



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Norwich to Tilbury
Hearing:	Open Floor Hearing 2 (OFH2) – Part 1
Date:	12 February 2026

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

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

00:00:05:00 - 00:00:40:20

Good morning, everybody, and welcome. Can I just confirm that everybody can hear me clearly. Thank you. Uh, can I also confirm with the case team that the live streaming and recording of this event has commenced? Thank you. So it's now 10:00, and this open floor hearing in relation to the Norwich to Tilbury project is now open. Uh, can I just say thank you all for attending this hearing with. And, um, whether you're in, uh, in Essex or online. My name is Matthew Sims, and I'm a chartered civil engineer and a member of the examining authority appointed to examine this application.

00:00:40:24 - 00:00:47:24

I'm now going to ask my fellow panel members, who have also been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine this project, to introduce themselves.

00:00:49:03 - 00:00:59:10

Good morning. My name is Susan Hunt. I'm a planning inspector and a chartered town planner. I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be the lead member of the panel for this application. Thank you.

00:01:00:06 - 00:01:04:26

Good morning. My name is Kenneth Stone, and I'm a planning inspector and charter town planner.

00:01:06:06 - 00:01:36:10

Together, we constitute the examining Authority or the WSA. For this examination, I can confirm that all members of the examining authority have made a formal declaration of interests, and that there are no known conflicts of interest with regard to us examining this application. There are other colleagues from the Planning Inspectorate who has joined us today, both here in Ossett and online. Our case managers are Sian Evans and Lily Robins, who are supported by case officers Harrison Coles, Georgina Hannigan and Jessica Dunlop.

00:01:36:16 - 00:02:15:09

It's the case team who should be contacted regarding the application process and in general, and today's arrangements included any online connection issues. We do have other colleagues from the Planning Inspectorate observing. We also have a Rhianna Pankhurst who is in the room and she's observing for training purposes only. In addition, there are technicians from CBS international in the room who are attending solely for the purpose of managing the recording and live streaming of the event. Today's hearing is being undertaken as a blended event, meaning some of you are present with us in the hearing venue and some are joining us virtually using Microsoft Teams.

00:02:16:03 - 00:02:29:06

We'll make sure that, however you have decided to join us today, you will be given a fair opportunity to participate. You should also be aware that the meeting is being recorded. I'll now ask Mrs. Hunt to explain some of the preliminary matters.

00:02:29:26 - 00:02:30:18

Thank you.

00:02:33:19 - 00:03:02:00

So just a few housekeeping and preliminary matters for those attending, both in person and online. So emergency exits in the event of emergency. Let's just go back through reception from where you came in. And the meeting point is in the car park. There are no tests or drills planned today. Can everyone please set their devices to silence and online participants should make sure cameras are switched off and microphones are muted unless they've been asked to speak.

00:03:03:17 - 00:03:12:07

And if at any point during the hearing you can't hear us for whatever reason, please just raise your hand either on Microsoft Teams or in person.

00:03:15:18 - 00:03:33:20

We expect to take a break around halfway through the hearing for around 15 20 minutes. Um, if any other breaks are required before this, particularly in the room, please let the case team know so you don't disturb proceedings or if you need any extra supports that come in coming up to the table.

00:03:35:08 - 00:03:40:00

We expect today's hearing to close by lunchtime today, which is the morning session.

00:03:41:27 - 00:04:12:12

This event is being live streamed and recorded, and you should be aware that we do retain and publish the digital recordings. And for a period of time after Secretary of State's decision and the General Data protection regulations apply. So it's important that you understand that it will be recorded and that you consent to that recording. We are aware of some people that do not wish to be filmed, and the audiovisual team are aware of this.

00:04:12:18 - 00:04:17:27

So they'll be seated in a place that's not covered by the cameras, and we'll just hear their voices only.

00:04:20:17 - 00:04:52:17

We only ever ask for information to be placed on the public record. That is important and relevant to the planning decision. So to avoid the need to edit the recordings, you do need to avoid saying anything that you would normally wish to keep private or confidential, such as addresses, medical information and financial circumstances, that sort of thing, because otherwise it would have to be redacted out of the recordings. If you feel that is important to your case, please discuss this with the case.

00:04:52:19 - 00:04:57:22

Thinks it could be put in writing and then be redacted in that way instead.

00:05:00:16 - 00:05:35:04

For those attending virtually online, can I repeat the request made in the arrangements conference that your phone is switched off, turned to silence, and you stay muted with your camera off unless you are speaking? And if you do wish to speak, or if you've got an issue of some sort, please raise the hand function on teams. There should be no display of plans, photographs or other visual materials. If you

do have any that you feel would support your case, they can be submitted with your notes at deadline one.

00:05:36:25 - 00:06:13:00

And just say a little bit about conduct during an open floor hearing. And we understand that people have strong feelings about the proposed developments, but we do have a quite a formal process to follow. We ask for good manners and respect to be shown to each other during the hearing, and everyone should have their opportunity to speak if they wish. So don't talk over anyone while they're speaking. No, no clapping or booing or anything like that. Um, because we need to be able to hear what people are saying and for the, for the recording to, to be able to pick up people's voices.

00:06:13:02 - 00:06:18:19

And we don't want anyone speaking time to be impacted because we've got quite, quite strict timings today.

00:06:22:03 - 00:06:50:25

And also on the other hand, we understand people feel nervous speaking in public. Um, coming up to the front and speaking in the microphone, that's fine as well. We understand if you stumble over your words and will allow you to repeat if you need to, that's not a problem. And also, I like to highlight that any vexatious or frivolous comments that are made, they may need to be redacted from a recording. Or we may ask you to stop speaking. So trying to avoid such comments.

00:06:53:04 - 00:07:08:15

So I think that's everything. Are there any comments or questions regarding any of those matters I've just run through, or the technology in the room or online? Nope.

