

SASES UPDATE – DECEMBER 2020

The first Issue Specific Hearings were held by the Examining Panel of the National Planning Inspectorate between 1st and 3rd December 2020.

You are especially recommended to listen to the livestream recordings of 2nd and 3rd December which can be accessed on the Planning Inspectorate's project websites. Not least are the contributions from the local action groups and specialists which are quite trenchant.

These were to consider the finer detail of the development proposals and provided local action groups and specialists their first opportunity to set out their opposing views and to question the assumptions of the applicant, Scottish Power Renewables. It is fair to say that their points struck home and they were given a sympathetic and careful hearing by the Panel.

The key issues covered in these hearings were

- Site selection which was considered to be flawed by the local groups.
- Concerns relating to substation design and most importantly
- Cumulative impacts of other energy projects in the public domain but which SPR do not consider to be sufficiently defined for them to address! However, this is not the view of the Panel which is clearly concerned to identify the precise number and detail of these and how they overlap to include Sizewell C.

The Panel have registered their disappointment that the transmission arms of National Grid failed to attend to explain their role and what projects are in the pipeline and their connection points. They have subsequently been asked to respond to specific questions of the Panel.

SASES representatives and specialists made detailed oral representations on all the major issues and the adverse impacts on the landscape and heritage assets including Friston Church.

There were major contributions from SEAS (Suffolk Energy Action Solutions), Save our Sandlings and Marianne Fellowes on behalf of Aldeburgh Town Council and individuals with key understanding of the area.

SPR were not convincing in many of their arguments. Concerns arise that at this stage technical issues remain about the offshore cable technology and the method of accessing the landfall site at Thorpeness given the fragile nature of the cliffs there.

There have to be responses from SPR and National Grid and others in answer to actions required by the Panel by Deadline 3, Tuesday 15th December. These will then be posted on the National Planning Inspectorate project websites for everyone to consider and respond to by Deadline 4, 13th January 2021.

Best wishes to all,
Simon Ive