Mark Pym

Interested Party Reference number: [redacted]

Subject: RE: EN020027 – Norwich to Tilbury

12th February 2026

FINAL 3-MINUTE STATEMENT

Further to my three minutes today, this is my summary and a little more detail -thank you for reviewing this.

Good morning. My name is Mark, and I speak as a local person and a member of the Pylons East Anglia Group, a cross-county campaign spanning Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk.

We have frequently asked National Grid to look at the alternative options, which they have ignored. This in my view, breaches the Gunning principles.

Before I mention three points, I would first like to request that the Planning Inspectorate (& ultimately the Secretary of State), walk some of the proposed pylon route. I would suggest at least 20-30 % of the route to see the variety and different landscapes. Areas that I know well, such as the Waltham's, Fordham and Ardleigh, stand to be impacted and devastated. A decision such as this, really can't be reached, without getting into the land and seeing what the reality of this proposal is.

But today I want to focus on a few issues that goes to the heart of whether this examination can rely on the evidence before it:

For instance, the lack of proper, robust and comprehensive survey coverage.

There isn't time provided for me to go into all the detail so today, in the short time I have, I wish to raise three points.

1. Inadequate Survey Coverage — Less Than 1% of the Land has been surveyed. I can if requested, provide the details of how I get to this calculation.

The ecological corridor for a 400kV overhead line is typically assessed at around 500 metres wide. Across a 180km route, this is approximately 9,000 hectares.

National Grid has surveyed, at best, around 45 hectares on foot.

That means over 99% of the affected landscape has never been visited by an ecologist.

Desktop and drone surveys cannot detect nests, cannot identify solitary breeders, cannot assess hedgerow understorey, cannot map microhabitats, and cannot replace fieldwork. That is a fact not an opinion. This technology doesn't work in the deep thickets and woods of many of our hedges and woods. Nighttime creatures don't pop out to stand in line, and be counted as a drone passes overhead!

This is not an adequate evidence base for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

Point 2. Hedgerows, Trees and Wildlife Corridors: Critical and Undisclosed

We still have no disclosure of:

• how many trees, hedgerows and bushes will be removed • where this will occur • when replacements will be provided • how long they will take to establish • who will maintain them • or where displaced wildlife is expected to go in the meantime. Astonishing figures of allegedly 1.8 million trees and 6 million hedges were allegedly leaked and then retracted. National Grid should be asked directly: **what is the estimated ecological destruction in trees, hedges and wildlife?**

Hedgerows and treelines are vital wildlife corridors.
This is recognised by the United Nations, IPBES, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UK's own Biodiversity Strategy.

A single mature hedgerow can support hundreds of species, insects, birds, mammals, amphibians and invertebrates.

Most of this life exists in the lower layers, what is termed as the understorey, the bramble, the leaf litter, the root systems, none of which can be surveyed by drones.

With less than 1% of the land surveyed, the risk is clear:
rare species and fragile habitats, may be bulldozed into local extinction, before anyone even knows they were there.

Furthermore, National Grid should be required, before any final decision is made to detail their alternative proposals, to replace the damage to the environment. It simply isn't good enough to say that is their intention. In a project, I was indirectly involved in with Hutchison Ports, when we were looking at developing a major infrastructure project called Bathside at Harwich, a major 117-hectare wildlife sanctuary and habitat creation scheme was detailed to compensate for the loss of intertidal mudflats and salt marshes.

Point 3. The Project's Rebranding and the Need for Full Disclosure

I didn't have time to raise this but believe it is very relevant and would ask the Planning Inspectorate to also look into this.

This scheme did not begin life as a pylon project.
It was originally presented as a **green-energy** transmission initiative, framed around modernisation and sustainability. Only later was it re-presented to the public as a pylon-based overhead line scheme.

Given the scale of environmental harm now evident, and the level of objection from councils, MPs, statutory bodies and communities, it is reasonable for the Planning Inspectorate to examine whether this rebranding affected the transparency and fairness of the consultation process.

To ensure procedural integrity, I believe the Planning Inspectorate should request:

• full disclosure of National Grid board papers, • internal assessments, • option appraisals, • and decision-making documents relating to the transition from the original “green” project concept to the current pylon-based proposal.

Without this transparency, it is impossible to know whether environmental impacts were fully acknowledged, whether alternatives were properly evaluated, or whether the shift in presentation was influenced by concerns about the scale of ecological damage pylons would cause across Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk.

Point 4. National Energy Security and Resilience — A Missing Assessment

There is also a national strategic dimension that has not been adequately addressed.

