

Submission ID: S4F3D88AA

I registered as soon as I was able to, and received nothing other than the code. It was only by chance that I found out about today's deadline. I'm therefore submitting a copy of my initial objections on the impact on Burgate. As NG has not made any plans to mitigate the adverse impact of its plans, my points remain valid.

I was not informed of the initial deadline and it was only by chance that I saw today's deadline.

I assume that I should have been made aware of the first deadline so I sincerely hope that you consider the documents I have already submitted today and my comments here.

Burgate is a very small community that will be blighted by the pylons if National Grid's plans go ahead. Residents put many hours of work into responding to National Grid's plans. Our objections about the harm caused to community, landscape, wildlife, SSSIs, listed buildings and residents' properties and wellbeing have all gone unanswered. No mitigation has been offered. And I doubt if National Grid forwarded our objections to the Planning Inspectorate. National Grid's statutory consultation only presented one option, the pylons. It gave no evidence to support its preferred option. We were expected to accept the view that pylons are better or cheaper than alternatives, without any evidence whatsoever.

For all the public know, National Grid could be underplaying the cost of its preferred option and over playing that of the alternatives. It needs to give us the facts on the cost and environmental impact of the pylons and the alternatives so we can see what has been included and what has not.

The fact that alternatives such as an offshore grid and undergrounding have not been presented for consultation is a major flaw.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from the consultation programme is that National Grid made up its mind before consulting with the public. Indeed, we see evidence National Grid has already started to implement its plan. For example, in the last few days a wireless energy monitoring system that measures electricity, gas, water and has been installed on a post at the junction of Burgate Road, Bugg's Road and Furze Way. It is directed towards the land that National Grid has earmarked as a working area for "construction equipment and machinery, site offices, welfare, storage and temporary construction access."

National Grid is already implementing the only option it is prepared to consider.

In the pre-statutory consultations, the proposed route for the pylons was further away from Burgate than it is now. My feedback then was that it was pointless shifting the pylons a bit to the left or the right in this part of Suffolk as they will only impact on other special rural communities, protected landscapes, visually important open spaces, areas of historic importance and rich wildlife habitats.

My feedback was ignored, and the proposed route now loops through Burgate, bringing the pylons within 400m of our home. We want clean energy, but not at any price.

National Grid's plans will bring severe harm to us as individuals, our community, our wildlife and our visual heritage. There are no benefits only harm.

National Grid has only presented one option, the giant pylons. It has:

- failed to listen to previous feedback from residents and their representatives at every level of local government
- failed to give evidence to support its claims
- failed to consider alternatives such as an offshore grid and putting the cables underground
- failed to run a transparent, honest consultation programme as it is required to do by law.

Section B Mid Suffolk, Burgate

National Grid's statutory consultation is flawed. It only presents one option: its preferred use of giant pylons to carry electricity from Norwich to Tilbury. Technical challenges of the 21st Century demand 21st Century solutions, not outdated pylons first introduced in the UK in 1928.

Burgate is disproportionately affected. In addition to the pylons coming through our beautiful hamlet, we will have to contend with National Grid taking temporary possession of large areas of land during the construction for site offices, construction machinery and equipment, materials, vehicles and staff welfare facilities.

Burgate Little Green is a very special place, with a protected ancient landscape, protected wildlife and a rich history. It will be destroyed if National Grid's plans go ahead.

The pylons bring only harm. They pave the way to the industrialisation of a 180km corridor through Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex as massive solar farms will inevitably follow. There are no benefits.

I set out my objections under four headings

- Breaches of the Holford Rules
- Impact on Little Green Burgate, its residents and wildlife (including water voles, great crested newts, pipistrelle bats and yellow hammers)
- Access to haul roads and local flood risk
- Inadequate consultation process and failure to present other alternatives

Breaches of Holford Rules

National Grid is supposed to follow the Holford Rules when planning a pylon route. It has broken five of these rules in the area in and around Burgate Little Green.

1. National Grid should choose the most direct line, with no sharp changes of direction

After moving roughly north to south through Wortham, the pylon route deviates sharply to the west towards Burgate and Little Green (pylon RG102). After running through Little Green Burgate it turns sharply south (pylon RG110) towards Gislingham. Two more sharp turns at RG112 and RG116 bring the route back to its original north to south route through Gislingham. This massive, unexplained loop to the west is a clear breach of the Holford Rules.

2. National Grid should choose tree and hill backgrounds in preference to sky backgrounds

The proposed route runs through flat, open countryside and farmland so there is nothing to negate the harmful visual impact the pylons will have on the landscape.

