

Cabinet 2nd February 2010 Agenda

item 4

BRAMFORD TO TWINSTEAD 400kV OVERHEAD LINE PROJECT NATIONAL GRID ROUTE CORRIDOR STUDY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Amended recommendations:

- 1 The Cabinet is asked to agree the proposed response to National Grid's route corridor consultation set out in paragraph 2.
2. Suffolk County Council
 - a) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the alternative corridors identified by National Grid for reinforcement of the existing Bramford-Twinstead 400 kV overhead link; but believes that the consultation is inadequate in failing to present a full range of options for consideration, including alternatives to overhead transmission lines;
 - b) encourages National Grid to pay full regard to the views of local people and their elected representatives in deciding how to meet the need for system reinforcement;
 - c) expresses its disappointment that National Grid has not followed good practice by publishing responses to the consultation on its website;
 - d) reserves the right to add to this submission when the full set of responses to the consultation is available, the detailed drafting of any such additions to be delegated to the Director of Environment and Transport in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Creating the Greenest County;
 - e) believes that all of the proposed corridors would cause severe damage to the environment of South Suffolk and considers that National Grid has not yet demonstrated conclusively that a scheme such as that proposed is the most appropriate means of achieving the network enhancements the company believes are required;
 - f) considers that National Grid must take a more strategic, long-term perspective on national transmission requirements, paying full regard to the environmental implications of alternative approaches to network development and the costs and benefits likely to arise over the lifetime of any investment project, rather than just its initial construction costs;
 - g) requests the company to further investigate alternative solutions, including a connection to an undersea grid around the coast and across the North Sea which could link planned and any future tranches of nuclear, offshore wind energy and other renewable

energy projects, as set out in the European Wind Energy Association's 20-year Masterplan, and to explore the potential of developing the North Sea Countries' Offshore Grid Initiative as an alternative means of meeting the additional transmission requirements, bringing the cables ashore much closer to the main concentrations of demand in and around London;

- h) urges National Grid to review its plans after giving due consideration to the issues raised in (f) and (g) above; and likewise urges the Infrastructure Planning Commission to request National Grid to undertake such a review;
- i) believes that there is more than adequate time to undertake such a review before the company needs to commit to a particular reinforcement solution, given the anticipated completion dates for committed generation projects and the uncertainty over nuclear and renewable generation proposals not yet committed;
- j) considers that if, after completion of a further full review of alternatives by National Grid, the Infrastructure Planning Commission ultimately accepts the case for a new overhead line in this area, routes 3 and 4 should be ruled out as they would traverse extensive areas of countryside currently free from pylon intrusion (see paragraph 35) and that there is insufficient justification for the installation of a third line of pylons as proposed in option 1 (see paragraph 34)
- k) considers that **corridor 2b** would cause the least environmental damage, but that any parts of a new line running through the sensitive Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the crossing of the Stour Valley south of Sudbury and the immediate setting of these areas should be undergrounded; and that, to compensate at least in part for adverse environmental impact elsewhere and to maximise the environmental benefit, lengths of the existing 400kV line within these areas and their settings should also be undergrounded.

2 February 2010