

# BRAMFORD\_OFH2\_SESSION1\_13092023\_E DIT

00:00

To this open floor hearing, which is part of the examination of the application, for the Branford to instead reinforcement, which is a nationally significant infrastructure project,

00:11

I need to run through a few preliminary matters before we introduce ourselves, can I check with the case team that you can hear me

00:19

I have a WAV and that the live stream and recording has started another way, thank you.

00:26

For those of you in the room, we're not expecting any fire alarm tests today. So it does sound it's the real thing. So please evacuate by the fire escapes which are to your left where you came in, or behind me to your right. And we should congregate in the carpark

00:44

where information the toilets at the far end of the corridor that you came in by and you'll see the side facing usually, please Could everyone set their phones to silent.

00:55

For those joining us online. Please keep your device on mute until you're asked to speak.

01:01

So to our introductions, I am Andrew mon and I was appointed on the fifth of July 2023. As the lead member of this examining authority. I have a background in ecology and environmental impact assessment. I'm a chartered environmentalist and a chartered landscape architect.

01:19

My fellow panel members were appointed at the same time, and I'll ask them to introduce themselves.

01:25

Good evening. I'm Julie de Courcey. I'm a chartered time planner. I have an appellate background that includes major infrastructure projects and the examination of local development plans.

01:42

Good evening, I'm John McAvoy. I have a background in major infrastructure projects and I'm also a chartered civil engineer.

01:53

Hello, and good evening. I am Jason Rawlins. I'm a chartered civil engineer and a chartered environmentalist. And I have a background in major projects for energy and highways.

02:08

Thank you, and you may have already spoken to our planning Inspectorate colleagues sitting at the back of the room this evening. Jake Stevens is the case manager leading the team and he's accompanied this evening by Sam Stevens and Robert Cook. And Jess Jess Weatherby is assisting online participants.

02:28

So we are examining an application from an order for development consent for the brand to insert reinforcement, and the application has been made by national grid electricity transmission PLC, that we will refer to as the applicant.

02:42

You can find information about the application and the documents produced for this examination on the project webpage on the planning Inspectorate national infrastructure website.

02:54

The rule six letter that we sent to all registered interested parties on the seventh of August this year has the web address for this.

03:03

This is a hybrid or blended hearing. So some participants are joining us online on Microsoft Teams. Those participants should note that the chat on the question facility is not in use.

03:16

If you participate in this and any other about public hearings and meetings, it's important that you understand that you will be recorded and live streamed and that a digital recording with subtitles will be published. It will be made available on the project webpage that I referred to earlier.

03:33

The planning inspectorates practice is to retain these recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State decision on the development consent order.

03:43

Because the digital recording is retained and published, it forms a public record that can contain your personal information to which the General Data Protection Regulation applies.

03:54

So to avoid the need to edit the digital recordings, we urge you not to add information that you wish to be kept private and confidential. Please do not give us details such as addresses email addresses, details of your home personal financial matters or medical conditions, as these should not be added to the public record.

04:15

In addition, please do not make unattributed references to other person's situation information or opinions.

04:24

If you're we consider there's no alternative to the disclosure of such information. We will agree a process to enable it to be made available without informing part of the public record. The normal way in which we will do this will be to ask you to make general oral submissions, but then to include any private and confidential information that you need to support it in a written document. That written document will also need to be published, but it can be redacted before publication takes place. Please do ask the case team if you need any more information about this.

04:58

I'm going to move on to Agenda Item

05:00

Two, which is the arrangements for this open floor hearing this evening.

05:09

My apologies, ladies and gentleman for the delay, we do have some IT issues, which means some of the recording hasn't been picked up. So I'm very sorry. But I'm going to have to go back through the agenda item to again,

05:21

I'm going to get away from the back if that's correct.

05:25

For the recording.

05:36

So I'm going to get back to the stage where I was talking about arrangements for the open floor hearings. This is agenda item two.

05:45

This is the first open floor hearing we've held rolling our cancellation of the proposed hearing yesterday afternoon at the Ipswich Town Football Club stadium.

