



Hearing Transcript

Project:	Norwich to Tilbury
Hearing:	Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) - Day 2 - Part 4
Date:	29 April 2026

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Okay. Good afternoon everybody. Welcome back. Um, this issue specific hearing is resumed at 2:00. Um, you'll be aware that there was quite a lot to get through on the agenda for the rest of this afternoon. Um, so we will continue as planned, and then I'll assess in the mid-afternoon break, um, where we are and then where we go in that last session of the day. Um, but obviously I shall consult before we do that, um, make a decision. So if we can start, as we said, with, uh, considering Dedham Vale, um, and I just have a few fairly short questions to start with.

00:00:44:00 - 00:01:03:18

Um, and then we can move on to some questions, um, from councils and interested parties because I'm conscious of time, obviously. Um, so the first question I have is for the applicant, um, and the questions are essentially about the proposed link pillars in the underground section.

00:01:04:05 - 00:01:11:18

So I'm terribly sorry. Um, there was a noise behind you, said the proposed, and we didn't get an expert.

00:01:11:20 - 00:01:27:29

Link pillars. The link pillars. The joint base and Olympic Ellis. Yeah. So, um, it's just a question of how frequent are the joint base and link pillars likely to be? I think the environmental statement indicates every 500m to 1km.

00:01:37:10 - 00:01:38:23

For the applicant. Um, the.

00:01:38:25 - 00:01:57:12

Link pillars are related to the, um, jointing of um sections of cable which come in those sort of lengths. So they do vary. But yeah, somewhere between that 500m and 1000m. So it's very much depends on the particular circumstance between um sections etcetera.

00:01:57:14 - 00:02:19:23

Okay. I see. So, um, I suppose has the worst case scenario for any visual effect of the link pillars being assessed in terms of, uh, I guess in that in that situation, the worst case scenario would be a link below every 500m. So, you know, um, around 42 link pillars.

00:02:34:02 - 00:03:00:10

Hi, Rebecca. Great tricks for the applicant. Um, we. Yes, we've assessed the design. Um, our understanding is that the above ground link boxes or link pillars, um, would form small, uh, components along the route. And the aim would be to try and locate these near field boundaries. Um, they would not be tall structures. They would be fairly small. Um, and we would hope that they could be colored to blend into the landscape to reduce visual effects.

00:03:00:12 - 00:03:27:08

Okay, I think I understand that they're not that big, but then I think they're about two meters tall. So taller than me, for instance. Um, and I was thinking of when it appears in the environmental statement that you'll have the pillar, and then there'll be a surrounding timber fence around it as well. And if

there's any incremental effect of, you know, potentially 40 odd of those structures through the national landscape.

00:03:30:15 - 00:03:34:12

Um, could you bear with me a second while I just speak to my colleagues about that? Okay. Thank you.

00:03:52:00 - 00:03:56:29

We'd like to come back to you on that question. Um, If that's okay. Thank you.

00:03:57:01 - 00:03:58:12

Of course. Thank you.

00:04:13:04 - 00:04:39:03

And the next question is the, um, obviously, I'm aware that there's potential for restrictions on, uh, existing land management practices on top of where the underground cables will go to landscaping and so on. Um, have those impacts on visual amenity and landscape character going forward and the special qualities of natural landscape being assessed properly.

00:04:47:06 - 00:05:21:00

Uh, Paul raised them for the applicant. Again, just to clarify, the, um, we would anticipate over the cables that sort of typically normal agricultural practice could continue. So if it was grassland and the cables were installed, then it would be returned to grassland, arable cropping, etc. could continue. The main restriction over cables would be not replanting any trees that were removed. So that's the main restriction. So I think my landscape colleagues can then comment on that.

00:05:22:00 - 00:05:52:12

Yes. Thanks Mr. Wilson. Rebecca, great tricks for the applicant. So as Mr. Easton said, there are some restrictions in terms of tree planting over the cables, but hedgerows will be able to be replanted. Um, we point out as well that the project has we have sought to reduce effects on trees within the national landscape. So we undertook an exercise whereby we clipped the order limits and we restricted the limits of deviation to actually reduce impacts on trees within the national landscape.

00:05:55:15 - 00:06:01:22

Thank you. Is there any restriction on, um, if that's farmland on top? Is there any restriction on plowing, for instance?

00:06:03:22 - 00:06:10:22

Uh, Paul Royston for the applicant, we wouldn't anticipate any restriction on normal agricultural practices that would include plowing.

