

PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

31 MAY 2022

REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

A.3. EAST ANGLIA GREEN – NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION

(Report prepared by Gary Guiver)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee's comments on initial proposals from the National Grid for the 'East Anglia Green' 400kV and a draft response from Tendring District Council to the current non-statutory consultation exercise.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To help achieve the government ambition to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 and to ensure the power network has the capacity to accommodate a projected increase in demand for electricity generated from renewable means, National Grid is proposing the 'East Anglia Green' project. This involves:

- A new 400kV powerline between Norwich and Bramford (near Ipswich);
- A new 400kV powerline between Bramford and Tilbury; and
- A new 400kV substation in the Tendring area to facilitate the connection to the proposed North Falls Offshore Windfarm and Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarm – both of which are to be located off the Tendring coast.

As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), the planning process will be overseen by central government and a specialist unit within the Planning Inspectorate. National Grid will be seeking a 'Development Consent Order' (DCO) from government, as opposed to planning permission from the local authority – however local authorities like Tendring District Council will be consultees in the process.

The project is currently at a non-statutory pre-application stage where National Grid are inviting comments on its initial proposals. Its intention is to proceed to a statutory consultation in 2023, the submission of the DCO application in 2024, an examination and decision process over the course of 2024 to 2026, construction between 2027 and 2030 and connection/operation from 2030/31,

The current eight week non-statutory consultation commenced on 21st April and closes on 16th June and National Grid have put in place a programme of briefing sessions for stakeholders, communities and other interested parties – many of which have already taken place.

In anticipation that the North Falls and Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarms (which will be the subject of their own DCO process in due course) will connect to the grid in Tendring (between Holland Haven and Frinton on Sea), it is proposed that there will be a large electricity substation in the Tendring District. This will enable connection of the windfarms to the new 400kV Norwich to Tilbury powerline.

The preferred location of the substation is on land close to the existing 132kV substation south of Lawford and west of Little Bromley and that the land-take will be around 20hectares (taking into account the need for landscaping). It is also anticipated that two additional 132kV 'customer' substations serving each of the two separate windfarms could be located in and around the same area.

The preferred route for the 400kV powerline would enter Tendring to the substation to the north of Ardleigh, coming in from the north through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and out to the south around the north of Colchester.

Apart from the section that passes through the Dedham Vale AONB which is to be provided underground to minimise landscape impacts, the remainder of the powerline is intended to be suspended from pylons.

Essex County Council is working on behalf of all affected local authorities to coordinate a technical response to each stage of the DCO project however Tendring District Council can provide its own response and may wish to do so from a community perspective.

Informed by initial feedback from communities and informal discussion with TDC Members, Officers have prepared a draft response to the non-statutory consultation on which comments are invited from the Planning Policy and Local Planning Committee. With the agreement of the Leader of the Council and Planning Portfolio Holder, it is intended that a final version of the response will be submitted to National Grid before the consultation period closes on 16th June.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee –

- (a) considers the draft response to the non-statutory consultation on the East Anglia Green project outlined in Appendix 1 and decides what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Leader of the Council and the Planning Portfolio Holder; and**
- (b) notes that, with the approval of the Leader of the Council and the Planning Portfolio Holder, a final version of the response will be submitted to National Grid before the consultation period closes on 16th June 2022.**

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Tendring District Council has declared a climate emergency and the East Anglia Green project is designed to assist in achieving the national target of zero carbon by 2050. Whilst the planning process for this project is to be administered at central government level, the Council has a role as a consultee in representing its communities to influence the process as best as it can to achieve the best outcome for the District and its residents.

RESOURCES AND RISK

The Council's role is that of a consultee on this project as it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for which a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be sought from central government.

Essex County Council is working with all affected local authorities in Essex to coordinate a technical response at the various stages of the DCO project which may or may not require additional support from the local authorities as the project progresses – particularly if external consultancy support or independent professional advice is required.

There is a risk that development will be allowed to proceed without addressing local concerns, however there could also be opportunities arising from the development that could be maximised to benefit local communities – and these are open for discussion.

LEGAL

As stated above, the proposed development is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for which the planning process is administered by central government. The Council's role in the process is therefore that of a consultee.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Area or Ward affected: Ardleigh and Little Bromley; Lawford, Manningtree & Mistley (however the location of the substation could have implications for the route through the District taken in connecting to the North Falls and Five Estuaries Wind Farms.

