



Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net
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Enquiries to: Phil Watson
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Date: 21st May 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

SCC Cabinet meeting 210524 Norwich to Tilbury Project

On the 21st May 2024, the Suffolk County Council Cabinet considered and approved the Council's response (in outline) to the s42 Statutory Consultation for the Norwich to Tilbury project¹.

Recognising your quasi-judicial role in the consenting of energy projects, I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention, in the cabinet paper recommendations, to the action to request NGET and Ofgem to pause the development of this proposal; to ensure that the alternative options for this scheme of connection, as proposed by National Grid ESO, receive appropriate and robust public consideration, including effective consideration of the environmental benefits and risks, as well as any potential additional costs to the consumer.

The County Council recognises that the delivery of the current proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project is a licence obligation for National Grid Electricity Transmission, and therefore a request has been made to Ofgem to make a variation to the ASTI provisions of the Licence Agreement.

It is considered that this is a reasonable request, given the findings of the Hiorns Report, which identified that the need case (timeline) for the development was not robust, and that it may not in fact be required until 2035. However, to be clear, the Council is not at this stage calling for an extended delay, rather it is calling for sufficient time to ensure a fair, robust, and effective consideration of alternatives, to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury scheme, in the interests of securing a fair process which will command public confidence and enable a just transition to a decarbonised electricity system by 2035.

Furthermore, NGET have committed to review their approach to this scheme in the light of the ESO findings, and therefore the County Council would ask that this

¹ Agenda Item 8 [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(21-05-2024\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(21-05-2024),%20The%20Cabinet)

review is undertaken, and to ensure that this is done in such a way that is visible publicly.

This request for a pause is made in a spirit of collaboration and co-operation with National Grid, and the regulator. The Council continues to seek to achieve the best possible outcome for the people of Suffolk, whilst at the same time enabling energy security, decarbonisation of the electricity network, and enhancing public trust and confidence in the process of change.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Rout

Deputy Leader of Suffolk County
Council and Cabinet Member for
Finance and Environment