

Little Bromley Parish Council
Response to NG Targeted Consultation
Location reference: Essex 3

Little Bromley Parish Council (**LBPC**) feel very strongly that National Grid's (**NG**) proposals cannot meaningfully be considered without also considering the inextricably-linked proposals by Five Estuaries (**FE**), North Falls (**NF**), and Tarchon who have all made a joint decision to connect their respective systems to each other in Little Bromley by building massive new sub-stations, cable runs, new roads, etc in this village. The entire project is of a size and scale that is frankly quite difficult to comprehend, and it is clear that meetings have already taken place at a board level to decide where this project is going to be built before any consultation was ever started.

Little Bromley is a small village with just over 100 homes. It has a long and proud history and is detailed in the Domesday Book. Despite its small size, the village is a sought-after location due largely to the attractive open countryside and unspoilt rural feel that the village has enjoyed for many centuries.

NG's proposals, which by any measure will destroy Little Bromley as the village we currently know and love, have been met with horror and revulsion by the people who live here. Residents are utterly appalled by these proposals, which will turn a charming and ancient rural village into an unrecognisable industrialised hellscape.

As a Parish Council we have a duty of care to our residents, and we wish it to be recorded as part of this response that we feel this entire exercise has been handled very badly, in what appears to be a deliberate ploy to psychologically manipulate people by giving them no options to choose from, thereby implying that there is no choice, that this scheme is going to happen regardless, and that any opposition is therefore futile.

The subtext as perceived by a great many residents is that NG are carrying out a meaningless consultation; people can object, but what is the point because it is going to happen anyway!

Many people in the village are extremely depressed, stressed, anxious and frightened about these plans and their mental health is being affected. Villagers have been bombarded with official letters warning them of the serious impact these proposals may have on their homes, purporting to be a consultation but without any options on offer and with no proposals as to what level of compensation or other amelioration proposals are going to be forthcoming.

In July 2024 LBPC submitted a lengthy response to NG's Statutory Consultation, a copy of this can be found on our website - <https://www.littlebromley.org.uk/notice/little-bromley-parish-council-response-to-national-grids-statutory-consultation-july-2024>. We strongly encourage NG to read the document and take into consideration our objections.

Our Specific Concerns

Due to the Targeted Consultation running for less than a month (25 February – 27 March 2025) and with LBPC sitting only bi-monthly, there has been insufficient opportunity to properly address the issues and involve residents in this localised consultation. Many residents are still finding it difficult to comprehend the scale and potential impact of the cumulative proposals to which the NG proposals are the cornerstone.

Our primary concern regarding the Targeted Consultation is that the changes do not seem to reflect meaningful consideration of the previous Statutory Consultation. However, we are unable to verify this, as the responses and how they were addressed by NG have not been published. We feel our feedback has not been adequately considered.

Surprisingly given LBPC's previous responses (which appear to have been ignored by NG), the only change that has been proposed for Little Bromley is the repositioning of a section of permanent private access road in the centre of the village. This access is the proposed permanent access road to the EACN on the outskirts of the Village.

LBPC is concerned about the placement of the permanent private access road in the centre of the village. We believe there are viable alternatives to situate the permanent access road outside the village. A sensible alternative is to construct a permanent road off the A120 bypassing the village entirely.

The proposed EACN site is on prime farmland in unspoilt countryside. Brownfield and industrial sites should be prioritised. With plans for three more substations serving FE and NF windfarms, and the Tarchon Converter Station, the impact would be significant. The chosen site for the EACN is totally inappropriate with the combined proposals to install a huge amount of infrastructure into a location which is totally unsuitable.

We do not believe that proper consideration has been given to alternative sites for the EACN and associated infrastructure (included RAF Boxted).

Based on the evidence available, we believe that NG did not maintain an open mind during their site selection process, which influenced their chosen location (contrary to PINS guidance).

We have been informed that NG will be using the NF/FE haul road off Bentley Road for construction traffic. The cumulative impact of HGV traffic on Bentley Road must be considered.

Other concerns arising from this Targeted Consultation

A few specific points relating to the changes proposed in this Targeted Consultation are highlighted here:

1. Increase in land take and harm to horticultural/agricultural activities and nature

The proposed changes in this Targeted Consultation significantly increase the land area in the draft order limits. This is most evident north of Little Bromley Road, where more horticultural and agricultural land is taken. This land is classed as some of the highest-grade farmland in East Anglia which cannot be replaced. This loss of highly productive land will have a major impact on national food security. One farm, if not more, may become unviable as a result. The changes will also cause greater destruction of ancient hedges along Home Farm Lane and their wildlife habitats which contain many endangered and protected species such as turtle doves, grey partridge and badgers to name a few.

