointed and increasingly concerned at the lack of engagement, clarity of the proposal and impact on our home at this stage.

We had a visit from both teams last year but have heard nothing since, we attended a drop-in session yesterday (29 January 2024) without adding any greater understanding as to the choice of route for construction traffic or the impact on us.

Given the monumental impact the suggested exponential increase in HGV traffic will have on our home and our family, we need clarity and detail within the proposal, as well as to hear from you how that impact will be mitigated, or what our options might be.

To date none of this information has been provided by any of the contracted developers involved with the numerous projects associated with the National Grid, Norwich to Tilbury project. We find it increasingly difficult to navigate the seemingly never-ending stream of requests for information from multiple parties in relation to our home – we have been offered no advice or guidance as to how we should best handle these requests and so, to date have done our best to provide the information requested – but this has been very much a one way transaction.

As you'll appreciate the stress and anxiety caused by this is already being felt by us and that will only get worse the longer this process goes on.

Although it seems clear that undersea cables to handle offshore electricity production would be the least disruptive and intrusive method of delivery of power from the windfarms to London, for example landing at the Bradfield power station facility which is not in use.

The focus of our response is on the impact to us, our home and our quality of life, to be honest we just want to understand the impact for us and as the experts, what you will do to alleviate, mitigate, reduce this.

Access to the construction site

Choice of route from A120 to substation site

Why has there been no consideration given to a direct link from the A120 (Hare Green roundabout or Park Road) to the site? This would provide purpose-built access to the substation sites across open fields, with limited impact to residents.

Additionally, this would provide ready access for exceptional loads of plant rather than making changes to the existing A120 carriageway at Pelhams Corner.

The current Pelhams Corner layout was installed following years of campaigning to reduce the numerous fatal accidents at this site – we fear any changes to layout and/or increase in unsuitable traffic using this junction will reverse this positive impact and cause serious and fatal accidents as a result.

Given haul roads are being constructed to allow connection from Bentley road to the sub station site(s), we can see no viable reason that this could not be done directly from the A120 to the planned Haul road. Therefore requiring no changes to Bentley Road itself, the A120 junction at Pelhams Corner or the exponential increase in construction traffic on a country lane that currently sees a couple of HGVs a week.

We have asked why this approach has not been considered by the various contracted teams – as yet **no** response received.

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Bentley Road Proposal

The current proposal to use Bentley Road for construction traffic, from the A120 to and from the substation build sites will have a huge and detrimental impact on our home and our quality of life.

We have detailed some of these negative impacts below, but we are sure you are fully aware of how harmful constant HGV traffic at the levels you describe will be on our family and our property – you are after all the experts and can provide more detail here.

Given our proximity to the A120 and Bentley Road, our home being within 2.5m of Bentley Road carriageway, our garden within 1m and our boundary within 0.5m, we will without doubt be the most impacted by any change to the layout of the junction, Bentley Road and the huge increase volume of heavy goods vehicles.

Our understanding, from what we've seen so far is that there will be construction vehicles passing within feet of our property 07.00-19.00, 6 days per week, at a rate of 3 every 5 minutes (in one direction – so in effect 6 HGVs every 5 minutes), for 3 years.

Given our proximity to this exponential increase in HGV (HGV traffic is currently very limited as the road is restricted to 7.5T) – we are gravely concerned about the resultant:

- Noise
- Vibration
- Dust
- Pollution
- Damage to our home
- Access to and from our home
- Access to our local amenities – Manningtree is our local town, this will be inaccessible throughout the construction phase
- Our safety should there be an accident at the junction or on Bentley Road
- Our safety leaving our home
- The impact on our property value – which we suspect has already has an impact due to this consultation
- Our ability to move house (should our financial situation change) – from now until construction is complete
- Limited/No use of our outside space for 3 years (gardens/summer house etc.)
- Impact on our quality of life
- Impact of pollution, dust, noise, vibration on our health
- The impact of all the above on our mental health and wellbeing

This is not an exhaustive list – but an indication of what we expect as directly impacted residents.

Again, we have asked every contracted party to provide details of this potential construction would impact us and our home, using some of the points above – to date we have received **no** answers.

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Questions

We do have a number of questions that to date no one has answered in relation to the proposed scheme and our home.

We can see no reference to these in the documentation shared so far, although given we have to trawl through hundreds of pages to find anything that relates to us it is possible this information is available, either way we would appreciate clarification.

