

Georgie Hannigan

From: Freddie Botfield [REDACTED]@whirledgeandnott.co.uk>
Sent: 12 March 2026 17:02
To: Norwich to Tilbury
Cc: Paul Walker; Grace Gardiner
Subject: Response to Applicant's Response to Open Floor Hearings

Good Afternoon

I spoke at the Open Floor Hearing on behalf of many affected landowners, tenants, charities and rural businesses along the Norwich to Tilbury route.

Having reviewed the Applicant's Response to the Open Floor Hearings, it is not clear that the concerns raised regarding engagement and uncertainty have been substantively addressed.

My submission highlighted the real impacts already being experienced by landowners and businesses due to prolonged uncertainty around the scheme, including the inability to make investment, land management or diversification decisions. It also identified several issues that had remained unresolved despite early engagement, including alternative routing considerations, construction methods, working clearances, irrigation requirements and the protection of soil, ecology and farm infrastructure.

It is accepted that consultation does not mean that every concern raised by affected parties must ultimately be agreed. However, meaningful engagement should involve clear responses to the issues raised, transparency around decisions taken, and a willingness to resolve practical matters where straightforward solutions exist.

The Applicant's response refers generally to consultation exercises and ongoing engagement with landowners. However, it does not directly address several of the specific issues raised at the hearing. In particular, there is no clear response regarding uncertainty around construction methods and programme, the handling of associated third-party utility works, protection of soils or the provision of survey information required under existing licence arrangements.

Similarly, while the Applicant notes that negotiations with landowners are ongoing and that Heads of Terms have been issued, the practical experience of those negotiations has not reflected a responsive process. Detailed comments on the proposed Heads of Terms were recently submitted by a group of professional agents representing multiple affected landowners. It took many months for a response to be provided and, when received, several even basic concerns raised in those submissions remained unaddressed and unexplained (we have provided details of this to the inspectorate separately).

This experience contributes to the perception that engagement has been procedural rather than genuinely responsive. In many instances there appear to be opportunities to acknowledge and resolve relatively minor practical issues now, which would help reduce uncertainty and demonstrate a willingness to work constructively with those affected.

It would therefore be helpful if the Applicant could provide further clarification on how these matters will be addressed and how engagement will move beyond process to provide clearer answers and practical solutions where possible.

Please can you confirm receipt.

Kind regards

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