



ROYDON PARISH COUNCIL, SOUTH NORFOLK.

Planning Inspectorate November 2025 National Grid Norwich to Tilbury project response.

Roydon Parish Council (RPC) objects to National Grid's planned Norwich to Tilbury pylons project.

We believe that National Grid's consultation has neither been open or transparent, especially on the alternatives to pylons, such as more partial undergrounding, a complete undergrounding along the route using High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cabling, or an offshore grid. It has failed to provide comprehensive, clear and justified costings for these alternatives in the same manner as the pylons, making it impossible for the public and local authorities to make meaningful comparisons. Instead, throughout the earlier consultations and subsequently, National Grid has tried to bat away such alternatives with vaguer statements and generalised costings backed up with minimal evidence, a sort of "take our word for it" approach, treating communities condescendingly and arrogantly. This is reflected in the fact that since the project began very few amendments have been made in our area despite widespread objections, with little or no feedback given as to why those objections were invalid. It is also reflected in the fact that the online project map for our parish was, at the time the Planning Inspectorate opened its registration, not even accurate. Throughout, many have felt that the plan is a fait accompli and that National Grid have been going through the process as a box-ticking exercise.

We believe that the Planning Inspectorate and the government cannot make a decision on this project until a full and transparent evaluation of the alternatives has been made - offshore transmission, more partial undergrounding and the use of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) throughout the whole route overland. These would produce much less environmental and visual damage. HVDC is considered the second best option after an offshore grid by Roydon Parish Council.

Pylons are an old technology for overland transmission belonging to the early 20th century. This is recognised by National Grid along with the fact that they damage our landscapes. The Grid are removing pylons in other parts of the UK. Why is East Anglia different? The Grid have failed to explain in detail why countries such as Germany are doing away with pylons in favour of the alternatives, and why this is not right for the UK.

When National Grid presented us with costings for pylons in its consultations, they were using those from 2012 - when new technology was not so advanced as the present time. This was and remains misleading, a further reflection of the lack of transparency in the process. The then Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero, Justin Tomlinson, made this clear in the House of Commons when he said: "We

had a deep dive discussion about overhead cables being the strong starting presumption, which in simple terms is based on the cost, as per the electricity system operator's 2012 figures. I am sure that the House would recognise that, since 2012, significant advances have been made to new technology."

We have significant concerns about the impact of this project on the nation's food security. East Anglia is vital to food production in Britain but the wave of new power generating infrastructure, including the Norwich to Tilbury project, in the region will compromise and use farmland of grade 3 and above.

We oppose NG's plan for pylons through the Waveney Valley because of the great harm it would do to this valued landscape. The route proposed would take the pylons through the narrow gap between the rare habitats of Roydon Fen and Wortham Ling. Suffolk Wildlife Trust described Roydon Fen, a County Wildlife Site, as a 49 acre reserve that offers a sense of the wildness a landscape of extensive wetland once would have offered. Wortham Ling is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) composed of acid grassland and dry heath. The setting of both would be damaged forever by 50m high pylons.

A joint Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils Valued Landscape assessment noted that "...the length of the Waveney Valley expresses many special qualities, and in the context of Suffolk and Norfolk, it is considered to be a valued landscape. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities articulated in this report is a key aspiration of existing planning policy."

The Waveney Valley is described by Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) as "part of a chain of fens that are strung like jewels along the Suffolk and Norfolk border. This wildlife corridor contains bat roosts as well as Schedule 1 protected bird species such as Barn Owl, Heron and Swift. The valley consists of rare peatland water meadows and, recognising this fact, SWT recently embarked with other bodies upon a long-term project, with the support of government funding, to connect and improve the river valley between Diss and the headwaters of the Little Ouse to the west which includes all that part of the Waveney Valley within Roydon Parish. Pylons would be a huge visual intrusion on this section of the valley. Undergrounding through this part of the Waveney Valley would be damaging but at the least would remove their visual impact - as long as proper care and consideration was given to the location of highly intrusive CSE compounds at either end.

The fact that undergrounding is happening in Dedham Vale is proof that National Grid understands the visual damage that pylons cause. Dedham Vale may be an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but to our residents the Waveney Valley is as beautiful and important a landscape as Dedham Vale is to residents and visitors there.

The proximity of the pylons to residential properties in Snow Street, Roydon, is concerning. This area has 11 listed buildings, which are heritage assets integral to

the character of Roydon village. Additionally, the pylon route just north of the A1066 and just west of Hall Lane, Roydon, is exceptionally close to residential properties along Hall Lane, the west end of Snow Street and in Darrow Lane. It is, in fact, incredible that it should be proposed to place pylons so close to them in the first place.

There is considerable disquiet in the village regarding the purchase by National Grid of The Gables, a listed building on Darrow Lane in Roydon, that will be very close to the pylons and whose setting will be greatly affected by them. This was purchased at a good market rate but has been deteriorating since. As a further illustration about the lack of transparency regarding this project, National Grid have not been open about the reason for buying the property or what they plan to do with it, or the land that goes with it. It is apparently the only such property along the entire route that has been purchased in this way. Why this property? What is the precedent that has been set here?

