



Planning Inspectorate
Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Hearing Transcript

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Project: | Norwich to Tilbury |
| Hearing: | Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) - Session 1 - Part 1 |
| Date: | 10 February 2026 |

Please note: This document is intended to assist Interested Parties.

It is not a verbatim text of what was said at the above hearing. The content was produced using artificial intelligence voice to text software. It may, therefore, include errors and should be assumed to be unedited.

The video recording published on the Planning Inspectorate project page is the primary record of the hearing.

00:00:04:29 - 00:00:31:06

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome. Can I confirm with the case team that I can be heard clearly? And live streaming and recording of the event has commenced? Yeah. Getting nods. Thank you. It is now 4:00 and it's time for this first open floor hearing in relation to the Norwich to Tilbury project to open. Thank you all for attending this hearing today, whether here in Ipswich or online.

00:00:33:07 - 00:00:52:20

My name is Susan Hunt. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered town planner, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the member of the panel, to be the lead member of the panel to examine this application. I'm now going to ask my fellow panel members to introduce themselves, who have also been appointed by the Secretary of State.

00:00:54:08 - 00:00:59:23

My name is Christopher Butler. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered town planner.

00:01:02:00 - 00:01:07:05

Good afternoon everybody. My name is John Hockley. I'm also a planning inspector and a chartered town planner.

00:01:08:07 - 00:01:12:22

Good afternoon. My name is Matthew Sims. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered civil engineer.

00:01:15:10 - 00:01:20:13

And good afternoon. My name is Kenneth Stone, and I'm a planning inspector and chartered town planner.

00:01:24:23 - 00:01:56:21

I can confirm that all members of the examining authority or a you may hear us referred to. We've made a formal declaration of interest, and there are no known conflicts of interest with regard to us. Examine this application. There are other colleagues from the Planning Inspectorate who are joining us today, both here in Ipswich and online. Our case managers are Shaun Evans and Lily Robins, and they're supported by case officers Harrison Coles, Georgie Hannigan and Jessica Dunlop.

00:01:57:11 - 00:02:20:12

And it's the case team who you should contact if you've got any, uh, queries or you need any help with arrangements today or any online connection issues. In addition, towards the back of the room, there are technicians from CVS international. They're attending solely for the purpose of recording, managing and recording and the live streaming of the event.

00:02:22:25 - 00:02:47:21

As you all know, today's hearing is being undertaken and what we call a blended event. That means some of you are present with us here today at the venue at Ipswich, and some of you are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams. And we will make sure that, however you've decided to participate, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate. And you should also be aware that the meeting is being recorded.

00:02:49:08 - 00:03:21:01

So just a few housekeeping and preliminary matters. And so the emergency exits. They are at the front and the back of the room. And the meeting point is in the South Stand car park, which you should have entered through today. And there are no planned alarms or fire drills today. Then everyone settle their devices to silent. Online participants should have their cameras switched off and also their microphones muted unless they are speaking.

00:03:22:16 - 00:03:54:08

We haven't made we haven't had any requests for any special measures or any special arrangements today. But if you do need any help participating today, please speak to the case team. And if at any point during the hearing you can't hear us or or you wish to raise something. Could virtual attendees use the raised hand function on teams? And there may be a delay before we can acknowledge this, and it has been explained to virtual participants what to do if you lose connection.

00:03:56:09 - 00:04:04:06

We will have a short break within the hearing today, and if any breaks are required before this, please alert the case team.

00:04:06:06 - 00:04:11:04

The hearing is not expected to continue beyond 6:30 p.m. tonight.

00:04:12:26 - 00:04:52:15

This event is being live streamed and recorded, and our letter of the 13th of January, which we we refer to as the rule six letter. And that explains that we retain and publish the digital recordings because they form a public record. And just to make you all aware that the General Data Protection Regulation applies to this, and the Planning Inspectorate do retain those recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State's decision. So if you do participate today, it's important that you do understand that there will be a recording and that you can sense the retention and publication of the digital recording.

00:04:54:03 - 00:04:58:17

I haven't been told that anyone else intends to film the meeting today.

00:05:02:28 - 00:05:40:25

And also, just to let you know, we only ever ask for information to be placed on public record. That is important and relevant to the planning decision. And sometimes we need to edit the digital recordings if personal information is given. So please try not to to give out information that you wish to be kept private or confidential when you're speaking today. If you do feel the need to refer to something like that, please discuss this with the case team first and they'll they'll let you know whether that can be submitted in writing and appropriately redacted for the public record.

00:05:44:00 - 00:06:01:24

For those attending virtually. Can I repeat the question made in the arrangements conference that your your phone is switched off or turned to silence, you stay muted with your camera off until it's your turn to speak, and we'll let you know when it's your turn. And there is a raised hand function in teams.

00:06:07:14 - 00:06:42:02

For those watching the live stream, if you're if you're just observing, if at any point we adjourn proceedings today, for example, for the break, we have to stop the live stream. You may need to refresh your browser if you think. If you need, we will let you know when we're going to resume the meeting. But it's best if you refresh your browser to make sure that you're back in it again. And just a little bit about conduct during the hearing. We understand people have strong feelings about the proposed development, and it's important to recognize that we have a process to follow.

00:06:42:04 - 00:07:05:19

It's quite a formal process, but we will try and make it easier for you. We we ask for good manners and respect to be shown to each other throughout the hearing, and we want everybody to have an opportunity to speak who has requested it. And so please don't talk over anyone while they're speaking. And no clapping, cheering or booing as we won't be able to hear what people are saying.

00:07:07:25 - 00:07:29:13

And just please be polite to each other. Everyone deserves the same level of respect, even if you don't share the same views. Also, we understand that people feel nervous doing public speaking, and please be reassured that if you stumble over your words or you need a little bit of extra time to repeat something, that's that's not a problem.

00:07:31:19 - 00:07:47:03

So just before we move on, does anyone have any questions about the technology today or the general housekeeping measures or anything that I've just run through for today's hearing? We've raised hand if we've got any questions.

00:07:48:20 - 00:07:49:10

Nope.

00:07:51:20 - 00:08:26:26

Okay. So should be aware that this is the first of three open floor hearings that are taking place this week for the Norwich to Tilbury project. So this is open floor hearing one or off one you might see it referred to. And that's taking place both this morning and tomorrow. Sorry. This afternoon and tomorrow morning the 11th of February here in Ipswich. Open floor hearing two and open floor hearing three are both taking place on the same day Thursday 12th of February.

00:08:27:11 - 00:08:33:02

Open floor hearing two is in Orsett in Essex and open floor hearing three is in Norwich.