00:07:10:03 - 00:07:40:23

So just to let you know, this is the second of three open floor hearings we're holding this week. We've already held one, um, open floor hearing, one we held in Ipswich on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, and open floor hearing three is also taking place today. That starts at 11:00 in Norwich. There are two other members of the panel. There are only three of us here today. Um, Mr. Butler and Mr. Hockley. They're in Norwich.

00:07:40:28 - 00:07:56:23

They're attending open floor hearing three, and they will watch this open floor hearing session afterwards on, on the, um, recording. And likewise we will watch the recordings from Norwich, so we will. We will still see and hear everybody's views.

00:07:58:22 - 00:08:30:09

The agenda and that's broadly the same for each hearing session. And it's, it's, it's as published. There is some slight change to the, the speakers and the names and order of speakers are as they are in the agenda. But if there is any additions, they've been added on to the end and will come to those. The agenda is in the examination library and that's on our project page of National Infrastructure website. That's EV 2003.

00:08:33:28 - 00:08:37:20

I think that's all those matters. We'll pass back over to Mr. Sims.

00:08:37:22 - 00:08:38:11

Thank you.

00:08:38:27 - 00:09:10:18

Thank you very much. So, um, just a quick point on the purpose of this open floor hearing. 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 form a view about what we want to discuss in more detail at later issues, specific hearings, and also in our written questions. So we are familiar with your representations.

00:09:10:20 - 00:09:43:15

So when speaking you don't need to repeat these at length. What we're really seeking is for you to provide further detail or evidence to help us understand the issues, to make best use of time, and whilst not wishing to limit contributions. It would be of great assistance if points were not repeated. You can rest assured that we will have understood the points the first time that they are made. We are aware that the applicant is attending. Today we will ask the applicant to respond to what they've heard during the open floor hearing sessions in writing. It's not the purpose of these hearings to enable the applicant to make their case.

00:09:45:01 - 00:10:01:25

Just as a point, those of you who were not at the preliminary meeting would just like to add here that the examining authority ultimately make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and net zero, and it's them that will make the decision on the application.

00:10:03:28 - 00:10:34:01

So, as Mrs. Hunt said, we anticipate this open floor hearing will be completed this morning and we will take a short refreshment break at a suitable point during the morning. It's our intention to hear from interested parties who are pre-registered to speak and who are listed on the agenda for this hearing. After that, if time permits, we may choose to hear from other interested parties who have not pre-registered but who wish to speak, and finally from any other persons or non interested parties who wish to speak. However, this will be at the discretion of the examiner authority.

00:10:34:19 - 00:11:06:19

There is an opportunity to request a further open floor hearing later in the examination, and this should be put in writing by deadline one on the 16th of February 26th of February. I correct myself across all of the open floor hearings this week, we have set a maximum of five minutes for those representing groups, which include membership organizations, clubs and societies, and three minutes for individuals. When you are speaking, please take account of the timing remaining which is shown on the monitor. For those attending virtually, you will let.

00:11:06:21 - 00:11:40:14

I will let you know verbally when you have one minute left. So just to confirm, for those of you in the room, when you come up to the table, you'll see the countdown monitor in front of you. You might not be able to see it from where you are at the moment. Uh, please try to finish in your allotted time, as we want to ensure everybody has the opportunity to be heard today to ensure we can hear from as many people as possible. We won't ask any questions of you once you've spoken, but please be assured that if we do have any questions for you, we will send them to you in writing following this event. So the order in which we'll invite you to speak will follow the publisher's agenda.

00:11:40:16 - 00:12:12:29

We will ask people to come forward to the front table in five at a time. If you've informed us that you do not want to be filmed. You do not come forward to the table. And instead, we will bring a roving microphone to you to speak from where you are currently seated. Although some of the speakers in each group of 5th May be attending virtually or not coming to the table, we will still ask each of you in turn to speak based on the time allocated to you, as shown in the agenda. When we've heard from everyone in the group, you're welcome to return to the general seating area and we'll call the next group forward.

00:12:14:05 - 00:12:45:28

A small number of people have advised us that they will now not be attending the session. We will still bring people forward in the groups shown on the public's agenda, but in some instances, there may now not be a full five people in each group. Once you've returned to the general seating, please feel free to depart the venue if you wish, but please do so quietly for the purposes of the recording and to respect those still speaking. It would assist us if written summaries of anything that you have said are submitted at deadline one on Thursday, the 26th of February.

00:12:46:04 - 00:13:12:23

These can include any additional points or further detail you may wish to make, but were unable to do so because of time constraints today. Please be reassured that when coming to our conclusions, we do give equal weight to both oral and written submissions. There is no disadvantage to not having presented something orally here today. So before we move on, does anybody have any questions on the speaking process, either in the room or online?

00:13:16:16 - 00:13:25:19

Okay. Thank you very much. We will now move on to the substantive point of the, um, morning and a to item four, and I'll pass over to Mr. Stone.

00:13:26:13 - 00:13:27:09

Thank you.

00:13:28:24 - 00:13:58:10

Uh, I'm not going to invite those listed in the agenda. EV 2003 to speak. Uh, when I read out your names, if you are in the room, please come to the table at the front. Unless you have informed us that you do not want to be filmed. And if online, please turn your camera on. When it is your turn to speak. Please turn on the microphone. This is the button on the front of the microphone stand for those in the room, and it will turn red when it's live.

00:14:00:13 - 00:14:13:12

Start by introducing yourself and if relevant, who you are representing. A timer is displayed in the room and you should be able to see it on the floor in front of you. Whenever you come to the front.

00:14:15:18 - 00:14:22:11

For those online, we will give you a one minute warning, uh, during your speech.

00:14:25:28 - 00:14:45:11

And I just remind you again not to supply any personal details when speaking here today. For example, do not state your home address, age or any medical conditions. If you feel that you need to supply this information, as we've said, please talk to the case team about how this can be done without going on the public record.

00:14:47:12 - 00:15:17:14

So if I start with the first group and a slight change to the published agenda, Essex County Council and Thurrock Council are no longer proposing to speak. So in our first grouping we will have three people. These are Chelmsford City Council, Tendring District Council and Ardleigh Parish Council. Please can you come to the table to the front or if you're online. Turn your camera on.

