

James Cartlidge MP

Member of Parliament for South Suffolk



HOUSE OF COMMONS,
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
Westminster
London
SW1H 0ET

7th July 2022

Dear Greg,

RE: A FAIR DEAL FOR EAST ANGLIA ON ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

We write further to the letter sent to you from OFFSET colleagues on 20th May 2022, signed by myself, Sir Bernard Jenkin, Dr Dan Poutler, Jo Churchill, Kemi Badenoch and Richard Bacon, and subsequently endorsed by Rt Hon. John Whittingdale, Will Quince, Duncan Baker and Jerome Mayhew; further colleagues have signed this letter, such is the growing anger across our region over National Grid's approach.

The consultation has now since closed but we would still be grateful for a reply given the huge importance of this subject. In particular, we write following a revelation that will cause deep consternation across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, in relation to the enclosed redacted email.

You will recall that our ask is simple: in the 'informal' consultation on East Anglia Green (EAG), proposing a huge new run of pylons through open countryside in our three counties, we want our constituents to be able to express a meaningful choice on the 'top level' question – overland or undersea. This is especially so given that EAG was explicitly chosen against a subsea route ('Sea Link 2').

Any say in this choice was denied our constituents. To be clear, our constituents support an offshore grid to protect their countryside and communities – but also because we know it is a necessary step if we are to deliver our Net Zero commitments and secure energy independence, in light of Ukraine. Thus, referring to the attached email:

- This was sent by the Community Engagement Team for the Eastern Link, a proposed £3.2bn undersea cable from Scotland to the north of England, to a member of the public and shared with us with their consent.
- In East Anglia Green consultations, all our constituents have been met with a stonewall from National Grid when expressing a preference for undersea cabling – typically told 'it's not possible', and that we cannot even have that choice to discuss as part of the informal consultation, which is effectively a 'fait accompli' Henry Ford consultation, with one single option.
- Whereas, in the enclosed email, National Grid are justifying going undersea off the north precisely to protect communities in the way we are denied even discussing in East Anglia.

We are sure you will agree that this represents a gross unfairness, with one approach in one part of the UK, one approach in another – and yet all our constituents are bill payers, funding this infrastructure, and surely deserve equal treatment. To avoid our constituents feeling like second class citizens, please intervene to get the East Anglia Green consultation restarted with an open discussion of ALL potential options – including offshore.

Telephone: 020 7219 4875

Email: james.cartlidge.mp@parliament.uk Website: www.jamescartlidge.com

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We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

James Cartlidge MP
Member of Parliament for South Suffolk

Sir Bernard Jenkin
Member of Parliament for Harwich & North Essex

Jo Churchill MP
Member of Parliament for Bury St. Edmunds

Kemi Badenoch MP
Member of Parliament for Saffron Walden

Richard Bacon MP
Member of Parliament for South Norfolk

Will Quince MP
Member of Parliament for Colchester

George Freeman
Member of Parliament for Mid Norfolk

Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP
Member of Parliament for Maldon

Jerome Mayhew MP
Member of Parliament for Broadland

Alex Burghart MP
Member of Parliament for Brentwood & Ongar

Dr Dan Poulter MP
Member of Parliament for Central & North Ipswich

Rt Hon Mark Francois MP
Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford

Duncan Baker MP
Member of Parliament for North Norfolk

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