00:06:10:24 - 00:06:11:23

Okay. Thank you.

00:06:14:16 - 00:06:19:14

Okay. Uh. Uh, Mr. Amstutz, did you want to raise something here?

00:06:22:11 - 00:06:56:16

Simon Amstutz, national landscape manager for the Denver National Landscape, Stuart Valley partnership. Uh, just two quick points on that. I heard a reference to, uh, painting or using color on the link pillars. I would encourage the use of our guidance on the use of color and development to inform the colors chosen for. For. For any painting of structures. and the second point just around where hedgerows are replanted.

00:06:56:29 - 00:07:12:12

Um, dormouse is a one of our iconic species. The dead. I would hope that, uh, appropriate species would be used. I think that second point is covered off, but just, uh, the main point about the use of color. Thank you.

00:07:13:00 - 00:07:14:26

Thank you for that. That's useful.

00:07:18:03 - 00:07:25:15

Um, if we could turn now, um, to the the duty to further the purposes of national landscape. Um,

00:07:27:15 - 00:07:29:17

I think I'll probably open this one up to the floor.

00:07:31:04 - 00:07:51:12

If I could ask for any questions or any points that people have about this matter on whether the proposal, including the proposed agreement to provide a financial contribution to enhance national landscape and its setting, will further the purpose of the national landscape. Um, and if not, why not in response to construction and operation.

00:07:53:09 - 00:07:54:10

Yes, Miss Pearson.

00:07:54:21 - 00:07:59:09

Thank you. I can't see if Richard Buxton has his hand up, but I know he does want to speak on exactly this.

00:07:59:11 - 00:08:02:06

And he does? Yes. Thank you. Yes, Mr. Buxton.

00:08:05:12 - 00:08:40:03

I'm good. Good, good. Good afternoon. Um, this is Richard. I'm Richard Buxton. Um, I'm a solicitor from Cambridge, and I'm working for the Dedham Vale Society, and I. And they are also working with pylons, East Anglia. Thank you for hearing me out of order, as it were. And it may be sensible to follow up in writing. Um, the Dedham Vale Society considers its got a duty to appear today because it exists to protect and enhance the Dedham Vale national landscape and its setting and and that is under serious threat from the proposals that are before you.

00:08:40:10 - 00:09:14:06

Now, my key point I want to make is that National Grid has not done its homework to justify its proposals. We submit that the examination cannot safely proceed to a recommendation until that homework has been, as it were, marked. Now, this submission is underpinned by the section the duty imposed by section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This underpins the dead of Vale's special if.

00:09:14:08 - 00:09:48:01

If you like to say we're special, but in this sense we are position here. That duty was strengthened in 2004 to require decision makers and to actively to seek to further the purpose of the national landscape designation. That's the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area, and that includes how you perceive the world beyond it, which is relevant, of course, Here to pylons outside.

00:09:48:03 - 00:10:19:28

Now, that is not a discretion. It's a duty. And put another way, where something feasibly can be done better, it must be. And just for the record. Section 85 reads very short in exercising or performing any functions in, relating to, or so as to affect land in an Area of Outstanding natural Beauty, we now read. National landscape a relevant authority must seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.

00:10:20:25 - 00:10:56:22

So I'm going to focus. Um, I hope not too controversially on the question of high voltage direct current undergrounding. Now, this matters for the whole route. That is because what would be best for the Dedham Vale that is a properly assessed, less damaging approach would also deliver enormous spin off benefits for communities and countryside along the entire 184km. My first point is that I understand National Grid proposes a high voltage AC alternating current through the dead end Vail.

00:10:57:02 - 00:11:37:00

This would require a 65 meter construction corridor, rising to about 200m, and up to 500m in places. When you take into account access tracks and so forth, there's a permanent tree loss, which has been discussed across the national landscape. By contrast, the DC route needs only 10 to 15m of construction corridor. And this leads to an obvious question why use a more damaging form of undergrounding than necessary anyway? At the very least, the section 85 duty requires the less harmful option to be properly assessed.

00:11:37:13 - 00:12:10:09

Now, I believe that National Grid says that DC through the Dedham Vale alone would require converter stations that would cause its own harm. And I agree with that. But nobody's proposed HVDC. Only through the national landscape. So the real question which National Grid has not answered is whether a whole route, high voltage DC solution has been properly assessed. Now I want to briefly to mention three documents which I have not been able to find in the library.

