



Bramford to Twinstead Tee Connection Project

Western sealing end compound location

Consultation feedback report

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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of document

- 1.1 National Grid is currently undertaking a comprehensive pre-application consultation programme on the Bramford to Twinstead Tee Connection Project.
- 1.2 This Feedback Report presents the results of consultation on the proposed location of a cable sealing end compound at the western end of the connection. In response to representations received at an earlier stage of consultation, consideration was being given to locating the compound near pylon 4YLA004 of the Bramford – Braintree - Rayleigh 400kV overhead line, rather than near pylon 4YLA001 as originally proposed. The consultation ran from 26th November to 21st December 2012. This Feedback Report sets out National Grid's response to the representations made in the consultation and how those representations have influenced the selection of the preferred location of the western cable sealing end compound.
- 1.3 The consultation invited the views of the local authorities and local communities in the vicinity of the proposed locations of the western cable sealing end compound near to either pylon 4YLA001 or 4YLA004. The options under consideration were set out in a report¹ which assessed the alternatives for the location of the cable sealing end compound and the associated routes for the cable sections west of the River Stour.
- 1.4 In preparing this Feedback Report, consideration has been given to guidance and advice notes prepared by the Government, by the Planning Inspectorate and by its predecessor the Infrastructure Planning Commission.
- 1.5 Figure 1 (at the end of this report) shows the alternatives for the location of the western cable sealing end compound near either pylon 4YLA001 or pylon 4YLA004.

Structure of the Feedback Report

- 1.6 This report is structured as follows:
 - Chapter 2 – provides the background to the project and consultation to date;

¹ National Grid: Bramford to Twinstead Western cable sealing end siting report: November 2012

- Chapter 3 – outlines the consultation carried out in relation to the potential location of the cable sealing end compound at the western end of the route corridor;
- Chapter 4 – sets out the representations received and explains how these representations have been addressed;
- Chapter 5 – concludes the report and identifies the next steps in the process.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Having identified that a new 400kV connection is needed between Bramford and Twinstead Tee, a Route Corridor Study² was commissioned to identify possible route corridors between the connection points at Bramford and Twinstead Tee and to assess how these performed against National Grid's obligations under sections 9 and 38 of the Electricity Act 1989³. This identified four route corridors, all of which would be technically feasible.
- 2.2 The Selection of Preferred Corridor Report⁴ assessed which corridor should be preferred, based on a range of technical, environmental, and other criteria, and taking account of representations received during the Stage 1 Consultation. It concluded that Corridor 2 should be selected as the basis for developing a scheme for an overhead line connection between Bramford and Twinstead Tee. The announcement of the preferred corridor (Corridor 2) was made in July 2011.
- 2.3 The Stage 2 consultation has focussed on connection options along the preferred corridor and the Connection Options Report⁵ was published in May 2012. This proposed that underground cables should be deployed at the western end of the route corridor with a sealing end compound providing a connection to the Bramford – Braintree – Rayleigh overhead line near pylon 4YLA001.
- 2.4 A number of representations were received on the Connection Options Report which proposed that an alternative location for the cable sealing end compound to the west of the route corridor (Study Area G) be given further consideration. These representations suggested that:
- the underground cable should bear south to connect to the existing line at a less sensitive point at least as far south as pylon 4YLA004. The special landscape characteristics justify the sealing end compound being located well south of Ansell's Grove;

² TEP : Bramford to Twinstead 400kV overhead line project : Route Corridor Study for Public Consultation : October 2009

³ Electricity Act: 1989: Ch 29

⁴ National Grid plc. : Bramford to Twinstead Tee Connection Project – Selection of Preferred Corridor : June 2011

⁵ National Grid plc. : Bramford to Twinstead Tee Connection – Connection Options Report : May 2012

- there would be a preference for a sealing end compound site south of Henny Back Road near pylon 4YLA005, thus removing 400kV pylons as well as the 132 kV diamond crossing from the Special Landscape Area;
- further details are required of the various routeing options considered with respect to underground cable across the Stour Valley in the vicinity of Moat Lane ending near pylon 4YLA004 or 4YLA005, and also which County Wildlife Site(s) would have been affected;
- positioning a sealing end compound in the bottom of the valley in the vicinity of pylon 4YLA001 may mean that the height and volume of the sealing end compound structure would be much greater than would be the case if it were sited at or between pylons 4YLA004 and 4YLA005.

