Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Council's response to the East Anglia Green Energy Enablement Project

To whom it may concern

Following a Parish Council meeting on Monday 13th June Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Council resolved to object to the proposals in the East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (Green) Project Background Document.
The Parish Council wholeheartedly accepts the need for increased electricity supply for the nation to meet the increased demands, both current and projected. We note, however, that the electrical cables in question are not intended to supply additional electricity to South Norfolk but to carry it mainly through South Norfolk (East Anglia Green p.20).

The Parish Council questions the safety of the proposal. It is noted that there is evidence of ill-health and harmful diseases attributed to power cables and the electromagnetic fields they emit. Many of these symptoms may go unreported or, if reported, fail to be diagnosed accurately, potentially blighting the lives of many. When reporting on the link between childhood leukaemia, the National Grid Electro Magnetic Field Unit reported:

'We find suggestions of higher risks in studies looking at higher and in studies with better quality exposure assessment. We conclude that there is a decline in reported risk from the mid-1990s to now, which is unlikely to be solely explained by improving study quality but may be due to chance, and an elevated risk remains.' (https://www.emfs.info/how-has-the-reported-risk-for-childhood-leukaemia-changed-over-time/)

Research on Electric Magnetic Fields pulled together by EMF Detection UK has led them to assert.

'Many peer-reviewed scientific publications have outlined a strong correlation to chronic exposure to electromagnetic fields and adverse health. The number of people suffering from electromagnetic hypersensitivity (EHS) is increasing exponentially, symptoms include but are not limited to: Headaches. Fatigue. Anxiety. Insomnia. Prickling and/or burning skin. Rashes. Muscle pain' (https://substation-health-risks.co.uk/what-are-the-health-risks-of-living-near-pylons/)

Evidence shows that cabling at a depth of 30 meters reduces the impact of EHS. This would appear to the Parish Council as a safer option should the findings be that the cabling must follow the outlined route way. This view is validated by Government briefings, which suggest cost is the only impediment.

'A study by Parsons Brinkerhoff published online by the Institute for Engineering and Technology assessed the lifetime financial costs of transmission options, but did not evaluate social or environmental costs. It found that the cheapest transmission technology was overhead line, with lifetime costs of £2.2m to £4.2m per kilometre. The next cheapest is direct buried, underground cable for any given route length or circuit capacity, with lifetime costs of £10.2m to £24.1m per kilometre.'

'Overall, if cost were not a factor, then undergrounding power lines would be one option for reducing magnetic field exposure in a population.'
(https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06453/SN06453.pdf)

We believe that if social and environmental costs were factored in, then placing these cables carrying 400KV underground would be the safest option and economically viable, given offset

societal demands and costs. Indeed, these cables are underground in London, and it appears to be the preferred option for this high voltage, high capacity cables.
(https://www.powerandcables.com/hv-cables-underground-cable-tunnel-pull-400kv-by-abb/)

The national grid also echoes this view.

'The use of underground cables has a long-term positive visual impact when compared with the use of overhead lines, and in some instances this will be the preferred choice.'
(https://www.nationalgrid.com/sites/default/files/documents/39111-Undergrounding_high_voltage_electricity_transmission_lines_The_technical_issues_INT.pdf)

The Parish Council is therefore of the opinion that on the basis of protecting public health, the cables should be underground.

Our second concern is the visual impact. South Norfolk is famed for its 'big skies' and uninterrupted long views. This is highlighted in the South Norfolk District Council document. South Norfolk Landscape Assessment: Final Report, Character Area: B4 Waveney Tributary Farmland which identifies the key characteristics as including

'A large-scale open landscape on the higher ground with some distant views.'
'A peaceful and rural landscape.' (B4 11.2)

The document goes on to say.