Consultation/Public Engagement: The current non-statutory consultation exercise end on 16th June 2022 and to date has included a variety of briefings and community events. On Saturday 28th May 2022, the project team will be at Lawford Venture Centre between 10am and 4pm to discuss the project and answer any questions. This non-statutory consultation is one part of the overall process and there will be a statutory consultation in 2023.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Full details of the East Anglia Green project can be found on the following weblink: [East Anglia GREEN | National Grid ET](#) however a summary of the project (as far as it affects Tendring) and the consultation process is set out below.

The proposal from National Grid is aimed at helping the country achieve net zero carbon by 2050. It involves:

- A new 400kV powerline between Norwich and Bramford;
- A new 400kV powerline between Bramford and Tilbury; and
- A new 400kV substation in the Tendring area to facilitate the connection of the [North Falls Offshore Wind Farm](#) and [Five Estuaries – Offshore wind farm](#) to the grid.

The planning application for this major project would be determined by government as ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP)’ which would result in the granting of a ‘Development Consent Order’. However local authorities are consultees and Essex County Council is working with Essex Districts to provide a coordinated technical response.

The proposed timetable (taken from a presentation to Officers on 29th March) is:

Milestone	Start	Finish
Routeing and Siting	Q2 2021	Q1 2022
Project website launch	Q1 2022	Q1 2022
Non-statutory Consultation	Q2 2022	Q2 2022
Statutory Consultation	Q2 2023	Q2 2023
Environmental Impact Assessment	Q3 2022	Q2 2024
DCO Submission	Q4 2024	Q4 2024
DCO Examination and Decision	Q4 2024	Q2 2026
Construction	Q1 2027	Q4 2030
Connection	Q2 2030	Q4 2030

The eight week non-statutory consultation commenced on 21st April and close on 16th June. The purpose of the non-statutory consultation is to:

- Introduce and provide an overview of the project to the public;
- Explain the development journey that has refined the proposals to date;
- Present and explain the preferred route corridor and substation site;
- Gather feedback on the work to date and the future consultation proposals; and
- Outline next steps.

The consultation has involved newsletters and other on-line material, information provided to libraries and village halls, face-to-face and virtual public events and briefings for MPs, Councillors and affected Town/Parish Councils. An event is being held on Saturday 28th May at Lawford Venture Centre between 10am and 4pm.

As part of the non-statutory consultation, National Grid has gone public for the first time with its preferred route for the new powerlines and the substation. The consultation exercise provides an explanation for the thought-process and the different factors that have been taken into account into identifying options, and the preferred options.

Tendring substation (graphics taken from presentation to Officers from National Grid)

The project

Our proposals for East Anglia GREEN reinforcement include:

- 60 km new 400 kV overhead line between Norwich and Bramford (AENC in NOA)
- 120 km new 400 kV overhead line between Bramford and Tilbury (ATNC in NOA)
- underground cables through Dedham Vale AONB
- new 400 kV substation, to be connected into the new Bramford – Tilbury circuit, to connect North Falls and Five Estuaries offshore wind farms.

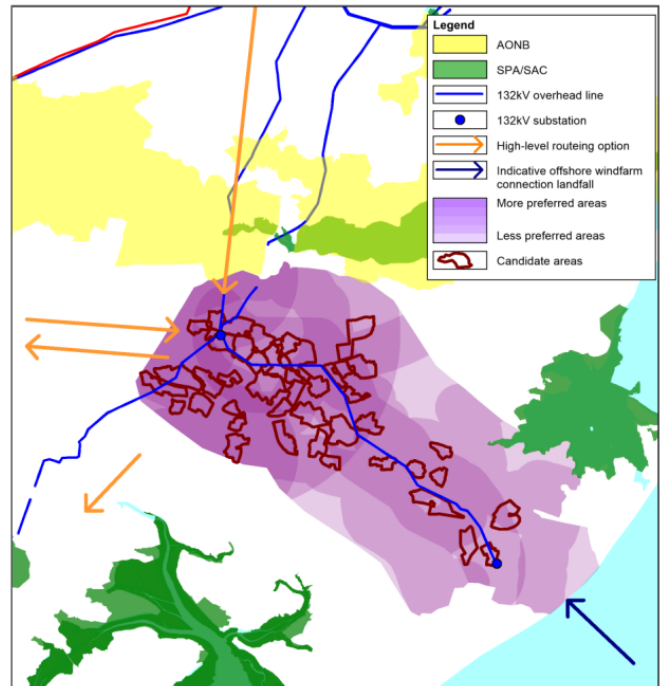


North Falls and Five Estuaries windfarms expected to connect to the mainland in Tendring, between Holland-on-Sea and Frinton-on-Sea. These are the subject of separate NSIP and DCO processes.