00:12:10:11 - 00:12:47:02

And if the panel does not have them, they could be provided. And I'd be surprised if panel doesn't have them. The first is the National Energy System operator. That's the Nisei study of 2024. Second is

the Institute of Engineering and Technologies study, a comparison of electricity transmission technologies of 2012, but updated in 2025. And thirdly, a presentation by a company, I think, called ATP cable plowing about cable plowing to the Independent Advisory Group on Future electricity grid for Wales in September 2024.

00:12:48:18 - 00:12:54:04

I'll come back to those very briefly, but I wanted to mention them. My main question is.

00:12:54:14 - 00:13:12:13

Mr. Buxton, could I just interrupt you? Sorry. Apologies. I just want to say, have you seen our, uh, our written question? Alt 1.5 and the, um, response to that from the applicant, because that deals with some of the comments you're raising, I believe.

00:13:13:02 - 00:13:31:06

Well, I will, I will if I will need to refer back to it. Um, sir, and I apologies if I've not grappled with it. Um, but I do. But I'm instructed that the points I'm raising are, um, haven't been answered.

00:13:31:25 - 00:14:01:15

Uh, of course I just, um, obviously, um, I just want to make sure that we all make the best use of the time today. Absolutely. No, no, of course. And, you know, we have considered those days, but not not. But, you know, we have asked those questions in writing about um, and raised people are very interested. Lots of interested parties. So they have been dealt with in written evidence so far to a large extent. But if there is anything new that you wanted to bring to our attention, then that would be very useful.

00:14:02:03 - 00:14:24:01

Well, I would say my understanding is that these these points have not been dealt with satisfactorily by National Grid. And that a in order to comply with the section 85 duty, as I mentioned, they need to consider undergrounding, um, undergrounding through the national landscape and therefore throughout by a less damaging alternative.

00:14:25:16 - 00:14:26:06

Um, and.

00:14:26:08 - 00:14:43:10

Okay. Yeah, I, I understand that point. Um, but that that question was asked directly. So it may be that the time may be more profitably spent if, if you could have a look at that question. If you've not done so already and respond in writing.

00:14:44:08 - 00:15:22:03

I can. I can do that, sir. That is that is that is fine. I will also mention briefly that I and maybe this has been mentioned also, but I'm instructed it has not been, um, that there has been um, the question of table ploughing has not been adequately responded to again, in the context of the national landscape. That is highly relevant because in the context of the national landscape, um, even if you use the existing the currently proposed, um form of the transmission, that is AC, it is not going to um, there are better ways of doing it.

00:15:22:05 - 00:15:56:21

And again, that applies to the entire route. Um, and the third um, um, issue, we mentioned pylon height this morning, and I'm instructed that, um, there's appears to be no Consideration of the TSRTC conductor technology by National Grid. Or else it hasn't been satisfactory responded to. And fourthly, I'm going to back up the question of the Treasury. Green book has been mentioned many times. I think to the panel, and that needs to be properly addressed.

00:15:56:23 - 00:16:41:20

And frankly, as a lawyer, I'm staggered that that hasn't. The national grid doesn't feel itself bound by it. So, um, to to to wrap up and I appreciate you want to keep the time short. Um, my, my, I think the central question that I asked the panel to consider, um, considering very carefully, is whether National Grid have really, uh, done their best to quote, seek to further, uh, as required under the act and have they rigorously assessed therefore high voltage direct current throughout, and that that includes with or without a node in their Ardley.

00:16:41:22 - 00:17:13:13

Have they considered the cable playing? Have they really not used the Green Book, and have they considered the other conductor? This is infrastructure whose effects will endure for decades. The technology has moved on, and the assessment, as far as we can see, has not. And we feel entitled to something better than what National Grid appears to have done in its planning. And we trust that the panel will be very careful to see that that is completely sorted.

00:17:13:15 - 00:17:30:06

But I will certainly, sir, look at your look at the document to which you refer and consider whether it's been properly answered, and if I may, if I may, sir, I will, um, submit a written um, um, follow up to this presentation.

00:17:30:21 - 00:17:39:06

That'd be very useful. Thank you very much, Mr. Buxton. And, um, obviously, we'll take your views into account and note the question that you post of us. Thank you.

00:17:39:08 - 00:17:40:04

Thank you very much.

00:17:41:03 - 00:17:46:15

Okay. Thank you. If we could go to the next hand online, which I believe is Simon Amstutz again.

