

National Grid Ventures' (NGV) Lionlink Project

Public Consultation 24th October 2023 to 3 November 2023

Comments of Friston Parish Council (FPC)

Introduction

1. National Grid has held an additional supplementary non statutory consultation relating to its Lionlink project formerly known as Eurolink. The consultation relates to alternative landfall and cable route locations in Walberswick and Southwold. Therefore it does not directly affect the parish of Friston. However FPC has considered the Supplementary Non-Statutory Consultation Briefing Document and the Interim Non-Statutory Consultation Feedback Summary Report and has a number of comments/observations. The consultation comments which FPC made in 2022 are attached as those comments remain valid and should be considered to form part of these comments.

Inadequate Quality of consultation

2. FPC has found the consultation process to be unsatisfactory, both the events and online webinars which are not sufficiently detailed or interactive. Some members of FPC have built up a significant level of knowledge having been involved in the onshore elements of projects connecting at Friston for five years now. Further FPC is a statutory consultee and Friston is the community most permanently affected by these proposals. Therefore more direct engagement is necessary at a more informed/detailed level.

Inadequate Response to Consultation Comments

3. As mentioned above FPC is a statutory consultee and yet there has been no meaningful response to the comments which it made in relation to the non-statutory consultation which took place in the last quarter of 2022. For ease of reference those comments are provided with this response.
4. Further the summary report does not meaningfully reflect the comments which FPC made. National Grid repeatedly states that it wants people to respond to the consultations. Yet National Grid's evident lack of regard for FPC's comments indicates that National Grid is not conscientiously considering FPC's consultation responses, which were diligently prepared by councillors in their own time.

Delay to Lionlink

5. It would appear from the small print in timeline on page 22 of the briefing document that Lionlink has been delayed. FPC's understanding was that the statutory consultation for Lionlink was due to take place in the first quarter of 2024, being a

little later than the 2023 date shown in the timeline for this project set out in the Eurolink briefing document dated November 2022. However it would appear that National Grid is now planning for the statutory consultation to take place in 2025 with the operational date moving out from 2029 to 2030. Why is there no reference to this substantial delay in the briefing document? This is a very material point not least as it probably ends the possibility of there being concurrent planning processes for Sealink, Lionlink and Nautilus. As you know multiple separate NSIP applications greatly adds to the burden on the community, which has already had to endure multiple complex NSIPs. This has an exclusionary effect.

6. It is extremely disappointing that National Grid has not been upfront about the delay. It is just this sort of conduct which so erodes trust and confidence.

31 October 2023

By email to info@lionlink.nationalgrid.com