

Essex County Council  
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Chelmsford  
CM1 1QH

Ms Susan Hunt  
Lead Member of the Examining Authority  
National Infrastructure Planning  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

Date: 27 January 2026  
Sent Via Email:  
[norwichtotilbury@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:norwichtotilbury@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Hunt,

**Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project (Application Reference: EN020027)**

**Norwich to Tilbury Project - Procedural Deadline A Response from Essex County Council (ECC)**

Following the receipt of the Rule 6 Letter for the Norwich to Tilbury project dated 13 January 2026, ECC would wish to provide the following responses to matters raised at Procedural Deadline A.

ECC has also completed 'Event Participation Forms' regarding the proposed hearings but for clarity, has provided information here regarding details to the Examining Authority on the expected attendance / participation.

1. Responses to the Rule 6 letter including any written submissions on the examination procedure and about this draft examination timetable

*Annex C – Initial Assessment of Principal issues*

- 1.1. With reference to the list of issues set out in Annex C of the Rule 6 letter, the County Council note that it does not imply any order of prioritisation or importance and on that basis, considers the list it does not omit anything or put anything unfairly, on which the Council feels it is necessary to comment

*Annex D – Draft examination timetable*

- 1.2. The County Council notes that Deadline 1 is seeking updated statements of common ground. ECC would wish to highlight that commentary was provided to National Grid on the latest iteration of the County Council Statement of Common Ground on 17 December 2025. However as of (27 January 2026), the County Council has yet to receive feedback from National Grid. This is a concern as the County Council is keen to progress this workstream ahead of this deadline but will require sufficient time to consider and respond to the latest iteration of the Statement of Common Ground when made available. The County Council is committed to engaging and progressing a Statement of Common Ground and endeavours to work with National Grid for revisions to be submitted as set out within deadlines across the Examination.
- 1.3. The County Council notes that dates have been reserved for hearings in the week commencing 27 April 2026 and 22 June 2026. The County Council would wish to gain an understanding as soon as practically possible of the matters which will be considered during these hearings to ensure the relevant specialisms and representation can be secured to attend as necessary.
- 1.4. The County Council notes that there are two allowances for Examining Authority Written Questions to be published, and responses prepared. The County Council is concerned with the limited timeframe in which to prepare a response to these questions, arising from the reduction in working days linked to the timing of bank holidays. Due to the expected extensiveness of these questions as a result of the scale and complexity of the project, ECC would request that further time is given for responses to be prepared to the Written Questions.
- 1.5. While it is acknowledged the Examining Authority is under a duty to complete the examination within 6 months of the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting, the Council would therefore like to propose a slight extension to the dates proposed for Deadline 3 and Deadline 5. It is therefore respectfully requested that Deadlines 3 and 5 are extended to 10 April and 12 June respectively in the interests of ensuring there is sufficient time and availability to comprehensively respond to the First and Second Written Questions.

*Annex E- Notification of initial hearings, Open Floor Hearings*

- 1.6. The County Council welcomes the proposal for three separate Open Floor Hearings, in each of the respective counties affected by the development.
- 1.7. The County Council notes the following statement within the Rule 6 letter: “Whilst your preferred slot [for an Open Floor Hearing] cannot be guaranteed we will do our best to

take this into account when producing the agendas. Once the slots for each session are full no more IPs can be admitted". The County Council is not clear therefore whether it is proposed to allocate slots on a "first come, first serve" basis or if there is another method proposed.

- 1.8. All those wishing to speak must be offered fair opportunity to put forward their points to the Examining Authority, taking note of the wish for speakers with common points to come together to nominate a spokesperson.
- 1.9. There are concerns that residents may not be able to travel to a different County if they are not offered a slot in their home County.
- 1.10. The County Council also notes that the Essex Open Floor Hearing is taking place during the day. A question is raised whether further opportunities will be offered for Open Floor Hearings during the evening at an alternative stage of the examination to allow for those who may not be able to attend during the day. This opportunity must be offered to ensure fair access for all to present their commentary to the ExA.
- 1.11. The County Council also assume that the ExA will be divided appropriately between Norfolk and Essex hearings which are scheduled on the same day
- 1.12. The County Council is also concerned regarding the accessibility of Orsett Hall by public transport. The nearest stations are at Grays, Stanford-Le-Hope and West Horndon, all of which are beyond a reasonable walking distance from Orsett Hall. The County Council questions whether the Applicant could consider how it can increase accessibility and sustainability of the location.

*Annex F – Other procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority*

- 1.13. The County Council is concerned with the cumulative impacts arising from the project, as it will set out in more detail in its Local Impact Report, therefore it welcomes the request from the Examining Authority for the applicant to submit a report on the interrelationship with other infrastructure projects.
2. Requests to be heard orally at the preliminary meeting on Tuesday 10 February 2026, including the agenda items you wish to speak on and the matters you will address (and why these points need to be made orally rather in writing)
  - 2.1. It is expected that Ms Emma Dring (of counsel) will attend remotely and that three representatives of the County Council will attend the Preliminary Meeting in person at the Ipswich Town Football Club. The County Council had intended to register Ms Dring as able to speak, in case there are any questions or matters on which the Examining

Authority may need assistance, but predominantly her attendance will be to observe only, however ECC reserves the right to respond to any comments that may be raised during the hearing.

3. Requests to participate in any of the open floor hearings from Tuesday 10 February to Thursday 12 February 2026 (annex E of this letter)

- 3.1 There will be three representatives of the County Council attending the Open Floor Hearing on Thursday 12 February to observe only, ECC however reserves the right to respond to any comments that may be raised during the hearing as may be necessary.
- 3.2 In addition, Councillor Lee Scott, Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration wishes to have a slot to speak at this hearing on 12 February. It is requested that Cllr Scott is provided with a slot during the afternoon to allow for his attendance at the Essex County Council Full Council meeting scheduled from 10am on the same day.

4. Requests to participate in the compulsory acquisition hearing on Wednesday 11 February (annex E)

- 4.1. ECC draws attention to paragraph 6.5.2 of its Relevant Representation (RR-1083) and the concerns with the potential impact of any works / possession of land arising from the Norwich to Tilbury project on the operations at the Essex Highways Depot in Ardleigh. ECC also takes note of the commentary on Annexe E of the Rule 6 Letter "There will be no discussion relating to specific plots nor objections raised by APs in relevant representations". ECC therefore does not wish to attend this meeting, although there will be County Council officers observing remotely to monitor discussions and will respond to any relevant queries raised in writing by Deadline 1. Furthermore, ECC will expand upon this matter within its Local Impact Report to also be submitted by Deadline 1 and intends, as may be necessary, to attend future compulsory acquisition hearings should this matter need further investigation through the examination process.

5. Requests to participate in issue specific hearing 1 on Friday 13 February (annex E)

- 5.1. It is expected that there will be one representative of the County Council attending the Issue Specific Hearing in person. In addition, it is expected that Ms Emma Dring (of counsel) and two representatives of the County Council will attend remotely. The Council would reserve the opportunity to respond to any comments as necessary. ECC would welcome an opportunity to amend this position subject to the publication of the agenda.
- 5.2. ECC notes that the registration process for Issue Specific Hearings sensibly asks, at the time of registration, for as much the detailed information as can be provided on the

agenda items on which ECC will wish to speak and the relevant documents. ECC is conscious that there may be times when some details only become clear in the work done in the immediate runup to the hearing, which will not be able to be reflected in the registration process, so hopes that a flexible approach can be adopted in those circumstances.

Overall, the County Council welcomes the opportunity to provide commentary at this Procedural Deadline A and will continue to engage with the applicant and the Examining Authority as this application progresses through Examination.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

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