

Roydon Parish Council submission to Planning Inspectors

Roydon Parish Council's submission today focuses on National Grid's ignoring of the Holford Rules around our village.

This disregard means that, uniquely along the Norwich-Tilbury route, Roydon **will be surrounded on three sides by 50-metre high pylons** - to the north, alongside Snow Street and Brewers Green, to the west along Darrow Lane and Hall Lane, and to the south through the Waveney Valley.

No other village from Norwich to Tilbury is impacted in such a dramatic way, no other village will be so significantly hemmed in by pylons and their cables.

Holford Rule 1... States that pylons should avoid, if possible, major areas of highest amenity value. Supplementary notes state that routes should minimise the effect on other special landscapes including those of county, district or local value.

Ignoring this, National Grid has routed pylons through the Waveney Valley, considered a Valued Landscape by Suffolk and Norfolk county councils, both Wildlife Trusts and residents.

What makes the valley so special is its contrasting habitats of peatland fen, deciduous woodland and heath, specifically Wortham Ling, an SSSI, and Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserve. To compound the impact, the pylons will run through the narrow gap between these sites, seriously detracting from their setting.

Holford Rule 2... states that pylons should avoid smaller areas of high amenity value.

The route also has significant impacts on the setting of listed buildings. One pylon will be just 200m or so from the Grade 2 listed, 17th century Limetree Farm on Snow Street. Other pylons will be upwards of 200m from other listed buildings in this area and, further south, the Grade 1 listed St Remigius Church will be overshadowed by four 50m pylons.

Some of the route runs close to the long-distance Angles Way footpath and the archaeological moated site of Bush Hall, a non-designated heritage asset within the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan.

Heron Meadow on Doit Lane, a valued care farm and local community asset, will have a pylon in clear sight about 100m to its north.

Holford Rule 3... states that all other things being equal, choose the most direct line, with no sharp changes of direction.

There is no greater example on the entire Norwich-Tilbury route where a village is so impacted by disregard for this rule.

The towers and cables will be the single most dominant feature of the landscape on three sides of the village, with two sharp changes of direction. In some cases the towers will be about 100-200 metres from properties.

Routes with significantly less impact on people and their environment would either swing more gently through sparsely populated areas to the west of Bressingham and west of Wortham Ling, or more directly to the east of Diss following the approximate route of the A140.

Subsequent notes on Rule 3 state that where possible the Grid should choose inconspicuous locations for angle towers and other infrastructure.

There are very few inconspicuous places around our village, which lies in a largely flat and lightly wooded agricultural landscape.

This same point applies to **Holford Rule 4**, which states that routes should choose tree and hill backgrounds in preference to sky backgrounds, to help hide the impact of pylons.

Roydon is known for big sky views. Several are protected under Policy 16 of the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan, made in October 2023. These views were chosen by the public before they knew of the Norwich-Tilbury project. The Key Views north of the village from Darrow Lane and south across the Waveney Valley will be devastated by pylons.

In conclusion, the Holford Rules exist to minimise the impact of pylons on people and the landscape but it's hard to think of anything more intrusive and prominent around our village than 50-metre pylons and cables. We ask, what is the point of the Holford Rules if National Grid are going to so egregiously ignore them around our parish?

National Grid repeatedly talks about the prohibitive cost of changing its preferred route. But throughout this project compromises that involve additional costs have been made to reduce significant impacts on communities, landscapes and residents' health and wellbeing. Why should Roydon be any different? And would changes to the route here really make such a dramatic difference to the overall cost?

To help make our case we ask that the Planning Inspectorate come to our village and walk the route with us, so you can see first hand how this route will damage our community.

Thank you for your time.