00:08:35:22 - 00:08:56:07

There will be two or more members of the panel at each of these hearings. It won't be all five of us at both of them, and the remaining panel members will watch the event afterwards. So whatever's said in in the hearing that they're not at, they will be listening to. So you can be assured that every panel member will hear your submissions.

00:08:59:07 - 00:09:19:13

The agenda that we've already published. Examination library reference EV 2001. It's broadly the same for each hearing session. It's just the list of people and the order in which we'll hear them. That's different. They've all been published on the project page of the National Infrastructure web page.

00:09:21:29 - 00:09:31:11

Okay. I'll now ask Mr. Stone to go through item two of the agenda, which is about the purpose of the open floor hearing. Thank you.

00:09:31:22 - 00:10:05:29

Thank you, Mrs. Hunt. Yes, this is about the purpose of the open floor hearing. Now, normally, open floor hearings are held at the request of interested parties. However, we've called this open floor hearing because we want to hear firsthand from interested parties. Your thoughts at an early stage of the examination. It will also help us to inform a view about what we want to discuss in more detail at later issue specific hearings and in our written questions. We are familiar with your representations, so when speaking, you do not need to repeat these at length.

00:10:06:09 - 00:10:36:27

What we are seeking is for you to provide further detail or evidence, to help us understand the issues, to make best use of time and what not. Wishing to limit your contributions? It would be of great assistance if point were not repeated. You can rest assured that we will have understood the point made the first time round. We are aware that the applicant is attending this afternoon. We will ask the applicant to respond to everything they've heard through all the open floor hearing sessions in writing.

00:10:37:09 - 00:10:47:19

It is not the purpose of these hearings to enable the applicant to make their case. Thank you. I will now hand it over to Mr. Butler for agenda item three.

00:10:51:18 - 00:11:26:12

Okay. So thank you very much. Um, agenda item three is confirmation of those who have notified the examining authority of a wish to be heard at the open floor hearing and the the order in which the these interested parties will be heard. Um, due to the number of people who wish to speak at this open floor hearing, you will have seen that the agenda we have, we have split into two sessions, uh, with the next session starting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.. It's our intention to hear from the interested parties who are pre-registered to speak and who are listed in the agenda for this hearing.

00:11:26:14 - 00:12:07:03

After that, if time permits, we may choose to hear from any interested party who has not pre-registered to speak, but who still wishes to speak. And finally, from any other person or non interested party, that isn't mean that they're not interested in the application, it's just a term that's used. Um, who wishes to speak may speak. At that point, if there's time permitting, uh, however, if time is tight, um, this will be at the discretion of the examining authority. Uh, if time is not available during these open floor hearing sessions for parties, they can request a further open floor hearing later in the examination.

00:12:07:08 - 00:12:40:24

However, you have to make this request by deadline one, which is Thursday the 26th of February, 2026. Uh, due to the number of parties wishing to speak today, we have set a time limit per person. We have set maximum of five minutes for those representing groups, which include membership organizations, clubs, societies, etc. and three minutes for individuals. Uh, when you are speaking, you must take account of the time remaining on the monitor. There's a monitor in front of you. You'll see it when you come up and you'll have your time ticking down.

00:12:40:28 - 00:13:19:24

Uh, and it will be an indication to you of how much time you've got left whilst you're speaking for those attending virtually. We'll let you know verbally when you've reached one minute to go. So one minute left and we'll let you know verbally if you're speaking virtually to us. Um, please try to finish in your allocated time, as we want to make sure everybody has an opportunity to be heard today. Uh, to ensure we can hear from as many people as possible. We won't ask any questions once you have spoken, but please be assured that if we do have any questions, um, for you, we'll send them to you in writing following the event.

00:13:23:05 - 00:13:25:18

So moving on to the list.

00:13:28:22 - 00:14:00:20

Um, we were going to ask the applicant to display it, but I don't think that's possible. So what I'll do is I'll speak through the list, just so you know, the running order. So firstly, we have Essex Police and Suffolk Police. Suffolk County council. Birstall parish council. Cotton parish council. Lawford parish council. Deborah Blackman. Gareth Pressley. Peter Finney. Georgina. Langton. Um. Simon Schultz.

00:14:01:26 - 00:14:33:23

I apologize if I've got that wrong. Um, just need to scroll down. Uh, Caroline blacker. Uh, Robert Willis. Christopher. Vermont. Um. Daniel Shepherd. Joanne. Elliott. Richard. Davies. Clive. Drury. Cindy. Eaves. Caroline. Holmwood. David. West. Tasmin. Farley. Graham. Lucas. Is there anybody that I've missed that has registered to speak? Right.

00:14:33:25 - 00:14:43:15

Okay. I've got Jane Lushington And Mr. Stacy. All right. So they were handwritten on my colleague's notes. So.

00:14:50:12 - 00:15:23:02

We will ask people to come forward to the front table, five at a time. If you have informed us that you do not want to be filmed, uh, you do not need to come forward. And instead, we will be given a roving mic to speak from where you are currently seated. Although some of the speakers, although some of the speakers in each group of the five, may be attending virtually or not coming to the table at the front, we still each ask each of you to speak in turn based on the time allocated to you, as shown in the agenda.

00:15:23:13 - 00:15:57:27

Uh, when we've heard from all five, you can return to the general seating and we'll call forward the next group. It would assist us if written summaries of anything that you say today are submitted by

deadline one, which is Thursday the 26th of February. These can include any additional points or further details that you may wish to make, but felt unable to do so because of the time constraint this afternoon. Please be reassured that when coming to our conclusions, we will give equal weight to both oral and written submissions.

00:15:57:29 - 00:16:03:22

There's no advantage in not having presented something orally here today, if you later put that in writing.

00:16:06:29 - 00:16:13:17

Does anyone have any questions on the speaking process in the room or online please?

00:16:15:18 - 00:16:23:24

I'm getting no hands and there's nothing online, so I'm going to ask Mr. Hockley to take us to the next agenda item, which is speaking.

00:16:24:05 - 00:16:56:28

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Butler. So I'm now going to invite those listed in the agenda to speak. Um, and when I read out your names, if you're in the room, please could you come to the table at the front? Um. And if online, please turn your camera on. When it's your turn to speak. Please turn the microphone on and there's a button at the front of each microphone there. You'll press it and it'll turn red, which means it's live. And then if you can start by introducing yourself when it's your turn and if relevant, who you are representing. Um, as Mr. Butler said, there's a timer displayed in the room and you should be able to see it when you're sat at the table.

