**ALVERDISCOTT & HUNTSHAW PARISH COUNCIL**

**MOROCCAN POWER CABLE & CONVERTER STATION**

**PUBLIC MEETING WITH SIR GEOFFREY COX MP**

**9TH DECEMBER 2022**

Present:

Graham White (chairman)

Sir Geoffrey Cox MP

Pat Smith

Approx 70 parish councillors and members of the public

The chairman welcomed Sir Geoffrey and all attendees, and began the meeting by reading out a statement from Nigel Salsbury, a new resident of the area, expressing his concern regarding the impact of the scheme on the area and the local population.

Sir Geoffrey in introduction, said that he had spoken to Xlinks without going into particular details of the scheme at the time, and is continuing to be in contact with the chief executive.

He has also spoken with National Grid regarding the effects on the substation at Alverdiscott, and will be following this aspect up with them.

The following is a short summary of the points raised by the audience. Surnames have been omitted.

Sue – very concerned about the inadequate length of the consultation period

Simon – potential problems with cable, particularly its vulnerability over such a long distance, and the visual and noise impact of the converter station

Wendy – concerns with the necessary expansion of the substation to cope with the additional load. Sir Geoffery noted that he had spoken to National Grid on this matter, who accepted that expansion would be required

Leslie/Helen – asked why landfall was necessary at Bideford, rather than Avon or Hinckley Point, where suitable infrastructure was already in place – the additional cost of the extra cable would be more than offset by the reduced civil engineering requirements

Matthew – Decommissioning of nuclear power stations along the Bristol Channel would lend itself to replacement with the cable terminus. At current projections, North Devon would be supplying 20% of UK’s power needs

Graham – Lack of detail regarding any feasibility study – what discussions have taken place between UK government and Xlinks? This is a private project and would need to be economically viable to proceed. Sir Geoffrey noted that he could consider calling in the project to the Secretary of State, but did not consider this a good move at this stage.

Bruce – Despite the two public presentations, there appeared to be a lack of detail forthcoming for the project

Philippa/Lucy – great concern over the devaluation of properties, and also the potential for noise from the fans in the converter station. In addition, the point was again made regarding the short time for any consultation

Matthew – it should be borne in mind that any upgrading to the substation would inevitable also require upgrades to the transmission infrastructure, such as grid connections and pylons

Philip– lack of consultation with losers in the development. Properties on the route have already seen a decline in value

Caroline – had the developers actually examined the site?

Kevin – concerns regarding the timing of the planning application, being particularly close to forthcoming council elections

Mr Blofield – the original preferred site on the Showground field, although closer to the substation than the currently proposed site, would also impact on properties

Sir Geoffrey closed the meeting by saying that he would be meeting both Xlinks and National Grid, and advising those present to contact their district councillors and Torridge DC to demand an extension to the consultation period. He hoped to convene an additional meeting at Alverdiscott in the New Year.