00:15:42:15 - 00:15:43:00

Sorry.

00:15:46:10 - 00:15:56:00

Okay. Thank you very much. So we're going to start with Chelmsford City Council. You have five minutes. Please start when you're ready. Thank you.

00:15:57:08 - 00:16:31:17

Thank you sir. Ma'am. Ruth. My book Chelmsford City Council. Our focus will be set out in our local impact report. But I wanted to draw your attention to a number of matters that are concerning to Chelmsford. Chelmsford City Council objects to the project. Our preferred strategic option is an integrated offshore technology that minimises onshore transmission infrastructure and does not include overhead lines and pylons. We recognise that this option would need to be delivered at pace and without risk to national net zero renewable energy and decarbonisation targets, as well as energy security.

00:16:32:17 - 00:17:05:07

We understand that the climate emergency requires us to help support the replacement of fossil fuels, but this does not mean that all projects which may assist in reducing climate change should be approved at any cost. Although we accept that network reinforcement is needed to accommodate the expected growth in demand for electricity, this cannot occur at the expense of our natural environment, landscapes and communities. This project would introduce 40 to 50 meter high pylons and overhead lines for an industrial character within our rural landscape. The project would appear vast in Congress.

00:17:05:12 - 00:17:37:27

It would lead to a harmful change in the identified character, appearance and quality of the landscape. The pylons and overhead lines would be visually noticeable and prominent. There would be harmful visual intrusion that cannot be mitigated due to their height and scale. The effects would be permanent. As inappropriate development, the project would lead to loss of openness and would be harmful to the greenbelt. It would lead to the harmful loss of the character and beauty of the countryside over a wide area, reducing its scenic beauty and tranquility, aesthetic enjoyment, sense of place, history and identity.

00:17:38:19 - 00:18:09:14

We were particularly concerned that the project would irreversibly harm Chelmsford rich and diverse historic environment. We have a hotspot between Great Waltham and Little Waltham, where the route would pass between two picturesque villages that contain high quality vernacular historic buildings, including grade one listed Langley's House, park and garden. We are disappointed that Netgear have discounted our request for the route to be recited under grounded or T pylons used. The proposed lower height pylons would have a wider stance and heavier frame compared to full height.

00:18:09:16 - 00:18:25:18

Pylons would have a greater visual presence in the context of the southern part of Great Waltham Conservation Area. Further consideration is needed of the alternative proposal to replace three of the low height pylons with two full height pylons, to ensure this is appropriate to the area.

00:18:27:09 - 00:19:03:23

We are particularly concerned regarding the impacts on residential amenity. In some places, the route will pass less than 200m from residential properties, and we're concerned that the pylons would appear overbearing dominance and stacked in views, leading to a harmful change in outlook. The proposed construction working hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays to Fridays and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. at weekends and bank holidays are unacceptable. They're not typical Chelmsford construction hours, and they offer no respite from noise for residents. More widely, the project would lead to ecological heritage and archaeological harm, with loss of trees, hedgerows and planting.

00:19:03:25 - 00:19:40:13

Best and most versatile agricultural land and harmful effects on local economy and highway network. Whilst the project would deliver significant benefits and national level locally, we don't consider this would either harm overcome the harm at local level. The application is silent and mitigation, community benefits and compensation and whilst replacement, planting and biodiversity net gain are proposed, they do little to compensate for the permanent significant adverse landscape effects within our communities. We consider the DCO should not be granted without a that substantially funded landscape and visual compensation scheme.

00:19:40:24 - 00:20:12:15

Additional mitigation should be introduced to standard to mitigate against the identified harm to affected areas, as well as reasonable compensation and benefits in the form of the Skills and Employment Fund funding. Heritage and community benefits. Should the DCI be granted, we, together with the other House authorities, will be responsible for implementing it. It's essential that we have the correct tools within the DCO to allow us to do so. The proposed 28 days time period to discharge the requirement is particularly concerning.

00:20:12:17 - 00:20:45:10

It's too short to enable thorough consideration of the requirement and allow proper consultation with consultees. Plus associated re consultation is required and we suggest at least 56 days to deal with each requirement. In summary, if granted this, the Norwich Tilbury project will lead to great and permanent change to Chelmsford and its environs, and it's essential that it is accompanied by appropriate mitigation to offset his substantial harm, together with a workable DCI that meets the needs of everyone. We look forward to engaging more in the examination process over the next few months.

00:20:45:12 - 00:20:46:16

Thank you.

00:20:49:18 - 00:20:59:22

Thank you very much. Can we next have a Tendring District Council, please? Again? You have five minutes. Please start when you're ready.

00:21:01:11 - 00:21:07:27

Jacob Ashmore for Tendring District Council. Good morning, chair. Members of the examining authority. Can you all hear me?

00:21:10:04 - 00:21:11:09

Yes we can.

00:21:11:12 - 00:21:41:27

Okay, so before I begin, I should make it clear that I'm speaking on behalf of Councillor Ivan Henderson. Is the Tendring District Council portfolio holder for economic growth, region and tourism? Uh, he asked me to tell you that he and other members cannot make it today due to crucial Essex County Council budget meeting. So, given Councillor Anderson's portfolio, my remarks will focus on further on detail around local business and economic impacts, job skills and employment matters, and highways impacts and mitigation. I just want to stress this is not a summary of the IDC's overall position on the project.

00:21:41:29 - 00:22:15:15

The Council's concerns and objections remain is very wide ranging and serious. And as set out in our written report, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity today to speak on behalf of Councillor Henderson and the communities he represents. So tendering is not opposed to progress. We recognise the need to transition to a more resilient energy network. We want to work constructively with National Grid, but we expect the same commitment in return. Recognising recognising national need does not mean overlooking very real local impacts for tendering.