00:17:46:17 - 00:18:22:25

Thank you Simon, I'm a national landscape manager for the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Stour Valley Partnership. Um, for the avoidance of of any doubt, um, I'm not representing the Dedham Vale Society, which is a a different organization, although we share many of the same aims. But I thought it was a matter of record that we should be noted. Um, I'll be very brief. Um, so, uh, with the project proposals noting that the Holford rules, um, have not been followed because they haven't avoided the areas of highest amenity.

00:18:22:27 - 00:19:08:01

So A and B is branded as National Landscapes. We've seen in app two, three, five that um, that no significant impact during construction on natural beauty features such as meadows and landscape quality, scenic quality. Um, I would I have the view that undergrounding should not be seen as meeting the section 85, um, burden or responsibility on relevant authorities, because if we're talking about the Holford rules to avoid, um, perhaps the argument is that by undergrounding, they are seeking to meet the aspirations of the Holford rules.

00:19:08:03 - 00:19:46:06

So I'm saying that undergrounding is a matter of policy that isn't related to section 85. And just two last points on, um, section 85. We'll all be aware that the government's response to the Fingleton review was talking about limiting compensation and, um, Mitigation for such projects and protected landscapes, national parks and national landscapes. But that would require legislation which we don't think has been put forward yet.

00:19:46:08 - 00:20:19:27

And even if that legislation to meet that recommendation of 70, so that recommendation 19, we still consider that section 85 still places a burden or requirement on relevant authorities to to seek to conserve and enhance. It's a different matter to the compensation point that recommendation 19 was trying to address in our view. And the last point I wanted to make is that the National Landscape Partnership is working on a heads of terms.

00:20:19:29 - 00:20:32:18

I think you referenced it, sir. Um, with National Grid about how National Grid might be able to demonstrate their compliance with section 85. Thank you.

00:20:33:16 - 00:20:40:19

Thank you very much, sir. That's useful. Um, we have, uh, bronchitis, I believe, online from Baber and.

00:20:42:14 - 00:21:14:24

Thank you, sir. Thank you. Yep. Bronchitis. Uh, just for this part. Representing baby district council. Um, as the, uh, the national landscape is just in that district. Um, just to reiterate some of the points that we've made already in previous submissions, but just to build on that, that the we have made a suggestion in, um, response to the draft accompanied site inspection itinerary regarding viewpoints that we believe the WSA may want to consider for their due consideration of the impacts on the setting of the national landscape.

00:21:15:03 - 00:21:53:05

We're just very alive to the fact that we have an extensive right of way network across the districts, and that the potential for kinetic views traveling towards the national landscape. Uh, there's no hard, hard limit, obviously, as to where your appreciation or enjoyment of the natural beauty of the national landscape starts and finishes. So particularly with the cable ceiling and compound, which is around when I'm Grove. Um, and we've also made reference to, um, asking the WSA to be satisfied that the assessment of all the cumulative infrastructure associated with the ECN, including pylons and overhead lines, in terms of the impacts on the setting of the national landscape, are considered.

00:21:53:07 - 00:22:02:00

And we did make reference to the recent application by Thornton Street for Dark Skies status, and that has been awarded. Thank you.

00:22:03:03 - 00:22:04:05

Thank you very much.

00:22:05:25 - 00:22:12:18

Um, do anyone else wish to raise anything? Ah, there's a hand in the audience. If we could get a microphone, please.

00:22:17:09 - 00:22:18:02

Thank you.

00:22:25:05 - 00:22:58:06

Tamsin Fairlie. I just wanted to come back to your question on cable depth. You asked the applicant whether normal farming practices could continue if the cable was buried underground. Now, the applicant says that that that that that it can. But that's only the case if the topsoil depth, if the depth of the lowest point of infrastructure are the tape, there's 1.2m of soil coverage. The applicant isn't going to guaranteeing that they will provide 1.2m of soil coverage there, saying they will only go to 0.9m.

00:22:58:08 - 00:23:29:00

That was supported by Louise Staples yesterday of the NFU. But if they don't, if they don't guarantee they will put it at 1.2m, you cannot guarantee that normal farming practices can continue over the top of it. We heard yesterday in the aviation section that National Grid's view was if they cannot continue to operate safely, they shouldn't operate a national grid, suggesting that farmers, if they can't operate safely, should just stop farming across the whole length of all of the underground sections. I think that's unreasonable.

