

1] UNLEVEL PLAYING FIELD

As an IP, thank you, I appreciate your requesting a better organised, less thematic, response (to OFH submissions) from NG.

That NG, with vast resources, have the cheek to enter a document so blatantly disorganised, in response to (mainly) laymen, is a disgrace. Yet, with all that alleged skill, expertise, experience and financial backing NG get sent back to redo their inadequate homework. These are the kind of woolly, inadequate, sometimes erroneous, responses we've been subjected to for the last 4 years; if, indeed, we were actually lucky enough to receive replies at all. And they have the nerve to call it "engagement".

It's unbelievable that NG request an extension for your requested changes, bearing in mind our lack of a level playing field between campaigners and applicants, and it's right their request has been rejected.

To quote another campaigner: "there are hundreds of qualified people at National Grid working on this project, full-time, on full pay, with share options. Meanwhile, those of us campaigning are fitting in the reading of the most recent 500 documents in ONE WEEK, part-time, amongst all of our other commitments, to send something sensible in to the Inspectorate by Deadline 2".

1] Offshore p5 "... the Government's strong starting presumption in NPS EN-5 (2024)

paragraph 2.9.20 for the use of overhead lines which form the basis of the Project with change where justified by consideration of the mitigation hierarchy" Not convinced. They have the option to change – EGL3 & 4 for example – where they choose. Germany now uses PYLONS LAST, this is no longer early twentieth century. There are now better choices. If NG costed pylons correctly, HVDC would be close in cost.

Equally, earlier in the process, NG opted for Waveney Valley underground – so pylons not central then. Then changed their minds ...

2] HVDC p5 "In all cases the HVDC onshore and offshore alternatives were significantly more expensive than overhead lines whilst not providing the system flexibility and full capacity as the AC alternative".

NG contradict themselves often, they state the following and had video promotion of HVDC undersea as good alternative. HVDC underground is deemed more secure, much less delivery risk, better over longer runs, more control, equivalent capacity, narrower trenches, so better and cheaper than AC underground (Dedham Vale).

3] Reinforcement of Existing lines – p8. I don't understand why no mention of TC Conductors, considering is part of NG

4] Underground Cables p8 "In those circumstances, the Secretary of State should only prefer underground or subsea, where the benefits clearly outweigh any extra economic, social or environmental impacts." If the Treasury Green Book was employed to consider cost benefits of social, environmental and economic cost / benefits, a very different scheme would emerge.

5] Use of T Pylons p 13 Once again, cost is NOT everything, but they cause harm in other ways: more of them are needed; they need permanent maintenance roads, and they are still an eyesore and agricultural impediment.

6] Cost: Monetisation of environmental impacts / use of the green book p15 "There is no requirement in the Planning Act 2008 for developers to have to submit a Treasury Green Book assessment as part of a Development Consent Order (DCO) application." Our barrister has given an Opinion that the Treasury Green Book is mandatory in this case, which is on Government business..

7] Devaluation of properties p15 NG recognises visual impact from overhead lines and pylons can cause concern for communities and may lead to "perceptions of property value loss". These are weasel words: the value loss is a fact, PYLON BLIGHT is recognised by Estate Agents and buyers/sellers all down the route –NOT just a perception.

8] Gunning Principles, Consultation of Alternatives, Engagement with landowners/communities pp16-20 These are of necessity lumped together as NG was deficient in most of these headings, as stated many times before – as in ESNP Deficiencies Report, submitted in November. Their lack of engagement, and ignoring of feedback has been excruciatingly bad.

9] Ecology and Biodiversity (inc Tree loss) / Birds (inc bird strikes) pp24-25. Bearing in mind the vastness of this extremely important environmental subject, NG seem to have given it minimum consideration here. It appears that a great deal has to be taken on trust. Much smoke and mirrors, blinding with science, countless acronyms and numbers, headings and sub-headings, and references to endless documents.

According to 5.9.19 Draft Statement of Common Ground, NG responses to Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) comments in November 2025, there are ongoing discussions about many of the ecological points. Considering that NG has been working on this now for over 4 years, and the Examination has started, that is really inefficient. Similar comments to Norfolk & Suffolk WTs. There seems a lot of ground still to cover at this late notice. Up to 18 pages Matters still Under Discussion. All 3 WTs still have dozens of comments / concerns / need for reassurance / awaiting survey results; and there seems to be a lot of mitigation / minimisation / reinstatement / careful routing.

Should there be pylons, I note the addition of orange spacers and bird diverters above the Waveney river and Ardleigh Reservoir. Yet, here are flocks of geese which daily fly over the village of Aldham: morning from NW-SE, presumably from night-time field roosts to Abberton Reservoir, which is not far; and always return at dusk from SE-NW. This has been a regular occurrence for some years now. So not only passerines, but also large birds: buzzards, owls and red kites. The East Atlantic Flyway is also a little to the East of us. There should be bird diverters all along the route: there are many other rivers and watering-places – this is the countryside.

10] Historic Environment / Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas / Heritage / Vibration Impacts / Flood Risk / Landscape & Visual/ Landscape Mitigation & Compensation pp 27-29

All of these affect ALDHAM / Ford Street / Fordham, and I find myself not reassured by NG responses. Others in Aldham will be dealing with this matter but I endorse what they say.

Specific points: Bearing in mind the harms to so much that makes Aldham special, including ecological destruction in heritage Colne Valley special landscape area (pylons planned for skyline against Holford Rules) why on earth not adopt far narrower HVDC underground, or better still undersea. It appears NG are struggling with Holford Rules in such a flat area, so investigate alternatives, as they should have done from the start.

To be landed with a new, unconsulted, Construction Compound on a flood plain behind Ford Street requiring CPO of large part of resident's garden, as late as 13 February 2026, appears to be a dereliction of duty

11] Local Economy / Tourism p32. "Through routeing and siting, the Applicant has sought to avoid, as far as practicable, locations that are important for leisure and tourism". This is unbelievably complacent – one paragraph, on a topic where the economy will suffer hugely.. It is well known through other reports we have submitted that many businesses, including the hundreds of tourism related ones: hospitality in the form of hotels, restaurants, cafes, pubs, bed & breakfasts, etc. will suffer greatly from not only construction but the mere existence of pylons. People visit because of the beauty and peace of the area; they will stop during construction and may never return to our then industrialised landscape.

12] Impacts on the local road network / PRoWs p34-35 Whatever they say, these cannot fail to be disastrous. All the roads along the route are already too busy, often jammed, including small lanes being used as rat runs. There is nowhere for the vast numbers and sizes of the expected HGVs to go. No possible mitigation, it will be years of chaos. Trees and hedges ripped out randomly for access (huge carbon storage lost), and some paths/lanes closed both temporarily and permanently. Why should this destruction occur when there are better alternatives. The paradox: green generated electricity, transmitted by far from green methods.

13] Cumulative Effects pp35-37. There is no way round these, Ardleigh heritage country village will be ruined for ever, swamped by electrical infrastructure. Essex Wildlife Trust is concerned about all the other major projects on wildlife. Hearing NG responding to questions about coordination and cumulative effects were clearly not, again after 4yrs, not communicating adequately with LTC, Highways, crucial oil pipe crossing the route, Wildlife Trusts.

I would like to finish with a general comment that, judging by NG behaviour over 4yrs, I struggle to find any of their volumes and volumes of documents even remotely reassuring. They should not be allowed to despoil our countryside with outdated pylons anywhere in the UK. There are now better options