- **Multiple Parties**
Why are we having to deal with and respond to **4** different companies in relation this scheme?
None of those involved have provided any clarity, maybe that's the idea?
Can we please request a single body to deal with in relation to the impact on our home and lives?
- **Pollution**
Can someone please confirm what increase in air pollution is projected by this traffic for our home and our family (taking account both construction and worker movements).
- **Health & Wellbeing**
Can someone please confirm what impact is expected to our health due to the noise, vibration, dust and pollution throughout construction and beyond?
We assume given the number of expected vehicle movements and nature of construction, there will be a projected impact from pollution and disruption – please share this.
- **Damage to our home**
Can someone please confirm what level of vibration, dust, noise should be expected from the volume and nature of traffic adjacent to our home – given some of our home is nearly 200 years old and is within 2.5m of the carriageway.
Again, we assume given the number of expected vehicle movements and nature of construction, there will be a projected impact from pollution and disruption – please share this.

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Mitigations

Given no mitigations or options have been suggested by those we have spoken to relating to this project so far – we have suggested some below:

- New Haul Road
 - Build a new haul road from the A120 Park Road junction to the substation haul road – using farm land and therefore not directly impacting local residents.
 - Build a new haul road between Bentley Road and Horsley Cross – utilising farm land and not directly impacting residential properties.
- Bentley Road/A120 Junction
 - If insistent on using Bentley Road - move the Bentley Road Carriageway further east of our property – as far as possible but at a minimum 20-30m
 - This would create a more accessible turn – currently a very sharp turn from A120
 - Moving traffic away from our boundary would reduce impact of noise/vibration/dust/pollution etc.
- Reduce construction traffic operational hours
 - Reduce to 08.00 – 18.00 Mon-Fri – Therefore the worst impact will be felt during the working day, allowing us some peace outside these times
- Install a grass verge between our home and the new Bentley Road carriageway
 - Install bollards to restrict parking/mounting the verge and improve our safety from passing HGVs
 - Install noise reduction methods - fencing / trees / shrubs
- Install a path so we may use the roadway other than in a vehicle
 - Install this on the residential side of the road
 - i.e. to aid the safety of directly impacted residents – not just to tick a planning box
- Consider what noise and vibration mitigation could be employed to reduce impact to us while in our home
 - Provide new/uprated double glazing – to reduce noise
 - Current double glazed units approx. 20 years old / not all windows double glazed
 - Install Air conditioning/purification system
 - As we will not be able to open our windows throughout construction due to noise & dust
 - Help to reduce the impact of pollution from construction
 - Better insulation to dampen sound
 - Parts of house nearly 200 years old
 - Improved road surface to reduce vibration and noise
 - Current surface noise and uneven
 - Noise/vibration/pollution monitoring throughout all works
 - Full structural survey of property prior to works
 - Regular surveys throughout works
 - Remedial activity throughout works
 - Repairs as identified by surveys
 - Redecoration / cleaning of exterior - dust/pollution
 - Windows / Patio / Gardens / Car cleaning - dust/pollution

Again, we have throughout this process asked all parties to suggest mitigations that may be employed to reduce or remove harmful impacts of this project (as the experts) – to date none have responded.

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Compensation

Nothing has been mentioned, suggested on this subject during any engagement so far, therefore we have suggested a few areas where we will be heavily impacted and require compensation for that impact:

- No ability to use our outside space in a relaxing and enjoyable way for 3 years
Possibly more – depending on construction delivery and road changes
- Daily impact of noise, vibration, dust, pollution, disturbance
- Obstruction of countryside views from our property
- Reduced value of property – already being felt and expected throughout the next 6-7 years
- Impact on our quality of life, mental health and wellbeing
- Increased commute times/costs

Finally, while we appreciate this is part of the planning process, we do feel this is already impacting our health and wellbeing. The stress and anxiety of not knowing is almost as bad as the potential worst outcome.

We therefore ask that you do not underestimate the impact you are having on people's lives when you consider your next steps – yes please do look after the trees, look after the cyclists – but it is those who are directly affected and are already suffering because of this project and the process that your focus should be on.

In some respects, while we love our home of 16 years, with this looming over us for the next 6-7 years we fear for our health from the impact of the stress and anxiety caused, as well as the health impact of the pollution caused and the daily noise and disruption. Therefore, and we do not say this lightly, while we would hate to move from our home, if sufficient changes or mitigations cannot be made, we would have to consider that a solution may be that we become open to offers for our property to be purchased to make way for this road widening to go ahead.

I would reiterate that this is not something that we say easily and without consideration, but with all 3 adults in the property working full time, our home is our sanctuary and the thought of the stress this will place on us, does mean we have to consider this option to set us free from this nightmare. This could only be considered at market rate (before any impact of this project), covering expenses and providing compensation of some kind.

We have and continue to work extremely hard to maintain our home, and the thought of this project and living with it, feels like we are left with no choice if you cannot offer acceptable mitigations for us to continue to enjoy our home throughout delivery of this project.

Other than saying again we wholeheartedly disagree with Bentley Road being used for this construction traffic and suggest a purpose built access road be created as a much more suitable and less impactful solution – we have nothing more to add at this time but would appreciate some actual engagement that answers some of our questions and concerns as a matter of urgency.

Mr & Mr Lifton

