

Good morning, I'm Graeme Crook and would like to thank you for allowing me the chance to represent myself today. I have lived in Writtle for just over 15 years, an area surrounded by ancient woodland and mostly flat, arable farmland, all Green Belt land.

The proposed pylons would cause significant harm to the local environment, devastating the rich nature that is abundant along the route. Since Day 1, my view is that National Grid have presented on their preferred option - at no point have they consulted on viable options, or in my opinion given sufficient evidence that alternatives have been properly explored. I have been consistently told by National Grid that the project must be live by 2030, to allow the East Anglian windfarms a connection to the grid, so that the power can be used to allow our economy to grow. However, the Hiorns report states that the power would not be needed until at least 2035 - the right thing to do here would be for National Grid to be asked to provide substantial evidence on fully costed alternatives - and where undergrounding that this is HVDC. Not rushing into a pylons first approach, particularly when elsewhere in the UK undergrounding is preferred.

The amount of information relevant to the project is incredible - how can I be expected to make informed representations with over 400 documents and hundreds of thousands of pages to digest?

In the immediate area, the pylons would curve round Writtle, and on one of the visualisations (from the Highwood Road), you would be able to see at least 18 pylons - far exceeding the visible distance from the National Grid documents. Why should the countryside be trashed when there are better and more viable alternatives? (*Doc 7.12 Part 6, P.131*)

On a more personal level, I have serious concerns over the risk of EMF to my young family, with the property being just over 100m from the route. The National Grid EMF expert could not provide me with sufficient evidence at the consultations to resolve my concerns. I even asked if he would live at that distance from pylons and feel safe, to which he said he wouldn't choose to. I also have not heard a convincing answer as to why pipelines hundreds of metres from the pylons would have to be protected, yet I will not be affected in my house which is much closer.

Locally, flooding is of great concern, the fields do flood in winter, having hundreds of tonnes of concrete uphill and a haul road will do nothing to help this and is likely to significantly increase the flooding and potentially affect my property too.

I also object to being told by National Grid that I will not be affected by the project. I acknowledge that the project does not touch my land, yet I am surrounded by a field that is all within the draft order limits and a main A road being used to connect to the haul road. Hundreds of lorries per day will pass within metres of the house, a property designated as a heritage asset, which will be affected by the vibrations. Then there would be the noise and dust every day for the years of construction - I'm told that this won't impact me, but local knowledge tells me otherwise as I live in the direction of the prevailing wind from the proposed route, across open fields. I strongly contest to not being affected - as a result of the plans, I am unlikely to be able to sell the property and if I did, could well have negative equity - many years of work and mortgage payments all gone.

My mental health is already suffering through the years of uncertainty and knowing that at present, there is nothing I can do about the proposal - to at least be financially unaffected if this did proceed. The ongoing battle has already taken far too much of my time, valuable time that should have been better spent with my young family, time I will not get again.

In summary, I do not feel that National Grid have listened adequately to the concerns raised throughout the project or addressed these in a satisfactory way. There must also be more hearings around alternatives, with these being fully costed.

Thank you