00:16:57:21 - 00:17:29:01

And just if I could just remind you again, not to supply any personal details when speaking here today, for example, don't state your home address, your age or any medical conditions you may have. Um, as we said before, if you feel that you need to supply that information to us, please talk to the case team about how this can be done without it going on the public record. Okay, so the first five people or organizations we have are Essex and Suffolk Police, Suffolk County Council, Birstall Parish Council, Cotton Parish Council and Lawford Parish Council.

00:17:29:16 - 00:17:37:17

Um, I'm not sure if Lawford Parish Council are here, but if they are, if they can make themselves available. So if you could come to the table, please. Thank you.

00:17:44:24 - 00:18:08:21

Thank you. When we've heard from all five of you, all four of you, you'll you can return to the general seating and we'll call the next group of five forward. Um, once you return to the general seating, please feel free to leave the venue if you wish, but please do so quietly. Um, so. Okay, so first we ask Essex and Suffolk police, and you have five minutes, please. And you can start when you're ready.

00:18:08:29 - 00:18:39:02

Maam. Sir. Good afternoon. I'm Assistant chief Constable Stuart Hooper of Essex Police, and I'm making this statement as a joint representative of both Essex Police and my colleagues in Suffolk

Constabulary, who will be referring to collectively as the Joint Forces. The joint Forces are interested parties and serve as the relevant police authorities and prescribed consultees in the DCO process. The Joint Forces are responsible for protecting and serving Essex and Suffolk, and our mission is to make them safe places to work, live, travel and invest.

00:18:39:11 - 00:19:12:14

Policing is a complex activity which responds to and manages a wide variety of community safety risks that are often hidden from view. The Joint Forces have engaged with National Grid throughout all pre-application and pre examination stages and continue to actively do so, including ongoing work to agree a statement of common ground from the outset. The Joint Forces have been consistent in highlighting the policing issues associated with the scheme, and the need for corresponding appropriate mitigation. The Joint Forces are taking this project and its implications extremely seriously.

00:19:12:16 - 00:19:46:01

Whilst holding no view on its planning merits, we are concerned with ensuring all likely impacts on community safety, including those affecting the project. Workforce and existing communities are fully identified, assessed and adequately mitigated. Given the scale of the anticipated traffic and transport changes during construction in particular. Policing would act as an important form of mitigation, but sufficient resourcing capacity needs to be in place to manage this effectively. It is well known that police forces across the country operate under severe capacity constraints.

00:19:46:06 - 00:20:21:15

The joint forces are policing at capacity and do not carry the additional resources to adequately mitigate the impacts generated as a direct result of this project. If these impacts are not adequately mitigated and funded, this project will have a significant adverse impact on the safety, well-being, and security of countless individuals and businesses across our counties. Running directly contrary to their responsibilities and mission of the joint forces and and simply the joint forces will not be able to deliver the policing of this proposal as recently exhibited by Suffolk Constabulary.

00:20:21:17 - 00:20:56:23

Successful engagement through the planning process with Sizewell C, understanding all the impacts of the development is essential in order to protect limited police resources and ensure continuity services to the communities that police forces serve. The mitigations secured recital C has facilitated the delivery of the project. Whilst ensuring that no adverse impact to the service delivered to the communities impacted by the development in respect to this project, the Joint Forces are particularly concerned by the operational impact of the need to provide escorts and services to facilitate the movement of abnormal, indivisible loads.

00:20:56:25 - 00:21:37:00

Isles. Whereas the legal requirement for police escorts to accompany air movements, this will only stretch further the constrained resources of the joint forces where sustained demand is identified. A bespoke solution such as dedicated ale team would be necessary, but is subject to appropriate leading time and developer funding. The Joint Forces are similarly concerned by the potential impact of the construction and operation of the project on traffic in both Essex and Suffolk, regarding the impact on

the construction phase on instant response, as well as more broadly as regards obstructions to the highway and road traffic collisions, both of which already pose a key challenge to the joint forces.

00:21:37:15 - 00:22:19:06

Accordingly, it is expected that the examination will need dedicated time to address related mitigation and monitoring matters through a section 106 agreement and requirements as part of its draft Development Consent Order, in respect of which the joint forces anticipate and need to be significantly involved. We would similarly expect that an issue specific herein, as part of the Traffic and Transport principle issue, should be held to address issues associated with traffic and transport issues we've identified previously. There also remain concerns with the assessment and acceptability of likely impacts, and the need for adequate mitigation in respect to both community and roads policing, which we consider require examination through further issue specific hearings.

00:22:19:15 - 00:22:50:12

Matters which could usually be addressed through a hearing as part of the socioeconomic principle issue in relation to these considerations include the range of impact on the workforce, local communities, and the role of emergency services in addressing these impacts. In conclusion, the joint Forces stressed the need for appropriate mitigation, without which they would not be able to deliver the policing of this proposal. We welcome the opportunity to participate in this examination and look forward to working with all parties to secure the requisite mitigation. Thank you.

00:22:50:27 - 00:22:59:01

Thank you very much, and thank you for your timeliness as well. Thank you. Okay. Now we'll move on to Suffolk County Council, please.

00:23:00:01 - 00:23:36:03

Good afternoon. My name is Richard Rout and I am the cabinet member with responsibility for nationally significant infrastructure projects, the environment, devolution and local government reform. At Suffolk County Council, I'd like to thank you for providing this opportunity to address you in person about the Norwich Tilbury project, to which Suffolk County Council has long standing and unresolved objections. However, before I comment on the application as presented to the examination, I would like to address the issue of alternatives to this proposal on which I'm grateful you have agreed to have us an issue specific hearing.

00:23:36:28 - 00:24:12:19

Corporately, National Grid have taken an inconsistent, disorganized and uncoordinated approach to engaging with the public and other consultees regarding alternatives to the scheme. This has led to a significant breakdown in public trust and understandably persistent calls for a robust consideration of alternatives prior to it becoming a non-departmental public body. The Electricity System Operator produced a comprehensive study of alternatives to the scheme to the use of overhead line scheme to deliver the required six gigawatts connection between Norwich and Tilbury.

00:24:13:15 - 00:24:59:06

In addition, councils in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex commissioned a study which indicated that the project could be deferred by five years to 2035 and on that basis an off shore scheme using high voltage direct current would be comparable in cost. Therefore, the Council considers that the applicant

did not adequately address the issue of alternatives at the pre-application stage or provide sufficient clarity on the need case in relation to the required connection date of 2031. An inconsistent and shifting policy environment nationally contributes further to the lack of trust in our communities, and will place yet more weight on Suffolk County Council and other local authorities in relation to the wording of requirements, the discharge of requirements and the effective supervision of construction.