Overhead pylons are inherently more vulnerable to:

• extreme cold
• ice loading
• high winds
• storm events
• and deliberate interference

than alternative transmission technologies. This is not contested by many of the experts.

In a period where the UK’s energy resilience is a stated national priority, it is concerning that the full range of resilience options does not appear to have been assessed transparently or in accordance with Green Book principles.

Our older generation **will be** impacted if these pylons go ahead without robust and strategic resilience built into the network. At the end of this I have attached some details from a pylon press release that got an astonish 1500 like and 500 plus shares. **The public really care about this issue and leaving us exposed to very cold snaps of weather, with the alternative energy sources, hollowed out** (such as limited gas suppliers in the UK now (with a just in time system), leaves no contingency. At least if the cables are off shored or underground, we are less exposed to extreme weather conditions.

If the Green Book had also been applied to its full extent, the appraisal would have required:

• a clear comparison of resilience and failure modes • assessment of weather-related vulnerability • analysis of recovery times after disruption • and evaluation of less exposed alternatives

That analysis has not been presented.

Given that National Grid is a shareholder-driven company, it is essential that national security considerations are independently scrutinised.

I therefore believe the Planning Inspectorate should request the involvement of the UK’s relevant national security and resilience agencies, in a transparent manner, to ensure that the chosen pylon solution does not increase long-term vulnerability for East Anglia or the wider national grid.

• tested rigorously across all three counties • assessed environmental or human health impacts • provided a management plan • or assessed the risk to the pylons themselves

Point 6. ESG, the UN SDGs and the Green Book

Again, I did not have the adequate time to mention this.

This project, as currently evidenced, is not aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals — particularly:

• SDG 13: Climate Action
• SDG 14: Life Below Water
• SDG 15: Life on Land
• SDG 16: Strong Institutions

Nor does it appear that the Treasury's Green Book has been applied to its full extent.

If Green Book principles had been properly applied, the applicant would have been required to:

• fully assess and compare alternative transmission technologies • quantify environmental losses and biodiversity impacts • demonstrate how the project delivers net environmental benefit • provide transparent, timely evidence for scrutiny • and ensure that the least-harm option is selected

An independent Consultant should be appointed to assess this gap and lack of alignment.

None of this has been demonstrated.

And finally - The Human Impact

I was nearly in tears today, given what I was hearing. The human impact is devastating. For instance, as a young lad the jamborees were hugely influential for my development. In part they helped me make a decision to join the Royal Navy, and serve my country. I have no doubt families will not camp under huge pylons, so effectively this proposal trashes this beautiful park.

Every person I speak to along this whole route has a heart-rending story.
Residents describe mental distress, tears, sleepless nights, and the fear of losing landscapes that have shaped families for generations.

Surely the voice of the people mostly impacted must be fully considered, if we really want to stay living in a democracy.

What I Ask the Planning Inspectorate to please consider: is as follows:

Given the scale of the gaps, the late disclosure, and the legal duties at stake, I respectfully ask the Panel to:

1. Require full field-based surveys across **all** habitat types.
2. Require dawn and dusk surveys for crepuscular species.
3. Require immediate disclosure of all ecological and soil data.
4. Require National Grid to provide their alternative 'green' solutions to offset the devastating damage the pylons and sways /access roads will do.

5. Require disclosure of National Grid's internal decision-making documents relating to the project's rebranding.
6. Request independent scrutiny from national security and resilience agencies.
7. Consider whether the consultation to date meets the standards of transparency and fairness required by law, including in terms of Gunning and Aarhus.

Until this information is provided, the evidence base is incomplete, in my view.

No large-scale planning infrastructure in the UK ever ended well, when proposals and processes developed over decades, were ignored, and especially ones that ignored the local communities' concerns.

Closing Point

In closing East Anglia deserves decisions based on facts, not assumptions.

Until the evidence is complete, this project cannot be justified.

Thank you for reading my submission.

Best regards

Mark Pym

Appendix: Extreme Weather Facebook Article:

Extract: (posted in January 2026)

Ed Miliband's Hidden Secret: The Truth About a 100% Renewable Britain in Extreme Weather

As America endures one of its most severe snow and ice storms in decades—leaving thousands without power—it raises an uncomfortable question for the UK: what would happen here if we had already done what Ed Miliband and others propose—moved to a near-total reliance on wind and solar energy?

The honest answer is one the public is rarely told.

The hidden vulnerability:

Wind and solar are valuable parts of a modern energy system. But a system that relies almost entirely on them is highly exposed to extreme weather, especially the kind climate change is making more frequent.