00:22:15:17 - 00:22:45:18

This is not an abstract infrastructure line on a map. These are treasured places where people run businesses and livelihoods. They raise their families there and they work hard to contribute to their communities and the regional economy. It is vital that this process secures meaningful, enforceable

protections, improvements, and opportunities, not merely vague aspirations. I want to specifically talk about impact on local businesses and our fragile rural economy.

00:22:46:00 - 00:23:24:02

Haulage firms, farms, hospitality, trades, logistics and small enterprises all rely on one thing above all else a functioning, open and reliable road network. It is the veins of our district and people depend greatly on our local road network. The rural lanes serving oddly Little Bromley, Lawford and the surrounding parishes are already narrow. They are already flood prone and already under pressure. Construction. Traffic on the scale proposed will strain these routes to beyond breaking point if mitigation is not lasting, robust, enforceable and delivered before construction commences.

00:23:24:10 - 00:23:56:25

It is absolutely vital that these highways and local roads remain open at all times, properly managed, improved where needed it? I'm protected from worsening flood and drainage issues. We cannot accept situations where existing and established local firms already operating there, and our residents are unable to move goods, unable to access their premises, or rely on unpredictable journey times. This is the lifeblood of our local economy. If these roads fail, our local based businesses will fail.

00:23:57:28 - 00:24:36:13

Ardleigh Parish Council has estimated that hundreds of local jobs could be at risk due to construction impacts alone. These losses should be factored in. Turning to skills and employment, then, ring is one of the most deprived district districts in the country. We have a high proportion of young people not in education, employment or training and even higher numbers of people facing significant barriers to work. The reasons are wide ranging and complex. In Norwich, the Tilbury project could be transformative for them, but only if National Grid commits to a clear, enforceable and locally focused skills training and employment strategy.

00:24:36:20 - 00:25:14:22

We have repeatedly invited Grid to address these issues so we expect local apprentices, apprenticeships, sorry, local training pathways, partnerships with institutions like Colchester Institute, the Essex University and local schools. We expect early and meaningful engagement through the DCS jobs and skills phase. They're also being made of Tendring communities is immense. Therefore, we expect our residents to read meaningful benefit from the opportunities this project could create. We want to see a firm and comprehensive social value policy from National Grid, not voluntary commitments, but legally enforceable requirements in the DCO.

00:25:14:27 - 00:25:48:11

This means local procurement and use of local trades and suppliers amongst others. We have seen good examples elsewhere. For example, Longfield south of there implemented the good social values policy. If they can do it, so can National Grid. Then these rural communities struggle to attract funding for innovation, resilience and adaptation. We must protect one of the ten most important sectors tourism and hospitality. We are proud promoters of the Sunshine Coast, but if genuine and high quality visitor accommodation is taken up, our hotels and guesthouses list cruising their core customers.

00:25:48:23 - 00:26:18:14

So in conclusion, the government announced that communities which host significant, nationally significant energy infrastructure should receive long term support and compensation. That statement must carry real weight. Tending is being asked to host the single largest concentration of energy related infrastructure in the region's history. We must come with clear commitments to support, mitigate and compensate. So we urge the examining authority to ensure the latter becomes the legacy of Norwich Tilbury.

00:26:23:26 - 00:26:26:19

Thank you very much. But you've also frozen.

00:26:31:19 - 00:27:07:09

Good timing on your, uh. You're saying we shall. We shall move on. Uh, thank you very much for your contribution. The final, uh, part in this group is Ardleigh Parish Council. So whenever you're ready again, you have five minutes. Good morning. Um, it's Simon Bell of Council on behalf of Ardleigh Parish Council. To save your pens, I will have a copy of this statement, which I will send in, uh, by deadline one. Um, but by way of introduction, Ardleigh Parish Council, uh, recognises and supports the national need for electricity generation and transmission across the country.

00:27:07:11 - 00:27:40:28

However, the scheme proposed by the applicant through this DCO is not something that Ardleigh Parish Council can support due to the impact it will have on Ardleigh and the surrounding area, which will have seen we refer to as the Alba in our submissions. Within this project, the Alba is uniquely and disproportionately affected by the cumulative clustering of the East Anglian. Connection node at wind farm substations, converter infrastructure and battery storage, which creates an energy hub of an exceptional scale in a constrained rural location.

00:27:41:17 - 00:28:15:06

Turning to alternatives, as will be discussed at a high level tomorrow, and it is hope subject to the decisions that you make on this in more detail at a later hearing. The identification of Ardleigh as a location for elements of this proposal is clearly inappropriate, and the applicant has failed to properly, cogently and clearly evidence how it is considered and rejected alternatives to its current proposal. Viable and low impact alternatives have either not been assessed or dismissed out of hand, and without reason in identifying the route and the location it has.

00:28:15:08 - 00:28:56:17

The applicant's own published analysis has demonstrated that coordinated offshore transmission could reduce infrastructure by up to 50%, and deliver savings of approximately 6 billion by 2050. Additionally, earlier analysis identified potential savings of between 2.4 and 5.6 billion compared to a purely radial solution. Despite this, no integrated offshore option has been comparatively assessed for the Norwich to Tilbury project. The siting of the East Anglia connection node in Ardleigh, which, amongst the other factors discussed in the written submissions, is a particular example that shows the proposal fails to identify the best and least harmful approach to delivering the need the applicant is seeking to meet.

00:28:57:17 - 00:29:29:09

Finally, in respect of alternatives, Ardleigh Parish Council supports the East Anglia Pylon Limited's request made during the preliminary meeting that the issue of alternatives be examined in greater depth than tomorrow's high level hearing will allow. The structured approach submissions, followed by a hearing suggested by Mr. Banner KC, would provide a proportionate and effective means of testing those issues. Ardleigh Parish Council considers that around a day will be required for such a hearing to be examined in the way in which the applicant has considered alternatives to its preferred approach.

