

Submission Statement to the Planning Inspectorate

I'm Matt, and I am a resident in Roydon. I am here today not just as a concerned local resident, or as a custodian of a historic listed building, But as a human who believes we all have a duty of care to make good ethical decisions on high impact projects, and call out inappropriate corporate hostility where it has a detrimental impact on communities and countryside.

I'll start with some reflections on my experience of the public consultation. it's been procedurally skewed from the outset and relies on distorted evidence. The strategic choice of Pylons being the best option was allegedly made on cost grounds, yet there was no validation of the costs of the other options, and it conflicts with estimates from other credible third parties.

From my personal experience, the consultation process has been opaque. The maps effectively obscure the extent of the construction process, such as the "temporary" access roads that are deactivated by default on the interactive map and the line markings are not intuitive for the general public who are unfamiliar with technical plans. The digital visualisations are also not reflective of the impact. In reality, on top of the long-term landscape impact, the project requires approximately **2 million square metres of stone (Type 1 MOT)** to be laid across our countryside. That is the equivalent of paving over **400 football pitches** of productive farmland, footpaths and hedgerows just for build access.

More critically, I received information from a National Grid representative at one of their public sessions, confirming that significant property acquisition costs are being attributed to a separate property portfolio budget rather than the project's own cost line. I understand that vendors have also been required to sign NDAs to conceal these transactions. This suggests the true project budget is being artificially suppressed by off-book accounting. If some costs are being hidden in a separate P&L to make the pylons appear cheaper than alternative options, the Inspectorate cannot make a valid "Value for Money" assessment.

I want to address the political and corporate narrative that I have observed. It's been said that any other option will result in energy costs going up. At a time where energy costs are crippling household budgets. This narrative vilifies anyone who opposes it, creates conflict in communities, suppressing public objection to the proposal. The consultation is therefore based on a false financial premise.

In relation to my personal situation and my immediate area the impact on nature reserves Roydon and Lopham Fen and open public spaces like Wortham Ling near Diss will be devastating. This extends to so many places along the route, and I'm sure you will hear from many others concerned about the landscape devastation from these metal monstrosities.

From my perspective, there's hypocrisy in the planning system. As an occupier of a listed building, I am subject to strict controls to protect the property from sanitising its historic fabric or altering its visual aesthetic. I was recently restricted by the planning system to erecting nothing higher than a 4ft open fence along my boundary. This was to retain the **visual appeal** from the roadside. Yet, National Grid proposes a **steel tower**, fifty times the height of my fence, without similar regard for the setting of mine and hundreds of historic properties along the route.

The scale of the visual impact of this project is staggering. Based on a flat rural landscape, a 50m pylon becomes a **very dominant** feature for at least one mile in any direction.

- That is over **200 square miles** of land where the industrialised skyline will become the dominant feature.
- If we extend this to where the pylons are **prominent** (let's say 2 miles), we are looking at an impacted area the size of **Dartmoor National Park**.
- If we go to the total visibility of around 6 miles (it's very flat in East Anglia after all) this project creates a negative visual footprint roughly the size of the entire county of **Kent or suffolk**.

At what point does the "long-term cost" of destroying that much amenity value outweigh the "short-term savings" on copper and steel?

National Grid's dismissal of offshore alternatives relies on a "False Economy." Their calculations are based purely on Capital Expenditure (Capex). They assign **zero value** to the permanent losses the project creates. This includes tourism, the devaluation of property, sterilisation of farmland, let alone the irreversible damage to thousands of people's home environment and the mental health impact of such stresses on the vulnerable and elderly.

It's important we remember that National Grid is not a public service; it is a PLC that generated over **£4.5 billion in operating profit** last year, with margins hitting **38%**. Their primary duty is to institutional shareholders like BlackRock and the Vanguard group, not to UK consumers. We have seen with HS2 how infrastructure forecasts can be vastly optimistic, only to spiral later. We are being asked to trust the cost-benefit analysis of a monopoly organisation, that profits directly from any inflated costs of the solution they are proposing. This surely needs properly audited 3rd party analysis and validation.

Perhaps they would consider doing it for a fixed cost like a builder would for a house extension?

The applicant claims this project is for "Green Energy," yet the infrastructure itself is environmentally toxic. The grid relies on **Sulphur Hexafluoride (SF6)**, a gas **23,500 times more potent than CO2**.

- The grid currently leaks this gas at a rate of 1.33% annually.
- That creates a carbon footprint equivalent to putting **170,000 extra petrol cars** on the road every year.

To destroy natural carbon sinks (trees and soil) to build infrastructure that leaks the world's most potent greenhouse gas is not sustainability; it's hypocrisy!

This proposal is also technically obsolete. We are currently wasting billions in "constraint payments" paying wind farms to turn off because our AC network is inefficient or can't handle peak loads. The world is shifting to Direct Current (DC). Solar is DC. Batteries are DC. EVs are DC. Data Centres are DC.

By forcing an AC pylon network on us, National Grid is building the equivalent of a Betamax video player for a world that is already watching Netflix. It's not the right tool for the job! Subsea **HVDC** cable is not just invisible; it is the native format of modern energy. Why are we bulldozing the countryside to build technology from 1928, when we should be building the "Eastern Green Link" standard of subsea cables?

Finally, whatever your feelings are on the points I've raised, and whatever side of the table you're sitting on (even those with a vested interest in Blackrock's profitability). We're just insignificant creatures living on a tiny island, on a massive planet that has existed for billions of years before we started mucking about with it. We're mere custodians of our bit of it, for a short time, much like me and my old house. To approve this project is to sanction the permanent industrialisation of East Anglia for the sake of short-term shareholder

dividends, and National Grid senior management bonuses. I urge the Inspectorate to reject this proposal. There are many flaws in the overall plan and how it has been implemented. I'd like to see the less harmful solutions such as networked offshore grids are explored and costed properly before any further consideration on this project.