



Department for
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Rt Hon Victoria Atkins MP
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Dear Victoria,

Thank you for your letter of 9 October regarding the National Grid's Grimsby to Walpole proposal and the impact on your constituency.

Our Clean Power 2030 Mission will deliver national and local benefits, decarbonising our energy system, boosting growth and investment nationally and in our communities, and protecting every household against future electricity price shocks.

The Government's policy, as set out in the National Policy Statement (NPS) for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5), is one of a starting presumption of overhead lines for large network projects in England and Wales. This is due to the cost, technical challenges, and environmental impacts of undergrounding. The Prime Minister has been clear that to achieve cheaper electricity, we must install new overground pylons; otherwise, the financial burden on taxpayers will be excessive. The general exception to this is in nationally designated landscapes, where undergrounding is the starting presumption.

In relation to National Energy Systems Operator's East Anglia Study, the high-voltage direct current (HVDC) underground option was found to have lower lifetime costs only in a scenario where the aboveground alternative was delayed by four years, from 2030 completion to 2034 completion, and the HVDC underground option had no delay. The on-time delivery for both options detailed the HVDC underground option to have £1bn higher lifetime costs.

I cannot comment on specific projects which will come before me for a final planning decision. However, all projects, regardless of location, must go through the independent and robust planning process. They must demonstrate they have both heard and engaged with community concerns and considered alternative options. In this case, it is the responsibility of the National Grid Electricity Transmission to propose a route and obtain planning permission for that route. The Government cannot intervene to mandate changes.

Yours ever,

RT HON ED MILIBAND MP
Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero