

Susan Hunt  
 Lead Member of the Examining Authority  
 The Planning Inspectorate  
 c/o QUADIENT  
 60 Buckingham Drive  
 Slough  
 SL1 4PN

27 January 2026  
 By email

Your Reference EN020027

Dear Ms Hunt

**National Grid Electricity Transmission plc**  
**The proposed Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order**  
**Applicant's Response to Rule 6 letter**

Thank you for the Rule 6 letter dated 13 January 2026, which is very helpful, and in which you invite comments on the draft examination timetable and arrangements for future examination hearings. We are grateful for the opportunity to make some suggestions.

We very much understand that the scheduling of an examination is a complicated task and requires significant thinking through, and detailed choreography. We appreciate that this is especially the case when considering a project at this scale. We take the view that the overall programme set by the timetable is achievable, reasonable and proportionate and we will work with the Examining Authority to deliver a determination in accordance with its provisions. Recognising that, we suggest making only minor changes to the schedule, focussing on those aspects that we feel are the most useful and which would, in our view, further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the process. Importantly, if adopted, they would not impact the length of the overall examination programme. A summary of our suggestions is set out below, followed by detailed reasoning. We trust they are seen as helpful.

**Summary of suggested changes**

	<b>Current date</b>	<b>Proposed date</b>
<b>Deadline 1 – no change</b>	Thursday 26 February	Thursday 26 February
<b>Deadline 2 – extension of two working days</b>	Thursday 12 March	Monday 16 March
<b>Publication of First Written Questions – extension of two working days</b>	Friday 20 March	Tuesday 24 March
<b>Deadline 3 – extension of one week</b>	Tuesday 7 April	Tuesday 14 April
<b>Deadline 4 - no change</b>	Tuesday 12 May	Tuesday 12 May
<b>Publication of Second Written Questions – brought forward by two working days</b>	Friday 22 May	Wednesday 20 May
<b>Deadline 5 – no change</b>	Tuesday 9 June	Tuesday 9 June
<b>Deadline 6 – brought forward by four or five working days</b>	Tuesday 7 July	Wednesday 1 or Thursday 2 July

<b>Publication by ExA of draft DCO and RIES– brought forward by four or five working days</b>	Tuesday 7 July	Wednesday 1 or Thursday 2 July
<b>Deadline 7 – brought forward by eight working days</b>	Tuesday 28 July	Thursday 16 July
<b>Deadline 8 – brought forward by seven working days</b>	Thursday 6 August	Tuesday 28 July
<b>Deadline 9 – Additional deadline added</b>	N/A	Thursday 6 August
<b>Close of examination</b>	Monday 10 August	Monday 10 August

#### **Applicant's comments on the draft examination timetable**

As highlighted above, we have proposed minor changes on some deadlines and the time they allow us and other stakeholders to respond as effectively and helpfully as we would like to the many issues that will require a response by some of the deadlines set out in the draft examination timetable.

Due to the nature, length and national significance of the project, we have necessarily submitted a significant amount of material in our application and that is likely to lead to a high volume of important and detailed responses from stakeholders.

##### **1. Local Impact Reports – Deadlines 1 and 2**

Deadline 1 is currently proposed as Thursday 26 February 2026. On that date, both Local Impact Reports (LIRs) and Written Representations are to be submitted. Comments on the LIRs and Written Representations are currently due on Thursday 12 March 2026 at Deadline 2.

Our current understanding is that there will be 12 local impact reports that set out the full technical comments on the local planning authorities. We appreciate the time it takes to produce a LIR and would welcome additional time to review, consider and provide comments on these important documents. We respectfully suggest an alternative date for Deadline 2 of Monday 16 March 2026 to allow the applicant two additional working days to address these important documents. We appreciate that this will have an impact on Deadline 3.

##### **2. First Written Questions – Deadline 3**

We note that the ExAs' first written questions are proposed to be published on Friday 20 March 2026 with responses due at Deadline 3, Tuesday 7 April 2026 immediately after Easter. We endorse the opportunity for all stakeholders to benefit from hearing all relevant issues in a timely manner, however, we feel that 11 working days to respond, as comprehensively as we could at this stage, is too short a timeframe to do as thoroughly as we would like and would therefore require more detail later.

Should the Deadline 2 change be taken forward, publication of the ExA's first written questions may need to move from Friday 20 March to Tuesday 24 March 2026 to retain the time set out. We respectfully suggest that Deadline 3 could then be set as Tuesday 14 April 2026. We appreciate that would leave the ExA a week to finalise the agenda for the hearings beginning in the week commencing 27 April 2026.