In deep winter storms:
• Solar power all but disappears: short days, low sun angles, heavy cloud, snow-covered panels.
• Wind power can fail at the worst possible moment: turbines shut down in icing conditions or extreme winds, and offshore installations are vulnerable to freezing spray.
• Transmission lines and pylons suffer ice loading, causing widespread outages that are slow to repair.

These are not theoretical risks. They are engineering realities—now playing out in real time across parts of the United States.

The storage myth:

The public is often reassured that "storage will solve it." But this is where the gap between political rhetoric and physical reality becomes most stark.

To ride out a multi-day winter storm, the UK would need weeks of national energy storage, not hours. Today:
• Battery storage covers only minutes or a few hours of peak demand.
• Pumped hydro is limited by geography.
• Hydrogen storage at scale remains largely aspirational, not operational.

A grid dominated by wind and solar without firm backup power risks cascading blackouts precisely when people need heat, light, and medical care most.

Why the past was more resilient:

Britain has faced severe winters before—1947, 1963, 1979, 2010. We coped not because the weather was kinder, but because our energy system was diverse.

We relied on:
• Dispatchable power stations that could be turned up when demand surged • Fuel stocks stored domestically • A grid designed around controllability, not hope

Crucially, we were not dependent on a single weather pattern to keep the lights on.

The supply chain elephant in the room:

There is another rarely discussed weakness: resilience depends on parts.

Transformers, high-voltage equipment, turbines, and control electronics are mostly manufactured overseas—often in China or South Korea. In a widespread cold emergency, global demand spikes, shipping slows, and repair timelines stretch from days into months.

Energy security is not just about carbon—it is about control and recovery.

What would actually make the system resilient:

If the aim is a low-carbon Britain that can survive extreme weather, honesty matters. A resilient system would include:
• Renewables as a major component—but not the only one • Firm low-carbon power such as nuclear and hydro • Strategic energy storage sized for winter, not summer press releases • Grid hardening, including selective undergrounding of cables in high-risk areas, better insulation, and weather-resistant substations • Redundancy, not single-point failure

Undergrounding or offshoring could help dramatically reduce storm damage.

So do decentralised microgrids for hospitals, water systems, and emergency services. These options exist—but they are rarely mentioned because they complicate the narrative.

The real danger: loss of public trust

The greatest risk is not technical—it is political.

If Britain pushes ahead with a system that fails during its first major winter crisis, the backlash could set back climate policy for a generation. People will not forgive being told a system was “secure” while they sit in freezing homes during blackouts.

This is the real hidden secret: resilience has been quietly deprioritised in favour of targets and slogans.

Of course if the green book principles had been followed, which are there to protect the public, this would all be in the public domain. Equally these points could be debated and refuted by National Grid, with evidence based data, to openly assess the risks and design mitigations.

It’s not too late for our Government, who have a duty to protect us, to stop and re-assess the risks fully, before it’s too late and we start to read headlines like ‘thousands die in the great big U.K freeze, due to past political ineptness’

Decarbonisation is necessary. But it must be built on engineering truth, not wishful thinking.

Extreme weather does not care about ideology—and neither does the power grid.

From: [redacted]
To: Norwich to Tilbury
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Fwd: Mark Pym follow up to submission today - Joining instructions for the open floor hearing 2 RE: EN020027 - Norwich to Tilbury - Mark Pym
Date: 12 February 2026 16:35:27

> follow-up submission:
>
> At the Open Floor Hearing on 12th Feb, I raised concerns about the renaming of the scheme from “East Anglia GREEN” to “Norwich to Tilbury / Great Grid Upgrade”. This change is not a cosmetic branding issue; it materially alters how the project’s purpose and impacts are perceived.
>
> The original title emphasised environmental benefit, whereas the current title reflects a long-distance overhead transmission corridor with significant landscape, heritage and community impacts. The reasons for this change are therefore directly relevant to the lawfulness and fairness of consultation and to the weight placed on the applicant’s need case.
>
> I respectfully request that the Examining Authority require the Applicant to disclose the rationale for this rebranding, including when the decision was taken and the reasons for it, so that interested parties may properly assess whether the consultation met the standards of fairness required under the Planning Act 2008, the EIA Regulations and the Aarhus Convention

Thank you for your consideration to the above.

Kind regards

Mark Pym

> Sent from my iPhone

Outlook

Fwd: Submission - [redacted] Norwich to Tilbury pylons

From Mark Pym [redacted]
Date Thu 2026-02-19 19:54
To Norwich to Tilbury <NorwichtoTilbury@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc [redacted]

Subject: Submission

Please confirm receipt by return.

Mark Pym - [redacted]

Additional Submission to the Planning Inspectorate instruct National Grid to complete a a Full Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), in accordance with the legislation.

