



Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project (Application Reference: EN020027)

Open Floor Hearing Thursday 12th February 2026

Statement by Ruth Mabbutt, MRTPI, Senior Planning Officer / NSIP Lead on behalf of Chelmsford City Council, Registration [REDACTED]

Thank you Sir / Maam. Our full case 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 object to the Project.

Our preferred strategic option is an integrated offshore technology that minimises onshore transmission infrastructure and doesn't 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.

We understand that the climate emergency requires us to help support the replacement of fossil fuels, but this doesn't 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 - 50m high pylons and overhead lines of an industrial character within our rural landscape. The Project would appear vast and incongruous. 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. They would lead to 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 Green Belt.

It would lead to the harmful loss of the character and beauty of the countryside over a wide area, reducing its scenic beauty and tranquillity, aesthetic enjoyment, sense of place, history and identity.

We are particularly concerned that the Project would irreversibly harm Chelmsford's 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 1 listed Langleys House park and garden.

We are disappointed that NGET have discounted our request for the route to be resited underground or T pylons used. The proposed lower height pylons would have a wider stance and heavier frame compared to full height pylons and 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.

We are particularly concerned regarding the impacts on residential amenity. In some places the route would pass less than 200 metres from residential properties. We are concerned that the pylons would appear overbearing, dominant and stacked in views, leading to a harmful change in outlook.

The proposed construction working hours of 07:00 am to 7:00 pm Mondays to Fridays and 7:00 am to 5pm at weekends and bank holidays are unacceptable, they are not typical Chelmsford construction hours and 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, Best and Most Versatile agricultural land and harmful effects on the local economy and highway network.

Whilst the Project would deliver significant benefits at a national level, locally we don't consider this would overcome the harm at the local level.

The application is silent on mitigation, community benefits and compensation.

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 substantial funded landscape and visual compensation scheme.

Additional mitigation should be introduced as standard to mitigate against the identified harm to affected areas, as well as reasonable compensation and benefits in the form of a Skills and Employment fund, funding for heritage and Community Benefits.

Should the DCO be granted, we, together with the other Host 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 day time period to discharge a requirement is particularly concerning. It's too short to enable thorough consideration of the requirement, and allow proper consultation with consultees, plus associated re-consultation. We suggest at least 56 days to deal with each requirement.

If granted, the Norwich to Tilbury Project will lead to great and permanent change to Chelmsford and its environs, and it is essential that it is accompanied by appropriate mitigation to offset its substantial harm, together with a workable DCO that meets the needs of everyone.

We look forward to engaging more in the examination process over the next months. Thank you.