



James Cartlidge MP
Member of Parliament for South Suffolk

Andrew Bowie MP
Minister for Nuclear and Networks
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

CC John Pettigrew

25th July 2023

Dear Andrew,

RE: NORWICH TO TILBURY – OFFSHORE ALTERNATIVES

I am writing to you in my capacity as a constituency MP, regarding National Grid's latest round of non-statutory consultation for their Norwich to Tilbury proposals, which my constituents have *in theory* recently been engaging with.

After your last meeting with OffSET colleagues on the 15th of May, we were encouraged by your positive attitude in relation to exploring credible offshore options, and you were also sympathetic to our calls for the synchronisation of National Grid's consultation with the Electricity System Operator's (ESO's) review. Whilst we understand that you did not have the power to delay the consultation, your understanding was appreciated.

As you will know, this alignment did not occur. I regret to report that the results of this decision have transpired as feared – 'consultation' occurring in our villages as if our entire efforts as MPs to bring forward data on offshore options had never happened.

To quote a letter that your Department has separately received from William Shearer on behalf of the Dedham Vale Society, and into which I was copied in: "no real consultation took place".

This chimes with exactly what I have heard from other attendees, including councillors, and a member of my team, who are very much up to speed with the facts of the matter. They tell me:

- There was minimal information about offshore options
- When National Grid staff were asked about offshore options, they were 'dismissive'
- One specifically said to a member of my team that "the proposed pylons would have to go ahead either way".

You can appreciate, given that the first time we had such consultation it felt totally predetermined – a fait accompli, and a Henry Ford choice of one single option – to have that repeated is most frustrating.

To be clear, we are not expecting National Grid to suddenly endorse the offshore options; much as we would like that. Nevertheless, given the material fact that ESO are undertaking the review, and that National Grid's initial efforts were found to be wanting, we had expected greater transparency on different choices in order to ensure our constituents could compare and contrast.

It must be self-evident that the best way forward for consultation with our constituents – National Grid's bill payers, who fund the network – would be to integrate the findings of the ESO review with the non-statutory



James Cartlidge MP
Member of Parliament for South Suffolk

process, to ensure that the full facts of the matter are put before those affected, without a sense of predetermination and 'going through the motions'.

To conclude, I have profound dismay that National Grid did not wait for the conclusion of the ESO study, nor have they engaged on offshore options in recent public consultation events, simply presenting the pylon run from Norwich to Tilbury as a foregone conclusion. What is clear above all, is that we were right to insist that the two were aligned.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Cartlidge', written in a cursive style.

James Cartlidge MP