

Dr Dan Poulter MP
House of Commons
Westminster
London SW1A 0AA

BY EMAIL

19 June 2015

Dear Dr Poulter

Re: Progress Power Ltd – proposed power station near Eye

Since the new Parliament returned, I have endeavoured to contact you with regard to our project (by phone and email) but without success. I wanted to provide you with an update regarding the precise details of the final scheme submitted to the Planning Inspector for consideration at the close of Examination in January 2015, following its refinement during the Examination phase. The Inspector's report is now with Amber Rudd, Secretary of State for Energy & Climate Change.

Given your comments to the media last week and the points you made in your 18th May 2015 letter to the Secretary of State, we are concerned that you have not acknowledged the extent of the changes we have made to the project as our plans have evolved through the Examination phase and in response to our local consultations.

These changes, primarily to reduce the environmental impacts of the power station and the substation, have been made in consultation with both Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), and have sought to address many of the comments received from the local parish councils as well as residents. The outcomes of our pre-application consultations were documented in our application to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2014, and the further refinements to the proposed development are reflected in our submissions to the Planning Inspectorate during the Examination phase.

You may recall that after your comments at our very first meeting, we agreed to underground the electrical connection to avoid the need for new overhead transmission towers and lines; it was an issue of particular concern to you and other people. However, as a result of Progress Power agreeing to "go underground", the substation had to be located close to the existing National Grid transmission network. This important point has been made and the rationale explained on numerous occasions including during meetings with yourself.

Please be assured that we have proposed extensive landscaping plans to screen both the substation and the power station; this was done in consultation, and with the agreement of SCC and MSDC. It would be worthwhile you re-visiting National Grid's Gas Compressor Station east of Eye Airfield to see how they have landscaped and successfully screened it. The Progress Power landscaping plans are available on-line (via the Planning Inspectorate website) but we would be more than happy to show them to you if we were to meet.

Further, are you aware that the existence of the National Grid Gas Compressor Station restricts, on health and safety grounds, the use of land in the near vicinity of it? It's just one of the reasons why MSDC considered the airfield as being appropriate for a power station (they had originally envisaged an Energy from Waste facility).

We are conscious that some members of the local community are not happy with the location of the substation. We were, however, surprised by your comment last week that it would be seen from

Norwich, a distance of 40 km. Given its tallest component is 12.5 m, the substation would not be seen from the centres of Diss or Eye, let alone Norwich, due to existing mature woodland and the surrounding countryside – this is the case even without our extensive landscape plans. It will be dwarfed by the existing transmission towers (approximately 48 m), the nearby wind turbines (130 m to tip) and the chicken litter stack on Eye Airfield (40 m).

With regard to your concerns about the access road to the substation being positioned on a fast bend, you should be aware that we have been in extensive discussions with the Suffolk Highways Authority, who have agreed that our plans are safe. Indeed, we undertook a Road Safety Audit to confirm that our access plans are safe. Furthermore, our plans include a road junction off the A140 during construction only, thus avoiding the need for HGV traffic to go through Yaxley and Mellis - please note that this change was as a direct result of feedback from the local residents of Yaxley and Mellis during the consultation phase prior to submitting the application for examination. In respect of local concerns about traffic and transport, we have also agreed to remove the aforementioned junction during operations (at the request of the Suffolk Highways Authority) and committed £86,000 for road safety measures at other existing road junctions to improve the safety of the A140. The contribution towards road safety measures is just one element of the commitments we have made in our s106 agreement with MSDC and SCC.

You should also be aware that we have submitted three Draft DCO applications for the Secretary of State to consider. The third of these includes a GIS substation option which is approximately 1/3 the size of the AIS substation, something which you made clear in our discussions you were keen for us to include in the application.

From the outset, we have sought to work closely with the local councils (indeed MSDC actively encouraged us to bring forward our plans in 2013) and we have engaged with the local community and their elected representatives. We accept that, despite the various changes that we have made to our project, there is still some opposition to it. However, at all times we have been guided by local and national planning policy and the Government's energy policy.

Our scheme will be the one of the smallest (and cleanest) gas-fired power stations to be built in the UK, and will provide essential back-up to intermittent wind and solar power, thereby bolstering the country's energy security. At a time when the new nuclear-build programme is uncertain and coal fired power stations are closing, the project's contribution to the country (as well as the regional economy) should not be underestimated.

If you would like to discuss these or any other points (via phone or face-to-face), please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Chris McKerrow
Project Director