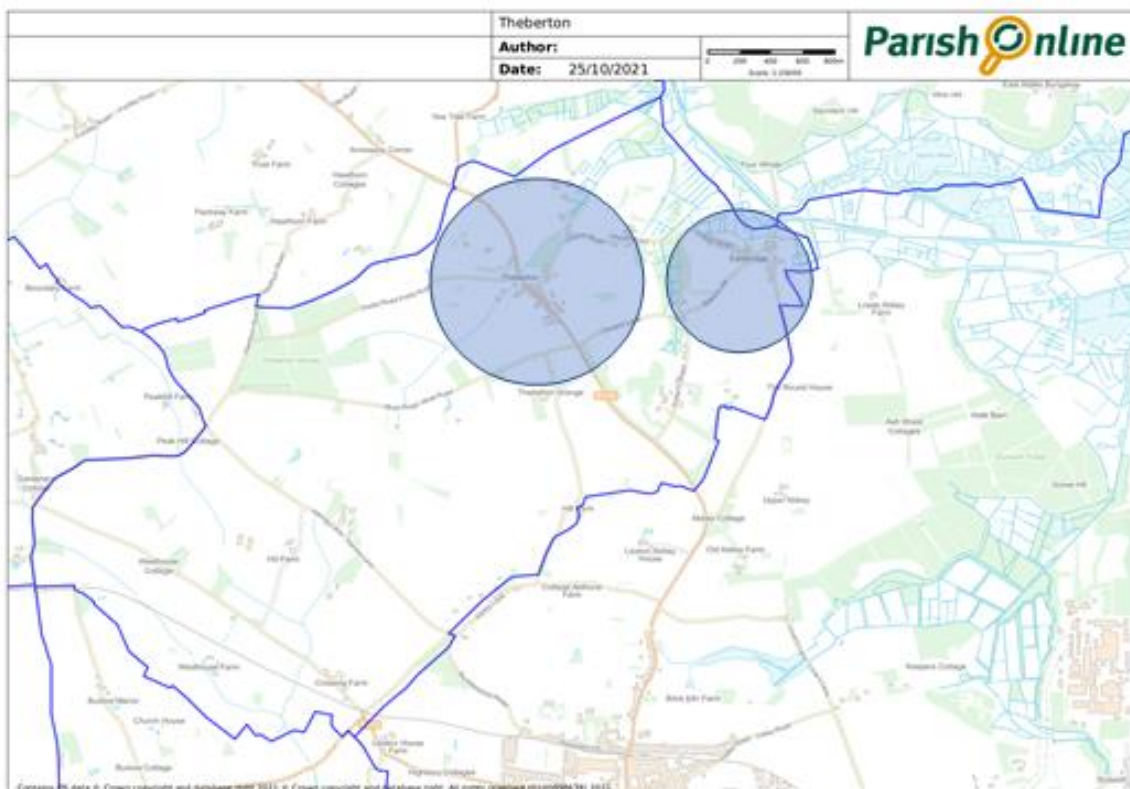


NATIONAL GRID VENTURES – NAUTILUS INTERCONNECTOR NON_STATUTORY CONSULTATION

RESPONSE FROM THEBERTON AND EASTBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL (TEPC)

Introduction



Theberton

Theberton is a small village of approximately 170 people and 90 houses mostly straddling the B1122. It is about 4 miles north of the proposed Sizewell C (SZC) large twin reactor site. The proposed entrance to the main site will be approximately 1 mile from the village entrance sign. Within the village of Theberton there is St Peters Church, a Grade I listed thatched roof church with an unusual round tower, a Grade II listed public house, a village hall, two working farms, a cattery, a small business selling wild bird and other animal feeds, a small caravan park and other places to stay for visitors to enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside. The successful village hall offers many activities and classes to the community and surrounding areas.