05:53

Our timetable does include provisions for further open floor hearings in the weeks commencing sixth of November and the 11th of December if they're required, but these would only be for any new speakers.

06:05

An open floor hearing provides an opportunity for interested parties to make submissions to the examination and for the examining authority to ask any questions should they arise.

06:16

We have read the relevant representations that have been made. And this hearing provides those interested parties with the opportunity to emphasise and explain key points. And to provide factual information to help us fully understand their concerns.

06:32

speakers will have the opportunity to provide us with a written summary of their oral submission together with any supporting evidence or references to documents that they refer to by deadline won in the draft examination timetable, which is 25th to September 2023.

06:49

For those of you who have chosen to submit their case and evidence in writing, I'd encourage you to submit this as a written representation for deadline to in the draft examination timetable, which is the 11th of October 2023.

07:05

In terms of the way we will proceed with this hearing, we've had requests in advance from those who wish to speak, and we'll come to you shortly.

07:13

It's common practice in national infrastructure examination open floor hearings to allow a maximum of five minutes per speaker. However, we are aware that some of the speakers who've registered in advance are here on behalf of local authorities or parish councils. And in recognition of their role in coordinating and representing the views of others. We will allow up to 10 minutes for each.

07:36

I should point out that if speakers bring up matters which are not relevant to the examination, we may interject to explain this and to ask them to move on to the next point. Please note that we cannot, for example, take evidence in relation to the merits of government policy, unrelated developments or the nature or quantum of compensation that might be paid to affected persons.

08:01

We will invite the applicant to respond to the points made in the representations today, either after each one. Before we close the hearing or in writing by deadline one. Can I ask who's representing the applicant this evening, please.

08:27

John Bevan on behalf of the applicant.

08:31

Thank you. We're not intending to speak much tonight. We're here for points of clarification that's useful. But we're very much in listening mode, and we'll ensure we respond in full as appropriate at deadline one. Thank you.

08:50

Thank you, John James greenhouse Project Director for the Branford twins Ted project.

08:55

Like John, not intending responding to that this evening, but will respond

09:00

on points or in writing by deadline on. Thank you. Thank you very much.

09:06

All right, we'll now move on to Agenda Item three, and I'm going to hand over to Mr. McAvoy.

09:12

Thank you everyone that agenda item three confirmation of those who have notified the examining authority of a wish to be heard at the open floor hearing this evening. Thank you indeed for attending. We have three interested parties who have indicated their wish to speak this evening. I'll run through the order in which we will receive their submissions. First we have Councillor Richard route from Suffolk County Council. Councillor route is the deputy Council leader. Second we have Miss Braun Curtis.

09:44

Barber, mid Suffolk District Council's is Curtis is a principal planning officer. And finally we have Mr. Adam Sedgwick representing six parish councils. Can I confirm to Cedric is here Cedric

10:00

That's very helpful indeed. Thank you. Moving on to receive the oral submissions from the interested parties. And first to speak will be counsellor route, Counsellor out. Are you present? Are you attending virtually? I'm into attending virtually Yes, I'm here. Can you hear and see the panel? I can, sir. Thank you. Because what if you can first start by introducing yourself, and then commence your submission?

10:27

Good evening. I'm counsellor Richard route, deputy leader of Suffolk County Council, and cabinet member for finance and environment.

10:36

Thank you very much for this opportunity to talk about this project, which has been so long getting to this stage.

10:44

First, to add some context, I have the political responsibility for overseeing the County Council's response to nationally significant infrastructure projects. It's a responsibility I've held since 2018.

10:58

Over this period, I and the teams I work with have engaged with and responded to Sizewell B, one of only two new nuclear plants in the UK, the EIA on the North Sea, the A to wind farms, major interconnectors, connecting the UK national grid to the continent at Suffolk, the Samak energy farm, which if consented would become the UK's largest solar farm, and the North to Tilbury pylons previously known as East Anglia Green, which forms another part of the large number of transmission projects planned to reinforce the grid coming forward in East Anglia as our region becomes one of the greatest exporters of energy in the country.

