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**Speech delivered by Mr Jaarsma - at the Essex Open Flood Hearing on 12 February 2026 - on behalf of Cllr Ivan Henderson - Tendring District Council Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism**

**Jacob Jaarsma – for Tendring District Council – Good morning Chair, Members of the Examining Authority,**

I am speaking on behalf of Councillor Ivan Henderson, Tendring District Council’s Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism. He and other Members cannot attend today due to a crucial Essex County Council budget meeting.

Given Cllr Henderson’s portfolio, my remarks today will focus on further detail around local business and economic impacts, jobs, skills and employment matters, and highways impacts and mitigation. This is *not* a summary of TDC’s overall position on the project; the Council’s concerns and objections remain wide-ranging and serious, as set out in our written submissions, and will be addressed fully at the relevant Issue-Specific Hearings.

So id like to Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of Cllr Henderson and the communities he represents.

Tendring is not opposed to progress. We recognise the need to transition to a more resilient energy network. We want to work constructively with National Grid but we expect the same commitment in return.

But recognising national need does not mean overlooking very real local impacts.

For Tendring, this is not an abstract infrastructure line on a map. These are treasured places where people run businesses and livelihoods, raise families, and work hard to contribute to their communities and the regional economy. And it is vital that the DCO process secures meaningful, enforceable protections, improvements and opportunities, not merely vague aspirations.

I want to specifically talk about **Impact on Local Businesses and our fragile Rural Economy**. Haulage firms, farms, hospitality, trades, logistics, and small enterprises all rely on one thing above else: a functioning, open and reliable road network – it is the veins of our district and people depend greatly on our local road network.

The rural lanes serving Ardleigh, Little Bromley, Lawford and the surrounding parishes are already narrow, already flood-prone, and already under pressure. Construction traffic on the scale proposed will strain these routes to beyond breaking point if mitigation is not lasting, robust, enforceable and delivered before construction commences.

It is vital that these highways and local roads remain:

- Open at all times,
- Properly managed,
- Improved where needed, and
- Protected from worsening flood and drainage issues.

We cannot accept situations where existing and established local firms and residents are unable to move goods, access their premises, or rely on unpredictable journey times. This is the lifeblood of our local economy. If these roads fail, local businesses will fail.

Ardleigh Parish Council has estimated that hundreds of local jobs could be at risk due to construction impacts alone. These losses should be factored in.

**Turning to skills and employment** - Tendring is one of the most deprived districts in the country. We have a high proportion of young people not in education, employment or training and even higher numbers facing

significant barriers to work.

The Norwich to Tilbury project could be transformative for them—but only if National Grid commits to a clear, enforceable, and locally focussed Skills, Training and Employment Strategy – we have repeatedly invited National Grid to address these issues.

We expect:

- Local apprenticeships
- Local training pathways
- Partnerships with institutions like Colchester Institute, Essex University, and local schools
- Early and meaningful engagement through TDC’s jobs and skills fairs

The ask being made of Tendring communities is immense – therefore we expect our residents to reap meaningful benefit from the opportunities this project could create.

We also want to see a **firm and comprehensive Social Value Policy** from National Grid—not voluntary commitments, but **legally enforceable requirements** in the DCO.

This means:

- Local procurement;
- Use of local trades, suppliers and equipment providers;
- Investment in community skills programmes; and
- Long-term benefits that last beyond construction

We have seen this done elsewhere. Longfield Solar Farm, for example, implemented strong social-value commitments, including local supply chain engagement and apprenticeships—proving that NSIPs *can* deliver good outcomes where there’s genuine commitment.

If Longfields can do it, so can National Grid.

**Tendring’s rural communities** often struggle to attract funding for innovation, resilience and adaptation. N2T will significantly increase pressure. We want National Grid to support those communities before, during construction, and through the operational lifetime of the project, helping rural businesses to adapt, survive and thrive.

Also we must protect one of Tendring's most important sectors: tourism and hospitality.

We are proud promoters of the Sunshine Coast. But if genuine and high-quality visitor accommodation is taken up by construction workers, our hotels and guest houses risk losing their core customers. That could permanently damage the sector.

We need National Grid to work with us to ensure accommodation strategies do not hollow out our visitor economy.

On flooding and drainage, our rural roads are not just narrow—they are vulnerable and, in some cases, already at breaking point. Surface-water flooding and inadequate drainage already cause damage and this results in closures and hazards. N2T Construction traffic will make matters worse unless strong conditions are in place.

Highways mitigation should not merely mitigate, it should improve and future proof. This will require investment in drainage, culverts, road strengthening and long-term resilience.

So the Government announced that communities which host nationally significant energy infrastructure should receive long-term support and compensation.

That statement must carry real weight.

Tendring is being asked to host the single largest concentration of energy-related infrastructure in the region's history. That must come with clear commitments to support, mitigate and compensate.

## **In Conclusion**

We want to be constructive.

We want to work with National Grid.

We want this project—*if it proceeds*—to deliver long-lasting benefits, not the long-lasting harm currently staring us in the face.

This is a once-in-a-generation project. It could either widen the deprivation gap, or— if handled properly—it could help close it.

We urge the Examining Authority to ensure that the latter becomes the legacy of Norwich to Tilbury for the people of Tendring.

Thank you.