

***Sent on behalf of Councillor Guy McGregor, Suffolk County Council Cabinet
Member for Roads and Transport***

Dear All

I reported to County Council on 14th March that I was to attend a meeting at the House of Commons hosted by Tim Yeo MP concerning pylons. I am just writing to let you know the outcome of that event.

As Tim acknowledged, Suffolk County Council was the inspiration for the event and, as the East Anglian recently reported, we remain the “vanguard of attempts to persuade National Grid to bury its cables”.

This was an excellent meeting. We attracted MPs from across England and Wales and it was very clear that they all share our concerns – it is simply wrong in the 21st century to think about stringing more pylons across our cherished landscapes. Not only it is morally wrong, it is economically flawed - yes it may be ‘cheaper’ but that ignores the sustained impacts on the local economy and the local community. Furthermore, there has been no effort on the behalf of Government to actually understand how much people cherish the natural environment, and indeed what they would be willing to pay to preserve it.

At the meeting we heard from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, the regulator (Ofgem) and National Grid. I was most interested however to hear the very persuasive case put forward by a leading academic that we should better understand the impacts of infrastructure on the environment and fabric of society before we embark on irreversible courses of action. Furthermore, we also then heard evidence that electricity consumers would be willing to contribute financially to get rid of some of National Grid’s existing lines in AONBs and National Parks. This of course begs the question as to what people would be willing to pay to avoid new ones. The answer is no-one knows, because they haven’t been asked.

Consequently it was agreed at the meeting that MPs would collectively write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Davey, to press him to require that this work is undertaken as a matter of urgency.

Regards,
Guy McGregor

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