00:29:29:27 - 00:30:09:06

Turning to consultation. Ardleigh Parish Council are also concerned that the applicant has failed to provide and allow for any real, meaningful public engagement and consultation, directly breaching the well-established principles for the consultation as set out in the case of gunning. Assessment of impacts. Part five of N1 requires generic impacts including human health, safety and emergency response capacity to be assessed and weighed in the planning balance, even where national need is accepted. N1 makes it clear that the presumption in favour of consent cannot be disengaged when residual impacts present unacceptable risks to human health or public safety.

00:30:09:15 - 00:30:45:08

Clearly, in respect of the ABA, adverse impacts outweigh the benefits notwithstanding national need. By way of conclusion, there are far more issues in parish council submissions and can be summarized in a five minute slot at an open floor hearing as such. The parish council repeats its request that matters. It has raised be examined in a focused Alba specific issue hearing to ensure proper scrutiny. Finally, the parish council wants to be clear that this is not a position that it is advancing on behalf of a handful of parish councillors.

00:30:45:10 - 00:31:13:03

It is supported by the local small community, and this is evidenced through the over £28,000 raised from over 70 households and local businesses looking to support Ardleigh Parish Council, with Little Bromley Parish Council through its cost of participating with expert representation at this examination. Ardleigh Parish Council and the community it serves has raised cogent and relevant concerns, and these deserve to be examined in the way our Ardleigh Parish Council submits that they should. Thank you.

00:31:16:17 - 00:31:54:07

Thank you very much for your submissions. Returning to the seated area. If we move to the next group. Um, Fordham Parish Council have notified us that they no longer proposed to speak. So the next group will be four people, which you can come to the table or switch your cameras on. These are Terence Nichols, Jenny Nichols, Little Bromley Parish Council, and northwest and southwest of Chelmsford Parishes Group.

00:32:20:19 - 00:32:24:15

Okay. Thank you very much. Camera on. One person on.

00:32:26:24 - 00:32:35:15

Three in the room. Thank you very much. Can we start with, uh, Mr. Nichols, you have three minutes. Start when you're ready.

00:32:37:12 - 00:32:42:28

Excuse me. Can you just turn your microphone on? It's with the button in the base plate. That's it. Thank you very much. Yeah.

00:32:43:06 - 00:33:13:20

The, uh, my name is Terrence Nichols. Um, my request reviews here today is to pile on. Moved a little bit down, further down so it doesn't come right across our garden. And I'd like to have it move like 22m as it is at the moment. It's going to it. It works out 80m from my back door. So that's my request, what I'm asking for. I don't think it's a very difficult one, and that's as much as I've got to say.

00:33:13:22 - 00:33:18:27

But my wife would really have a lot more to say. Thank you for listening to me.

00:33:21:00 - 00:33:23:06

Okay. Thank you very much for your submission.

00:33:25:26 - 00:33:30:11

In that case, can we turn to Kenny Nichols and you have three minutes.

00:33:31:05 - 00:34:03:05

Thank you. Um, I want to start off by saying that this situation has really affected me far more deeply than I ever expected. We live on the A1, A2 seven, which is already a very busy road and noisy, but we've also we've always made our home feel like a place of peace in the open field behind us, knowing that this space is now due to be crossed by major pylons. This project is part of the Norwich to Tilbury route, and the pylons planned are not standard structures.

00:34:03:07 - 00:34:36:19

I've been told they're the biggest and the ugliest things going, but some of the largest available carrying 18 electricity lines. These would run directly across my garden, dominating the view, the environment and the sense of safety and the well-being of like in our own home, which makes this especially hard to accept. And this is the impact that it's completely avoidable. German Fischer and the project architects have visited my property on several occasions.

00:34:36:21 - 00:35:09:20

During those visits, they have agreed that the route could be moved to avoid our garden. This is a clear, practical alternative. The lines can go straight across the lay by the open. The option avoids our our garden entirely and does not negatively affect anybody else, and it still delivers the project as intended. Despite this professional agreement, the the plans remain unchanged. I want to be very clear with the panel.

00:35:09:22 - 00:35:43:07

We're not opposing the project. We understand the need for infrastructure. We are not standing in the way of progress. We have even said that we would allow full access to our property for construction works whenever needed. We're not. We are trying to be reasonable and cooperative. All we're asking for is one simple change that the electric lines do not cross our garden when there's no necessary for

them to do so. The emotion of practical is real, but it's a practical one. These pylons would significantly devalue our property.

00:35:43:09 - 00:36:20:11

It is widely understood that the homes with overhead electric lines are far harder to sell. This is not speculation. It's a general financial loss that would stay with us long after the project is complete. Planning decisions are not just lines on the map. They affect people's homes, their mental well-being and their sense of security. Right now, this decision feels like something being done to us rather than with us. And although I fear an agreed alternative does exist, I'm asking just to consider and listen to what we say.

00:36:20:13 - 00:36:40:21

We're not against it. We would just like it to be moved just a little bit further. Just so it doesn't take up the whole of our garden. And it can be done because we're, we've got all the lay by next to us, which is full of brambles, no nice trees, and we would be helpful.

00:36:40:28 - 00:36:43:21

Thank you very much for your submission. Okay.

00:36:47:16 - 00:36:52:10

Okay. Next on the list we have Little Bromley Parish Council, please.

00:36:53:15 - 00:37:26:09

Good morning again, Simon Bell. Council, this time for Little Bromley Parish Council. And hopefully not repetitive. Um, by way of introduction, what follows is a statement made on behalf of Little Bromley Parish Council. This Little Bromley Parish Council does not seek to repeat much of Ardleigh Parish Council statement, but it has considered it and supports the points made in it. It is important to note that whilst Ardleigh Parish Council with Little Bromley Parish Council have engaged the same council to act for them, they remain distinct parish councils with joint but separate concerns about this proposal.

