Bramford to Twinstead Tee 20th July 2012
Freepost National Grid Connections

Dear Sirs

**Hintlesham and Chattisham Parish Council’s response to the
Connection Options Report**

In October 2009 Hintlesham and Chattisham Parish Council passed a resolution to support total undergrounding of the Bramford to Twinsted route instead of selecting a ‘least worst’ pylon option. We remain consistent in our opposition to anything but an underground route. In the last fortnight all the Suffolk Local Authorities ( Babergh DC, Mid Suffolk DC and Suffolk CC) have also passed resolutions to insist National Grid underground the whole line. We support the LAs and fully endorse Babergh’s M50 policy document.

Misinformation from National Grid (NG) regarding the true cost of undergrounding originally influenced Local Authorities into thinking that undergrounding was prohibitively expensive. Even the Government was deceived by stating undergrounding was 12 to 17 times more expensive than pylons. Independent research now puts this multiple at 3 times. Now, our local MP, Tim Yeo, Chair of the Energy and Climate Change Committee is pressing the Government for change. He believes ‘all future new transmission lines should be underground anywhere in the country’.

Since 2009 the urgency for the new line has diminished. Sizewell C is not imminent or certain. The power from the first stage of the East Anglian Offshore Wind project can be accommodated by the upgrade to the existing line. We think NG has plenty of time to rethink its proposal.
Parts of our villages are in a Babergh designated Special Landscape Area. Hintlesham Great Wood and Ramsey Wood are nationally recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Hintlesham Hall is a designated heritage asset of the highest level: Grade 1. Yet, National Grid have labelled us ‘’unremarkable”. In a sop to national pressure, NG’s planned mitigation to protect the woods has drawn this comment from Babergh DC in their paper M50 :

‘9.33 In order to avoid Ramsey Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the proposalswould result in the creation of a further wire ‘box’ to the south of the A1071 and Hadleigh Bee Farm. This in combination with the use of a different pylon design to that already used would not achieve synchronicity with the existing overhead line. As such the proposals would be visually intrusive and highly detrimental to the character of the surrounding countryside, especially when viewed from the A1071road. As a consequence there is a very compelling case for the route to be placed beneath ground within the AB Study Area of Burstall to Hintlesham.’ Unsurprisingly, NG has not produced a 3D version of route options; the catastrophic effect on our landscape would then be blatantly clear.

We have the most residents and businesses of the six study areas. We are unique in having two route options. Many of our community have found the information provided by NG to be confusing and the maps very difficult to understand eg. existing routes and proposed routes change colour on the map sent to every household in ‘Project News Spring 2012’. But far worse is the effect on our strong community of being split into two factions. NG’s proposal could punish one side of the village and reward the other. NG’s actions are unforgiveable. They have put villager against villager creating anger and discord. The people in our villages have had to work hard to provide a home for their families. For many the equity in their homes forms their pension pot for the future. NG has paid scant concern to the effect of their scheme on our economy and livelihood.

We are bemused by NG’s decision making. In 2011 Corridor 2 was chosen. Yet NG’s own critera put a stronger case for different corridors. In the 2012 COR, again using NG’s own baseline criteria for undergrounding, despite our area having the highest score for being undergrounded we were not considered.(See Appendix 1).

Our representatives at Community Forums have been totally frustrated by the consultation process. NG has always refused to say what weight will ultimately be given to the views of those affected. We now know that they don’t respect our views at all. They could not give one single example of how the opinions of residents from Hintlesham ,Chattisham or Burstall had influenced decisions.

The quality of our lives and environment is already compromised by the existing overhead line; we cannot possibly absorb any more pylons. The proposed route must go underground.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Stephanie Coupland
Chairman
Hintlesham and Chattisham Parish Council