00:25:00:00 - 00:25:30:04

Turning to the proposal before us. Full and comprehensive details of the Council's concerns are set out elsewhere, but I will take this opportunity to highlight a selection of key issues. Working hours are a significant concern. There is a critical need to protect the wellbeing of our communities by providing respite from impacts and construction traffic on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and bank holidays. Tree loss across the scheme will inevitably be extensive and effective, and robust.

00:25:30:06 - 00:25:43:24

Planting programme is therefore central to mitigate these mitigating these impacts. Likewise, it's critical to ensure that the project meets the Secretary of State's duty in relation to protecting and enhancing the Dedham Vale national landscape.

00:25:45:10 - 00:26:17:13

Turning to the Waveney Valley, the Council is bitterly disappointed that the project has been unable to deliver the option of undergrounding through the Waveney Valley that was initially proposed as an option by the applicant. The council presented evidence to the applicant which indicated that such undergrounding outside a designated landscape was necessary and appropriate in the specific location, in accordance with NPS Ian five. The Council appreciates that on this basis, the applicant was prepared to consider this option and for their effective engagement on this issue.

00:26:17:15 - 00:26:49:21

However, given that in the view of National Grid. Technical issues prevented its delivery. The Council considers that an alternative scheme of offsetting compensation measures is now essential. The quality and robustness of the outline management plan is critical to allow this Council and others to monitor and control the activities of the applicant's contractors during construction of the project. It should be noted that the outline management plans agreed for the Bradford to Twin Pylon project at the consenting stage were not effective or robust in all cases.

00:26:49:24 - 00:27:20:22

As a result, the discharge of requirements has been complex and protracted for everyone involved. This council considers it's critical to avoid the situation occurring again on this much larger project, especially in light of recent comments made by the head of Clean Power 2030, Chris Stark, in relation to accelerating delivery of this scheme ahead of the 2031 deadline set out by the applicant. For all these reasons and others set out in detail elsewhere in our submission, Suffolk County Council continues to object to the Norwich to Tilbury proposals.

00:27:20:24 - 00:27:21:20

Thank you.

00:27:22:22 - 00:27:32:02

Thank you. Councillor out and again. Yes. Thank you for coming to the time. Um, so next speaker we have is for Birstall Parish Council, please.

00:27:32:04 - 00:27:32:19

Thank you.

00:27:32:21 - 00:28:08:06

William Peterson, Birstall parish council. If all current proposals proceed, our village will sit just 650m from what has become one of the most concentrated energy infrastructure sites in the United Kingdom. We are deeply concerned about the resilience, security and continuity risks associated with the Bramford substation. You've already received submissions from Ardley and Little Bromley parish councils, referencing Ian one and three. Today I want to add site specific evidence showing why Bramford now lies well beyond any reasonable risk tolerance.

00:28:08:26 - 00:28:38:27

The Bramford site has expanded dramatically. It now includes the existing National Grid substation. The Bramford to Tilbury. Sorry. Bramford to twin stood pylons under construction. The proposed Norwich to Tilbury reinforcement. East Anglia one and three projects. Two solar farms for approved battery and energy storage sites, and two more at pre-application stage, plus a growing queue of further projects, all dependent on this project's approval.

00:28:39:17 - 00:29:10:14

The latest, best proposal would be the largest in Europe. Taken together, these developments amount to more than 2.75GW of storage, over 1500 lithium battery containers directly surrounding and adjoining the substation. This is no longer a substation. It's an extraordinary concentration of exposed, nationally critical energy infrastructure, absent from any serious assessment of resilience and security in an increasingly unstable world.

00:29:10:16 - 00:29:49:23

Resilience must be designed in, not retrofitted. We've seen deliberate attacks on energy infrastructure in Ukraine. Suspected sabotage related power outages in Europe, and a marked increase in unexplained drone activity in the UK. And this doesn't even require hostile intent. Accidents happen. We saw that last year in Heathrow. The impacts are well known. Against this backdrop, a simple question arises what consideration is being given to security and resilient risk of routing up to 30% of the UK's electricity through a single, highly concentrated site at Bramford.

00:29:50:25 - 00:30:23:14

By any objective measure, this is a critical vulnerability. So what is the plan if Bramford is offline for weeks or months? There appears to be no meaningful assessment of a prolonged loss of site of this scale and national importance. We're concerned that the rush to meet the 2030 targets is driving strategic planning errors, favoring ease of concentration over resilience. There's also a serious process failure. While Norwich to Tilbury is treated as nationally significant.

00:30:23:18 - 00:30:45:20

The physically connected developments around it are not. As a result, battery storage and solar schemes that surround and directly adjoin Bramford are being approved by local planning routes

without comprehensive national checks and balances. Without central ownership and accountability, effective prevention and emergency response becomes impossible.

00:30:47:23 - 00:31:22:27

With beds, sites circuit encircling Bramford, continuity planning must be based on worst but plausible scenarios. A battery fire here would have national consequences, including toxic plumes potentially affecting Ipswich and contamination of the aquifer on which the substation sits. This is not scaremongering. It's basic risk management. Therefore, as a minimum, we respectfully request firstly a full cumulative resilience, continuity and security review of the Bramford site using worst case assumptions.

00:31:23:15 - 00:31:58:07

Secondly, a moratorium on further development at Branford until a review is complete and implemented. Third, a single point of ownership and accountability for the entire site at Branford, potentially through the Health and Safety Executive. And fourthly, a Planning Inspectorate site visit covering all existing, approved and proposed developments at the Branford substation. In its current form, we believe consent for this project should be refused due to the assessed unmitigated resilience, continuity and security risks.

00:31:58:19 - 00:32:23:11

These risks are directly related to the extreme concentration of infrastructure arising because of grid capacity being increased by this project. This is not an argument against renewable energy. It's an argument for doing it safely, securely and intelligently. If Bramford fails, the consequences will not be local. They'll be national. Thank you.

00:32:25:04 - 00:32:26:21

Thank you very much, Mr. Petersen.

00:32:28:18 - 00:32:33:12

And next, we have a Cotton Parish Council, please. Thank you.

00:32:34:20 - 00:32:36:15

Good afternoon, inspectors.

00:32:36:17 - 00:33:11:27

I'm Councillor Sarah Weinbaum CBE, representing Cotton Parish Council in Mid Suffolk. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. To date we certainly don't feel as if we've been properly consulted given considered alternatives. Nor have we been taken seriously by the national grid. What a pity the grid did not adopt as a mission statement the words of hypocrisies. First, do no harm. This project causes great harm on so many levels and is a big mistake.