11:38

The county council has also successfully promoted its own DCO project under the ENSET planning regime to authorise the lake loading third crossing Lowestoft, which is now under construction as to go in Bridge. The county council therefore has a good understanding of the responsibilities and pressures on a scheme promoter, as well as its experience as a host authority and regulating authority.

12:02

This is the experience that we at Suffolk County Council have in dealing with nationally significant infrastructure projects.

12:10

The county council recognises that Suffolk's geography means that the county will play a very significant role in delivering the country's Net Zero targets, particularly Suffolk will likely be an important location for delivering energy security, supporting food security, and adapting to climate change. Suffolk already hosts a huge proportion of the UK new low carbon generation projects.

12:35

SCC has adopted a policy of being supportive in principle to renewable and low carbon energy generation and transmission schemes, whilst ensuring that the impact of these schemes is minimised and the OPT opportunities for the affected area are maximised.

12:50

Suffolk County Council's energy and adaptive climate infrastructure policy, approved by the County Council's cabinet in May 2023, outlines that the council will try to secure proposals that avoid, mitigate and if necessary compensate for significant changes in locations affected by the suffix people and environment.

13:10

were of course behind the national ambition to achieve Net Zero of the UK.

13:15

The County Council declared a climate emergency in 29, March of 2019. And we're fully aware and supportive of the need for new large scale, low carbon electricity generation and transmission.

13:27

Whilst the national benefits of this transition are welcome. The colocation of these major projects will result in the significant impact of these schemes being acutely concentrated on our local communities and environment as a rural county with a vibrant economy, strong communities and a rich natural and cultural heritage. The speed and scale of this transformation for our energy infrastructure means that Suffolk County Council's position must be to demand the highest standards of all major projects, including this one in terms of design mitigation, and reducing the impact on our communities as best as possible. And where required providing appropriate compensation for residual impacts.

14:10

The council's local impact report will go into the comprehensive details of the council's issues with the proposed development. However, I will speak to the wider issues as we perceive them.

14:21

Suffolk County Council accept this project is essential to reinforce the electricity transmission network in East Anglia. Furthermore, the council recognises that the applicant has made significant changes during the development of these proposals to reduce the harm to surface communities landscape and environment.

14:38

The proposed under gap grounding is very welcome. It means that the area of outstanding natural beauty gets the recognition and protection it deserves and requires. The proposed undergrounding also means that the and designated landscape of the store valley which is of the highest quality and sensitivity also gains this protection.

14:57

Suffolk County Council is satisfied that the case

15:00

For undergrounding and the store Valley is entirely justified and robust in terms of both the sensitivity of the landscape and the requirements of the emerging draft policies in the national policy statements. Also, it is important to acknowledge that it has come about in no small part due to the relentless and effective campaigning of both the communities and the local authorities over many years. There are however substantial issues that remain to be resolved.

15:29

These include the long term impact of the project around Bramford. At the substation, both by itself and in combination with other projects, the detrimental impacts on the setting of listed buildings along the route, such as hintlesham Hall.

15:42

Furthermore, National Grid have acknowledged that there will be long term residual impact from this scheme. The council considers therefore, that a comprehensive scheme of mitigation to compensate for these residual impact is both reasonable and essential.

15:57

The construction phase of the project will have significant impacts for both residents and the visitor economy. The council considers that these impacts on businesses, especially tourism businesses, and the immunity and highways impact must be robustly addressed and mitigated by National Grid.

16:14

The proposals as they stand at present lack sufficient detail in places, including aspects such as the construction traffic management plan, and the county council insists that it should be consulted before details of the construction, traffic routing, and management are agreed.

16:32

The successful delivery of these proposals will depend to a large degree on National Grid keeping to the promised mitigation as set out in the application. And the county council will continue to work with all interested parties to ensure that this is so this is especially true of the proposed undergrounding of cables in the Dedham Vale area of outstanding natural beauty and in the store valley. It also applies to the micro siting of lattice towers in the vicinity of the listed buildings at hintlesham. Hall and the Brett valley of Benton end.

