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The applicant

Our Ref: EN020027

Date: 17 April 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 17

Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an order granting development consent for the Norwich to Tilbury project

Request for further information relating to ancient woodlands, the approach to scenarios, environmental statement updates and bats

This letter is written under rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

Ancient Woodland Technical Note

An Ancient Woodland Technical Note (AWTN) parts 1 to 5 [REP3-058] to [REP3-062] was submitted at deadline 3. This reflects the updates to the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) published by Natural England in Essex in July 2025 and in Suffolk in October 2025. The AWTN provides updates to the environmental statement (ES) to reflect the revisions to existing areas of ancient woodland and the inclusion of new areas of ancient woodland as identified in table 1.1 of the AWTN.

The AWTN sets out the changes to:

- ES chapter 7 (air quality)
- ES chapter 8 (ecology and biodiversity) and appendix 8.1 (habitat report),
- ES chapter 13 (landscape and visual) and appendix 13.6 (aboricultural impact assessment)
- Outline Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) including appendix A (Environmental Constraints Plan) [REP3-025]
- Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) including appendix B (ancient woodland and veteran tree strategy) [REP3-030]

The ES was considered to be adequate as part of the acceptance process. The applicant is asked to provide further justification regarding its view set out in its cover letter [REP3-001] that the AWTN should be classified as “further information” in respect of regulation 20 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

The Examining Authority (ExA) requests a response from the applicant by **deadline 4 (Tuesday 12 May 2026)**.

Approach to Scenarios

Section 2.4 of the approach to scenarios document [REP3-063] indicates that in the event that the applicant is satisfied that a particular design scenario is capable of being rationalised or confirmed, consideration will need to be given to updating or amending the application documents and the timing for doing so. Paragraph 2.4.2 states the importance of the relevant information being placed before the ExA at the earliest possible time so as to avoid time and resources (for all parties) being spent on particular issues or matters which are no longer of relevance.

Tables 2.11 and 2.18 of the document relate to land south of the Tilbury North substation and refer to the adoption of scenario B. This was initially notified to the ExA on 9 February 2026 [AS-084] and again in the applicant’s deadline 1 cover letter [REP1-141]. The applicant states that it intends to submit the suite of updated documents at deadline 5 (10 June 2026).

Over two months has passed since the notification of the adoption of scenario B. National Highways Lower Thames Crossing [REP2-052] and Thurrock Council [REP2-042], have both requested that the relevant updated documents for Tilbury North be submitted earlier than deadline 5. The ExA agrees with them and given that a compelling reason for delaying this to deadline 5 has not been given in the applicant’s response [REP3-070], it requests the submission of the amendments to the relevant documents and plans relating to scenario B at **deadline 4 (Tuesday 12 May 2026)**.

The ExA understands that a number of the options outlined in the document are still under discussion and that confirmed options will be grouped and submitted into the examination in batches at relevant deadlines. The ExA requests further clarification from the applicant on this approach given that there are few deadlines remaining for this to take place.

Environmental Statement updates

The ExA notes the applicant’s responses to its first written questions (ExQ1) [REP3-074] HW 1.9, HW 1.10 and SET 1.1, with regard to the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the inclusion of more granular Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) data to reveal localised deprivation. The ExA seeks an addendum or technical note to ES chapters 10 (Health and Wellbeing) and 15 (Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism), to be submitted by **deadline 4 (Tuesday 12 May 2026)**, which compares the IMD2019 and IMD 2025 for all local authorities, including county authorities, within which the proposed development is situated, along with a full technical analysis and conclusions arising from the comparison data.

The addendum/ technical note should also include an assessment, together with conclusions, with regard to LSOAs and whether the comparison data provides more granular data that reveal localised deprivation.

ES chapters 10 and 15 should be updated with the additional information arising from the addendum/ technical note no later than **deadline 6 (Tuesday 7 July 2026)**.

The ExA notes the applicant's responses to ExQ1 SET 1.2, SET 1.3 and SET 1.6 [REP3-074], where hyperlinks are provided to documentation in response to those questions. However, it is not for the ExA to go searching for these documents or, in the instance of your responses to SET 1.3 and SET 1.6, the applicant's evidence in regard to them. Therefore the ExA requests the documents referred to in the responses to the above questions, or the relevant extracts from them, along with, where relevant, an explanation of how they answer the ExA's original question is sought. These are to be submitted by **deadline 4 (Tuesday 12 May 2026)**.

Advice letter on bats and letters of no impediment from Natural England

In its response to ExQ1 BIO 1.6 [REP3-112], Natural England comments that it has provided you with a further advice letter dated 30 March 2026 in relation to bat tree roost survey coverage. In addition, the ExA notes that the applicant has made reference to being in receipt of letters of no impediment from Natural England in relation to various European protected species. The applicant is asked to submit into the examination a copy of this letter and all the letters of no impediment by no later than **deadline 4 (Tuesday 12 May 2026)**.

Yours sincerely

Susan Hunt

Lead member of the panel of Examining Inspectors

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

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