00:33:12:15 - 00:33:50:10

How paradoxical that a scheme designed to deliver very welcome green renewable energy should do so with last century solutions which are highly intrusive and environmentally damaging, not least in the construction phase. Other countries in Europe and Scandinavia have shown a much more enlightened approach. So deeply felt is our opposition to the grids pylon plans that several residents of

cotton will address you tomorrow. Their concerns will focus on heritage assets, agriculture, health and welfare, the natural environment and wildlife.

00:33:50:13 - 00:34:31:11

There are many species of conservation concern or in decline which are undisturbed in common. Of course, we all strongly prefer an offshore or HVDC undergrounding solution. Why? Well, one key reason is because the route through cotton and some adjacent affected parishes is situated on high plateau on clay land, mostly given to agriculture. The ability to mitigate the visual impact of 15 50 metre high pylons through the parish is absolutely minimal, as the grid admitted at the very first consultation event I attended.

00:34:31:24 - 00:35:04:19

Just imagine 15 of these giants striding across the fields with wide open, open views, hedgerows, much varied wildlife, popular footpaths and productive fields. Mid Suffolk District Council point to the under recognition of landscape quality and significant adverse landscape and visual impacts from this scheme and site current mitigation and compensation measures as inadequate. The nature and character of our small village will be changed forever.

00:35:05:18 - 00:35:40:24

In Now written submission. We spoke of cumulative impact. I'll expand. The grid has followed the shortest, straightest route wherever it can, regardless of the cumulative impact on certain communities, individuals and livelihoods. Three family farms in cotton have their viability threatened in the short and possibly long term, as 12 pylons are to be sited on their land and um, and built by putting high proportions of that land out of use for indeterminate periods.

00:35:40:26 - 00:36:32:16

We believe that diversions of the route to minimize the harm have not been seriously considered. Given government policies to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, the district council argues that agricultural impacts must be safeguarded and potential for land sterilization mitigated. We agree in the time remaining to me, I want to highlight the construction phase and the plan to build the pylons via miles of haul roads. This is an especially difficult area for non engineers, but logic tells you that thousands and thousands of tons of stone and aggregate will have to be shipped into East Anglia from distant quarries to build these haul roads, and in their subsequent removal, the add in their subsequent removal and the carbon footprint will be huge.

00:36:32:18 - 00:37:04:27

In our village, most roads were not built for heavy lorry traffic at all and are currently disintegrating and we share the police concerns re safety. What more environmentally friendly alternatives might exist, such as temporary matting or trackway systems, or specialised ground stabilisation, which may do less harm to the soil. We hope you will not accept all roads as a fait accompli, will ensure the grid is challenged on this, and that environmental considerations will be properly weighed against costs.

00:37:05:15 - 00:37:26:10

I hope I've persuaded you of the validity of some of our concerns. We are energy consumers. We want the best for all energy consumers measured, measured over the lifetime of this ship. But please, let's

not go down the route of knowing the cost of everything and the value of nothing. Thank you for listening.

00:37:27:11 - 00:37:28:21

Thank you. Councilmember.

00:37:30:24 - 00:37:35:09

I just double check that we don't have Lawford Parish Council in the room.

00:37:37:27 - 00:37:45:16

Not seeing anyone. So. Okay. Well, thank you all very much for your contributions. Um, as I said before, you're welcome to sit down. You're welcome to also leave the venue.

00:37:49:07 - 00:38:05:27

And if we could have the next five speakers, please, um, if they're in the room or online. So we have Deborah Blackman, Gareth Presley, Peter Finney, Georgina Langton and online. Simon Anstis. Yeah.

00:38:21:13 - 00:38:48:09

Okay, so we just have the two speakers here at the moment. Um, I was warned that that might have happened by the case team. So. Thank you. Um, so if we could start with, I believe, uh, Deborah Blackman. Nope. Sorry. Gareth presley. Peter finney. Peter finney. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Finney. Um, if you like to start when you're ready, you have three minutes.

00:38:51:07 - 00:38:51:25

Um,

00:38:53:11 - 00:39:20:22

I'd like to take us right back to the beginning. Right. Um, I'm a professional engineer. And in the last six years, I've developed a net zero level of trust in all of our institutions and anything to do with this project, particularly from the moment Johnson announced his so-called green agenda back, back in the early 2020. For me, alarm bells started a ring.

00:39:22:28 - 00:39:56:14

My own lifetime work experience extends to multi-million pound projects, so I'm more than aware of timelines associated with projects of this scale given the time I'm in. Together with statements made by Johnson. What is abundantly clear to me is that this project was signed off illegally by the Johnson government during the lockdown periods of 2020, when both the public and parliament were completely shut down, thereby effectively cancelling any opportunity for public or parliamentary debate or indeed scrutiny

00:39:58:03 - 00:40:32:15

Given the total lack of due process. This project therefore, in my opinion, is one of the largest cases of fraud against the public purse I've experienced in my lifetime. It is based upon a platform of lies, deceit, fake science, unprincipled ideologies and massive lobbying of government by NGOs to release unprecedented levels of public finance subsidies, without which the project would never have left the drawing board, and all to satisfy a so-called Green Johnson agenda that was never mandated.

00:40:33:16 - 00:40:59:29

It seems to me also that the progress of this project is evidenced by not only land and property purchases, but also the amount of development work that's already been completed from the Norfolk coast to Sawston, which itself is illegal from the very beginning, started well before any public consultations were commenced and simply Waived or forced through by planning departments.

00:41:01:28 - 00:41:07:00

And of course, what we're witnessing today is a bit of a farce. It's a bit theatre in that

00:41:08:29 - 00:41:46:19

reading through the mountainous document sent out preceding to today's event, I'd like to select a few paragraphs to highlight this point. Extracts taken from rule six letter. The examination authority will or will not consider the following one. Any adverse impact of the proposed development would not outweigh the benefits. What earth does that mean? Who's the judge of the impact benefit analysis and where is it? Two Secretary of state is entitled to completely disregard any representations that relate to the merit of the designated scheme.

00:41:46:21 - 00:41:57:05

Well, it's done and dusted then, isn't it? Three no one is able to challenge policy or its validity, so the fraud simply marches on.

00:41:58:00 - 00:42:02:15

Oh, Mr. Feeny, I'm gonna have to ask you to draw to a close now, please. Your three minutes is up.

00:42:02:17 - 00:42:17:17

Yeah. My last point is that it's about trust. And I would like to challenge the committee as to who appointed you and whether you have any conflicts of interest. Because if you have, you shouldn't be here.