17:04

In summary, the county council accepts the need for the project in principle, and acknowledges the engagement with national grid and the improvements that have flowed from the constructive dialogue. However, the council is not yet able to offer its support because of the outstanding unresolved matters. The county council look forward to participating in the examination process with a view to securing satisfactory resolution of its concerns. Thank you very much for your time.

17:34

I'm sorry, many, many thanks. I had one question for you. It's in relation to your comments on the visitor economy. And you spoke of significant impacts. Do you can you give me any specific examples of those impacts, please?

17:49

I think they'll probably be best placed to our experts in what I what I can say is that we were very keen to have the impact on tourism scoped in this project. And we were disappointed that they were not. But what has happened is that for the proposed nourish to Tilbury project,

18:10

formerly known as he's dangling green, it has been scoped in. So I think that demonstrates that in projects of this sort, the impact on tourism and the visitor economy should be considered. But I think it's our expert team that should be consulted on that to give you the specifics.



18:28

That's helpful. Thank you look to my colleagues on the panel.

18:35

For the questions

18:37

of some different focus customers, many thanks. Thank you.

18:41

Secondly, to speak, we have from Babor and mid Suffolk district councils. Miss Brown Curtis was Curtis, can you hear me? Yes, thank you. Can you see the panel? I can. Thank you. That's fine. Wonderful. Can you please start by introducing yourself and then you may commence your submission. Thank you. Thank you. Good evening. My name is Brian Curtis. I am Principal Planning Officer for baby District Council and mid Suffolk District Council. And I lead on our inset work. I am just going to keep it very brief to restate the principles that we've already submitted in our relevant reps. And to reinforce the views of my colleague from the county council, that the district councils support the principle of development in terms of

19:29

transmission of electricity and reinforcement. But the roles of the districts in supporting our communities, businesses, and protecting the environment and heritage of those districts are key priorities for our members. And we will be participating in the hearing as they as they go forward and offer full support to our communities. All of the details of our concerns that remain outstanding. The schema in our relevant reps and will be detailed further in our

20:00

likely impact report and other submissions as we go forward. Thank you.

20:07

Curtis, thank you. That was very concise. I had no questions of you. I looked at my colleagues

20:13

we have no further questions. Thank you indeed.

20:17

Okay. Thirdly, to speak, we have in person, Mr. Adam Sedgwick, representing six parish councils

20:34

okay Mr. Cedric, okay.

20:37

So that button is sitting comfortably. Thank you, Mr. Cedric. If you can start by introducing yourself and then you must hold your submission. Thank you. Thank you. And my name is Adam centric. I'm a parish councillor for stoke by Nayland parish council. I represent six parish councils the six local parish councils posted stoke by Nayland, Lemond Heath Blessington, a little Coronado and Bilson Mary.

21:06

And these some parish councils have worked together in previously on joint responses to national grid power during the earlier rounds.

21:15

And the parish councils fully support the need for

21:19

this good reinforcement and recognise the principle of the specific reinforcement disease this is established. What we're concerned about is the two sections overhead line to the east of the compound ceiling and company posted Heath and to the west through LeBron Heath and ashington.

21:43

These are outside the AONB, but it will have significant impact on it setting

21:50

and the setting value project area which shall cancel route referred to

21:56

earlier, they are affecting views and major crop crossing major Nexus routes.

22:03

And national grids current proposal for the Norcia Tilbury line as part of the great Sigrid upgrade includes an underground section through great Hawksley based on acknowledgment that the overhead line in such proximity to an A and B does have can have material adverse impact on the setting.

22:26

Our view is National Grid have not taken the similar impacts on the sections of this project, especially into account.

22:37

We asked the inspectorate to consider this disparity in their examination of the current application.

22:45

The national policy statement for energy makes explicit that structures outside aonbs have impact on them, and hopeful rules as I understand it emphasised the desirability of avoiding impact altogether.