3. In all locations, National Grid should minimise confusing appearance

The proposed route is clearly a deviation from the original plan, looping through Burgate and crossing the Burgate Road twice before it double backs on itself to enter Gislingham. It is confusing even when seen on a map. It will be much worse in reality. A jungle of giant metal pylons will loom over Burgate, spoiling this beautiful place and harming the wellbeing and sense of place of its residents.

4. National Grid should choose routes that minimise the effects on the setting of areas of architectural, historical and archaeological interest

The deviation in the route to the west through Burgate and Gislingham before resuming its north-south path will harm important architectural, historical and archaeological features.

Little Green Burgate is an ancient common and is designated by Mid Suffolk Council as a Special Landscape Area. It is essentially the same landscape that our ancestors look out at. It is part of our heritage. If National Grid's plans go ahead this visually important open space will be framed by giant pylons when looking from west to east across the common; and the jungle of pylons to the west will ruin the beautiful approach to the common from Gislingham.

What can be seen from a Special Landscape Area needs to be protected as much as the land itself. Standing on the common and seeing 50m high pylons harms this ancient landscape.

The proposed pylons will also have a harmful visual impact on historic buildings. The pylons will run within 400m around two-sides of St Mary's Church Burgate, a Grade 1 listed medieval building. At least nine other listed buildings in Burgate will also be affected (see below with Historic England's designation numbers).

- St Mary's Church Burgate, Grade 1 (1032797)
- Hall Farm (1032798)
- Hall Farm House (1352234)
- Hill House (1352238)
- The Old Rectory (1181701)
- Glebe Farm (103280)
- Gibson Farm, Little Green (1181694)
- Green Farm House, Little Green (1181676)
- Green Farm Cottage, Little Green (1032803)
- Willow Cottage, Little Green (1352237)

Burgate Wood is a medieval wood designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It links Little Green to Great Green to form Burgate and is only 800m from the proposed route. In addition to providing a habitat for rare plants and animals it is the

site of ancient earthworks and remains of an old manor house. This SSSI is of national importance and should be protected from harm.

5. National Grid should avoid routing to residential areas as far as possible

The unexplained deviation west through Burgate and Gislingham brings the pylons unacceptably close to the residents of Little Green Burgate. In addition to the pylons, we will have to endure the damage, destruction and noise caused during their construction.

We will also have to contend with disruption caused by large swathes of land being earmarked to store construction equipment, machinery materials, vehicles and site offices (marked on the maps as the 'project order limits').

The extent and scale of works proposed in and around Burgate is disproportionate and completely unacceptable. Our small community will be overwhelmed.

Everything associated with building the pylons and the pylons themselves will harm our community, devalue our homes and threaten our health and wellbeing.

Impact on Little Green Burgate, its residents and wildlife (including water voles, great crested newts, pipistrelle bats and yellow hammers)

Contamination, destruction and disruption of habitats: threat to water voles, great crested newts, pipistrelle bats and yellow hammers

The underground drainage from the hard standing area on the proposed haul road (adjacent to Bullocks Ley on Burgate Road) runs into a drainage ditch that feeds our pond. Our pond drains into the large pond on the common (Little Green).

Construction of the haul road and its subsequent use threatens to contaminate the ground water that feeds into these ponds and harm the habitat for wildlife that includes water voles and great crested newts.

We have recent video and photographic evidence that our ponds contain water voles and great crested newts, both protected species.

Water voles are fully protected under section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended).

Great crested newts are "strictly protected by British and European law which makes it an offence to: kill, injure, capture or disturb them; damage or destroy their habitat; and to possess, sell or trade".

We also have pipistrelle bats roosting in our barn. These bats are also protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981; and in Europe as European Protected Species under Annex IV of the European Habitats Directive. They are known to be harmed by building work and construction.

Yellow hammers (on the UK Birds of Conservation Red List of endangered species) nest in the hedges along the Burgate Road leading to Gislingham in the area where the proposed pylon route crosses the road twice (between the sugar beet pad and the horse paddock). If National Grid's plan goes ahead their habitat will be destroyed and the population made extinct in the area.

Disruption to residents during construction and commandeering land for storage, etc

Ours is a small rural community accessed by extremely narrow lanes, with few passing places and sharp bends. They are unsuitable for heavy vehicles, and construction traffic would make our roads dangerous.

The area is quiet, with very little road traffic and no local businesses of any kind. Any noise from the construction will affect us all.

The proposed areas of land being commandeered for construction equipment, vehicles and site offices will further increase the burden on Burgate and its residents and will put further strain on vulnerable wildlife habitats.