Yesterday I drove around the area, where I used to live and walk, with my late grandfather, and what struck me was the intensive building and roads that have pushed the wildlife, that I used to track as a youngster, further into the Walthams, and directly into the pylon route.

Therefore I have added this request for the Planning Inspectorate consideration.

Subject: Ecological Displacement, Cumulative Impacts, and Required Assessment for the Proposed National Grid Infrastructure pylon Scheme Affecting Chelmsford–Walthams Corridor

1. Introduction

This submission concerns the significant ecological pressures arising from recent and ongoing development in the Chelmsford area, particularly the large-scale housing expansion at Springfield and Beaulieu Park. These developments have already displaced wildlife populations into the remaining green spaces and ecological corridors extending toward and in the Walthams and in many cases wildlife has fled this area due to multiple infrastructure and construction pressures. This is impossible to ignore given the size and scale of the developments.

The proposed National Grid infrastructure scheme introduces a second major disturbance into a landscape where ecological resilience has already been materially reduced. It is therefore essential that the Examining Authority requires a far more rigorous ecological assessment and mitigation strategy than would ordinarily be expected.

2. Context: Prior Displacement and Reduced Ecological Capacity

The extensive housing development in Springfield/Beaulieu Park has resulted in the loss of substantial semi-natural habitat. The scale is mind blowing.

As a direct consequence, wildlife has been displaced into the remaining green spaces and corridors to the north and west, including those around the Walthams.

These areas now function as refuge habitats for species that previously occupied a much wider landscape. Their ecological carrying capacity is already under strain. Any further displacement, whether temporary during construction or permanent due to operational land-take, risks local population collapse for several species.

This context is essential: the baseline is no longer a theoretical “pre-development” landscape but a compressed, stressed ecological system. If you know the area I am sure you could not agree otherwise.

3. Requirement for a Full Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Given the foreseeable risk of significant effects on protected species and habitats, the Applicant must not rely on screening alone. A full Habitats Regulations Assessment, including an Appropriate Assessment, is required.

The HRA must explicitly address:

• The displacement already caused by recent housing development and roads plus the significant increased traffic in the area.

Displaced from the pylons, wildlife will be driven in these traffic flows and slaughtered, as these are no longer quiet roads.

• The reduced availability of alternative habitat - there is simply no where for the wildlife to go now.

• The risk that further displacement will exceed the ecological carrying capacity of the Walthams corridor

• The potential for adverse effects on site integrity, even where the project is not directly within a designated site

This is consistent with the Habitats Regulations as applied to NSIPs and with established case law on cumulative and in-combination effects.

4. Requirement for a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA)

The Applicant’s ecological assessment must be expanded to include a robust cumulative impact assessment covering:

• The Springfield/Beaulieu Park housing expansion
• Associated road and infrastructure works
• The resulting wildlife displacement into the Walthams
• The additional displacement and habitat fragmentation caused by the National Grid scheme

Assessing the project in isolation would be contrary to the EIA Regulations and to PINS guidance on cumulative effects. The ecological baseline has already shifted; the CIA must reflect this reality.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Functional Habitat Replacement

BNG cannot be treated as a numerical offset exercise. The Applicant must demonstrate:

• That BNG proposals address displaced wildlife, not only on-site losses
• That habitat creation or enhancement occurs within the same ecological corridor, ensuring functional connectivity
• That proposed habitats (what are they?) are capable of supporting the species currently using the Walthams refuge areas
• That monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are secured for the long term

BNG delivered at distant or ecologically disconnected sites would fail to mitigate the actual impact pathway.

6. Ecological Mitigation Hierarchy and Corridor Protection

The statutory mitigation hierarchy must be applied rigorously:

1. Avoid impacts through route and design changes
2. Minimise unavoidable impacts
3. Mitigate through on-site habitat retention and enhancement
4. Compensate only where no alternative exists

Given the already-compressed ecological landscape, avoidance and minimisation must be prioritised.

The remaining green corridors in the Walthams now constitute critical ecological infrastructure. Their fragmentation would have disproportionate effects compared with a less-pressured landscape.

7. Requirement for a Displacement Impact Model

The Applicant must provide a quantitative displacement model addressing:

• Species currently using the Walthams corridor
• Habitat capacity and ecological thresholds
• Predicted displacement from the National Grid scheme
• Whether the receiving habitats can support additional individuals
• The scale and location of required habitat creation if capacity is exceeded

This modelling is standard practice where displacement is foreseeable and must be included.

8. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

A legally enforceable CEMP must be secured, including:

• Seasonal restrictions on vegetation clearance
• Maintenance of temporary wildlife corridors during construction
• On-site ecologists with stop-work authority
• A minimum 5–10 year post-construction monitoring programme

These measures must be secured by Requirement and not left to post-consent negotiation.