2.5 In considering these representations, National Grid has undertaken further studies and concluded that a cable sealing end compound in the vicinity of pylon 4YLA004 should be consulted upon. Consultation on this alternative location has been carried out and the following sections of the report summarise and assess the representations received. The report then sets out the preferred alignment and cable sealing end compound location which National Grid will take forward.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 3G Communications, who manage the consultation process for National Grid, logged the representations into the stakeholder tracker system, they were transferred to Dialogue by Design was commissioned to analyse and summarise the representations received in response to the consultation. Representations received in letters, emails, telephone conversations, the completed feedback forms, or through other mechanisms were typed into the analysis database verbatim, to facilitate analysis and to ensure consistency when interpreting issues. This analysis was used to ensure that all issues raised in representations were captured for consideration by the project team.
- 3.2 Consultation with the local community ran from 26th November to 21st December 2012. A total of 34 representations were received in response to this consultation, 24 of which were in support of the cable sealing end compound being sited further south to pylon 4YLA004, 4 of which showed a preference for it to be located at 4YLA001, and 6 of which showed no preference.
- 3.3 Briefings were provided for Alphamstone and Lamarsh Parish Council (21st November), and for Essex County Council and Braintree District Council (28th November) at which the options for the location of the sealing end compound were outlined and discussed. An open meeting was held at Alphamstone Village Hall from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. on 28th November where information on the proposals was provided and members of the project team were available to answer questions. 58 people attended this event.
- 3.4 The following chapter looks at specific comments received through representations from the local community, Suffolk and Essex County Councils and Braintree District Council and offers a response to comments as appropriate.

4 ISSUES AND REPRESENTATIONS

County and District Council Representations

- 4.1 Suffolk and Essex County Councils and Braintree District Council were consulted on the location of the cable sealing end compound at the western end of the connection. Essex County Council and Braintree District Council have provided similar representations welcoming the revised route and cable sealing end compound further south. While both authorities support a cable sealing end compound further south, a specific preference for a location near pylon 4YLA004 or 4YLA005 is not stated. National Grid considers that it has sufficient information at this time to determine which of these locations would be more appropriate – in its earlier report it identified why a location near pylon 4YLA004 should be preferred to one near pylon 4YLA005. Both authorities have, however, outlined issues for discussion with National Grid in the detailed design of the project. National Grid will engage in discussion with the authorities and undertake further surveys and develop mitigation proposals as part of the detailed design of the project and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.
- 4.2 Braintree District Council considers that the area surrounding pylon 4YLA004 is less visually sensitive than the area surrounding pylon 4YLA001 and the revised location would allow the removal of high voltage lines and pylons southwards of the Twinstead Tee which would benefit the local landscape. However, both Essex County Council and Braintree District Council consider that the underground cable route and design of the cable sealing end compound should be subject to further detailed studies, including ecological and archaeological investigations, to identify the preferred alignment and necessary mitigation measures. Both Councils seek to be actively engaged in this process.
- 4.3 Both Councils recommend that National Grid undertake a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment of the potential cable sealing end compound locations and the underground route in the Stour Valley and make this publically available when finalising the preferred location. National Grid will continue to liaise with the Councils on the detailed matters of siting and design and a detailed assessment of the preferred cable sealing end locations and underground cable route will be carried out as part of the EIA of the whole project.
- 4.4 The Councils presented their own assessments of local landscape and visual effects of siting the cable sealing end compound near pylons 4YLA004 and 4YLA005 and

recommended further investigation of mitigation measures together with the production of visualisations to inform in particular, an assessment of the potential effect on the setting of listed buildings at Cripple Corner and Goulds Road. Mitigation measures will be investigated further in the context of the EIA.

- 4.5 Both Councils are concerned that by considering an underground route and cable sealing end compound location further south, there is a danger that all relevant constraints will not be identified. However, the constraints to which they refer will be fully addressed through the EIA process.
- 4.6 The Councils have concerns regarding the access to the local road network with regards to the underground cable route and cable sealing end compounds, in particular, the potential effects of large vehicles on Protected Lanes. Essex County Council is currently undertaking a Protected Lane assessment on behalf of Braintree District Council which will be provided to National Grid. Careful consideration will be required regarding the permanent tarmac access road to the cable sealing end compound, given the nature of the Protected Lane at Henny Back Road. National Grid will engage with the Highway Authority with regard to detailed access issues in relation to construction and maintenance.
- 4.7 In developing the detailed cable route and cable sealing end compound locations, National Grid is encouraged by the Councils to consider the relevant environmental designations and constraints along the corridor identified in partnership with the Thematic Groups. This will be the case. The Councils also support National Grid's continued investigation and liaison with cable suppliers regarding possible reductions in swathe widths for underground cables and any reduction in these widths would be supported by the Councils.
- 4.8 The Councils have requested particular consideration be given to the potential effects on:
- listed buildings and the setting of Ansell's Farmhouse and Moorcot;
 - the Protected Lane at Henny Back Road;
 - Alphamstone Meadows and Complex (Local Wildlife Site) to the west of pylon 4YLA004.