Options identification

Options drivers

- Site large enough to host NG substation, plus two customer substations there or nearby;
- shorter 400kV overhead line required preferred;
- potential to mitigate through removal of 132kV overhead lines; and
- proximity to the A and B road networks.



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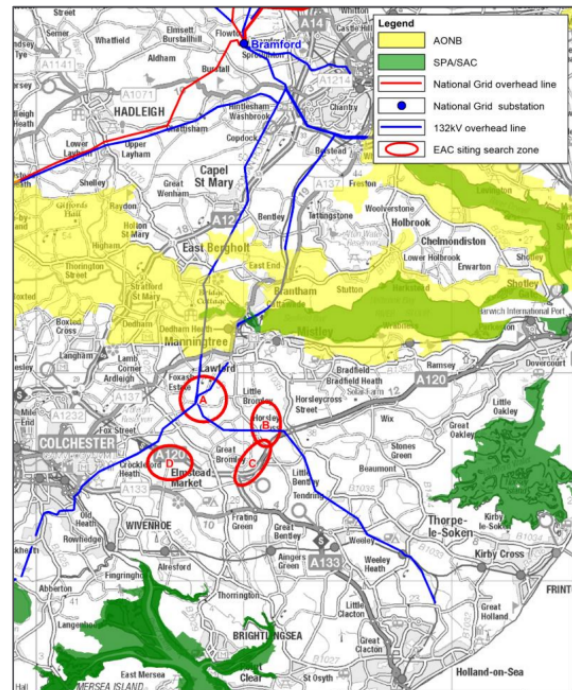
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National Grid have considered various locations for a sub-station through the centre of Tendring, but its preference would be for the substation to be as close to the new 400kV powerlines as possible.

Options filtering

Options filtered with consideration of

- scope for mitigation;
- nature of adjacent roads;
- availability of existing screening elements;
- proximity of adjacent residential properties or listed buildings;
- public rights of way and cycle routes;
- the presence of any potentially valuable landscape elements; and
- the relative length of OHL and cable



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Further refinement identified four potential locations for the substation:

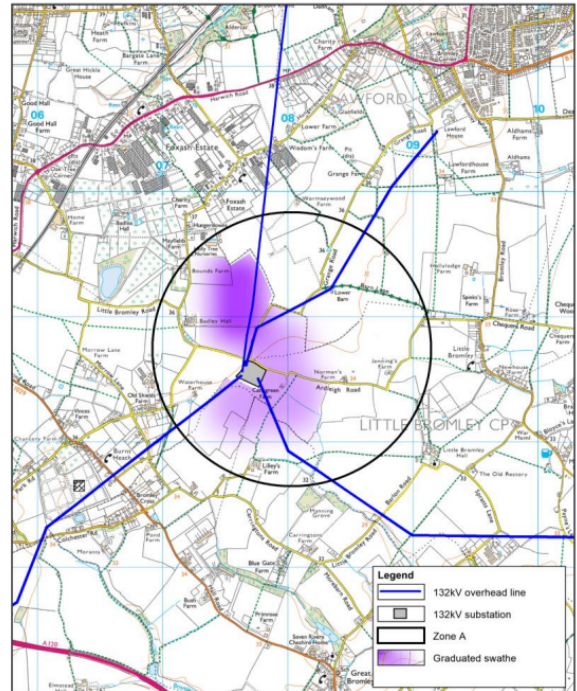
- North of Elmstead Market;

- North of A120/A133 slip road;
- West of Horsley Cross; and
- Close to existing substation near Ardleigh/Little Bromley/Lawford.