9. Conclusion

The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to require the Applicant to undertake:

• A full HRA including Appropriate Assessment
• A comprehensive cumulative impact assessment
• A corridor-based BNG strategy
• A displacement impact model
• A strengthened CEMP with enforceable ecological safeguards

Without these measures, the scheme risks causing irreversible ecological harm in a landscape already under exceptional pressure from recent development. The remaining green spaces around the Walthams are now essential refuges for displaced wildlife; their integrity must be protected.

Thank you for reviewing this latest submission.

Outlook

Interested Party Reference number: [redacted]

From Mark Pym[redacted]outlook.com>
Date Thu 2026-02-19 11:46
To Norwich to Tilbury <NorwichtoTilbury@planninginspectorate.gov.uk>
Cc [redacted]>

[redacted]

Interested Party Reference number: [redacted]

Subject: RE: EN020027 – Norwich to Tilbury
I write further to my previous submission and following up with the point I made to the Planning Inspectorate's, about the critical need to review strategic resilience of pylons, to bad weather and re-referencing major concerns about gas stores/other energy options, being hollowed out of energy resources, whilst we chase targets.

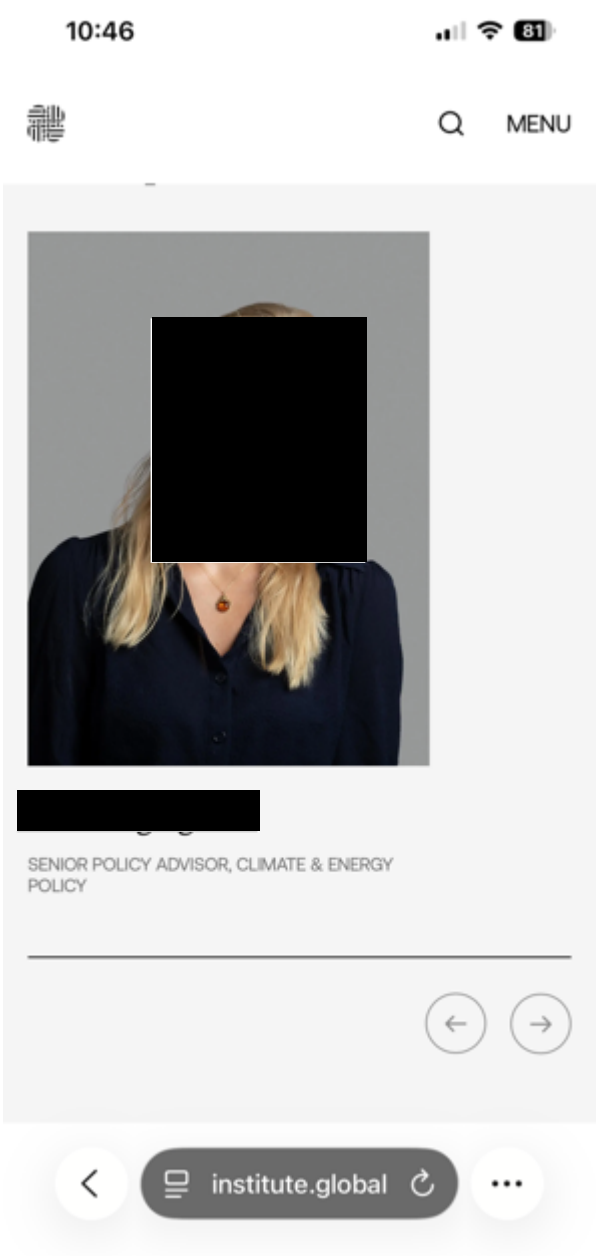
I have already requested that the Planning Inspectorate, fully ascertain and risk assess, if resilience (alternative forms of power) are available in extreme conditions, and now would like to add an additional point.

Can the Planning Inspectorate please ensure they are satisfied that without much more due diligence on costings (NG's costings are years out of date), from NG/Government, the project costs will not increase, and cost everyone much more money, because a balanced/diversified energy approach, has not been followed (including that of not having other forms of power available such as gas, as part of our strategic resilience strategy.

In doing this, can the Planning Inspectorate please refer to Tony Blair's institute's, latest published report on energy and the extensive cost accelerators, if different decisions are not urgently took, relating to so called clean power by 2030!

https://institute.global/insights/climate-and-energy/why-britain-needs-an-energy-strategy-reset

Please can I request that they Planning Inspectorate, ask Tony Blair's advisor (see below) to present to them, about the importance of strategic resilience, which is why no decisions can be made, in my opinion, until a full U.K strategic energy resilience review is completed!