Health and wellbeing

The scale of work proposed for in and around Burgate is overwhelming and disproportionate. It is already causing a great deal of concern and anxiety in the community.

If National Grid's proposal are allowed to go ahead the impact on our mental and physical health and wellbeing will be immeasurable. We will have to witness the damage to our precious environment and its wildlife, endure the noise and disruption of the construction process and watch our house prices plummet.

We will then need to live with the risks to health posed by the electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) emitted by the pylons: childhood leukaemia, brain tumours and Alzheimer's.

According to the World Health Organisation, adverse health effects caused by high-level short-term exposure to EMFs have been scientifically established (ICNIRP, 2003).

The evidence is less clear for long-term exposure at a lower level, but there's still a risk. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Any risk is unacceptable to us.

National Grid's representative at one of the public meetings was dismissive of our fears. He said he lived near a pylon and it didn't do him any harm – and that the risks of cancer were highest for children living within 150m of a pylon. When asked by someone else about the risk to her grandchildren, he said it would be alright because they were "only visiting". At another meeting a child was told that she was at more risk from underground cables because she was short.

Devaluation of property

National Grid's proposal will have a devastating effect on our property, its value and our ability to sell.

It's unlikely that we will be able to sell until after the pylons have been constructed, and then at a massively reduced price.

We extended our barn in 2020/21. We would never have embarked on such a large and expensive building programme if we had known about the proposed pylons. Our plans in Burgate have been destroyed and we will seek compensation.

Access to the haul roads and local flood risk

All three lanes to and from the proposed haul roads in Little Green Burgate are unsuitable heavy construction vehicles. They are extremely narrow with few passing spaces, particularly on the road between Gislingham and Burgate. The short stretch of road that runs past St Mary's Church contains three 90-degree bends that are tricky to navigate safely even for cars. The roads are not safe for the use of heavy vehicles and will endanger residents.

The lanes are also prone to flooding. During the winter of 2023/24, Bugg's Road was impassable on three occasions; Burgate Road from Bugg's Road to St Mary's Church Burgate twice; and Burgate Road leading to Gislingham once. During Storm Babette all three access roads were impassable (verifiable by National Highways).

Several homes in Burgate were flooded and claims for flood damage are ongoing. Three have had to be vacated while they are dried out and remedial work takes place (1 and 2 Red Brick Cottages and Walnut Tree Cottage).

While the flooding is obviously worse during the wet winter months, they flood at other times of year too. On 21 May, flooding on Burgate Road was particularly bad on the sharp bend by St Mary's Church with cars struggling to get through.

Inadequate consultation process and failure to present other alternatives

National Grid's statutory consultation only presents one option, the pylons. It gives no evidence to support its preferred option. We are expected to accept the view that it is better or cheaper than alternatives, without any evidence whatsoever.

For all the public know, National Grid could be underplaying the cost of its preferred option and over playing that of the alternatives. It needs to give us the facts on the cost and environmental impact of the pylons and the alternatives so we can see what has been included and what has not.

The fact that alternatives such as an offshore grid and undergrounding have not been presented for consultation is a major flaw.

It is obvious that National Grid's proposal to use pylons to transmit electricity from Norwich to Tilbury will bring only harm to the people affected and no benefits whatsoever. Those affected will need to be compensated. Has this been factored into the overall cost of the pylons? I suspect not.

The consultation programme lacks transparency. The only conclusion that can be drawn from it is that National Grid has made up its mind before consulting with the public. Indeed, we see evidence National Grid has already started to implement its plan. For example, in the last few days a wireless energy monitoring system that measures electricity, gas, water and has been installed on a post at the junction of Burgate Road, Bugg's Road and Furze Way. It is directed towards the land that National Grid has earmarked as a working area for "construction equipment and machinery, site offices, welfare, storage and temporary construction access."

The consultation is a sham. National Grid is already implementing the only option it is prepared to consider.

Conclusion

In the pre-statutory consultations, the proposed route for the pylons was further away from Burgate than it is now. My feedback then was that it was pointless shifting the pylons a bit to the left or the right in this part of Suffolk as they will only impact on other special rural communities, protected landscapes, visually important open spaces, areas of historic importance and rich wildlife habitats.

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National Grid's plans will bring severe harm to us as individuals, our community, our wildlife and our visual heritage. There are no benefits only harm.

National Grid has only presented one option, the giant pylons. It has:

- failed to listen to previous feedback from residents and their representatives at every level of local government
- failed to give evidence to support its claims
- failed to consider alternatives such as an offshore grid and putting the cables underground
- failed to run a transparent, honest consultation programme as it is required to do by law.