Preferred option

Zone A

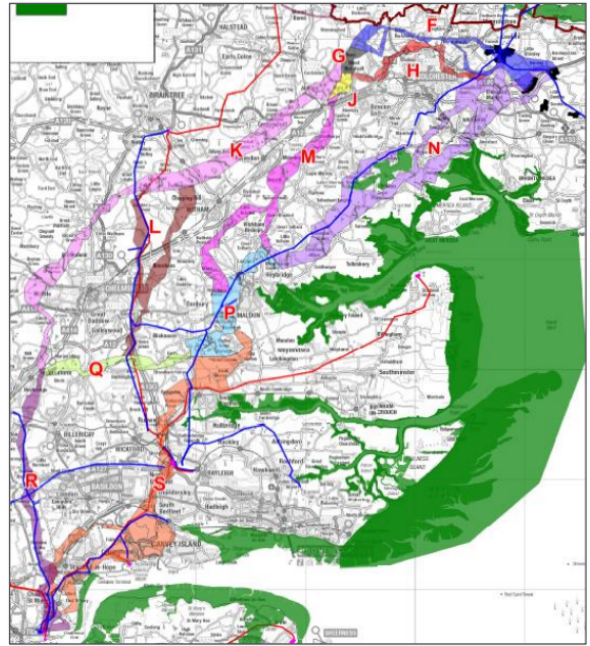
- North of Lawford Grid 132kV substation
- Potential for customer substations in adjacent fields



The preferred location is that in the Ardleigh/Lawford/Little Bromley area to north of an existing substation. There is potential for the additional two 'customer sub-stations' (to which each of the two windfarms would connect) to be located in adjacent fields.

Option selection

- Filtering process to identify viable end-to-end corridors or best performing sites
- Further assessment undertaken as necessary
- Decision workshops to compare costs and benefits of each corridor/site and determine preferred
- Guided by Holford & Horlock rules

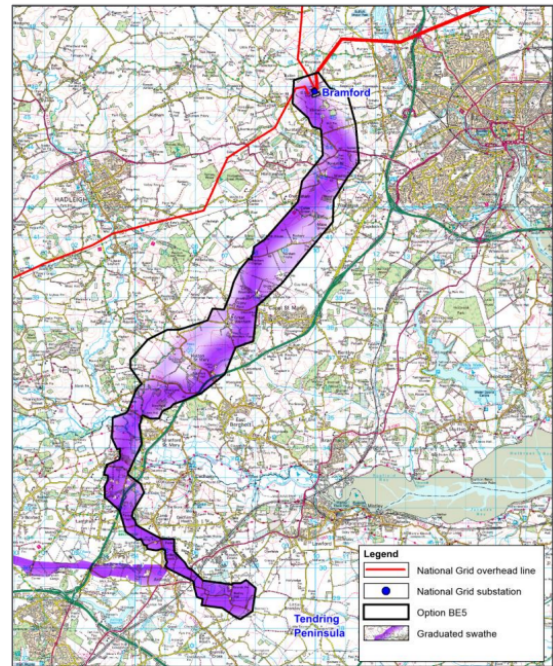


Several route options have been considered for the Bramford to Tilbury 400kV Powerline. They involve different approaches to connecting with the Tendring substation – including a ‘coastal route’ to the east of Colchester and a more ‘inland route’ going around the north of Colchester and through the middle part of Essex.

Preferred option

Option BE5

- Enters Bramford substation from south east
- Runs parallel to A12
- Crosses AONB to west of Stratford St Mary
- Approaches connection node north of Ardleigh
- Enters connection node from west

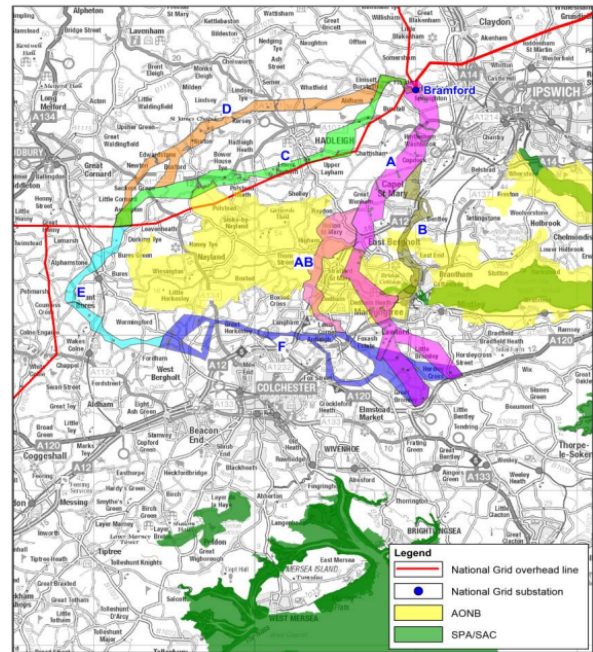


The preferred route is that extending north and west of Colchester – thus avoiding impact on the sensitive internationally important wildlife sites along the coast, and the Garden Community site. It would however pass through the parish of Ardleigh and would consist of a large overhead cable and pylons, within a fairly close proximity to the north of Ardleigh village.