These issues will be addressed in the EIA process.

- 4.9 The Councils have requested that a comprehensive and detailed archaeological excavation and recording programme is undertaken in advance of any development,

as part of the EIA. National Grid can confirm that the basis of archaeological investigations to be undertaken in advance of development taking place will be agreed with the relevant authority.

- 4.10 Essex County Council, in relation to ecological interests, has requested that a full habitat and species surveys be undertaken according to best practice and that appropriate mitigation be carried out. This will be undertaken as part of the EIA process.
- 4.11 Suffolk County Council has commented that, although the cable sealing end compound is located outside its administrative boundaries, the consideration of an alternative location for the cable sealing end compound in light of the consultation responses received is supported. It notes that the potential cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 is within the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project area and that mitigation is essential.
- 4.12 Suffolk County Council acknowledges the detailed consideration given to the local landscape and visual impacts of the cable sealing end compound which has resulted in an extension in the length of undergrounding to accrue these benefits. Comments were also provided on the approach to be taken to confirm the locations of the cable sealing end compounds in Suffolk.

Local Community Representations

Representations relating to cable sealing end compound location 4YLA001

- 4.13 The majority of representations received were not in favour of a cable sealing end compound located near pylon 4YLA001. Representations stated that constructing a cable sealing end compound at this location would be the least attractive option, would be intrusive and unacceptable.
- 4.14 Some representations expressed the view that a cable sealing end compound in this location would destroy ancient orchard areas and protected grassland (particularly that forming part of Sparrow's Farm).
- 4.15 There were concerns raised in relation to access for Heavy Goods Vehicles given the difficult access through narrow protected lanes which may need to be widened to accommodate large vehicles.
- 4.16 Two representations commented that the land near pylon 4YLA001 is wet and prone to flooding.

- 4.17 A number of representations raised concerns that given the flat, unscreened area in which the cable sealing end compound would be located, it would have a harmful impact on the surrounding landscape and the Stour Valley in particular.
- 4.18 Concerns were raised about the negative effect on local wildlife, and a proposed underground route which would destroy unique orchids and habitat.
- 4.19 Other objections to the cable sealing end compound being located near pylon 4YLA001 included the impact on statutory listed buildings at Sparrow's Farm, visual impact and health risks.
- 4.20 Four representations preferred this option for the following reasons:
- although it is surrounded by farms, it is further away from more populated areas and therefore would have less impact on surrounding houses;
 - the route is through less visually attractive fields rather than woodland and would have a lesser impact on ecology;
 - the land is even, well drained and easily accessible;
 - the positives of this location outweigh the removal of three pylons.

Representations relating to cable sealing end compound location 4YLA004

- 4.21 The majority of representations received preferred this option for the location of the western cable sealing end compound.
- 4.22 In most representations the reason given for the preference for a location near pylon 4YLA004 is because it would allow three further pylons to be removed on the Bramford – Braintree – Rayleigh overhead line, improving the landscape.
- 4.23 Many representations made reference to the visual impact of a cable sealing end compound in this location, stating that the impact would be less than it would be near pylon 4YLA001. Some of these representations also suggested a location within one of the disused gravel pits to limit the visual impact of the cable sealing end compound.
- 4.24 Some representations stated that the access for HGVs would be better at this location than near pylon 4YLA001.
- 4.25 Representations have commented that there would be greater screening at this location due to the surrounding woodland which would provide natural screening for the surrounding landscape.

- 4.26 Representations in support of a cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 included comments that a cable sealing end compound at this location would be discreet, the removal of the additional overhead line would have a positive impact on woodland, birds/bats, flora and fauna, tourism and the setting of Sparrow's Farm, a property considered to be historically important.
- 4.27 Four representations were received which were not in support of the proposal to locate the western sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004. Two of the representations were concerned that the construction of the cable sealing end compound would destroy two sections of mature woodland and this would alter the character and value of property, be harmful to wildlife, and affect access to the woodland.
- 4.28 All representations opposed to the cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 stated that there would be more properties affected in this location than would be near pylon 4YLA001, one of which (Moorcot) is listed.
- 4.29 Concerns were raised in one representation about health and safety and the effect trenching would have on the well water supply to two houses.
- 4.30 There were concerns raised that National Grid have not visited the land to survey the suitability of the land for the cable route proposed. This would reveal a stream crossing, a valley consisting of uneven ground, poorly drained land in the valley bottom and difficult access routes for heavy vehicles.

