

Suggested Written Questions for the Examining Authority

Norwich to Tilbury Electricity Transmission Project (EN020027)

Interested Party: Robert Wass re [REDACTED]

Submission to the Examining Authority

Norwich to Tilbury Electricity Transmission Project (EN020027)

Key Issues for the Examining Authority

- Whether National Grid has adequately explained how the Holford Rules were applied when selecting the alignment between pylons TB047–TB052 affecting Ford Street, Aldham and Fordham.
- Whether the western alternative alignment referenced in the Applicant’s response was properly assessed and compared with the preferred route in terms of environmental and heritage impacts.
- Why ridge-top siting of pylons behind Ford Street and Fordham has been selected when this creates skyline intrusion in a high-amenity landscape.
- Why the Ford Street Conservation Area is cited as a constraint for route selection while construction infrastructure is proposed within Ford Street itself.

1. Introduction

I spoke at the Open Floor Hearing on 10 February 2026 regarding the proposed alignment between pylons TB047–TB052 affecting the villages of Ford Street, Aldham and Fordham.

Having reviewed Document 8.5.4 – Applicant’s Response to the Open Floor Hearings, I am concerned that the Applicant’s response does not adequately address the issues raised regarding this section of the route.

The document contains only a single short section referring to these villages titled “Alternatives at the Colne Valley (Ford Street, Aldham and Fordham)”, which does not engage with the detailed planning issues raised during the hearing.

2. Lack of Location-Specific Response

The Applicant has structured the response document by broad themes rather than by location. As a result, the concerns raised regarding the Colne Valley villages are condensed into a single paragraph.

The response does not address several issues raised at the hearing including ridge-top siting of pylons between TB047–TB052, impacts on Fordham’s Grade I listed church and Aldham’s Grade II* church, impacts on the Ford Street Conservation Area, Roman archaeological remains near

TB047, the Essex Way long-distance path, the cumulative visual impact on Ford Street, and the proposed construction compound behind The Maltings.

3. Reliance on Efficiency Rather than Environmental Minimization of Impact

The Applicant states that a western alignment was considered but rejected because it would be longer, require additional pylons and be less efficient.

However, national policy requires environmental harm to be minimised wherever reasonably possible rather than simply selecting the shortest route.

Under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, National Grid has a statutory duty to preserve natural beauty, conserve flora and fauna and protect sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest.

The response does not explain how these duties have been applied in determining the alignment through the Colne Valley.

4. Failure to Demonstrate Application of the Holford Rules

The Holford Rules recognised in NPS EN-5 require transmission lines to avoid areas of highest amenity value, follow natural landform and avoid skylines where possible.

The alignment between TB047 and TB052 appears to place pylons on elevated ridgelines above villages within a valued landscape, specifically the Fordham Hall Estate which also has high public amenity value, and a Roman archeological site.

The Applicant's response does not explain how the Holford Rules were applied in determining this alignment.

5. Inconsistency Regarding the Ford Street Conservation Area

The Applicant states that shifting the alignment westwards would bring the route closer to Ford Street, Fordham and the Ford Street Conservation Area.

However, the project proposes a construction compound within Ford Street itself behind The Maltings. This suggests that conservation area was NOT treated consistently as a constraint during route selection and construction planning.

6. Requested Clarification

I respectfully request that the Examining Authority ask the Applicant to SPECIFICALLY clarify:

- How the Holford Rules were applied in determining the alignment between TB047 and TB052.
- What comparison was undertaken between the preferred alignment and the western alternative.
- Why ridge-top siting of pylons behind Ford Street and Fordham was considered acceptable.
- How the setting of Fordham Church, Aldham Church and the Ford Street Conservation Area has been taken into account.

- Why the conservation area is cited as a constraint for route selection while construction infrastructure is proposed within Ford Street.

7. Conclusion

The Applicant's response to the Open Floor Hearings provides only a limited explanation of the route selection affecting Ford Street, Aldham and Fordham.

Given the sensitivity of this landscape and the presence of important heritage assets, a clear and detailed justification for the chosen alignment is necessary to demonstrate compliance with national policy and statutory duties.

Question 1 — Application of the Holford Rules

Please explain how the Holford Rules were applied in determining the alignment between pylons TB047 and TB052 affecting Ford Street, Aldham and Fordham, including:

- whether alternative alignments following lower ground or natural landform were assessed;
- why the preferred alignment places pylons on elevated ridgelines above nearby settlements; and
- how skyline impacts on villages were considered in the route-selection process.

Question 2 — Assessment of the Western Alignment Alternative

The Applicant states that an alternative alignment west of Ford Street and Fordham was considered.

Please provide:

- information as to whether ANY comparative environmental assessment has been undertaken between the preferred alignment and the western alternative;
- the heritage, landscape and residential amenity effects associated with each alignment; and
- the extent to which the western alternative may have reduced impacts on Ford Street, Aldham and Fordham.

Question 3 — Ford Street Conservation Area

The Applicant states that shifting the alignment westwards would bring the route closer to Ford Street and the Ford Street Conservation Area.

However, land within Ford Street itself is proposed for construction infrastructure (including a compound behind The Maltings which generally floods for 2 months of the year).

Nation I Grid needs to fully explain:

- how the Ford Street Conservation Area was treated as a constraint during route selection;
- why proximity to the conservation area was considered problematic for the route alignment but acceptable for construction infrastructure; and
- how the setting of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings has been considered in both cases.