Options identification

Options identified

- Two initial core options
 - Through and around AONB
- Sub-options for branches of the corridor
 - Parallel to existing OHL or not; various routes through AONB
- Corridors assessed in sections to aid potential for combining



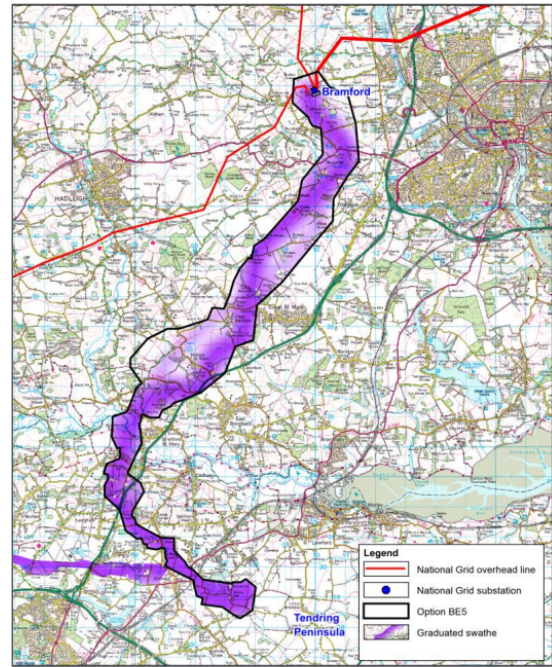
To get from the substation to Bramford, the powerline will either have to pass through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or around it. Above are the different route options that have been considered for that section.

National Grid's preference is for one of the routes passing through the AONB, but avoiding Flatford Mill and some of the more sensitive features of Constable Country. There is in expectation in national planning policy for electricity infrastructure, for cables to go underground through the AONB – but there would still be short-term damage – a circa 200m trench that would be replanted and restored following the works.

Preferred option

Option BE5

- Enters Bramford substation from south east
- Runs parallel to A12
- Crosses AONB to west of Stratford St Mary
- Approaches connection node north of Ardleigh
- Enters connection node from west



The preferred route to Bramford would involve an overhead powerline passing close to the northern edge of Ardleigh village.

Whilst Essex County Council is leading on a coordinated technical response to the consultation, Officers have been asked to prepare a separate Tendring District Council response that reflects community considerations.

From informal feedback from Councillors and communities, it is suggested that the response makes the following points and observations:

- The Council recognises that this proposal will be determined through the NSIP process by central government, supports the comments submitted via Essex County Council but wishes to make a number of comments on behalf of its communities.
- Concern that alternative routes, including a potential underground route for powerlines beneath the seabed around the coast have been discounted and suggest that such options are considered further.
- Concern about the landscape, visual and potential health impact of giant overhead pylons, particularly where they run close to existing communities such as Ardleigh.
- Concern that overhead powerlines are a technology that has been in place for some 100 years and are known to lose a considerable amount of power along the length of their route and are considered an inefficient and outdated means of transporting energy.
- Suggest that more of the powerline route is underground – particularly the relatively short stretches between the AONB and Ardleigh and out towards Colchester.

- Concern about the scale and height of the substation in the preferred location and the impact on rural lanes during the construction period – particularly if two customer substations are likely to be sited in a similar location.
- The Tendring District is a key contributor to national renewable energy generation with a large proportion of wind and solar farms being located both within the District and off its coast – however, the communities in Tendring affected by these developments receive all the impacts with little or no tangible benefits.
- The benefits to the affected communities must be maximised through either some form of planning gain to protection of the local environment, upholding the integrity of the coastline, support for local projects, a focus on providing training and job opportunities and local discounts on energy bills.

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the draft response prepared by Officers in Appendix 1 to ensure it captures the main messages the Council wants to put forward to National Grid.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft response from Tendring District Council to the non-statutory consultation on the East Anglia Green project.