Responses

- 4.31 A large majority of the representations received were in favour of locating the western cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 rather than near pylon 4YLA001. However, some objections and concerns were also raised to this alternative. National Grid's responds to issues raised is provided in the following paragraphs.
- 4.32 It is accepted that there are more residential properties close to pylon 4YLA004 than to pylon 4YLA001, in that pylon 4YLA004 is just under 0.5km from houses at the edge of Alphamstone. However, the vegetation and landform in the area of pylon 4YLA004 screen many views. National Grid considers that the impact on residential properties will be limited and the properties to the north are likely to benefit from the removal of the overhead line between pylons 4YLA001 and 4YLA004. Houses at and near Hill Farm would have very limited views of the cable sealing end compound and terminal pylon but would benefit from the removal of the section of overhead line

between pylons 4YLA001 and 4YLA004. Other properties that would benefit from the removal of the existing section of overhead line north of pylon 4YLA004 include Elm Cottage, Lightlands, Newhouse Cottage and Lark Hill Cottage on Lorkin's Lane, one property on Moat Lane and the property at Sparrow's Farm.

- 4.33 A cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 would be likely to result in a negative effect on the setting of the nearby listed buildings, Moorcot and Ansells Farm. However, the settings of Moorcot and Ansells Farm would both also benefit from the removal of 4YLA003 to the north which would help to offset negative effects. Cobbs Farm would have limited views of the cable sealing end compound. In addition, the revised route and location of the cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 would result in positive effects on the setting of Grade II listed buildings at Sparrow's Farm.
- 4.34 The possible use of directional drilling techniques on an underground cable route to pylon 4YLA004 would avoid direct effects on woodland and County Wildlife Sites. However, there would be some loss of hedgerow and hedgerow trees which connect with County Wildlife Sites and there would be short to medium term impacts on grasslands. A connection to pylon 4YLA004 would result in fewer hedgerow and Protected Lane crossings than a connection to pylon 4YLA001. Despite this, impacts are likely to be greater than with the connection to pylon 4YLA001 due to fragmentation effects on the habitat mosaic in the local landscape.
- 4.35 Initial walkover surveys have been carried out and National Grid is aware of issues such as uneven ground and stream crossings. These issues have been taken into account and further surveys will be undertaken as the project develops.
- 4.36 With regards to drainage, National Grid will commission a specialist drainage consultant who will design interim and enduring drainage schemes. National Grid will engage with the relevant stakeholders including the Environment Agency in relation to drainage and flooding.

General comments

- 4.37 A number of general comments were received in relation to the route corridor. These included preferences for more undergrounding and sought further information on elements of the scheme. None would influence the selection of the cable sealing end compound location.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

- 5.1 The representations received to the local consultation on locations for the western sealing end compound have been analysed and reported in this document. National Grid has considered whether, as a result of information received, it should modify the location of the cable sealing end compound to the west of the corridor. Representations recognised the advantages in locating the sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004, including benefits associated with removing additional spans of the Bramford – Braintree – Rayleigh overhead line and reduced effects on the environment in the vicinity of Sparrow’s Farm. Some representations identified adverse effects of a location near pylon 4YLA004. National Grid has reviewed these effects but considers that they would be outweighed by the benefits of locating a cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004. Mitigation for adverse effects will be addressed in the detailed design of the scheme. It therefore confirms that the cable sealing end compound near pylon 4YLA004 and the associated modifications to the cable route west of the River Stour should now form part of the Preferred Alignment.

Next steps

- 5.2 The next step is to commence the development of a detailed connection design, based on the Preferred Alignment, which will also be influenced by technical considerations, environmental and geo-technical surveys and discussions with affected landowners and occupiers.
- 5.3 During Stage 3 of the process, the detailed connection design will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and further public consultation.
- 5.4 The project is subject to a continuous process of backcheck and review in the pre-application stages to ensure that when new information comes forward (be it related to policy, technological developments, environmental or other factors), this is communicated to the project team and it is reviewed to determine whether different conclusions should be reached in the light of the new information.

- 5.5 It is anticipated that National Grid's formal consultation on the proposed application, including the detailed connection design and preliminary environmental information will be undertaken in Summer 2013. The proposal will then be finalised and it is anticipated that a submission will be made to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2013, seeking consent for the connection and associated development. Timescales and activities may be subject to alteration as the project progresses.

FIGURE 1 : CABLE SEALING END COMPOUND LOCATIONS