00:37:27:02 - 00:38:03:20

As with Ardleigh Parish Council, Little Bromley Parish Council recognises and supports the national need for electricity generation and transmission infrastructure across the country. However, the scheme proposed through this DCO cannot be supported because of the disproportionate cumulative impact it imposes upon this small rural parish, parish and the wider Alba area. The impacts on Little Bromley. Whilst within this project, Little Bromley does not host a single isolated element. It sits within a concentrated cluster of substations, converter infrastructure, battery energy storage and overhead transmission infrastructure.

00:38:03:26 - 00:38:37:17

The effect is the industrialisation of open countryside within a compact geography that will destroy the historic small rural village of Little Bromley. Unlike larger settlements, Little Bromley's infrastructure and road network are limited. Construction. Traffic associated with this proposal, which utilize narrow rural lanes not designed for sustained heavy goods vehicle movements. Further, the applicant's proposal introduces a permanent access road from the centre of Little Bromley to service

the East Anglia Connection node, with significant and permanent character changes being made to Bentley Road.

00:38:37:28 - 00:39:13:22

The parish councils relevant representation identifies the significant safety, severance and amenity impacts arising from the construction, traffic and the permanent works to the local road network. Cumulatively, at sorry. Cumulatively. You should also note that traffic servicing all of the substations and converter station will be routed through Little Bromley. However, Little Bromley Parish Councils concern is not confined to construction traffic. The permanent footprint fragments agricultural land affects drainage patterns and impacts best and most versatile farmland.

00:39:13:28 - 00:39:50:06

The cumulative footprint of pylons and associated infrastructure will result in considerable loss of prime agricultural land in Little Bromley in Little Bromley Parish Council submissions, and this is in respect of alternatives. The impacts it has identified arise because the project has not assessed lower impact strategic alternatives as identified by Ardeleigh Parish Council and Little Bromley Parish Council. The applicant's own published material demonstrates that coordinated offshore transmission could reduce infrastructure by up to 50%, and deliver significant savings of 6 billion by 2050.

00:39:50:21 - 00:40:21:08

Despite this evidence, no integrated offshore option has been comparatively assessed for the Norwich Tilbury project. The clustering experience in Little Bromley is therefore a consequence of strategic choices made by the applicant, which require examination and scrutiny over the next six months. Assessment of impacts. Part five of the N1 requires consideration of impacts on human health, safety and emergency response capacity to be assessed and weighed in the planning bands in a rural parish with constrained access routes and limited energy infrastructure.

00:40:21:10 - 00:41:02:25

The proximity of high voltage equipment and battery storage engages those considerations directly, even where national need is accepted. Ian, one makes clear that the presumption in favour of consent is not absolute and may be disengaged where residual impacts present unacceptable risks to human health or public safety. In conclusion, there is considerably more within Little Bromley parish councils with written submissions than can be addressed within a five minute open floor hearing. Accordingly, Littleborough Little Bromley Parish Council reiterates its joint request for a focused Alba issue specific hearing so that cumulative impacts, safety considerations and alternatives can be examined coherently rather than in fragmented topic sessions.

00:41:03:03 - 00:41:39:11

Further, Little Bromley Parish Council supports East Anglia pylons. Limited request that the issue of alternatives be examined in more depth than tomorrow's high level hearing will allow. Little Bromley Parish Council is a very small parish council. It does not benefit from the same level of precept as some of the other parish councils involved in this examination. However, it has the support of its community and is engaged with this process through a contribution to Ardeleigh Parish Councils Fund. This Will Bromley Parish Council therefore respectfully asked that its concerns be examined fully and proportionately in light of the scale of the permanent change proposed within this parish.

00:41:39:13 - 00:41:40:06

Thank you.

00:41:42:21 - 00:41:43:25

Thank you very much.

00:41:46:11 - 00:41:57:15

And then finally in this group, turn to Mr. Blake, who is speaking on behalf of North West and South west of Chelmsford Parish Group. Thank you.

00:41:59:25 - 00:42:36:09

Thank you, sir, for this opportunity to contribute for the parishes Group. Our group of nine parishes seeks to work constructively with planners and to bring clarity by speaking with one voice. Our strong preference is for HVDC cabling wherever possible, underground or offshore. However, as others will speak more eloquently than I on that subject this morning, I'd like to focus instead on another strand of our work. This strand takes overhead lines as a given and considers the best route for them around Chelmsford.

00:42:37:03 - 00:43:09:16

We took as our starting point National Grid's CPRS report of 2022, and looked in detail at corridors L and Q to the east and south of Chelmsford. Using our local knowledge, we identified strategic options and map detail routes with potential variations. Finally, we submitted our proposals to an independent landscape consultancy, which included that our principal combination of route sections significantly outperforms the preferred route.

00:43:10:13 - 00:43:50:10

All our work will be submitted to you at deadline one. My apologies that there is a lot of detail. We also reached out to National Grid and met with them during the 2024 consultation. We accepted and still do that. Our proposals will need discussion and refinement, as any proposals inevitably do at this useful meeting. It was agreed to continue the dialogue into the autumn. When pressures on energy colleagues would seek with ease. Our emails to arrange further meetings were initially welcomed, but ultimately no dates were offered and eventually our emails went unanswered.

00:43:50:23 - 00:44:21:05

So sadly, we cannot submit an SOC as we had hoped, although that is not through want of our trying. So the group remains baffled, primarily by NGOs decision before the first informal consultation had even begun to prefer a route through untouched countryside to the obvious alternative east and south of Chelmsford, where there are opportunities to close parallel and rationalise with existing power lines.

00:44:21:23 - 00:45:00:21

Self-evidently, the general duty imposed by schedule nine of the 1989 Act to Preserve Natural Beauty would be better met if effects can be limited to existing OHL or trunk road corridors. The CPRS estimated that this eastern and southern route will be slightly cheaper and is shorter. Its agencies present no fundamental objection either. It would have less impact overall on the setting of heritage

assets and grey to farmland. The Chelmer Valley, with its backdrop of wooded hills, would invite the blessing of Holford rules four and five instead.

