
Open hearings Tuesday 10 February. Copy of text; additional comments

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Reference no. [REDACTED]

Please see below the text of my submission on 10 February together with additional comment:

Pylons examination stage 10 February 2026
Thank you.

My points refer mainly to the Waveney Valley section of the 181km proposed pylons route:

Designated a 'valued landscape', the Waveney Valley sustains Wortham Ling, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lying parallel to the proposed 50-metre-high pylons path. These will obscure the views of Roydon Church, Roydon Fen, a local nature reserve, the Angles way (a national footpath).

National Grid originally agreed to two kilometres of undergrounding through the Waveney Valley. That decision was withdrawn in favour of 70 years of old technology lattice pylons. NG's reason was 'ecological damage' – an inconsistent and inadequate opinion since undergrounding is still to proceed in the Dedham Vale, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where cables are going underground. However, two kilometres is not enough. NG conceded that undergrounding should be extended to protect nearby houses and Wortham Ling from any impact of their sealing and compounds.

There are many benefits to HVDC undergrounding as opposed to AC cables: they reduce transmission losses; there's better power flow, stability and control; lower Electro-magnetic fields; space and visual impact; flexibility in network design and more cost effectiveness over long distances.

Pylons and bird strikes go together

Redgrave and Lopham Fen is the largest valley fen in England and one of the most important wetlands in Europe. Collision with power lines and electrocution from power line infrastructure kill of over 100 species of wild birds in the UK – some of our best loved: barn swallow, common swift, barn owl, tawny owl, geese and swans. Birds en route to the Fen via a Waveney Valley with pylons are unsuspecting victims.

The pylons route also includes part of the proposed UNESCO World Heritage East Coast Flyway. Future generations would forgive neither the permanent destruction of habitats critical to migration, nor the risk of mortality to migrating birds along the Flyway.

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

Additional comments

It is evident from the open hearings that National Grid was unable to to answer very basic questions with regard to the proposed pylons route, hence the very revealing fact that they asked for more time to consider and check.

It is imperative that there are further sessions at which NG can attempt to answer the questions from those speaking from the floor. As a starting point, assessment of NG's insistence on pylons rather than the less damaging, strategic offshore solution. These points need thorough and proper investigation by the examiners.

It is critical that NG clarifies that they have adhered to the Treasury Green Book. And if not, why not?

As you will see from my text above (10 February, benefits to HVDC) the next stages of the examination should make sure that NG is transparent with reference to the costs of the proposed pylons project and why they have not engaged properly with communities drastically affected.

VERY IMPORTANT

Acid sulphate soils and their risk of oxidisation

The soilscapes presented by NG do not align with the mapping of the Soil Survey of England and Wales. It has been noted that Dr David Dent warned NG of the presence of these soils in the Waveney Valley (and most probably elsewhere, e.g. Dedham Vale). However, NG has not carried out the recognised tests for potential acid sulphate soils. Proper testing requires either 3 months of incubation under oxidising conditions or hydrogen peroxide treatment. Neither method is reported in NGs documentation. NG has fallen far short of required standards.

- Why has NG not tested rigorously and scientifically for these soils across all 3 counties?**
- What assessment has been made of the environmental and human health impacts when acid sulphate soils are exposed during construction?**
- What is the management plan if acid sulphate soils are encountered?**
- And what assessment has been made of the risk to the pylons themselves?**

I hope very much that the examiners will consider all the points above. The distress among communities is palpable. NG needs to look again at their project and realise that the offshore solution is the right one for this country.

**Yours sincerely
Caroline Blacker**