00:42:19:01 - 00:42:44:01

Okay. Thank you very much for your comments. Um, just to, um, just to pick up on your last point then, is I hope you heard Mrs. Hunter at the start said that we have all, uh, published our, um, conflict of interest forms, and they're available to you. Okay. Thank you. Thank you. If there's anything else you wish to say, you're welcome to put them in writing by deadline one as well. Sorry. If you have anything else to say, you're welcome to put it in writing by deadline one. Thank you.

00:42:46:20 - 00:42:56:19

Um, if now we have Georgina Langton, please. Good afternoon. You have three minutes. Could you turn your microphone on, please? Perfect. Thank you.

00:42:57:09 - 00:43:28:00

Good afternoon. My name is Georgina. I'm an owner of a farm in Wenham, where we will have seven pylons and the undergrounding undergrounding site on our productive land. Four years ago, this project was conceived. And today we meet on a battlefield of planning policy to test whether a project

so dedicated to the disruption of our region can be allowed to stand. I sit here today speaking for the farmers, the landowners and the business owners who form the backbone of this local economy.

00:43:28:06 - 00:44:01:24

But above all, I speak for the next generation, for my daughter, and for the future. She will have to navigate if this plan goes ahead. We are told we have been consulted, but looking at the evidence, I see a broken promise. The law requires, under the governing principles, that consultation happens when proposals are still formative. Yet the legal opinion of Charles Banner makes it clear that the statutory consultation has remained infected by the flaws of the past. He's confirmed that this entire process has not been a has not been a consultation, but a bat checking exercise.

00:44:02:09 - 00:44:42:03

The decision to use onshore pylons has been made in the dark before we were ever even asked. They force fed us a predetermined outcome and asked us to spot the spelling mistakes. A project built on a foundation of procedural unfairness cannot stand. They tell us this is for net zero and the environment, but look at their environmental statement. National grid's own data admits that this project will cause a major adverse effect on the best and most versatile agricultural land. They're going to strip over 3500 hectares of agricultural land from production during construction, and they're cementing over the very soil required to feed this nation.

00:44:42:21 - 00:45:13:28

This project isn't green, it is grey. It is built on thousands of tons of new materials driven by Driven by the fuel of thousands of HGV movements and reliant on steel imported from across the globe. You cannot claim to save the environment by industrialising the countryside with high carbon infrastructure. When an integrated offshore grid, a solution they discounted to save money, is sitting right there. And now I speak of my farm. This isn't just a purple line on a map.

00:45:14:00 - 00:45:52:18

It's a living, breathing business that you're proposing to dismantle. The seven pylons, the undergrounding site and the haulage roads are going to take approximately 200 acres, which is nearly a third of our productive land out of production, either permanently or during the construction phase. It is going to cut our farm in half and make any operations convoluted or completely impossible. The disruption they plan is so severe that in fact, threatens to make our third generation farm a completely non-viable business. When you sever our fields and strip our topsoil, you don't just take our land, you take our ability to function and live National Grid talks of compensation and voluntary agreements.

00:45:52:20 - 00:46:20:03

But compensation is a promise for tomorrow and we need to survive today. In the words of Martin Luther King, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. And to approve this application is to validate a flawed process. It is to accept a major adverse effect on our food security as collateral damage. It is to say that our children's future is less important than National Grid's balance sheet. I ask the examining authority to be the shield that protects us from this injustice and refuse this application. Thank you.

00:46:20:23 - 00:46:47:27

Thank you very much, Miss Langton. Okay. Our next speaker is, uh, online, uh, Simon Amstutz. Um, and I if you I believe, Mr. Amstutz, you're representing a Dedham Vale National landscape Partnership. So, um, I can't confirm that you will have five minutes instead of the three minutes it was on the agenda. So, uh, when you're ready, if you'd like to comment. Simon Amstutz, Um.

00:46:48:06 - 00:47:09:04

National Landscape Manager at the Dedham Vale National Landscape and representing the National Landscape Partnership. Thanks for your comments about being given five minutes from the agenda. I was given three minutes. I've only prepared to speak for three minutes. But I will do do what I what I can.

00:47:10:20 - 00:47:56:11

Um, I think, um, what I just wanted to say is that I represent the National Landscape Partnership, and when I use the term national landscape, um, I'm referring to the legally designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. But the branding has come in as national landscape in the last couple of couple of years. Um, but the, um, when we consider these proposals and I should also say that representing the National Landscape Partnership, I'll only be commenting on behalf of the partnership, where the impacts on the national landscape and have great sympathy for communities across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

00:47:56:26 - 00:48:44:06

But our comments are purely related to the impacts on the national landscape. Um, and I would say, um, you know, draw your attention to the Holford rules, where policy dictates that, uh, national landscapes, national parks should be avoided as they are of the highest amenity, um, value to, to society. But recognising that the proposals are going underground through the national landscape, although it should be very obvious to anyone that undergrounding is not a silver bullet and there will be significant impacts during construction and impacts, uh, during the operational phase as well.

00:48:45:09 - 00:49:16:18

I just wanted to say about 3 or 4 things that I'd like you to consider as an examining authority. One being the enhanced duty on, um, uh, relevant authorities. So statutory undertakers, local authorities, and I believe also the Planning Inspectorate, uh, where when they take decisions relating to, uh, national landscapes, they should seek to further the purpose of that national landscape.

00:49:16:20 - 00:49:47:08

So to conserve and enhance, um, natural beauty. Um, on that matter, the National Landscape Partnership is in discussion with the applicant about how the, um, the applicant can meet its, uh, responsibilities under the, uh, section 85 of Countryside and Rights of Way Act duty. Um, and those discussions are ongoing. I've got also a question for the applicant.

00:49:47:10 - 00:50:18:09

Around the statutory management plan for the national landscape, the Dedham Vale. Um, as you'll be as there, be aware that it is a statutory document that is required for protected landscapes at national parks and national landscapes. And the, um, we are um, we've just had a changeover of plan from the 2020, excuse me, 2021 to 26 plan to the 2631 plan.

00:50:18:11 - 00:50:49:21

So I think there needs to be some discussion there about which plan should take precedence in consideration in determining the application. Um, and I think the last thing that I would, um, um, like to be considered is the impact on the natural beauty. So that's the reason for designation of the national landscape and how those natural beauty characteristics will be impacted.

00:50:49:27 - 00:50:52:26

That is the landscape quality. Scenic quality relatively.

00:50:52:28 - 00:50:54:14

Well. One minute left, Mr. Amstutz.