National Grid needs to put forward a new proposal for consultation that sets out all the evidence for and against the pylons and the alternatives of an offshore grid and undergrounding.

To do this National Grid needs to do what Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex county councils have suggested: pause the consultation and seriously explore alternatives such as a proper integrated offshore grid and HVDC undergrounding.

Only then will National Grid be in the position to carry out a genuine, evidence-based consultation with the public that sets out the evidence for and against the pylons and the alternatives.

We have time to get it right

An independent review commissioned by the three county councils and carried out by Andy Hiorns concluded that offshore wind-generated power is not need until 2034.

With a revised timescale, National Grid can challenge outdated national policy statements that presume pylons to be the best option in the 21st Century when energy is generated offshore in DC form. It also has time to adopt and champion new technology like an integrated offshore Grid and HVDC undergrounding. Both these options have considerable advantages over outdated pylons.

- An integrated offshore grid is the future-proof solution, carrying DC electricity under the sea to where it is needed and using HVDC undergrounding to deliver it to end users without the need to change from DC to AC.

- HVDC undergrounding has
 - lower transmission losses so that cables can run for longer distances with fewer substations
 - better power flow
 - lower electro-magnetic fields
 - 6 cables instead of 18 so drastically reduces the impact on the landscape
 - the ability to be 'drilled directionally' to avoid or minimise harm in sensitive areas.

By 2034 HVDC will achieve parity in price with pylons and over the long term be more cost effective. National Grid's own electricity service operator (ESO) scored it highly in the government independent review.

Do it right.

Section B Mid Suffolk, Burgate

I have raised my objections to National Grid's proposal to build a 180km corridor of giant pylons from Norwich to Tilbury in two previous emails dated 4 June and 2 July.

I am writing again to highlight the risk of damage to St Mary's Church, Burgate.

Burgate is a distinct and special part of rural Suffolk consisting of residential homes clustered around two ancient commons (Little Green and Great Green) and St Mary's Church. Burgate Wood, a medieval woodland with SSI status, joins the two commons. The whole of Burgate is surrounded by high-grade arable farmland (90% grade 1, 2 and 3 – the highest percentage of all the areas affected by the pylons).

National Grid states that Burgate Little Green is 0.11 kilometres from its draft order limit and Burgate Wood 0.36 kilometres.

According to maps given in National Grid's background document (Volume II: Figures, part 25 of 27, <https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/document/154621/download>) St Mary's church is outside of the area that National Grid says will be affected by noise and vibration presumably because of the way it defines this area. (I would have thought that noise/vibrations would radiate out from a single point and not follow straight lines such as the route of haul roads.)

St Mary's Church is closer to the pylon route and the site works than the SSI and sits on the right-hand bend where Sycamore View becomes Burgate Road - National Grid's access road to the haulage road it plans to build adjacent to Bullocks Ley.

It is inevitable that the church will be affected by noise and vibration from construction work and from the massive increase in traffic (a 25,100% increase if National Grid's surveyors had recorded one car instead of zero on the day the survey was carried out). National Grid estimates that there will be an average increase of 251 vehicles a day on Burgate's narrow lanes, 84 of which will be lorries.

St Mary's was built in the 14th Century and is grade II* listed. It needs to be protected from damage caused by construction traffic trundling past just metres away, and from construction noise and vibration. The maps do not give units for noise or any indication of the level of vibration. It is therefore not possible to check it is a reasonable or safe level, particularly for such an old, important building.

Lesley Sargeant

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Burgate: 25,000% increase in traffic

Burgate is a small hamlet. Our single-track lanes are very narrow, with few passing spaces and sharp bends. National Grid has described the estimated increase in traffic on our lanes as “negligible” because it’s not possible to calculate a percentage increase from a base level of zero. If National Grid’s surveyors had recorded one vehicle and not none, the percentage increase would be 25,000%.

It’s obvious that no one from National Grid has been to Burgate. To put construction traffic on our lanes is absolutely madness and will end in gridlock. National Grid’s mitigation is that its HGV’s will be Euro VI compliant whatever that means. It’s absurd, but it sums up National Grid’s attitude to this consultation. It’s made up its mind what it wants to do and, emboldened by a government that doesn’t yet understand the dirty side of clean energy, is pushing ahead regardless of the damage it will do to the environment and communities for generations to come.

Someone needs to examine the evidence about the best way to get clean energy from where it’s produced to where it is need. We can’t as National Grid hasn’t given us any facts or figures to back up its claims.

Sadly, all we may be able to do is check that National Grid’s vehicles are EURO VI compliant. The HGVs won’t be moving so it shouldn’t be too difficult.