The prospect of the implementation of the proposals set out for this project has caused much anxiety and mental stress to many residents, considering not only the prospect of pylons themselves but the high level of local disruption that will happen over the long construction period. Has the mental health impact of this project on people and the cost associated with it been included in the project costings?

Local roads are completely unsuitable for the high numbers of HGV movements and general construction traffic that will be associated with the project. Many of these roads have no pavements, blind turns and are single lane. This view has been taken by the County Highways Department in relation to recent planning applications in the area where large numbers of HGV movements and other heavy vehicles were proposed, notably applications in relation to an industrial biofuel plant at Deal Farm, Bressingham. This was ultimately rejected on appeal, largely on the grounds of road safety. National Grid figures revealed during the consultations showed HGV traffic increases to our section of the route ranging from 26% to 75% (the 12 hours from 7am to 7pm on weekdays) depending on the specific site being worked, producing 8,984 additional vehicle movements per day, 795 of them being HGVs. Did National Grid include the associated costs of damage to roads, congestion and health impacts on residents in their project costings?

We note that the proposed pylon route, passing through the narrow gap between Roydon and Bressingham, necessitates a number of sharp turns in contravention of Holford Rule 3. This rule seeks to ensure the very minimal use of the larger angle towers but, in the flat landscape in Roydon, these are even more visually impacting.

The Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan (DDNP) was adopted by referendum in 2023, and includes the whole of Roydon parish. The DDNP designates Key Views in Roydon as part of DDNP Policy 16, two of which will be severely affected by the proposed pylon route. These views very much give a feel of place to the locality and, it should be noted, were chosen by the public before the Norwich to Tilbury

project was public knowledge. Key View 28 looks all around from the middle of Darrow Lane, just north of Snow Street; the open landscape nature of this view will be devastated by the visual impact of 50m-high pylons. Similarly, Key View 25 looks south from the churchyard of the grade 1 listed St Remigius Church across the Waveney Valley to the south, another open landscape where 50m pylons would completely blight the vista. The setting of the church would itself be seriously compromised by the proximity of pylons. Additionally looking west from Key View 24, from Public Footpath 15, will produce a clear sight of the pylon route. It is to be noted that public footpaths 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 14 (part of Angles Way) and 23 will all be impacted by temporary closure during construction and the very close proximity of pylons permanently. Additionally, footpaths 8 and 15, will have clear views of the pylons when in place. These footpaths are well used by local people as well as visitors to the area.

Fox Wood Forest School, situated on Snow Street, and developed to support children's mental and physical well-being through connection with nature, will be compromised in the build process and permanently through the pylon's visual impact. Heron Meadow, a Care Farm promoting well-being and learning, off Doit Lane, Roydon will be similarly affected.

The Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan (DDNP) defined 37 Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) within its seven parishes which are important to the history of the locality, the character of the neighbourhood and sense of place. The setting and enjoyment of some of these will be spoilt by 50m-high pylons:

- Roydon Fen (Track and Environs), NDHA 16. Clear site of pylon line at its western end.
- Roydon Church and White Hart, NDHA 27. The vista to the south from this grouping of historic buildings will be entirely blighted by the presence of pylons
- The medieval moated site of Bush Hall, NDHA23, lies directly on the proposed pylon route in the bottom of the Waveney Valley .

The DDNP also designated a number of Local Green Spaces (LGS) to be afforded protection. RPC considers that the setting of Little Green, Snow Street, LGS 31, will be spoilt both during and after construction of the pylons.

We consider that residents should not be "bribed" by condescending offers of so-called community benefits by way of compensation. Such minimal benefits do not compensate for the huge, permanent damage that 50m pylons will do to our residents' quality of life and the environment, let alone the significant reduction in property values.

We are also concerned by the evidence suggesting an association between proximity to power lines and childhood leukaemia. Emeritus Professor Denis Henshaw in the school of Chemistry at Bristol university is a member of the

coordinating committee of the Government Stakeholder Advisory Group for EMF (SAGE). He is a member also of the Human Radiation Effects Group funded by the charity Children with Leukaemia to research the possible environmental causes of childhood leukaemia with the emphasis on non-ionising radiation. Currently, evidence suggest that power frequency magnetic fields suppress the production of the hormone melatonin, a natural anti-cancer agent secreted by the pineal gland, which may explain the adverse health effects associated with magnetic field exposure, as experienced in proximity to high voltage power lines. Power lines also emit corona ions which may also explain the apparent increase in the risk of childhood leukaemia within 600 meters of such lines. Further studies by the Oncology department of Bristol University support this view. Whilst appreciating such associations are not conclusively proven, nevertheless RPC, and local residents, are deeply concerned by such risks and the council considers, therefore, that the presence of such power lines present an unacceptable level of possible risk to human health, and something not to be gambled with.

We appreciate that the UK needs more energy security, and from sustainable resources. However, this should not at the expense of our landscapes, environment and health. Quality of life for current and future residents and visitors to our area must be considered alongside the bare financial cost of build. This project will directly and mostly benefit London and the south-east of England whilst East Anglia is left permanently scarred by it. We urge the Planning Inspectorate and the Government to reject the plan as it stands.