00:50:54:16 - 00:51:17:05

Thank you. Relative tranquility, natural heritage features and cultural heritage. So I think the partnership would like to see how those how the impacts of the project, where it's within the national landscape are impacted. Thank you very much. And thank you for the, uh, the additional time for, um, for representing a partnership. Thank you.

00:51:17:15 - 00:51:21:03

Thank you, Mr. Amstutz, and apologies for the confusion before I hand over to time.

00:51:22:19 - 00:51:35:18

Okay. Thank you. If we could have our next group of speakers, please. And that's, uh, Caroline Blacker, Robert Willis, Christopher Vermont, Daniel Shepard and Joanne Elliott.

00:51:50:15 - 00:51:58:26

Okay. Thank you very much. Um, if we could start, please, with Caroline Blacker. Um, you have three minutes. Thank you.

00:51:59:03 - 00:52:30:02

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My points refer mainly to the Waveney Valley section of the proposed pylons route A designated A valued landscape. The Waveney Valley sustains Wortham Link, a Site of Special Scientific Interest SSI, lying parallel to the proposed 50 metre high pylons path. The pylons will obscure views of Roydon Church, Roydon Venn Fen, a local nature reserve, and the Angles Way, a national footpath.

00:52:30:28 - 00:53:10:23

National grid originally agreed two kilometres of undergrounding through the Waveney Valley. That decision was withdrawn in favor of 70 years of old technology. Lattice pylons. National grid's reason was ecological damage. An inconsistent and inadequate opinion, since in the dead of the veil, as we have just heard, are an AoNB. Cables are going underground. However, two kilometres is not enough. National grid conceded that undergrounding should be extended to protect houses nearby and Wortham Ling from any impact of their ceiling and compounds.

00:53:11:24 - 00:53:46:01

There are many benefits to HVDC undergrounding as opposed to AC cables. They reduce transmission losses with better power flow stability and control lower electrical electromagnetic fields, spatial and visual impact. They offer more flexibility and network design are more cost effectiveness over long distances. Pylons and bird strikes go together. Redgrave and Lapping Fen is the largest fen valley fen in England, and one of the most important wetlands in Europe.

00:53:46:17 - 00:54:27:06

Collision with power lines and electrocution from power line infrastructure kill over 100 species of wild birds in the UK. Some of our best loved. Barn swallow. Common swift. Barn owl. Cuckoo geese and swans. Birds en route to the fen via a Waveney valley with pylons are unsuspecting victims. The pylon route also includes part of the proposed Unesco World Heritage East Coast Flyway. Future generations would forgive neither the permanent destruction of habitats critical to migration, nor the risk of mortality to migrating birds along the flyway.

00:54:28:10 - 00:54:58:24

National grid must protect the precious landscape of the Waveney Valley, its wildlife, its architecture and famous history from the blight of pylons. The views of communities to which this government pays lip service should prevail. The crude calculations of National Grid do not quantify, cannot quantify the cost to us of the desecration of ancient landscapes and their wildlife. Thank you.

00:54:59:24 - 00:55:01:17

Thank you very much, Miss Blackadder.

00:55:05:23 - 00:55:09:07

If we could have our next speaker, please. And that's Robert Willis.

00:55:10:02 - 00:55:15:20

Thank you. We're within the underground cabling section of the route. I'm here today because we have.

00:55:15:22 - 00:55:49:00

Serious concerns about the construction impacts in our section of the route. You may not be able to see too well, but the orange area is a construction zone. There's a white blob in the middle. That's where our cells and our neighbors live. The project is trying to squeeze 100 meter wide construction swathe into a 60 meter wide gap, resulting in major construction all round our home. Ourselves and our neighbors will be enveloped by the draft order limits on all sides. We were an island in a construction zone. We're not near the construction zone. We are in it, and our experience of those impacts will be acute.

00:55:49:02 - 00:56:23:18

We are really worried that for a number of years our lives could be unbearable. Having looked at the route, we think there are very few, if any, properties in a situation such as ours. We're concerned that very serious impacts could be completely missed because of the scale of the project. We think it needs to be considered now as part of the examination, rather than as a post consent matter, because it's not clear how the scheme can be delivered on this alignment and not have an unacceptable impact on us.

As we set out in our written submissions. The major excavation works create a very real risk to the structure of our grade two listed home.

00:56:23:25 - 00:57:00:24

Significant. There will be significant cumulative amenity impacts, noise and vibration disturbance, transport impacts, air quality, which presents serious, potentially serious impacts on our physical and our mental health. The DCO documents refer to using our fence line. It's unclear why it's needed, and that's something we've also questioned. We're concerned that the impact of the project on us have been underestimated throughout. Very recently, the updated environmental statement identifies moderate adverse impacts on the setting during construction, but it still doesn't address the impacts I have just mentioned, which seems to have been completely overlooked.

00:57:01:12 - 00:57:33:16

The impacts are also looked at in silos and not cumulatively, which is essential given that we are in the construction zone. There have been no information on how impacts could be mitigated, as I've in general reference to best practice measures. We've asked National Grid for a discussion about impacts and how they could be mitigated on a number of occasions, and no response has been received with therefore, like the examination, to do the following review our written comments and those of our neighbours. Look at the impacts of the project for ourselves and for our neighbors, including cumulative impacts.

00:57:33:29 - 00:58:07:27

Look at the potential to tweak the alignment to reduce impacts. Look at the range of mitigation measures that will be needed. Whether the impacts are capable of being adequately mitigated, and the process of assuring for ensuring that mitigations happen. Carefully look at the order limits and review whether there really is a need to take our fence line. And if not already, please do come and look at our area as part of the examination process. We don't want to be difficult, we just want to make sure the project doesn't damage our home or destroy our quality of life for a number of years.

00:58:07:29 - 00:58:08:21

Thank you.

00:58:10:11 - 00:58:20:06

Thank you very much. Mister Willis. Um, Mister Willis, you did obviously show the plan to briefly at start, if you'd like to submit that in evidence for for deadline one. That'd be useful. Thank you.

00:58:20:19 - 00:58:24:19

I'll see to bid that in writing, shall I? On by email. Yes. Thank you.

00:58:26:13 - 00:58:32:23

Okay. Our next speaker, please, is, uh, Christopher Vermont. Uh, you have three minutes. Thank you. Thank you.

00:58:32:25 - 00:58:33:14

I have.

00:58:33:16 - 00:58:34:01
40.

00:58:34:03 - 00:58:34:18
Years.

00:58:34:20 - 00:58:36:13
Experience of financing infrastructure projects.

00:58:36:15 - 00:58:37:00
Around.

