

## **Reasons to say no to National Grid's proposed Bridgwater to Loxton pylon corridors 1 and 2**

We all need electricity and realise that the electrical cables have to be installed. However, insufficient attention appears to have been paid to alternative routes, such as under the Bristol Channel or along the M5 corridor (preferably underground). With such a short consultation period, it has been impossible for the local communities to thoroughly research and propose alternative options.

There are many reasons to object to the current plans to install 46m high electricity pylons across an area of outstanding beauty. When writing to object its much more powerful and effective if you write your own personalised letter or email. Please feel free to use the thoughts below to form your response:

- The Somerset Levels is a unique wetland environment with an international reputation for its birdlife, including buzzards, starlings, lapwings, egrets, and other endangered species. It is also a major overwintering site for swans and other migratory birds. Somerset County Council have nominated the Somerset levels and moors as an UNESCO World Heritage site. Installation of pylons across unspoilt areas of the Somerset levels as proposed in Corridor route option 2 would destroy any chance of achieving World heritage site status.
- There is increasing incremental destruction of open countryside and installing pylons across the Somerset levels is a step too far. By its very nature, the Somerset levels are totally flat. There is consequently no suitable topography to reduce the impact of the pylons. They will be highly visible and tower over an otherwise unspoilt landscape.
- The Somerset levels are a major tourist attraction for the county. Pylons would be highly visible from the main arterial road (the A38) that brings virtually all visitors to Cheddar Gorge. It would turn the Somerset levels into an industrial landscape, destroy its inherent beauty and have a very detrimental impact on the local economy.
- The proposed pylons will dominate the landscape. They will be higher than any other feature along their proposed route and even higher than the highest local landmark, Ashton Windmill on top of the Isle of Wedmore.
- The proposed height of the pylons at 46.5m (over 152 ft) is over double the height of local church towers and, in the flat Somerset levels, will literally be seen for miles. Given the proposed height of the pylons at 46.5m, they may require aircraft warning lights. If so, the pylons will be lit up like Christmas trees across the Somerset levels.
- The pylons will cause excessive noise pollution in a very tranquil area where there are very few other sounds to mask the transmission 'hum'.

- The Somerset levels are famous for their wide-open vistas and stunning views of sunsets. Pylons will have a major negative effect on the landscape.
- Option 2 corridor route will affect at least four listed buildings – two of which are grade II.
- While there is a lack of conclusive evidence, there is a large and growing body of evidence that high voltage aerial transmission lines are linked to an increased incidence of childhood leukemia, Alzheimers disease, senile dementia and other illnesses. Ref: [http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1204276682532?p=1207897920036](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1204276682532?p=1207897920036)
- The Somerset Levels and Moors is a Special Protection Area (SPAs) as defined in the EC Birds Directive. Pylons across the Somerset levels may affect rare and vulnerable birds that use the wetlands as resting or breeding ground. (ref: [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-162](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-162)).
- Parts of the Somerset levels are classified as an Environmentally Sensitive Area.
- The Somerset levels are highly prone to flooding. Installation of pylons will bring distinct new risks and require very deep footings to make them safe in the boggy ground. Have the environmental and cost implications of these footings been taken into account?
- National Grid have yet to satisfactorily answer why they have rejected other already 'blighted' routing options. These include:
  - Following the line of the M5
  - Upgrading the existing 400kv Bridgwater to Melksham line that will be largely redundant when Hinkley B is decommissioned in 2016
- Or produce details on the additional cost of submarine cables in the Bristol Channel. The £1 billion cost quoted by National Grid appears to be much higher than other comparable schemes in Europe and the USA.