22:59

So our position is the National Grid's interpretation of the national policy statement in relation to this project is excessively narrow,

23:07

and that the proposal does not address a requirement to protect the setting of the area and be in the project area adequately.

23:17

We intend to seek expert lands to give advice on this topic to establish whether the applicant submissions regarding the setting have been competently developed. And what are the two overhead sections in question create unacceptable and negative landscape and visual impacts to insert against planning policy and best practice? So we will be making much more detailed written submissions later in the process?

23:47

Saturday, you're finished. Finished. Thank you, indeed. Thank you much. Indeed. I have no further questions. I'll be back to my colleagues.

23:53

That's palyed. Thank you.

23:57

Thank you, sir. Could I just check when you say you're going to make detailed written representations, we'll identify quite clearly the two sections of overhead why you can you're referring to a yes, indeed. And could it also identify what you believe will be the setting of the A and B?

24:13

A and B? Yes. Yes, you're right. Yes, absolutely. So I won't ask you to repeat it again. So we'll have we'll find it in your reading representation. Indeed. Yes. Thank you very much.

24:26

Cedric Many thanks. That completes the list of speakers who registered to address us this evening. Is anybody who present who would wish to contribute?

24:38

I'm looking at the whole I see one hand raised. I'm looking virtually no hands raised surfing given a please. Two or two hands raised I apologise. So

24:49

even hold

24:53

second answer

24:59

Thank you, sir.

25:07

Okay, so Mr. Holland if you wish to step forward please

25:23

Hello, thank you. You have five minutes to make your submission. When you start, can you please introduce yourself and then you may commence your submission. Thank you.

25:32

Thank you for hearing me. My name is David Holland. I'm a district councillor in Braintree district. I'm the member for staff ally South the ward most affected by the undergrounding across the Star Valley.

25:47

I am the chairman of South Valley underground long standing campaign group who addressed this particular issue since 2009.

25:55

The matters I wanted to raise worth

25:59

brought to me by members of the communities I represent and centre very locally around issues including the substation Proposal A twisted weakened pull border.

26:15

The communities very much lament the fact that there has been a process to remove parts of the Bramford twins did project which for the first decade or so we're all on thing and to take part a puppet a particular part out and put it through the local planning system

26:35

that has consequences for the way in which the whole project is thought about, in particular with respect to consequences, such as

26:48

the substation effectively makes redundant the 132 kilovolt UK Power Networks line between the substation and Bramford National Grid have agreed with UK PN to remove the section between the twins did T and Bramford. In as mitigation for the overall project. However, they have not agreed to remove the section between the Twin City T and the substation.

27:21

And during the planning process at local level, it was determined that that section of line whilst being an issue in the wider context, was not part of the

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substation plant local planning application, and therefore could not be formed part of the decision or determination the community wished to

27:51

have all redundant pylons removed. And this is an important issue for us.

27:58

The The other issue that that raises is one of confusion. And this is an exceedingly complex proposal, which fundamentally we support. Indeed, the group that I represent, supported, that the fundamental routing that's been adopted, from the outset, recognising is the least detrimental despite the fact it comes through our patch. So I think we've been balanced. But

28:28

with such a complex proposal, it's difficult enough already for regular members of the community to understand it. And by atomizing the thing into bits and bobs and putting through different parts of the planning system, you don't help public understanding and that I regard is highly detrimental. The only other thing I'd like to say is that we completely agree with the points made by Adam Sedgwick

28:59

and regard the setting all what will soon be the dead unveiled national landscape. Currently the AONB the detriments to the setting are also extremely important and should be fully mitigated.

29:18

And this means that the ceiling Empire compounds in particular become an important issue. And we would hope that the approach that we believe we're seeing in early days formed on nourish Tilbury with respect to these locations would actually be applied on the Branford twin twisted road. Thank you.

29:45

Just get to know the examining authority have visited

29:49

earlier in July the sites to force proposed sites for the ceiling and compounds. Just one question for you in terms of you spoke of the difficulty in the public understand

30:00

Under proposals, do you have any suggestions in terms of how that might be done? I do better providing better understanding I do. The proposals should come forward as one proposal with a single rationale for why the proposal is coming forward. And it should remain one proposal going through one planning authority all the way through.