'This is a transitional landscape gently sloping from the higher plateau landscapes (at 50m AOD) to the Waveney Valley (at approximately 30m AOD). In the north, such as around Tivetshall St Mary, the landform is a higher and flatter, reflecting the transition to the adjacent Great Moulton Plateau Farmland.' (B4 11.4)

'Churches are a distinctive feature of this character area, with towers often being significant in rural views. Large, prominent churches … (and) round tower churches .. (including) isolated round c13 tower church occurs amid fields ...' (11.13)

Any structure that impinges upon views too, from, or through the distinctive features, or challenges the views of the skyline, would fail to meet the requirements set out in the Landscape Assessment.

The Landscape Assessment identifies sensitivities and vulnerabilities, which for the sake of this objection, include:

'the hedgerows and woodlands, which create pattern and variety in the landscape and contribute to a more intimate and enclosed character in some areas; … the rural setting of villages; … the views to and setting of the distinctive and prominent churches; … the overall peaceful, rural character and absence of visual and aural intrusion.' (11.15).

Other Energy Networks have recognised the generic need to preserve the integrity of the landscape when identifying a strategic approach to building Pylons across open countryside and rural areas. An example of this is SP Energy Networks (SPEN), which identified a set of rules or principles they will work to when sighting the energy cables, see Rule 4.

'Choose tree and hill backgrounds in preference to sky backgrounds, wherever possible; and when the line has to cross a ridge, secure this opaque background as long as possible and cross obliquely

when a dip in the ridge provides an opportunity. Where it does not, cross directly, preferably between belts of trees.'
(https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/SPEN_Approach_to_Routeing_Document_2nd_version.pdf)

The overall landscape strategy of the South Norfolk District Council is,
'to conserve the rural, peaceful quality of the Waveney Tributary Farmland with its strong farmland character, threaded by small tributary watercourses, and mix of more intimate, wooded, enclosed valleys contrasting with more open landscapes.' (11.16)

The proposals outlined by the GREEN project run counter to this and simply adds further weight to the view that the erecting of the pylons and the subsequent wire that will cut through swathes of land blighting the long views from this Parish across South Norfolk should be reviewed appropriately and the wire sunk beneath the ground at a depth that makes it safe and where it does not impinge upon the landscapes, long views and scenic views from this parish.

Section 11.17 specifies.

'Any development in the area must respect the character of Waveney Tributary Farmland and in particular consider the following: conserve the rural peaceful character, with the pattern of small villages and settlements set within the agricultural landscape, but not dominating it; conserve the character and individual identity of the villages either set around greens or loosely following roads. Conserve the quiet, rural character of the narrow lanes that cross the area; consider potential effects of potential large-scale developments'.

It is our contention that the erection of the Pylons will not comply with the overall strategy either in part or as a whole.

Character Area: A5 Waveney Rural River Valley

'visual sensitivities associated with open views to churches and the valley crest skyline and the threat of intrusion of development into these views' (7.18)

The Dickleburgh and Rushall emerging Neighbourhood Plan is very clear on the question of structures that challenge, impinge upon or detract from long views

4.5.1 Policy
The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect views and vistas across the parish that are valued by residents or hold particular community importance. Key features of the views can include distant buildings, areas of landscape and the juxtaposition of village edges and the open agricultural countryside. Development that reduces access to the view, vista or development within these views will not be allowed unless exceptional circumstances can be proved. … All developments must demonstrate that they will not adversely affect a public view or vista as identified within the Neighbourhood Plan. Development proposals that would adversely affect an important public view or vista will not be supported.

Although outside of the Parish the Power lines may affect views from the parish and should therefore be subject to the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan policy.

We feel there is a powerful argument and good reason for laying the cabling beneath ground over the entirety of South Norfolk part of the journey. Should this be rejected then, the only alternative is that the cabling is laid on the sea bed at a depth greater than 30 meters and enters the Thames

estuary, remaining on the sea bed until it reaches the point of distribution to the areas of conurbation. This approach should be easily achievable given that the majority of sources of energy are either at sea or coastal.

Andrew Goodman

Chairman Dickleburgh and Rushall Parish Council