



Norwich to Tilbury

EN020027

Post-Hearing Submission for Open Floor Hearing 1

Babergh District Council



Deadline 1
26 February 2026



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Glossary of Acronyms

<i>DCO</i>	<i>Development Consent Order</i>
<i>ES</i>	<i>Environmental Statement</i>
<i>NSIP</i>	<i>Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project</i>
<i>PPA</i>	<i>Planning Performance Agreement</i>

“BDC” refers to Babergh District Council; “MSDC” refers to Mid Suffolk District Council; “BMSDC” refers to BDC and MSDC jointly; “SCC” refers to Suffolk County Council; and “the Councils” refers to BDC, MSDC, and SCC jointly.

Purpose of this Submission

The document has been prepared by Babergh District Council to provide a written summary of the representations made by the Council at Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) held on 11 February 2026. Examination Library references are used throughout to assist readers.

Written Summary of Representations made at Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)

Agenda Item	Title of Matter and BDC's Written Summary of Representation	References
1	Welcome, introductions, and arrangements for the hearing	
	<p>Babergh District Council were represented by the following team in person:</p> <p>1.1 Councillor John Ward</p> <p>Attending colleagues were supported by the following team virtually:</p> <p>-</p>	
2	Purpose of the open floor hearing	
3	Confirmation of those who have notified the ExA of a wish to be heard at the open floor hearing and the order in which parties will be heard	
4	Representations by interested parties and others	
	<u>Written Summary of Oral Submission of Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) - Session 2 - Part 1 by Babergh District Council</u>	



Agenda Item	Title of Matter and BDC’s Written Summary of Representation	References
	<p><u>18:18 - Cllr John Ward</u></p> <p>My name is Councillor John Ward; I am the leader of Babergh District Council.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to address the examination.</p> <p>The full details of the Council’s concerns are set out in our relevant representation and other submissions so I will take this opportunity summarise some matters that are of particular relevance to the council and our residents. Maintaining our in-principle objection to the project Babergh District Council cites the conclusion of the Hiorns report that the current transmission network capacity, including the Bradford to Twinstead reinforcement, which is currently under construction, is likely to be sufficient for committed connections until 2035 and that, as a result, it is reasonable to call for a delay to the consideration of this project to allow appropriate analysis of alternative options.</p> <p>I also doubt that the current project could be delivered by 2030 or 2031, which calls into question the assessment that it is the only viable option deliverable within the timescale. Large infrastructure projects are notorious for overrunning and exceeding estimated costs. The council maintains a preference for high voltage direct current undergrounding of the entire length of the project to mitigate its considerable impacts. This is particularly important when considering the proposed underground sections of Norwich to Tilbury. The impact on the Dedham Vale National Landscape will be particularly devastating, with a very wide swathe cut through one of the most beautiful and historic parts of the region.</p> <p>The impact of the overpowering cable ceiling end compounds on those living nearby cannot be ignored either. Underground HVDC cables would have far less short term and long term consequences for this sensitive environment. Babergh is also concerned that the arguments that have been used to justify the overhead AC solution seem to contradict what has been said about the proposed solution for the eastern green links. National Grid has decided on an undersea HVDC solution for these, arguing that it is better technology, is more controllable, carries a much lower delivery risk with comparable capital costs and much lower lifetime costs than AC.</p>	



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	<p>All these should also apply equally to an underground HVDC link for Norwich to Tilbury. Babergh wants to see a full options appraisal and a detailed cost comparison of all alternative solutions. Price alone should not be the principal consideration when selecting the preferred option. We remain convinced from comments received that our residents would happily pay a few pounds extra a year for the environmental and other benefits of a better solution, particularly one that, by National Grid's own admission, is a better technology. Babergh has over 3000 listed buildings and numerous other designated and non-designated heritage assets, which we are proud to seek to protect.</p> <p>The applicant has failed to meet the requirements of National Policy Statement EN-1 in their consideration of non-designated heritage assets, undermining the value of their overall heritage assessment and risking significant harm to the historic environment of the district. Babergh is very concerned about the potential impact on the grade one listed Little Wenham Castle, a scheduled monument and the grade one listed All Saints Church and medieval barns nearby. The castle is a unique example of a semi fortified 13th century structure in East Anglia, built using some of the first English made bricks.</p> <p>The landscape of the district is highly valued, with a national landscape designation, many cultural and historic associations and sensitive views that contribute to the unique character of Babergh District and the wider region. All of these, of course, immortalised by Constable and Gainsborough, whose birthdays we're celebrating this year and next year. Those are important birthdays. The applicant states that the project will have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts, which are not considered to be adequately mitigated or compensated. Although we welcome the proposed funding of a feasibility study for the removal or rationalisation of existing 132 kV overhead lines within the district.</p> <p>We also have significant concerns regarding the cumulative impacts of the scheme, its geographic and temporal relationship with other projects being delivered in the eastern region, and the impact of a failure of appropriate coordination and mitigation on residents, businesses and the environment. Of course, grid reinforcement is necessary and all options have impacts. Residents do understand that, but we have never had a proper national debate about the</p>	



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	<p>trade-offs between costs and impacts of all the new energy projects. No one knows how much extra people might be prepared to pay to reduce those impacts. We must understand this and feed it into the the options appraisals for each and every project. Babergh district council maintains a position of objection in principle to this particular solution.</p> <p>We believe that we need a 21st century grid built using 21st century technology, not upgrading a 20th century grid with 20th century technology. Thank you.</p>	
5	Close of Open Floor Hearing	