

I consider that the consultation process was very poor, particularly regarding the traffic to the construction site in Alphamstone. There was a lack of publicly available information about the size and number of vehicles involved. There was no discussion of alternative routes for a haul road, nor an evaluation of its costs and impacts. There was inconsistent information about the suitability of the local minor roads, and no information about any widening or repair options. I wrote to National Grid asking for information, and did not receive a reply. I attach that letter.

Address redacted
24th March 2023

FAO John Bevan
Senior Project Manager
Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement
National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc

Dear Sir

Re: Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement Consultation Notice under Sections 42 and 44 of the Planning Act 2008

Thank you for your letter of 23rd February 2023 informing me that my land may be affected by the proposals. I have participated in the consultation to date and I have now considered the General Arrangement Plan enclosed with your letter.

Summary of concerns

Among the key criteria which you undertake to use in your project planning are establishing need, minimising effects of new infrastructure and mitigating adverse effects of works (p.4 Commitments when undertaking works in the UK, Project background document Jan 2022). I remain unconvinced that you have adequately addressed these criteria. In particular, the proposal for a haul road from the A131 to the junction of Twinstead Road, Pebmarsh fails adequately to document the justification for this new infrastructure in the first place and, should it prove necessary, provides no evidence that alternative, less disproportionate solutions have been considered. You propose to build a haul road causing permanent damage to productive arable farmland, a permanent scar on the landscape, huge numbers of vehicle movements and vast quantities of materials to construct it and then (if it is indeed temporary) to remove it. I fail to see how this is an appropriate solution.

Detail

My property [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The proposal as shown on the General Arrangement Plan sheet 29 is of concern to me for several reasons.

It seems to me that the need for a haul road has arisen out of an anticipated, but unproven difficulty for articulated lorries carrying the large cable drums for the underground work being able to get around the bend at Kings Park. It has since grown into National Grid requiring a cross country route from the A131 to the Stour Valley west construction site for all the construction vehicles being used in the project, and for the permanent availability of that route for National Grid by easements over the land. This seems out of all proportion to the initial anticipated difficulty at Kings Park. If this is the proposed solution for Pebmarsh one would also expect a haul road around Halstead to avoid the inevitable congestion that the construction traffic will create in the town.

The route of the proposed haul road addresses the concerns of residents at Cripple Corner by avoiding the roads at Cripple Corner. These concerns would still be addressed if the existing road network was used from the A131 to the Twinstead Road junction close to Lorkins Lane, where my track way exits onto the public highway, and then a temporary haul road made from there parallel to Lorkins Lane as shown on drawing 29. This would avoid the considerable damage that will occur to the arable land of two local farms (Collins and Magnolia farms). Furthermore, on the current plan the field adjoining my trackway will be bisected by the haul road and the existing access to half of it cut off from the highway by the haul road.

The route of the proposed haul road will have a devastating impact on the wider area around the Peb valley. This landscape was identified by the District Council as an Area of Special Landscape Value. It is a quiet area of gently undulating mainly arable land with hedges, trees, footpaths, bridleways, and fine views, and is enjoyed by residents and visitors. The proposed haul road will destroy this landscape.

Action requested

I write to you to request four things:

1. The evidence, fully costed, to support National Grid's decision to select the route being proposed for a haul road rather than using the existing road network from the A131 as far as the junction of Twinstead road and Lorkins Lane.
2. Feedback regarding my suggestion (given on the September consultation feedback form) that if a haul road is required, an alternative route starting to the west of Twinstead should be evaluated. This route is shorter by about 0.5 km. The visual and aural impact on the landscape

would be less. Part of the route is rough grassland not productive arable land, and it involves fewer crossings of the local road network. The resulting negative economic impact would be lessened. Has this route been fully considered and costed, and if not why not?

3. Clear and accurate information about what type of traffic would be allowed to use the proposed haul road, what quantity of vehicle movements there would be and over what period, and how the traffic would be managed.

So far, the information I have received at the consultation meetings about the need for a haul road has not provided this information.

At the March 2022 consultation I was told that the haul road would be for the large cable drum carrying lorries and that there would be 100 deliveries per year for about two years, with 1 or 2 lorries using the haul road per day. At the September consultation I was told that there would be 40 vehicles going in and 40 going out using the road, and that the haul road would be used for all construction traffic including all lorries, white vans, and crew cabs and not just for the large vehicles carrying cable drums.

4. Finally, what assessment has there been of the impact on the wildlife of my ancient trackway and the adjacent pond from having a haul road in such proximity? I have not been approached by anyone wanting to carry out a wildlife survey, although I believe wildlife surveys were done elsewhere in the area earlier in the consultation process.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Harriet Heath

cc. Pebmarsh Parish Council

Councillor Gabrielle Spray, Braintree District Council

Councillor Peter Schwier, Braintree District Council

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

CPRE

Colne Stour Countryside Association