##### **3. Second Written Questions – Deadline 5**

The Second Written Questions are due to be published on Friday 22 May 2026 and the response is due at deadline 5 on Tuesday 9 June 2026. It is noted that Monday 25 May is a bank holiday and that week is also half term for schools. This gives 11 working days to respond. We therefore suggest, if at all possible, that the second written questions be issued 2 days earlier on Wednesday 20 May 2026.

#### **4. Other Comments on timetable**

Deadline 8 provides for the Applicants' closing statement to be submitted in parallel to closing statements from Interested Parties (IP's). It is assumed that IPs will also wish to comment at Deadline 8 on the full suite of final updated documents submitted by the applicant at Deadline 7.

We would expect that any submissions under s.127 and s.138 of the Planning Act 2008 will need to be made by the Applicant and by affected IPs at Deadline 7, with an opportunity for responses to be provided at Deadline 8 (including in order for regard to be had by IPs in the context of those s.127 and s.138 submissions to the updated documents submitted at Deadline 7).

It is our experience that the Applicant normally has the right of last reply in respect of submissions from IPs and third parties and particularly so in relation to submissions made under s.127 and s.138 of the Act.

The following changes to the timetable are therefore suggested:

- i) Deadline 6 (currently 7 July) would be brought forwards to 1 or 2 July. This would still allow five working days for Deadline 6 submissions to be prepared/updated following the expected close of hearings the week before.
- ii) The ExA's commentary on the draft DCO and the RIES would also need to be brought forwards to 1 or 2 July.
- iii) Deadline 7 (currently 28 July) would be brought forwards to 16 July.
- iv) Deadline 8 (currently 6 August) would likewise be brought forwards to 28 July.
- v) Deadline 9 would be scheduled for 6 August, at which the applicant would be permitted to submit its closing statement, including in response to IP submissions at Deadline 8.

#### **Draft DCO and Explanatory Memorandum**

Apart from Deadline 7, we are not clear on what deadlines the ExA expects that revised or updated versions of the draft DCO and Explanatory Memorandum will need to be submitted. We would be grateful if this could please be clarified in the Rule 8 Letter? We note that regard needs to be had to the two change applications to ensure that there are not multiple versions of the draft DCO in circulation at the same time.

#### **Change Applications**

We would also be grateful if it were possible for the Rule 8 letter to clarify what the current expectations are in respect of the submission of documentation to support each change application (assumed to be Deadline 4) and the timings for updates to be made to the wider suite of application documentation in the event that one or both of the change applications were to be accepted.

#### **Arrangements for Future Examination Hearings**

The applicant has no specific comments on the arrangements for future hearings. We would be grateful for as much detail as possible at the Rule 8 stage to assist in planning for venue bookings and other preparation.

#### **Attendance at Preliminary Meeting**

I can confirm that we will be in attendance at the Preliminary Meeting. We would envisage speaking on agenda item 4 and we are available and happy to assist the ExA on all other agenda items if required.

#### **Use of Artificial Intelligence in Submissions**

As set out in the Application cover letter (APP-002) the applicant is aware of the Planning Inspectorate's guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence in casework evidence and confirms that artificial intelligence has not been used to create any application text or images.

## Approach to Errata

For the purposes of this approach:

- Errata are defined as minor, non-material corrections such as typographical errors, incorrect references, omissions of appendices identified in the index, or clarifications that do not alter the assessment outcomes, conclusions, or red-line boundaries along the route. This includes new or revised information from government agencies or regulators that now affects the NTT Application.
- The Applicant will maintain a version-controlled Errata Schedule identifying the affected document, section, nature of the correction, and the corrected text. This schedule will be updated throughout the examination.
- Updates to the ES will be managed through tracking of agreed amendments via the Errata throughout the Examination, and any required updates to the ES or supplementary documents will be made at the end of the Examination, ensuring transparency and traceability of changes.

This approach ensures that all corrections and updates are clearly documented, accessible, and submitted in accordance with the Examining Authority's procedural requirements.

The initial errata will be submitted in February 2026.

## Changes to land Interests

We confirm that, where we become aware of a change in ownership, or a new interest in relevant land, the Applicant will make the relevant person aware that they can make a request to the ExA to become an interested party under section 102A of the Planning Act 2008 as set out in the letter.

If you have any queries about the content of this letter, please contact Ian Fletcher (email address [REDACTED]@nationalgrid.com).

Please acknowledge safe receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Pepper  
Project Director