00:45:01:00 - 00:45:34:00

NJ have chosen a route that runs along the edge of the elevated Plessey farmland plateau, meaning that almost every metre of pylon can be seen against the skyline. Time prevents me from describing the attempts to squeeze pylons between two sensitive conservation areas at the Waltons. The impact on the adjoining Langley's registered park and gardens. The impact on designated valued landscape west of Broomfield, and much more, which could all be avoided entirely by a better route.

00:45:35:10 - 00:46:12:01

It seems that this strange choice stems from the fact that in 2022, the possibility of undergrounding or rationalising sections of the 132 kilovolt UK power network line had not yet been considered. This would be necessary to achieve the east and south of Chelmsford route, but undergrounding did not emerge as an option until 2024, by which time energy had long made its decisions back checking is fine for checking, but it isn't really capable of going back to the beginning where this is required.

00:46:12:16 - 00:46:13:01

So you have.

00:46:13:03 - 00:46:52:27

All relevant, all relevant issues and options should be considered and consulted on at the outset. Once a decision has been made and months of follow up work invested, it's very difficult to go back to first principles if new factors need to be applied. However, it is the only way of avoiding the problems which this choose and defend approach has created. Therefore. So we urge you not to approve the current application until there has been a complete re-evaluation of the options around Chelmsford and a full and genuine consultation.

00:46:52:29 - 00:46:53:28

Thank you.

00:46:56:13 - 00:46:57:18

Thank you very much.

00:47:05:24 - 00:47:20:07

Okay. Can we move to the next groupings? So that will be the Triton Farming Partnership LLP, Mr. Charles Tritton.

00:47:22:24 - 00:47:40:09

Brett Aggregates Limited, Freddy Boat Field and Paul Walker. Mr. Tritton has informed us that he does not wish to be filmed. So can I please ask that? He puts his hand up under the roving microphone is brought to him.

00:47:42:21 - 00:47:43:15

Thank you.

00:47:49:15 - 00:47:57:26

And the others? Please come up to the table and turn your cameras on. Thank you very much,

00:47:59:21 - 00:48:20:14

Mr. Triton. Uh, you have three minutes on behalf of Triton forming partnership and three minutes as an individual. Please can you make it clear which you are speaking on at that particular time? Uh, and can you start when you are ready? Thank you.

00:48:21:24 - 00:48:57:02

Charles Triton, senior partner representing Triton Farming Partnership LLP, TFP. Here its members and their interests, including Lola's Farm, an 85 page detailed effects and solution, has been sent to the Planning Inspectorate in November. I wanted to highlight three major impacts. The first is sterilization of part of a proposed 10 million tonne mineral site directly under the pylon route, promoted in conjunction with Aggregates to Essex County Council.

00:48:58:01 - 00:49:28:02

Two sterilization of a proposed 1500 housing scheme adjoining the mineral site and under the directly under the pylon route. Submitted to Chelmsford City Council for future Local Plan. The area is a growth area and Chelmsford Garden community is less than a kilometre away. Thirdly, the infrastructure during construction means it is likely we could only feel farm to fields out of 50.

00:49:29:18 - 00:50:02:22

Both the mineral and housing proposals pre-date the first announcement of the pylon route. The mineral site could have a commercial value of approximately £140 million, and the gross development value of 1500 homes could be even greater. Together, they could represent gross value above £300 million pre costs to TFP partners, stakeholders and investors. This is a third of the cost of the entire National Grid project.

00:50:03:04 - 00:50:06:00

TFP will suffer many other losses.

00:50:07:28 - 00:50:23:27

TFP has sought to engage directly with National Grid. Throughout the process. However, the first initial meeting was in July 25th, but the first material meeting was in November 25th, which interested me.

00:50:23:29 - 00:50:25:00

With one minute remaining.

00:50:25:02 - 00:50:58:25

Which was post DCO filing. Given the importance of this area, we would like to propose an inspection into other local routes. Most noticeably the National Grid's alternative Great Water Route, which avoids the development voids. The Great Waltham Pinch Point is more compliant with whole field rail rules one, two and seven with the shuttle. 2003 clarifications. Second one is the option for proposed by TFP.

00:50:58:28 - 00:51:31:03

avoiding a triple C which is 200m less visible. Skyline voids. Development houses, less houses, is more compliant with whole field rules and clarifications one, two, five and seven. I therefore wish to request these issue specific hearing looks at this, and that the planning Inspector has a look at the compensation of budget of 180 million, which hasn't changed since day one, despite inflation updates and reality.

00:51:31:05 - 00:51:37:25

Mr. Chetan, your time is up for the partnership. If you could draw those to a conclusion and then make your own personal comments. Thank you.

00:51:38:05 - 00:51:41:05

I'm combining the two and I have finished.

00:51:43:04 - 00:51:54:27

Thank you very much then. So that's both both breaking points in that case. Then we shall move on to Brett. Aggregate limited.

00:51:59:23 - 00:52:05:05

Good morning. My name is Simon Treacy, planning director to Brett Aggregates Limited.

00:52:06:22 - 00:52:40:09

The objections we have made concerning mineral extraction prospect site at Lilly's Farm, near Great Leads, to the north of Chelmsford. The objections we have submitted describe a mineral resource of sand and gravel that extends to circa 10 million tonnes. The mineral deposit is recognised for its high quality, low overburden layer and has a commercial value of over £140 million. Brett has made investments in designing and assessing this deposit since 2019, when it undertook geological investigations at that time.

00:52:40:28 - 00:53:14:28

The quarry designs since prepared have been promoted to Essex County Council. In this review of his current and future need, the County Council has an established position that additional quarry sites are needed to meet future demand for construction aggregates during the preamp engagement into the DTO. Ng was made aware of the mineral scheme, its importance and value. During these engagements, alternative routes were offered by the landowner TFP in good faith across other areas in their ownership.

00:53:15:20 - 00:53:28:22

Despite this, the route chosen passes right over the middle of the mineral scheme, right over its deepest point. The CIP scheme without amendment will have a significant impact on this important resource.