Mark Pym
[redacted]

[redacted]

We help create, build and develop extraordinary individuals, teams, cultures, workplaces, organisations and communities

[redacted]

[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 26 February 2026 18:06
To: Norwich to Tilbury
Subject: Interested Party Reference number: [redacted]

Categories: Deadline Submission

[redacted]

Interested Party Reference number: F03643BC2

Subject: RE: EN020027 – Norwich to Tilbury

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

I am writing to register a formal and serious objection to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury overhead line as it affects Fordham and the surrounding rural area. This is further to my email on this earlier today.

The scale of construction activity indicated in the submitted plans is wholly disproportionate for a small rural parish with limited infrastructure resilience. The volume of temporary land take, construction compounds, access tracks and heavy goods vehicle movements shown within the Order Limits would fundamentally disrupt daily life for residents for a prolonged period.

Fordham Road and the surrounding rural road network are already in poor structural condition. Sections are narrow, degrading and in places visibly crumbling. They are not designed for sustained heavy construction traffic, abnormal loads or crane movements. The Transport Assessment appears to underestimate the vulnerability of this road network and the safety implications of routing significant construction traffic through it. The roads are already in an appalling state of repair and in places dangerous. This project will significantly worsen this.

In addition, this area is prone to flooding, particularly in and around the River Colne floodplain. Introducing heavy plant, temporary trackways and intensified vehicle movements onto flood-sensitive land presents clear risks to drainage patterns, road integrity and habitat stability. The interaction between flood risk, soil compaction, runoff and ecological disturbance has not, in my view, been robustly demonstrated as acceptable.

It is also essential that cumulative impacts are properly recognised. Fordham and nearby settlements have already absorbed substantial housing growth in recent years. This has materially increased baseline traffic levels and placed sustained pressure on local infrastructure and services. The proposal would layer a major nationally significant infrastructure construction programme on top of an already stressed rural transport network.

The visual mapping shows multiple red-lined areas, access spurs and working zones concentrated in a relatively small geographic area. For a parish of this scale, the cumulative footprint is extensive. The suggestion that most impacts are "temporary" does not negate the fact that several years of heavy construction activity can cause long-term physical and environmental consequences.

Given:

- The fragile and substandard condition of local roads
- The known flood vulnerability of the landscape
- The cumulative pressure from recent major housing development
- The proximity to sensitive riverine and agricultural habitats

I formally request that the Planning Inspectorate visit this area and also instructing a strengthened and fully updated Habitat Regulations Assessment, for this section of the route, with explicit consideration of cumulative impacts, floodplain ecology, hydrological change, soil compaction effects and construction-phase disturbance.