The widening of Bentley Road will cause significant logistic issues for farmers especially during peak seasons of the farming calendar. Machines of such size that operate on these farms rely on the Bentley Road to access different parts of farms as all other local roads are of an unsuitable width. This coupled with local peak time traffic will cause major disruptions and safety concerns.

2. Emergency Planning

LBPC have concerns regarding what measures, if any, NG have in place for any unforeseen emergency situations that could occur at the EACN site, or the access to it, during, or after, construction.

Tendring District Council is one of the few District Council's to utilise an Emergency Plan, which is something LBPC are interested in creating in and around our village.

For LBPC to plan accurately, we need information about potential hazards from the construction and the site. LBPC is concerned that the proposed location of your permanent service road is not suitable. It should be outside the village, away from dwellings to minimize risk and potential emergency impacts. Any delay in emergency services could be catastrophic for our village.

3. Fire, Terrorism, Accident, etc.

LBPC is concerned that the concentration of electricity infrastructure in and around Little Bromley will pose a risk to health, lives and livelihoods. The Tendring Peninsula is one of the driest parts of the UK and with tinder-dry crops and stubble fields for several months a year, fire is already a potential hazard. Crop and stubble fires can spread quickly, and "wildfires" are becoming increasingly common world-wide - so any proposals must consider these issues

and the impact/increased risk that construction and siting of electricity infrastructure will pose for local communities.

We fear that the convergence of NG, NF/FE and Tarchon routes at the EACN will put the area at risk of terrorism. Sadly, energy infrastructure is clearly a prized target in this uncertain world.

Whilst not directly connected to NG proposals, the close proximity of the EACN to the proposed emergency Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) near Ardleigh/Little Bromley with its li-ion batteries and risks of “thermal runaway” should not be overlooked and again, the cumulative effects should be considered and not underestimated.

LBPC is concerned that the siting of the emergency access road from the centre of Little Bromley to the EACN (with its entrance more than a mile from the A120) could result in delays to accessing the EACN site in case of emergency or accident with consequences for Little Bromley village and its residents.

4. Destruction of Ancient Hedges and Preserved Trees

The widening of Bentley Road to accommodate the construction traffic will destroy ancient hedges and preserved trees. These natural features cannot be replaced and will be permanently impacted by the underground cable and swathe.

5. Excess water drainage

NG’s drainage plans send water across Grange Road/FE direction. Flooding is already an issue here and FE/NF excess water drainage plans do not take NG’s excess water into account when thinking about risk to Ardleigh Road’s existing flooding issues.

6. Foul water drainage

This is a significant concern for Little Bromley with extensive flooding already in numerous locations throughout the village which has resulted in the closure of roads for days.

7. Mains Sewage

Many houses do not have access to mains sewer.

8. Well Water

Many homes in the village are on well water and this has a possible impact of construction on people's water. Proper consideration and planning should be conducted prior to construction, taking into account the high-water table, the position of mains water, and access for properties. Additionally, an emergency plan should be established and communicated to the village in case of water-related issues.

9. Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative impacts have not been properly considered across the board - including water, drainage, traffic, environmental etc.

Mitigation

Given the scale of infrastructure proposed for Little Bromley, it is challenging to identify potential meaningful mitigations.

This is particularly the case when considering not only the (substantial) impact of the NG proposals, but the additional disruption and harm which would be caused by the other projects connecting to the EACN.

Compensation

The proposed financial compensation being discussed in the media is unacceptable. Reasonable and fair compensatory measures for our community must be forthcoming. These would need to relate appropriately to the impacts to our village and residents for the EACN substation together with the two substations for Five Estuaries and North Falls, the Converter Station for Tarchon Energy, the traffic and construction impacts for all projects, environmental and heritage impacts to our existing landscapes, caused solely by NG's site choice for the EACN as the connection point offered to NG's customers. This should go far beyond suggestions being voiced in the media and include significant monetary value to the community of Little Bromley, such as measures considered within the Planning and Infrastructure Reform Bill for hosting Nationally Significant Infrastructure, (substations, converter station, pylons and cable routes and permanent haul route) which will all remain, following construction in Little Bromley and our neighbouring villages.

LBPC would welcome an opportunity to engage with NG face-to-face about the impact of NG proposals (and the cumulative effects resulting from the FE, NF and Tarchon projects) on Little Bromley.

Little Bromley Parish Council

27th March 2025