00:53:30:08 - 00:53:51:12

The NPF states that it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. It also says since minerals are a

finite natural resource and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them.

00:53:53:04 - 00:54:25:16

The position of Essex County Council as Minerals Planning Authority is not to object to the DCO, as it has been informed by energy that no significant operational impacts are envisaged at the Low LEAs mineral site. However, to achieve this position, Ng will need to alter the route to avoid the mineral deposit at Coley's Farm. A change to the submitted route must be made and consulted upon. Changes to a submitted DCO can be made while it is being examined.

00:54:25:25 - 00:54:47:03

It is likely that a material change to the scheme is required to deliver this, as additional land interests in TFP will be required. I therefore wish to request that an issue specific hearing is organised to discuss alternative routing to avoid this important mineral resource. Thank you.

00:54:49:19 - 00:54:50:22

Thank you very much.

00:54:53:10 - 00:54:59:18

I turn to Mr. Butterfield, and you have three minutes. Please start when you're ready.

00:55:01:10 - 00:55:40:21

Good morning. My name is Freddie Butterfield and associate director of chartered Surveyors. I'm speaking today on behalf of over 80 affected parties, including landowners, tenants, charities and event operators along the Norwich to Tilbury route. None of our clients wish to be here. They would far rather not be spending time, money and emotional energy dealing with this scheme. There's already a demonstrated negative impact on businesses health and wellbeing arising from the prolonged uncertainty, lack of transparency and the absence of reliable time frames.

00:55:40:27 - 00:56:30:17

Personal and business decisions are in limbo and people cannot invest, plan, sell or diversify with any confidence. Opportunities are being lost now, not at some future construction stage. Despite early and repeated engagement, specific questions raised at our very first meetings remain unanswered. Including possible alternative routes, the safe delivery and operation of the proposal, the safe working practices moving forward including machinery clearances and irrigation issues, the protection of the ecology, trees and hedges, and the protection of my client's greatest asset, their soil and their future ability to farm the land.

00:56:31:15 - 00:57:04:27

Consultation has taken substantial time and cost, and yet many responses are either absent or uncertain as to be unusable. There is a particular serious issue around the associated third party works. Landowners are being left to deal directly with bodies such as electricity, telecoms, gas and pipeline operators in relation to diversions reinforcements that directly arise from this project. There has been no consultation by those parties.

00:57:05:05 - 00:57:35:07

No clear accountability and responsibility is repeatedly deflected by National Grid. There remains significant uncertainty around construction methods and programme making sensible planning impossible. Agreed licence terms have not been adhered to, including failures to provide survey data required for proper review and informed engagement. And there is also continued pressure to agree standardised heads of terms, despite these not being presented to clients in good time.

00:57:36:03 - 00:57:51:29

The cumulative effect is serious uncertainty, financial strain and real mental health impacts for our clients. Overall, there is a strong perception that the engagement has been procedural rather than meaningful and a tick box Exercise. Thank you.

00:57:54:10 - 00:57:55:13

Thank you very much.

00:57:57:12 - 00:58:06:15

And finally, for this group, can we turn to Mr. Walker? And again, Mr. Walker, you have three minutes. Um, please start when you are ready.

00:58:06:21 - 00:58:37:24

Thank you. Good morning. And thank you for the opportunity to speak. Uh, my name is Paul Walker. I'm a director of Worthington, not chartered surveyors. I echo my colleague Freddie's comments regarding the poor engagement. However, I'm here today to speak on behalf of Essex Scouts and Guides, who together organise the Essex International Scout and Guide Jamboree. This is a charitable, volunteer led youth event. It has been held in Essex since 1947. Since 2012 it has taken place at Rockwell.

00:58:38:10 - 00:59:10:12

The proposed pylon route now cuts through the site. The two towers sit in the heart of the camping and activity areas. The overlay submitted with our representation makes this clear. In 2024, it hosted 5000 young people aged 10 to 17 years, supported by over 2500 adult volunteers. There were participants for more than from more than 40 countries. It operates on a budget exceeding £2 million, entirely funded by those attending.

00:59:10:18 - 00:59:44:28

It is one of the largest events in the UK, if not in Europe. Significant charitable funds have been invested in permanent infrastructure on this 125 acre site. Many thousands of hours of volunteer time are devoted to planning and delivering the event. The impact is immediate and significant. National grid inform us that the 2028 Jamboree cannot take place during the construction period. However, once built, National Grid claim their pylons and cabling are compatible with the Jamboree use.

00:59:45:15 - 01:00:16:12

Frankly, that is ridiculous And demonstrates National Grid's failure to recognize the nature of the event and the true impact of their scheme. National grid will need to satisfy scouting and Guiding safety teams, the local licensing authority, but more importantly, parents. Parents will not send their children to camp beneath pylons. So even if technically possible, the perception of risk alone renders the renders the event unviable. The scheme therefore threatens the future of this event.

01:00:16:18 - 01:00:58:06

Risks wasting substantial charitable investment and volunteer time. If the scheme proceeds, undergrounding, this section is the only realistic mitigation that would materially reduce harm. Failing that, National Grid must identify and fully fund a suitable alternative site, including replacing lost infrastructure and relocation costs. But finding a suitable alternative site is not straightforward or certain. I acknowledge National Grid are in communication with the Jamboree team, however, without any reassurances in place yet, the trustees must make clear that within the DCO process, this scheme as proposed, threatens the future of this significant international youth event.

01:00:58:24 - 01:01:12:23

And finally, a plea. The National Grid must properly engage, listen and respond. Behind these plans are real people, real charities and thousands of young people whose experiences and opportunities are at risk. Thank you.

01:01:14:06 - 01:01:15:12

Thank you very much.

01:01:18:22 - 01:01:41:21

Time is now just coming up to 11:00 or it's just 11:00. Uh, and we therefore propose that we will take a short adjournment to allow our comfort break. Those watching on the live stream. You will need to refresh your browser page to review this hearing. When we resume, we will reconvene at 11:20.