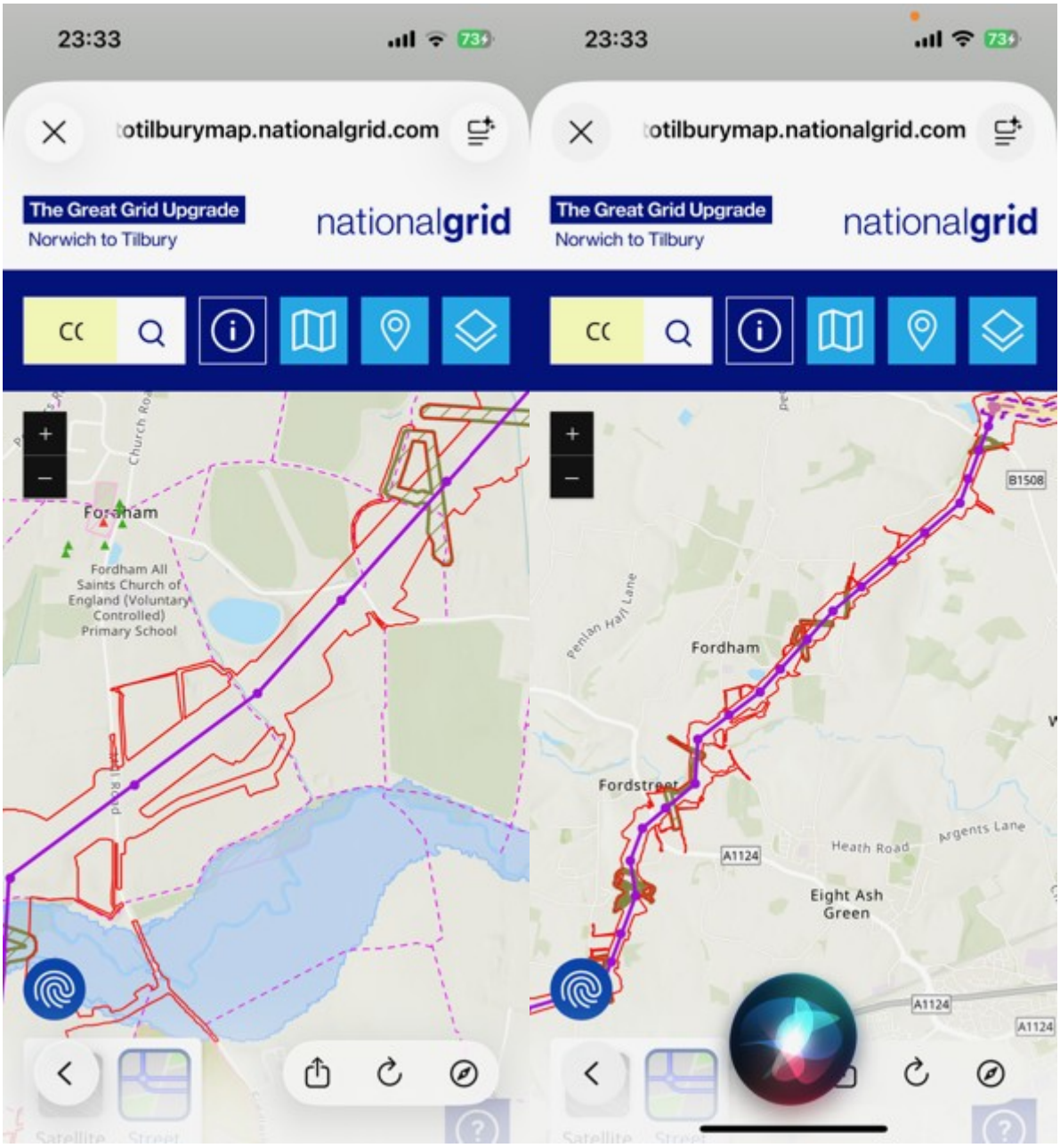
Furthermore, I ask that the adequacy of the Transport Assessment for the Fordham section be independently scrutinised, with particular regard to road condition, safety, flood interaction and realistic construction traffic volumes.

This community should not bear a disproportionate burden because it is rural and perceived as low resistance. National infrastructure must not come at the expense of local environmental resilience and public safety.

I respectfully request that these concerns be given full and serious consideration before any decision is made.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Pym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The Great Grid Upgrade
Norwich to Tilbury
nationalgrid
Fordham
Fordham All Saints Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Church Road
Pound Road
23:33
otilburymap.nationalgrid.com
The Great Grid Upgrade
Norwich to Tilbury
nationalgrid
B1508
Fordham
Fordstreet
Heath Road
Argents Lane
A1124
Eight Ash Green
A1124
A1124

[redacted]

From: [redacted] >
Sent: 26 February 2026 18:21
To: Norwich to Tilbury
Subject: Interested party [redacted]

Categories: Deadline Submission

EN020027 - Norwich to Tilbury

My final submission before the first deadline closure, is that I am concerned that the current planning and assessment for the proposed National Grid pylon route around Fordham and the Colchester area has not adequately considered the potential for undiscovered archaeological remains. This landscape is one of Britain's most archaeologically rich areas, with evidence of long-term human activity from the Iron Age through Roman times, and continued occupation into the early medieval period. The town of Camulodunum (modern Colchester) was the first Roman capital of Britain and has yielded extensive archaeological remains, including roads, buildings, and defensive works dating back nearly 2,000 years. Recent major excavations in Colchester city centre continue to reveal Roman public streets and structures beneath modern ground surfaces, underscoring how much remains unrecorded beneath the surface.

There are also active archaeological digs in and around the Fordham area that have already uncovered significant features, including Roman burials and Roman road surfaces surviving in situ discoveries which illustrate that substantial heritage assets may exist throughout the proposed corridor.

Additionally, archaeological work in the wider region has demonstrated early industrial activity such as Bronze-working and Iron Age metalworking sites, and there is evidence of early Saxon settlement and post-Roman occupation in the Colchester area.

The river line and surrounding villages, were a major route for local groups and tribes, in ancient England and is rich in history.

Given this context, I respectfully request that a comprehensive, professionally-resourced archaeological assessment (including geophysical survey and trial trenching where appropriate) is completed along the full length of the proposed pylon route before any construction is authorised, to avoid irreversible harm to heritage assets that may lie undiscovered beneath the surface.

Thank you for considering this request.

