



Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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Dear Sarah

Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an order granting development consent for the Norwich to Tilbury project

I write to register the statutory safeguarding position of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with regard to the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application that has now been registered with respect to the above proposed project.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding Team represents the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as a consultee in UK planning and energy consenting systems to ensure that development does not compromise or degrade the operation of defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites or training resources such as the UK Military Low Flying System.

The proposed development will feature approximately 159km of new overhead powerlines supported on approximately 510 lattice structures including towers (typically 50m in height) and some gantries (Typically up to 15m in height), cable sealing end compounds, a new East Anglia Connection Node substation and other associated infrastructure.

The application site occupies the statutory aerodrome height, technical and bridstrike safeguarding zones surrounding Wattisham Station and the statutory technical safeguarding zones relating to the East 2 WAM (Wide Area Multilateration) Network.

East 2 WAM Network Statutory Technical Safeguarding Zones

The technical safeguarding zones define areas within which the height of development, the materials used in construction, and the potential introduction of sources of electro-magnetic fields are of particular concern as they can impact upon the effective operation of the transmitter/receiver sites that feature in the WAM Network.

The MOD have previously been consulted at the Scoping (response sent dated 30 November 2022), the Applicants Environmental Impact Assessment (response sent 16 May 2024), and the Pre-examination of the DCO (response sent 25 November 2025) stages for this development.

Following the MOD response to the Pre-examination consultation, the Applicant's Representatives have provided additional information to the MOD with regard to the proposed locations of certain electricity towers. The MOD has completed technical assessments using this information which have confirmed that a section of the overhead power line route, as currently proposed, will physically impact upon a microwave link that forms part of the safeguarded East 2 WAM Network. The disruption of this microwave link will affect the timely conveyance of information received from en-route aircraft which is used by air traffic controllers to derive the identity of an aircraft and its altitude to facilitate their delivery of accurate air traffic control services to air space users in this region..

In a meeting between the MOD and the Applicant's Representatives on 19 February 2026, the MOD was made aware that the grid references provided for the electricity towers and/or gantries are subject to a lateral tolerance of 20m in any direction. Further technical assessments will now be undertaken to determine if further impacts may be caused taking account of these limits of variation and the expected height profile of relevant sections of overhead cables.

At this time the MOD maintains an objection to the development, as currently proposed, due to the unacceptable impact it would have upon the effective operation of the East 2 WAM Network for the provision of air traffic control services.

Wattisham Station Statutory Aerodrome Safeguarding Zones

Within the statutory aerodrome safeguarding zones, the principal concern of the MOD is that structures, whether permanent or temporary, may project into the safeguarded critical air space surrounding the aerodrome within which aircraft using the aerodrome will be engaged in critical stages of flight.

In addition, there are various transmitter/receiver technical installations located at the aerodrome including radar systems and ground to air communication which are used to provide air traffic services and aid air traffic navigation. There are dedicated technical site safeguarding zones within which the heights of structures, the materials used in construction, and the potential introduction of sources of electro-magnetic fields are of particular concern as they can impact upon the effectiveness of these navigational aids.

The overhead line development corridor passes through the statutory aerodrome height safeguarding zones protecting the critical airspace encompassing Wattisham Station. It also occupies technical safeguarding zones embedded in the aerodrome safeguarding zone that protect the effective operation of air navigational aids. The proposed development will be located approximately 1.74km northeast of the boundary of Wattisham Station at its closest point. It occupies zones in which development with a height of, or exceeding, 45.7m above ground level are of relevance. Therefore, there is the potential that towers, overhead cables and temporal structures or plant equipment required during construction may impact upon aerodrome safeguarding requirements.

The MOD has undertaken assessments to determine what effects the proposed development might cause using the additional information provided on behalf of the Applicant on 27 November 2025. However, in view of the further information provided by the Applicant's Representatives during a meeting on 19 February 2026, further assessments will need to be undertaken to account for the vertical and lateral limits of variation proposed in the siting and design of lattice towers as well as for crane or temporal structures that may be used during construction. These assessments will determine the need for any siting and design parameters, or other measures, that may be necessary to maintain the safe and effective operation of navigational aids as well as the critical airspace encompassing Wattisham Station.

The proposed development also crosses through the statutory aerodrome birdstrike safeguarding zone that encompasses Wattisham Station. Within this zone the principal concern of the MOD is that the creation of new habitats may attract and support populations of those large and/or flocking bird species hazardous to aviation safety close to the aerodrome.

Having reviewed the proposals, the MOD have identified no safeguarding objection with regard to birdstrike.

Military Low Flying Training Areas

The proposed development occupies Low Flying Areas 5 and 10 (LFA 5 and LFA 10) within which military aircraft may conduct low level flight training. The addition of a development featuring tall or narrow profile structures such as electricity towers in this locality has the potential to introduce a physical obstruction to military aircraft engaged in low flying training activities in this locality. To address this, it will be necessary for details of the completed overhead line development to be submitted for inclusion on lower airspace charts. In addition, during the construction phase the MOD would wish to be notified in advance of the deployment of cranes or temporal tall or narrow profile structures 50m or greater in height, including details of any aviation warning lighting with which they may be fitted.

Summary

The MOD **objects** to this application on the grounds that the development as proposed will physically impact upon a microwave link that forms part of the safeguarded East 2 WAM Network which could result in the degradation of aviation safety. Further technical assessments are ongoing to clarify exactly what impact the development will have on the East 2 WAM Network to define siting and design parameters necessary to prevent the impact identified.

A requirement for additional assessment has been identified following a meeting with the Applicant's Representatives on 19 February 2026. These assessments will be undertaken to determine whether the section of the overhead line development that crosses through the safeguarding zones surrounding Wattisham Station will have any impact upon the safe and effective operation of the aerodrome including the navigational aid technical assets located at the aerodrome.

I trust this is clear however should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Assistant Safeguarding Manager
DIO Safeguarding