

RESIDENTS ACTION GROUP CONDEMNS SPANISH ENERGY GIANTS PLANS TO BUILD A MASSIVE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IN THE HEART OF THE TRANQUIL EAST SUFFOLK COUNTRYSIDE

Iberdrola the Spanish energy giant, through its U.K. arm Scottish Power based in Glasgow, is planning to build a 30 acre industrial substation complex right next to the peaceful village of Friston in the heart of the East Suffolk countryside. It also intends to carve a cable route for two sets of high voltage cables 50 metres wide and 2 metres deep across 10 kilometres of countryside from the sea at Sizewell to Friston scarring the landscape, destroying woodland and causing widespread disruption to residents and the agricultural and tourism industries which underpin East Suffolk's economy. This will also block any building on the affected land. This is part of Scottish Power's latest offshore wind farm projects known as East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO which are in addition to its current East Anglia ONE and East Anglia THREE projects. The East Anglia ONE project is already under construction with a 37 kilometre cable route from Bawdsey to the existing massive substation complex near Bramford.

This is despite there being a suitable site at Sizewell which as an existing "energy hub" is the most suitable location for such a complex. However this is owned by Iberdrola's competitor EDF the French energy giant. Scottish Power argues that EDF will not sell it the land but is vague as to the reasons why, other than it is needed for reptiles or for unspecified "operational reasons". There are also locations immediately south of Sizewell. Whilst technically they are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), nobody could realistically regard them as beautiful let alone outstandingly beautiful, and permission for development within AONBs can be granted as shown by the existing and planned nuclear power stations Sizewell A, B and C and the Great Gabbard and Galloper substations.

Available evidence suggests that this may only be necessary because of a series of incomprehensible decisions affecting Scottish Power's wind farms, which are understood to originally all have been connected to the existing huge substation complex at Bramford via the massively expensive and disruptive cable route currently under construction from Bawdsey. It now seems that project choices about implementing Scottish Power's wind farms have resulted in extremely inefficient usage of the Bawdsey cable route and that little more than half of its originally planned capacity can now ever be used. As a result Scottish Power have now come to Sizewell to find new locations for substations and a new cable route to them. Just how can this have been allowed to happen?

These plans have been compounded by a poorly managed consultation process with local communities resulting in much rumour and misinformation. The village of Friston was not even contacted initially as part of the so called consultation process. Even now people who live right next door to the proposed site have received no direct communication from Scottish Power.

.....and it gets worse. National Grid is planning at least two separate international power sharing projects that will connect to the electricity grids of Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK electricity grid in the same area on the East Suffolk Coast somewhere at or near Sizewell. There is little or no coordination of any of these projects. The concern is that if the Scottish Power plans are approved the National Grid will treat that a green light to build even more industrial scale substations inland causing yet further disruption, damage and destruction.

Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council have called upon central government in Westminster to intervene so that sense can prevail, but Scottish Power are pressing ahead regardless despite widespread opposition from local communities.

At an emotional meeting on Thursday night at which Scottish Power tried to justify their position Friston Parish Council unreservedly condemned Scottish Power's proposals and demanded that Scottish Power work with EDF, The National Grid, the local councils and central government to properly coordinate all these projects and find a solution which would enable this industrial scale infrastructure to be sited where it already exists, namely Sizewell or at Bramford via Bawdsey.

With the support of the neighbouring communities of Knodishall and Aldringham an Action Group has been formed to vigorously oppose Scottish Power's plans.

A spokesman for the group said "this is a completely unnecessary desecration of the East Suffolk countryside which will cause disruption and worry to residents for many years and damage the local economy. The countryside and residents of East Suffolk are being sacrificed due to the poor management of Scottish Power and its parent Iberdrola who seem to care little for our local communities."