

## Consultation on changes to the Initial Project Assessment of the Nautilus Offshore Hybrid Asset

Nick Pittarello

OFGEM

cap.floor@ofgem.gov.uk

Saxmundham Town Council, already the proposed site for National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) Sea Link and National Grid Ventures (NGV) LionLink converter stations wish to tender our strongest objections to the possibility of NGV Nautilus connecting to Friston Substation and thence to a third proposed converter station in the Saxmundham area.

The proposed Nautilus converter station would be the third monolithic building to the east of our rural small market town. Major construction works are already planned to the east of Saxmundham in the form of numerous Nationally Significant Energy Projects including EDF Energy's Sizewell C nuclear power station, Scottish Power Renewables' East Anglia 1 North and East Anglia 2 offshore wind farms, and now National Grid's proposed Sea Link and Lionlink. Furthermore, a large-scale, new neighbourhood development of 800 homes and designated work/industrial units to the south and west will result in Saxmundham being a town under siege. Cumulative impacts of simultaneous traffic congestion and construction works will detrimentally affect our residents and environment, and visitors may avoid this area affecting the economic viability of our shops and amenities as footfall decreases.

The heritage landscape and views to the south of the town, across the parkland of Hurt's Hall (Grade II) and St John's Church, (Grade II\*), will be severely blighted if National Grid impose multiple monolithic 26-metre-high converter stations, that cover some 6.5 hectares each, on the higher land approaching Saxmundham. Our town will suffer the impacts of random, unplanned industrialisation and decimation of our rural countryside and way of life but without any economic advantages or compensation. The new industrialisation of the town, if it proceeds, will be a largely jobless one, and undoubtedly residents will suffer.

Whilst we understand the need to reinforce the electricity transmission network to boost energy security and affordability and to make the nation become more self-sufficient, we consider that National Grid, a private conglomerate, seeks to maximise profit to the detriment of our local economy and the environment. The initial planning consent for Friston substation was granted to take Scottish Power's EA1N and EA2 projects only. This did not include Sea Link, Lionlink and now Nautilus with their associated converter stations blighting our rural town and surrounding countryside. Indeed OFGEM are aiding, without consultation or consideration of cumulative effects the imposition of an energy superhub onto our countryside.

If the projects proceed, landfall works, cable corridors, sub-stations, new roads, bridges and converter stations will have devastating impacts on the precious landscape and cause widespread environmental damage. Moreover, light and noise pollution, both during and after construction of the three converter stations will be untenable for those that live in close proximity to the site. We refer to Dr Andy Tickle, *Greening the Great Grid Upgrade: a new vision for landscapes and communities in East Anglia*. Tickle argues that various planning policies do not go sufficiently far to protect the countryside and suggests amongst preventing energy cluster points (as planned for this area) that developers deliver local environmental benefits. In other words, more community engagement would benefit

the Great Grid Upgrade, whilst the current thinking of reducing planning consenting time will be detrimental to social acceptance of projects.

OFGEM's support of Nautilus connecting at Friston substation with a converter station at Saxmundham appears to be cost based, to the detriment of environmental, social and community economic impact. We would request that cost/ benefit analysis for the severe impacts should inform your decision to permit Nautilus to locate in our area. Moreover, due to the immense stress that the proposed energy projects will and are already placing on our community we strongly suggest that OFGEM accept the full cost of Nautilus production and allow it to proceed to the Isle of Grain to prevent the decimation of the landscape, environment, ecology and socio-economic viability of our area. Moreover, the entire threat could entirely be negated by an off shore ring main, that effectively helps meet Net Zero targets whilst ensuring our countryside and coast are not irreversibly decimated.