

## **June 2024 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks**

### **Norwich to Tilbury pylons: council to object to plans and call for pause**

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet formally objects to National Grid's current proposals for pylons between Norwich and Tilbury. The total length of pylons would be 183 kilometres, consisting of around 158 kilometres of new overhead line supported by 520 pylons. There would be also four sections of underground cabling running through, and in the vicinity of, the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Waveney Valley. A paper presented at the Cabinet meeting on 21 May 2024 recommends that the council's position is to call for a pause to consider alternative options, such as an offshore solution, or High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) undergrounding. It also objects to the current proposals for a number of reasons, including:

- the need for additional undergrounding of cables in the Waveney Valley and elsewhere along the route
- the need for much greater clarity regarding the relationship between the proposed project and proposed solar projects, and the cumulative effects
- potentially serious implications for at least six airfields, including pylons close to runways and, in some cases, possibly stopping all flying

Our message to National Grid and Ofgem is that the current proposals must be put on hold so that the alternative solutions, which do not involve pylons, can be properly explored. We support the government's desire for energy security for the UK but this must be achieved appropriately and fairly where our communities, and the local environment, will feel the impact from energy projects. Our work so far has helped change the proposals, by introducing more undergrounding of cables and altering the location of parts of the scheme. But this does not go nearly far enough, and in our opinion, there are significant issues which remain - not least adequate research into offshore solutions or HVDC, as well as more clarity around the cumulative impact of other energy projects. Therefore, we have no choice but to object to the proposed scheme.

A number of recent reports help to support the council's position:

The [ESO East Anglia Network Study](#) by The National Grid Electricity System Operator, explored better ways to connect offshore wind in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. The council previously stated that it was critical for National Grid to take these findings into consideration as they continue planning their Great Grid Upgrade, including the Norwich to Tilbury project.

The "[Valued Landscape Assessment](#)" of the Waveney Valley, commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, acts as a timely reminder to National Grid, of the need to respond effectively and robustly to the sensitivities of Suffolk's landscapes and communities.

The [Hiorns Smart Energy Networks report](#), also commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, suggested that it is possible for the Norwich to Tilbury project to be paused in order to consider alternatives.

The Norwich to Tilbury project is currently in a statutory consultation phase until 18 June 2024, and it is expected to submit its application to the Planning Inspectorate in 2025.

### **Suffolk Business Board named**

A new Suffolk Business Board has been established to represent the local business community, help steer Suffolk's economic strategy and create a stronger, higher-skilled local economy. The Business Board takes over the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in providing a voice for business in Suffolk. Mark Pendlington, local business leader and former High Sheriff of Suffolk, will serve as interim chair for the first year. Cllr Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, will serve as deputy chair. Representatives from business, education and local government will join them on the Board and bring experience in key Suffolk sectors including agri-food, retail, technology, ports and logistics, and the visitor economy.

### **East of England local authorities collaborate to appeal for more foster families**

Eleven local authorities across the East of England have joined forces in a bid to collectively recruit more foster carers to look after some of the region's most vulnerable children. Suffolk is taking part in a new initiative for fostering under the banner Foster East. There is an urgent need for foster carers in the East of England with more than 7,000 vulnerable children already in the care of their local authority, and a further 150 children coming into care every month. The Foster East initiative which is funded by the Department of Education and launched on Wednesday 29 May 2024, is a new, collaborative approach to foster carer recruitment and support. Councils will work together to provide more comprehensive training, support and best practice. Each applicant will be nurtured through their fostering journey with their local council and via a buddy network. Foster East advisors will help people find out how fostering can become part of their life. In Suffolk there are more than 900 children and young people ranging from babies to 18-year-olds who need safe, loving and nurturing homes where they can thrive and develop. Every local authority aims to keep children and young people local to their support networks, but a shortage of foster families in our area means this is not always possible. Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children. Through the Foster East Partnership, we are united in our ambition to provide more loving foster families for children in their local area. We always have opportunities to foster children of any age, including sibling groups, but we currently have a particular need for carers to look after teenagers who are 11+. We provide in-depth training and support to ensure our foster parents can care with confidence. Because we know our children and our carers, we can take care to match the right child to the right family, where they can thrive. Foster East will give people considering fostering the opportunity to speak to an advisor from 8am to 8pm daily, and the chance to talk to an experienced foster carer to find out more about what the role involves and ask any questions they may have. More information can be found on the [Foster East website](#).

### **Rogue trader plumber admits defrauding customers**

A rogue Suffolk trader has admitted taking thousands of pounds from customers for work that was never carried out or which was sub-standard. Grant Phillips took a total of £23,511 from eleven customers between April 2021 and October 2023 while operating under three different names. Phillips traded as Superdry Plumbing & Drainage, Rhino Plumb and Plumb Fix, operating around East Anglia before being brought to justice in a prosecution by Suffolk Trading Standards. At Ipswich Magistrates Court on Monday June 3, he admitted fraudulent trading contrary to Section 9 of the Fraud Act 2006 - trading fraudulently by failing to provide materials for work or not completing projects. Phillips, 44 is due to be sentenced next month. The prosecution was brought by Suffolk Trading Standards after customers complained to the Citizens Advice Helpline and Action Fraud. The victims said payments were made to Phillips for home improvement projects that were not completed or were substandard, requiring expensive remedial work. He also took money for materials which were not provided, were not as ordered or were not suitable. The losses ranged from £200 to more than £4,000. Some victims were elderly and had commissioned home improvement projects to improve accessibility to bathroom facilities in their homes. Some were not able to afford to complete the project or have the work re-done for a lengthy period and one elderly victim found it difficult to trust another trader in her property. Trading Standards advises people to use the Suffolk Trusted Trader scheme when having work done. It is a business partnership scheme where participants have completed a full vetting process and agree to trade fairly under a Code of Practice. This covers transparent quoting and conducting work, only charging a fair and reasonable price, and dealing with complaints promptly. For details go to [trustedtrader.team/Suffolk/](https://trustedtrader.team/Suffolk/)

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