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Our Ref : Tarchon/Non-stat/1

Dear Mr Wood,

TDC's Response to the Non-Statutory Consultation on the Tarchon Interconnector

Tendring District Council (TDC) submits this response to the non-statutory consultation on the Tarchon Interconnector project. TDC objects to this proposal in the strongest possible terms due to significant concerns regarding the site selection process, landscape impact, highways disruption, and potential conflicts with the Local Plan review. This response outlines these objections in detail and calls for a thorough reassessment of the proposed project.

Objections to EACN and N2T Proposals

The primary reason for identifying the Tendring Peninsula as the landfall location for the interconnection cable and large-scale substation is, as stated in the consultation booklet: *"National Grid has proposed a new East Anglian Connection Node (EACN) 400kV substation in Tendring, where Tarchon has been offered a grid connection."*

TDC has strongly and consistently opposed the EACN and the Norwich to Tilbury (N2T) pylons, citing multiple serious and overriding flaws in N2T's site selection process. National Grid has not adequately considered credible alternatives, such as an offshore-centred approach or High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) undergrounding—both of which could be delivered at pace to minimise onshore infrastructure impacts across Braintree and Essex. TDC's position is that these alternatives must be fully explored and properly assessed.

Furthermore, the National Energy System Operator's (NESO) *East Anglia Network Study* (March 2024) identified numerous other grid reinforcement options capable of achieving the same capacity, potentially with significantly fewer environmental impacts than the Norwich to Tilbury proposals, and now by extension the Tarchon proposal. This demonstrates not only the flawed nature of the site selection process but also that the Tarchon proposal is premature, given that Norwich to Tilbury and the EACN remain unconsented.

The consultation booklet for the Tarchon proposal suggests a greater degree of certainty around the EACN proposal than is warranted at this stage, which risks misleading the public. The booklet does not make clear that the National Grid is still in the consultation and pre-submission phase of its Development Consent Order (DCO) application and is not expected to submit its application to the Planning Inspectorate until late summer. TDC continues to object to National Grid's EACN in the strongest possible terms. Although Ofgem's support for the Tarchon proposal is noted in the booklet, the energy regulator does not determine whether to grant a DCO – and their role in the process has not been made clear alongside their apparent endorsement of the scheme. Furthermore, the scale of the diagrams and maps in the booklet risk minimising the impact of the scheme if not presented alongside larger scale maps that clearly communicate the magnitude of the proposed development.

Landscape Impact

TDC objects to the entirely unacceptable visual impact of the onshore elements of this project on the Tendring District landscape. This includes the setting of the designated **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**, now referred to as a National Landscape, whose southern boundary lies just a few hundred meters from the area identified for the interconnector substation. These concerns extend to both the individual impacts of the Tarchon Interconnector and the cumulative effects of this development alongside other proposed infrastructure projects in the area.

Furthermore, TDC is concerned that the National Landscape team has not been engaged in advance of this non-statutory consultation exercise. We understand it has not been invited to comment or been informed of the consultation which, in TDC's view, demonstrates a disregard both for policies aimed at protecting and enhancing National Landscapes and their settings, and for the strengthened duty (under section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) to seek to further the statutory purposes of National Landscapes.

The broad areas of land identified for the potential location of the converter station – a potentially significant structure of considerable scale - include areas of extremely open, exposed and attractive countryside that forms the unique rural setting for small villages and hamlets like Horsley Cross, Bradfield, Little Bromley and Lawford/Mistley. A construction of this scale in this location would destroy that rural character, the intrinsic beauty of the countryside and the enjoyment of the countryside by our rural residential communities.

At this stage, the broad location is so large that it is not possible to offer detailed comments on the impact of the development in a particular location. In future stages of the process, if Tarchon proceeds as a project, this Council will need to be satisfied that all efforts have been made to locate the converter station on a site that will not interrupt views across the exposed open countryside from residential properties (such as the sensitive open views between Horsley Cross and Little Bromley), to ensure a minimal impact on the landscape in general, and to minimise the potentially overbearing impact upon residential communities. The Council is currently updating its Landscape Character Assessment, with a final report due to be published later in 2025 – and it will expect this document to be used to inform the selection of sites and routes as the Tarchon proposal progresses.

Highways Concerns

Tendring is a rural coastal district, with a significant proportion of its residents relying on travel by private vehicles to access employment, school and leisure activities. The district is heavily reliant on the tourism industry, with significant numbers of visitors coming to the

peninsular throughout the year – the majority of whom drive to and around Tendring placing acute pressure on the highway network, particularly in the summer months. Furthermore, the locations of the indicative Landfall Zone and the Area of Search for a Converter Station Site will require the Onshore HVDC cable route to cross the A120. The A120 is an integral part of the strategic road network in North Essex and carries high numbers of commercial vehicles to and from the port at Harwich.

TDC is concerned that both the cumulative impact of construction traffic from this and the three other infrastructure projects proposed in the district will be considerable, and the effect of the work to deliver this project (both on the strategic highway network and on local roads) will be highly detrimental – not only to the day to day lives of those living in affected communities, but to the economy of the wider area. The Council will expect detailed mitigation proposals to be developed to ensure that these harms are minimised.

Impact on Tendring District Council's Local Plan Review

TDC is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan and, in light of the Government's new housing targets published in December 2024, will need to identify significant amounts of additional land for housing development between now and 2041. The four spatial strategy options the Council is considering are published in the Issues and Options Consultation Document ([link](#)), and all four options propose significant growth at Harwich and along the A120 corridor. In particular, land to the South of Oakley Road, Harwich and land around Horsley Cross could both be critical in allowing TDC to meet its statutory responsibility to plan for new housing growth, as the Government pushes forward with its ambition to deliver 1.5 million new homes over the course of the Parliament. Continued engagement with TDC's Planning Policy team will be essential as sites are selected for allocation in the emerging Local Plan and the Council will object in the strongest terms to any infrastructure proposals, either for underground cables or for a Converter Station, which will jeopardise the delivery of the updated Local Plan.

Conclusion

In summary, TDC strongly opposes the Tarchon Interconnector proposal due to its reliance on an unconsented scheme, significant landscape and highways impacts, and potential conflicts with the Local Plan review. TDC urges the developer to fully explore alternative solutions, engage with relevant stakeholders, and address the concerns outlined in this response. We expect to see comprehensive mitigation measures and a transparent consultation process as the project progresses.

Yours sincerely,



Gary Guiver
CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND COMMUNITY