Eastbridge

Eastbridge is a tranquil hamlet of around 70 people and 40 houses nestled in a rural landscape with no street signs or speed limits. It borders the Minsmere River which cuts through an area of important wetland known as the Minsmere Levels forming part of the Minsmere - Walberswick Heaths and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is also the location of RSPB Minsmere Reserve. Within Eastbridge there is a public house, the Eels Foot Inn, a working farm, a certified and a basic campsite, for visitors to enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside. Many local people and visitors enjoy the circular walk from Eastbridge to the Minsmere sluice to reach the Suffolk Heritage Coast and the sea returning through RSPB Minsmere or via National Trust’s Dunwich Coastguards Cottages.

Both villages are chiefly agricultural, and people live there historically or by choice for the tranquility, dark skies, and the proximity to the Suffolk Heritage Coast. The two villages are linked by single track lanes with walks in the countryside characterised by open skies, arable and livestock farms, pheasants, partridge, owls, marsh harriers, buzzards, bittern, deer, bats and other wildlife. Residents and visitors enjoy the proximity to RSPB's flagship nature reserve at Minsmere with the Leiston Long Shop Museum, National Trust Dunwich Heath, Aldeburgh, Walberswick and Southwold within easy reach.

1. Response

- 1.1 Our major concern is that all the National Strategic Infrastructure energy projects should collectively minimize their onshore impacts on both the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast and the National and International designated sites that overlap along the coastal strip and the inland rural/agricultural land to the west of the AONB and around Leiston, Saxmundham, Aldeburgh and the various outlying villages such as Theberton and Eastbridge.
- 1.2 Should Scottish Power's (SPR) EA1N and EA2 and the associated NGS not be approved, then TEPC would have to withdraw these comments and reconsider any amended proposals in the light of such a decision.
- 1.3 On the assumption that EA1N, EA2 converter stations and National Grid substation (NGS) north of Friston are approved, we feel that any Nautilus converter station and links from the shore and to the National Grid substation from the converter station should minimize the spread of infrastructure and cable routes as far as possible.
- 1.4 On the basis that EA1N/EA2 and the NGS are approved, we cannot see any justification for siting converter stations at CSA1, CSA2 or CSA3 as these would significantly expand these industrial sites into the rural hinterland and potentially encourage further development later.
- 1.5 Use of CSA1, CSA2 and CSA3 would also see expanded impacts from the cabling routes across rural/agricultural land which we feel is unnecessarily damaging to the area and for CSA3 the cabling routes would potentially conflict with EDF's SZC proposed development, should it be approved.
- 1.6 Landfall E is simply unacceptable as it will either cross or be very close to the marshland of Haven Nature Reserve Aldeburgh, the Hundred River and RSPB North Warren, all part of the Leiston-Aldeburgh SSSI.
- 1.7 As far as is possible the cable route should be close to the proposed route for SPR's EA1N and EA2 projects to avoid additional cable tracks across currently undisturbed land.
- 1.8 As it is expected that the Eurolink project will follow the Nautilus project, we believe that NGV should create any cable route with sufficient capacity to service both projects and avoid yet another major disruption to add its cable route from the coast to converter station.
- 1.9 Whichever site is eventually proposed for the Nautilus Interconnector converter station, it should have sufficient potential capacity to accommodate the Eurolink converter station also.

2. Conclusion

This response, to the non-statutory consultation, reflects our initial thoughts given the significant number of energy projects that are currently under consideration and actively being examined as National Strategic Infrastructure Projects for this area. Namely, Scottish Power EA1N and AE2, EDF's SZC, NGV Eurolink, Northfalls, Five Estuaries and the two National Grid SEAL projects alongside this Nautilus interconnector project.

Whilst we understand the need for expanding both offshore wind and improving the interconnectedness between the UK and neighbouring countries in the North Sea, such developments need to be undertaken in a sympathetic and coordinated manner as these projects come ashore. Whilst the Multi-Purpose Interconnector would appear to potentially improve and reduce the overall cabling that might come ashore to converter stations, there seems to be a potential conflict between the use of these cables as an interconnector and as a concentrator of offshore wind connections. It is not clear if that conflict has been properly resolved in this outline proposal.