

PRESS RELEASE

13 February 2008

Power lines removed from Constable Country

Power lines are coming down across the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as part of a £2.9million scheme managed by EDF Energy in the East of England.

The energy firm is investing more than £450,000 to remove over 4 miles of low voltage overhead network and 75 wooden poles from this nationally protected landscape, known locally as Constable Country because of its links with the famous painter. The move has been made possible thanks to a special allowance granted by industry regulator, Ofgem.

The power line currently stretches through the Stour Valley, from Boxted Mill past Langham Hall to the River Stour at Stratford St Mary. The lines impact the views of the countryside from the Stour Valley Path and the Essex Way. Both walks attract many visitors every year. Furthermore, many wildfowl and wading birds are attracted to the area so the removal of the lines will help to protect them.

Whilst work is underway EDF Energy Networks engineers will use special all-terrain vehicles at the site with low-pressure tyres which can be manipulated to have minimum impact on the land.

Barry Hatton, Director of Capital Programme for EDF Energy Networks, said: "This project will clearly have a positive impact on a much-loved local landscape. We are delighted to work with Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project to provide technical expertise and bring this project to fruition."

Katherine Blake, Project Manager for Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project said: "After all the preparatory work, and cooperation of the landowners, we are really pleased to see this work to remove power lines from areas of Dedham Vale start. EDF Energy Networks have been able to make this investment thanks to a special allowance from Ofgem which will really have a positive impact on our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."

Careful planning is required to install underground network in place of the overhead lines which are being removed. Specialist machinery has been used to directionally drill under the River Stour to bury the network below the river bed. EDF Energy Networks engineers will also work closely with archaeologists along the route to ensure any unknown buried archaeology is protected.

The project is due to start next month and will be undertaken in three phases over 3 years. It is the first of two projects to remove power lines from Dedham Vale AONB.

There will be an opportunity to film or take photographs of the cables being installed under the River Stour. This work is scheduled to take place on 5 March. There will also be the opportunity to gain images of the overhead power line being removed from Dedham Vale AONB. The removal of the lines is likely to take around a day to complete and will be carried out towards the end of March.

If you would like to register interest in attending the site while this work is taking place please contact Marjorie Barnes at the EDF Energy press office on 01473 266484.

For further information on Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project contact Katherine Blake on 01473 264263 or Katherine.blake@et.suffolccc.gov.uk



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