Best regards

Mark Pym

From: [redacted]
To: Norwich to Tilbury
Subject: Interested Party Reference number: P[redacted]
Date: 26 February 2026 17:15:10

Interested Party Reference number: [redacted]

Subject: RE: EN020027 – Norwich to Tilbury
In addition to the previous information I have sent I now wish to request that that Planning Inspectorate reviews indeed if the right solution has been selected by National Grid.

This is very important as it goes to the heart of meaningful consultation.

My summary is below:

A Call for Evidence-Led Infrastructure — And Consistency With Environmental Commitments

The current examination by the Planning Inspectorate of the proposed Norwich to Tilbury pylons scheme presents a defining national test.

The question is not whether grid reinforcement is required. It is whether the right solution, technologically, environmentally and strategically, is being pursued.

Recent commentary has again attempted to frame opposition as resistance to progress. That is a mischaracterisation.

The real concern is whether credible, lower-impact alternatives have been properly assessed before imposing 50-metre lattice pylons, which are old technology, across some of the most rural and environmentally sensitive landscapes, in East Anglia.

Viable Alternatives Require Proper Examination

Before defaulting to legacy overhead lines, the following must be robustly compared to:

- High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) underground cabling, now widely deployed internationally.
- Cable ploughing installation techniques, which significantly reduce landscape scarring compared to open trenching.
- Offshore coordination of wind connections, reducing inland reinforcement.
- Upgrading the existing grid with advanced high-capacity conductors, capable of transmitting substantially more power on existing or reduced-height structures.

Even where overhead lines are deemed necessary, modern conductor technology can reduce the number and scale of pylons. It is legitimate to ask whether the current design reflects best available engineering practice, or historical standardisation.

Alignment With National Environmental Commitments

In his interview last year with the National Trust, the Prime Minister (see below) reiterated his government's commitment to protecting the natural environment while delivering infrastructure.

He spoke about balancing growth with stewardship and ensuring future generations inherit landscapes not diminished by short-term decisions.

Hilary McGrady interviews Prime Minister Keir Starmer - NTAB - Association of National Trust Members in Belgium

Those words matter.

This project crosses productive farmland, sensitive habitats, flood-prone zones and communities already absorbing substantial development pressure. If national leadership has committed to environmental protection as a central pillar of policy, then that principle must be visible in decision-making here.

The Planning Inspectorate has a duty not only to examine need, but to ensure that environmental safeguards are rigorously applied and not procedurally abbreviated.

The Case for a Full Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

There is growing concern that cumulative impacts along the route; including:

- Major housing expansion,
- Flooding vulnerabilities,
- Agricultural disruption,
- Biodiversity fragmentation,

have not been comprehensively assessed in combination.

Fordham is a case in point. Significant housing development is already underway there, placing pressure on roads, drainage systems and local habitats. Introducing major transmission infrastructure without a full, route-wide Habitat Regulations Assessment risks piecemeal evaluation rather than strategic oversight.

Given the scale and permanence of the proposal, it is reasonable and proportionate to request:

- A pause in the examination process, and
- A comprehensive HRA conducted along the entire route, including Fordham and other high-growth locations, assessing cumulative and in-combination effects. I will write to you separately on Fordham setting out the case in more depth.

Anything less risks undermining public confidence in the integrity of the planning system.

A Question of Modern Standards

Infrastructure decisions taken now will shape the landscape for at least half a century.

The public and myself are not asking for obstruction.

It is asking for evidence. What's the evidence that the proposal put forward by National Grid is the best one for the public and the medium to long term? How does this compare against the other, very viable alternatives?

We are asking for **modern engineering** to be properly considered.

We are asking for national environmental commitments to be honoured in practice, not just in interview.

The Prime minister has made a commitment to the environment, in his interview in 2025 with the National Trust, and he committed to its protection and this project, before it goes ahead, needs to evidence this.

Hilary McGrady interviews Prime Minister Keir Starmer - NTAB - Association of National Trust Members in Belgium

I would hope that all the Planning Inspectorate are already members of the National Trust and have

access to this interview, however if you do not, I am sure the National Trust can provide this as part of my evidence submission, as I do not have authority to copy and paste this.

It's very pertinent to this infrastructure project and I would ask, that as part of my submission the Planning Inspectorate obtain a copy and read it -thank you

If the current proposal represents the least harmful, most future-proof and proportionate solution, it should withstand transparent comparison and full environmental scrutiny.

If it does not, it must be reconsidered.

The Planning Inspectorate has an opportunity here to demonstrate that 21st-century infrastructure planning in the United Kingdom is aligned with both technological advancement and environmental responsibility.

That opportunity should not be rushed.

Thank you for considering this.

Mark Pym
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