30:37

The reason I am saying that in answer to you is a really simple one that for the communities of East Anglia, we currently have a situation where we know that there are wider projects coming forward, which are all interconnected,

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which I think you could pick up from the name of the company that we're dealing with here.

31:03

And it is very, very difficult to understand the cumulative impacts

31:11

across our region of these projects. And that cumulative impact for our region will be vast.

31:26

Thank you very much. Just hold on a second, please. I took my colleagues on the panel Cressy.

31:33

Further questions. Thank you very much indeed.

31:40

Okay, next speaker is Mr. VARCOE.

31:49

These

31:51

Mr. Barca Thank you, you'll have five minutes to make a submission. When you start, can you please introduce yourself and you may come into submission. Thank you.

31:59

Thank you. My name is Steven VARCOE. I'm a householder near to the ceiling and compound in Alphen stone.

32:12

And the first speaker you had from Suffolk County Council this evening. spoke about the lack of detail in

32:23

in the submissions and what concerns me and I'm sure many people like me in our area is

32:37

how this will impact us during the period of construction. We live

32:46

I'm I won't say where we live.

32:49

But henne back lane is the road on which the ceiling and compound effectively is being built.

32:58

It is

32:59

double ended. There is an entrance, if you like at the ceiling and compound and and there is a an exit or another entrance to the towards the Suffolk end.

33:13

And anybody not knowing the local topography would imagine that if you close one end of the lane,

33:24

we'll be able to make our way through the other. I had a rather interesting experience about six weeks ago, where two fire engines came through.

33:36

But they got stuck. And one of them managed to reverse out. I had to pull the other one out backwards.

33:46

We will suffer if if the plans aren't properly thought through, we will suffer from not having access to emergency vehicles, normal

33:59

deliveries like dust carts and so on.

34:04

And that's something I think I would like to to point out at this stage. Thank you.

34:13

Mr. Parker. Thank you. I just wanna understand in terms of access, are you saying that if one end of the road is closed, you will not be able to access gain access or your usual routes of access?

34:24

Yes, well, without

34:28

if the road near the ceiling and compound disclosed. And looking at the plans for digging trenches suggests that it will be

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there is not sufficient access through the other end and Councillor Holland will back me up on the head, knowing the area intimately as he does.

34:57

With Thank you just to confirm that we have actually been here

35:00

This in July, the examining authority did actually visit the site of the force Indian compound. So we have some familiarity with the road network around that particular compound. I've said to my colleagues left and right to see if any questions.

35:16

We have no further questions. Thank you very much indeed.

35:24

To make a final call for anybody who wishes to speak, who hasn't spoken already, if they wish to speak.

35:31

I'm seeing no hands raised in the hole or on line.

35:36

I just returned to the applicant, do you wish to an attorney comes to the stage?

35:46

John Beth, and on behalf of the applicant.

35:50

As I said, start, I don't think we've had any substantive comments to make at this stage. But we'll ensure you know, we've seen the relevant representations which I think cover a number of these issues. So we'll, we'll respond fully at deadline one to those.

36:06

I guess the only other thing is to thank those that have come down this evening and made representations and will ensure we respond to them. We've taken plenty of notes.

36:17

Thank you. Indeed, I do notice a hand raised on line. So if we can receive details of the person who's wishing to speak

36:31

nobody's forthcoming.

36:33



Okay. On that basis, I think we'll move to Agenda Item five, which is just closing the hearing. A reminder that the next formal deadline on the draft examination timetable is deadline one on the 25th of September this year. Because those of you who have spoken today, please ensure that any written summaries of your oral submissions reach the examining authority by that date. You should consult the draft examination timetable in ALEKS D of the rules six letter to check what other submissions we are requesting. And with that, on behalf of the examining authority, I'd like to thank everybody who contributed and seen the hearing this evening. The open sore hearing is now closed.