00:58:37:02 - 00:58:38:03
The world, including high.

00:58:38:05 - 00:58:39:12
Voltage transmission.

00:58:39:14 - 00:58:40:12
Networks.

00:58:40:26 - 00:58:41:20
This has mostly.

00:58:41:22 - 00:59:17:29
Been in developing countries of Africa and Asia. National grids, so-called consultation falls well short of the standard to be found in most emerging markets, let alone developed countries. Since 2003, project seeking commercial finance in the emerging markets have needed to adhere to the Equator Principles, a voluntary code adopted by the world's major banks. These principles include selecting options which minimise harm to indigenous people and compensating those unavoidably affected.

00:59:18:18 - 00:59:51:09
Neither of these principles have been followed by National Grid for the indigenous people of East Anglia. National grid has refused to consider similarly costed alternatives to AC pylons. NASA's East Anglia Network study, published in March 2024, shows underground HVDC has similar whole life costs to AC pylons and is actually £600 million cheaper if delivery is delayed beyond 2030.

00:59:51:11 - 01:00:22:12
You can see on page 48 the table. Despite numerous numerous calls on National Grid to consider this option, it has failed to do so. Nor has it publicly challenged NASA's evaluation. Instead, it has made cynical and misleading claims in what it calls its community newsletter that undergrounding is many times more expensive. This is only correct if just front end costs are considered. The claim is wrong.

01:00:22:18 - 01:00:53:02
If NASA's whole life cost methodology is followed. Furthermore, if non-monetary externalities such as harms to nature, heritage, the local economy and social amenity as would be required under the

Equator Principles if they were taken into account. Undergrounding HVDC becomes even more compelling. I have lived in a listed farmhouse with a celebrated garden, featuring in both house and garden and the English Garden magazine in the last two years.

01:00:53:06 - 01:01:34:21

Charities and community groups use the garden as a local resource and to raise money. We are sited just over a hundred yards from the proposed East Anglia Node substation, which will largely destroy the community and unity of the garden. National grid has refused to include our property in its heritage survey. National grid initially recognised that we had a case for non-statutory financial compensation for the documented £400,000 loss in the resale value of the property, but last year, so they would not discuss compensation until the Planning Inspectorate had agreed to consider their application following the DCO being accepted for consideration in September.

01:01:34:23 - 01:01:49:07

National grid turned around and said they had no interest in a discussion discussion after all. I don't have time to list the dozen or more examples of National Grid's failure to consult or reply to my land agent's emails. This is compounded by the.

01:01:49:09 - 01:01:51:27

Incompetency to draw it to a close. Please. Thank you.

01:01:51:29 - 01:02:15:03

This is compounded by their incompetence to plan ahead to evacuate power from the North Sea, leading to the growing mountain of constraint payments paid to wind farms. The green transition is too important to be handled by such amateurs. Let's accelerate a solution which has broad societal agreement. And for those unlucky enough who are significantly affected. Please make sure that appropriate compensation is paid.

01:02:16:09 - 01:02:25:03

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. Our next speaker is listed as Daniel Shepherd. But I don't believe Mr. Shepherd is with us. Can I just double check, please?

01:02:27:13 - 01:02:33:27

No, he's not okay, so we'll move to the next speaker, please. Joanne. Elliott. Thank you. You have three minutes. Thank you.

01:02:34:27 - 01:02:35:21

National grid.

01:02:35:23 - 01:02:36:08

Have.

01:02:36:10 - 01:02:36:27

Been disingenuous.

01:02:36:29 - 01:02:37:14

From.

01:02:37:16 - 01:03:11:19

The start. The initial title of East Anglia Green communicated through a community newsletter with pictures of people skipping through the trees without a pylon in sight, was soon dropped when it dawned that 180km of steel and concrete and millions of felled trees and hedgerows was anything but green. The consultation process has felt like nothing but a sham. We've been through three consultations, submitted copious feedback, met with energy agents and expressed our concerns. Not one of our questions has been answered, not questions about aesthetics and views, although these are heartbreaking.

01:03:11:21 - 01:03:47:24

A beautiful valley on the edge of the national landscape, to be filled with steel and concrete, which will be seen for miles, passing close to numerous listed buildings. Ancient woodland impacting a wildlife corridor and intersecting a wildfowl flight path. Functional questions about the impact of tonnes of concrete under the pylons and service roads on a slope just above a stream. Increased water levels will cause the stream to fall over our driveway to our home more frequently and deeply, preventing access. Run off from the fields onto the highway races down a steep hill already causing erosion in heavy rain.

01:03:47:26 - 01:04:21:28

An increase will increase that damage and cause dangerous road conditions. The buzzing and wind noise for the homes so close to the power lines. Given the unique topography of the valley and our experience of noise channeling through it, the impact on huge variety of bird and wildlife on our land. Batten owl nesting sites. Badger sets the flight path of the wild fowl on the pond. All right next to the pylon line. Ecologists have visited and told us it is a rich habitat and further assessments will be needed, but there have been no subsequent surveys.

01:04:22:06 - 01:04:52:23

Why? The National Grid proposed fell some of our trees to bury an existing wire only meters from open farmland. Only last week, the House of Lords was told that we are the most severely nature depleted nation globally. This is a clear example of why so many unanswered questions. So how can this be properly costed? National grid's problem or ours? We have felt an arrogance that this is a done deal. In fact, some people have been told as much.

01:04:52:25 - 01:05:22:29

No alternatives presented, not consultations, presentations, ticking boxes. When Niso published their findings of the East Anglia study in 24 that an underground HVDC line could be delivered at a similar cost, although it would take longer, we thought sense would prevail a much lower long term impact on the landscape, wildlife and communities, a result also more secure against adverse weather and sabotage, but no national grid.

01:05:23:01 - 01:05:41:19

Plough on with their proposal. Regardless, we were told the HVDC would take longer due to the wait time for cable. Yet we see newspaper headlines of cable manufacturers laying off staff because

projects have been cancelled. We cannot understand why this much hated project is being pursued at all costs.

01:05:41:25 - 01:05:43:21

I must ask you to close, please. Now.

01:05:43:23 - 01:05:53:00

Most likely it will be late. Costs will balloon and all the destruction will have been for nothing. Another national infrastructure disaster in the making.

01:05:54:13 - 01:06:14:01

Thank you very much for your contributions. The time is now 5:05. And as on the agenda, we'll have a short break. Um, for those watching on live stream, you'll just need to refresh your browser page to view the hearing when we reconvene. Um, so we'll adjourn now and reconvene at 1725, 5:25. Thank you.