

Dear Planning Inspectorate

We write on behalf of George Durrant and Sons Ltd, Brooks Leney, Clarke and Simpson and Messrs Whirlledge & Nott who are acting as Land Agents for landowners from across the length of the scheme from Norwich to Tilbury. Our clients are impacted directly by the scheme in that pylons are being built on their land or indirectly by the construction of the scheme close to their homes and businesses. Based on the number of pylons our clients account for well over 50% of the overall scheme. We have been involved with National Grid and their agents Fisher German since the beginning of the scheme in August 2022. This experience allows us to make informed comment on the progress to date and our fears for the coming months and years. We have also been involved with other local significant infrastructure projects, Bramford – Twinstead being the most recent and easily comparable.

We attended the afternoon session of the hearing on 11th February and I would like to make three points following your questioning of the applicant.

i) Feedback

We have held multiple meetings with clients and Fisher German through the various consultation phases, we have submitted change requests to National Grid, some of these may have been significant, such as asking for sections of the line to be buried and some may have been much smaller – perhaps moving a pylon closer to a field boundary to minimise disruption to farming operations.

Having listened to Mr Paul Royston who represented the applicant we were surprised to hear that the applicants felt they had provided feedback to Land Agents where change requests had been made, this is not our experience. There has been no direct explanations to our clients as to why a change request could or could not be facilitated. The process has not been constructive and has left many land owners disenfranchised with the whole process and in some cases there mental wellbeing has been significantly impacted. This could have been avoided if constructive two way dialogue had been facilitated by the applicant. Most clients are understanding of the project but expect to be treated fairly and when asked to engage there is an expectation of some feedback. We can give examples if you would like further evidence as to the position.

ii) Heads of Terms

Secondly with respect to the Heads of Terms that have been issued, generic Heads which were issued in late Summer 2025, feedback was given by us in Autumn 2025 and eventually a meeting was held in mid January 2026 to go through these change requests with Fisher German. We still await hearing whether the applicant is prepared to make any alterations to the Heads of Terms despite feedback being originally given in Autumn 2025. At the current time we cannot advise our clients to sign up to the voluntary Heads of Terms as they are little better than simply relying on the statutory provisions were the consent order to be granted. We can provide more information regarding the deficiencies in the voluntary Heads of Terms should you wish them to be outlined in more detail. Our experience of previous schemes involving National Grid suggests that whilst they will attempt to negotiate voluntary Heads of Terms and possibly reach agreement, the execution of the documents will be delayed to a point where they are forced to use their statutory powers to gain possession rather than a more satisfactory voluntary approach.

iii) Statutory undertakers

Finally most of our clients are not only impacted by the installation of the new pylons and cables but also by the re-routing of existing infrastructure, in particular UKPN wires, pylons and poles which need to be buried or re-routed. We have at the date of writing had no engagement with UKPN or their agents. We understand that they have now appointed their own agent but this is far too late in the process. We now face an uncertain period whilst we find out what is proposed for the existing infrastructure and how compensation and remedial works will be split between UKPN and the applicant. We have serious concerns about a system whereby access to land and settlement of claims are to be dealt with separately between the undertakers.

To conclude we feel that the applicant has made failed to constructively engage with landowners, is not working hard enough to secure satisfactory voluntary agreements to secure the access and right they need and that there will be significant difficulties associated with the combined approach to other statutory undertakers in particular UKPN.

Yours sincerely

Durrants, Brooks Leney, Whirlledge and Nott and Clarke and Simpson