

The Great Grid Upgrade: Grimsby to Walpole Stage 2

Below are the notes of the Grimsby to Walpole - Grid Upgrade Zoom meeting and Draft Corporate Response.

Guest: Andy Roberts

Andy Roberts was invited to discuss his findings and research with regards to the Pylons Project proposed for Lincolnshire. He outlined his concerns of not only the infrastructure impact and potential for future industrialisation it may lead to, but also the traffic impact to Louth and the surrounding area.

After the discussion, it was decided that there were two relevant sections of the Consultation Feedback Form to have a direct impact on the Louth Area, which we wished to comment on, and to provide an overall statement at the end of the questionnaire, when asked for further considerations.

This final statement should then be sent to the relevant parties at ELDC, and LCC for their consideration also.

Route Section2 - New Grimsby West Substation to Lincolnshire Connection Substation A

Q2/ Do you have any comments on Route Section 2, Including on the points listed below

There is not a preferred alignment for the overhead line.

Not since the Ice Age has the landscape of eastern Lincolnshire been so radically reshaped. The proposals will fundamentally alter the rural nature of this important Lincolnshire landscape, and will lead to a dramatic over-industrialisation of the countryside.

These proposals will radically affect the multi-million tourism offer on which our area relies and will compromise the visual amenity of the Lincolnshire Wolds, a National Landscape (Formerly AONB). This important farming area is presently not scarred by industrialisation and its clean air and big skies are popular with cyclists, and holiday makers from the industrial East Midlands in particular. Many move here on retirement for health reasons and quality of life. Fundamentally this will be wiped out by the anticipated industrialisation of the pastoral landscape.

The threat from vast Solar farms and Industry designed to utilise excess electricity produced will further erode this valuable landscape. The huge proposed centres at Woodthorpe and Beesby will dwarf our present structures and are out of character with the pattern of settlements which characterise the sub-region.

Lincolnshire has for multiple generations been the bread basket of the country with its farms, producing a third of the country's food essentials. The land supports many small farmers and producers whose very future is now under threat, severely compromising food supplies for our growing population,

Given the unstable nature of today's Geo-political environment, it is prudent to protect our farmland for crop production that provides the UK resilience should world events lead to further instability, or even the potential of escalation of war in Europe. Once lost it cannot be restored to food production.

The damage to the rich bio diversity of this well established rural environment would take many years to recover, if at all. Net gain is offered as a benefit, but all too often the rules allow for this to be anywhere within the United Kingdom, and do nothing for the community it is affecting. There are valuable bird and insect species which will be lost irreparably for future generations.

Traffic will increase dramatically in the locality, particularly during the construction phase, on roads ill-designed for a large increase in heavy traffic volume. There will be a continued need for maintenance, so this is a problem which will not go away after construction. East Lindsey itself has very few major trunk roads, and our country roads are narrow completely unsuited for the use of vehicles delivering large quantities of construction supplies and risk further erosion by this increased volume of heavy traffic. This is problematic at key times of the year when agricultural vehicles slow the flow of traffic and holidaymakers flock to the coast. There are no rail lines in this area so the community relies heavily on our poor road network for everything. Our poor infrastructure is not up to coping with this form of activity and there is no funding for upgrading this. This will lead to the potential for even more road traffic incidents, loss of air quality and increased pollution from road vehicles.

There is some understanding that the former Conoco Site in Theddlethorpe offers benefit, but the local understanding is this is to be utilised as a carbon capture facility, and there is concern that if further industry builds up here, the potential for accident increases. The Health and Safety risks have not been adequately addressed in this proposal.

Whilst there is an acceptance that the UK requires an infrastructure upgrade to hit carbon reduction targets, the solution must be off-shore development, that minimises the impact not only to the landscape but also to the very way of life that characterises the area. Over the life of this proposal the cost of putting the lines out to sea becomes more affordable and should not be viewed as a deterrent.

Alternatively, an approach that mirrors the current network that comes in at the Grimsby area, but follows the line west, toward the network that moves along the Trent river, bypassing the local farmland and National Landscape.

Q3/ Do you have any comments on Route Section 3, Including on the points listed below

Our response to Q2 is all applicable to this question.

The proposed construction compound at South Reston is sited in a ribbon development village on a twisty road which is already struggling to cope with coastal traffic. The road structure in Lincolnshire east of Wragby is inadequate for the volumes of traffic National Grid is proposing and getting to Reston from Louth is characterised by stunt corners and potholed surfaces.

Tourists coming to our seaside use this road in large numbers and this is not limited to the summer as it is the route servicing the largest agglomeration of caravans in Western Europe. The caravan business should not be viewed as seasonal, it is a year-round industry.

This without doubt will ultimately lead to a loss of income for local business, and reduces the wealth of the county, already struggling with cost of living issues.

There is a concern that this large swathe of affected land will inevitably damage the valuable mixed farming in this small community.

The infrastructure equipment required for building the substations, are again requiring transportation on roads not designed for this level of traffic movement and size. We are mostly small width, winding roads, not designed for long wheel based trucks of abnormal length. The potential for incident is large and should be included on the risk register which we cannot locate in your proposals.

General Considerations

Q8/ Is there anything else you would like us to consider as we develop our proposals? Please provide details below

(PWG suggest all of the above is added to this section, and in its entirety this be presented as a statement of LTC to be given to relevant authorities).

The Impact to the Lincolnshire community is larger than what the Grid considers its impacted area. Louth itself has not been approach for direct consultation, but Louth and its residents will be impacted by this development.

Pre-1974 Louth was a Borough council, which included its surrounding villages. This in many respects represents our community much better in some respects, allowing you to understand the larger ramifications of the proposal. Villages from Wragby to Mablethorpe are serviced by Louth, being one of the larger Town Centres. Traffic flow is essential throughout the Easy Lindsey region. The traffic flow construction will generate will disrupt this community, and has direct impact on the town, even though we are offered no financial benefits to our infrastructure or community you offer the directly affected small parish councils. This would appear to be an oversight that doesn't truly reflect the impact this proposal will have to residents, businesses and the local infrastructure.

We accept that infrastructure is needed, but sensible investment that does not destroy the local environment is essential for future generations. A wholistic approach of the grid, solar farms and industry must be considered, and not a piecemeal erosion of what this county has represented for generations.