

National Grid has summarised statements made at the Open Floor Hearings into broad themes instead of addressing them individually and the written representation I made has not been addressed. National Grid's own documentation identifies the Landscape Character Types surrounding Offton as an area that will experience a significant negative impact of the proposed Norwich to Tilbury infrastructure. Only two locations have been identified at this level of severity. The other is Dedham Vale.

However, the mitigation approach differs materially between the two areas.

In Dedham Vale, undergrounding is proposed to reduce the acknowledged harm to landscape, heritage, and community value. In Offton, where the level of impact is described as comparable, the proposal remains overhead pylons.

This creates a clear issue of consistency and fairness.

If both locations are assessed as experiencing significant harm, can the Applicant explain, with evidence, why one community receives underground mitigation while the other does not?

Offton is not opposing the national requirement to move renewable energy from offshore generation into the grid. We recognise that this infrastructure is needed.

What we question is whether continuing to deploy large-scale overhead pylons represents the best available solution. We are effectively addressing a 21st-century energy challenge using transmission technology developed in the last century.

Steel lattice pylons are familiar, but they are not innovative or future-proofed when viable alternatives exist.

The Parish Council has consistently requested that modern options, including offshore coordination and HVDC undergrounding are properly evaluated alongside the preferred route.

The impacts on Offton are substantial and long-term. The proposed route will bisect the village, working farms, introduce heavy construction traffic onto single track narrow rural roads, and result in the loss of hedgerows, trees, and established landscape character.

It will place permanent industrial infrastructure within a historic rural setting containing listed buildings, ancient woodland, and valued public rights of way.

These effects will define the character and viability of the parish for generations.

We have seen in other nationally significant cases, such as the Post Office Horizon IT scandal, how continuing with a contested solution despite credible concerns can cause lasting harm and loss of trust. Offton's concern is that avoidable impacts may be accepted without full evaluation of less damaging alternatives.

Offton is therefore not asking for the project to stop, but for proportionality and consistency.

If Dedham Vale warrants undergrounding because of the significance of its impact, then Offton identified as experiencing comparable harm, should be afforded the same consideration.

We respectfully request that the impact on Offton is reassessed, that alternatives are transparently evaluated, and that mitigation consistent with other equally affected areas is applied.

Thank you.

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the community of Offton.

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