00:23:30:01 - 00:23:30:25

Thank you.

00:23:32:12 - 00:23:36:19

Do you have any more comments about Dedham Vale specifically before I revert?

00:23:38:15 - 00:23:39:17

Seeing any hands.

00:23:40:05 - 00:24:12:06

Sir? Mike Webb, Suffolk County Council. I'll just make a brief point because it's a point in our air. Um, in relation to the overall approach, we certainly welcome, uh, the applicant's recognition of the duty and its seriousness and the proposed contribution. Um, there are small points in terms of finessing matters, particularly in relation to, um, loss of hedgerows along the route and to the extent that that can be avoided by greater use of horizontal directional drilling.

00:24:12:08 - 00:24:19:12

That's our strong preference. But those are, I say, more matters of finessing rather than matters of violent opposition. Thank you sir.

00:24:20:07 - 00:24:24:03

Thank you, Mr. Bedford. And just briefly, if we could return to Mr. Amstutz.

00:24:26:15 - 00:24:58:00

Simon, national landscape manager, Denver National Landscapes two A Valley Partnership. I very much confer with what Michael Bedford said around, um, horizontal directional drilling or similar as much as possible through the, uh, the national landscape. And my final point is that the section 85, I understand, um, is, is a burden on all, um, relevant authorities, which will, you know, will include the local authorities.

00:24:58:02 - 00:25:10:00

I believe it also includes the, uh, the planning inspectors as well as even the secretary of state who will ultimately make the decision. So that's my understanding of that section 85. Thank you.

00:25:10:09 - 00:25:17:09

Thank you very much. Um, if I could ask the the applicant for this, there's quite a few points, but if you respond to those points. Thank you.

00:25:17:17 - 00:25:55:01

Thank you very much. Um, most of the points that most of the parties have made have been considered and dealt with both in app 120 and in the document you've already referred to, which sets out our case. I don't propose to rehearse those there. There is a duty on the examining authority Under Secretary of State to seek seek to further the interests of the national landscape. This was first considered and tested in the Lower Thames Crossing case, where the Secretary of State considered the duty and held that it had been met by a contribution post examination.

00:25:55:03 - 00:26:29:20

We go much better than that, because our financial contribution has been crafted in association with the gentleman who has just been speaking or his organisation. The negotiations have taken place and have led to a heads of terms which are largely agreed. As you've seen, I'm going to ask Naomi Hayes just to give you the highlights of that. I know you don't want a full repetition of it, but just the highlights of that and why. It is, in our view, that they meet the statutory requirement to seek to further the interests.

00:26:29:27 - 00:27:08:06

Before I do, though, um, we agree with what Mr. Bedford said about loss of hedges and, uh, horizontal, um, drilling where that can be appropriately and efficiently achieved and that, that would be covered by, um, uh, submissions, uh, through the draft, um, document that we looked at yesterday, which is then secured by article, um, by requirement for. So, um, I'll shut up and ask, um, Naomi Hayes, just to give you a flavour of the heads of terms and why they are relevant to seeking to further the interests.

00:27:12:25 - 00:27:46:12

Hi. Thank you. Um, Naomi Hayes, um, speaking for the applicant. So the, um, the heads of terms, which, um, have been pointed out, has been already shared and comments received back from both Suffolk County Council as the host authority for the National Landscape Partnership, and by the National Landscape Partnership. And a second set of those heads of terms have been shared recently. Looking to address the comments that were received, but fundamentally there.

00:27:46:19 - 00:28:25:02

The measures have been supported. So last year, um, the we proposed to have um, engaged with the local authorities and the National partnership to try and identify um, measures that were both, um, sufficient and appropriate, reasonable and proportionate in line with the um, national planning policy and one and also the, the Defra guidance. Um, so we took on board the comments we received and where there was a preference for a contribution.

00:28:25:15 - 00:29:08:21

Um, and in order to identify the sum for that contribution, we liaised closely with the National Landscape Partnerships to identify projects which have been, um, identified in the annex to appendix A, which is the appendix to the uh document a PP120, um, identifying the the nature of the projects, which are compliant with the management plan and current at the time, and also the the future one at the time they were drafted, which is the present management plan now to identify projects and cost those to come up with an overall sum, which was, um, agreed.

00:29:09:14 - 00:29:44:18

Those projects are all, as I say, in line with the management plan and seeking to further the purposes of of the national landscape and provide resourcing for that landscape partnership to assure that can be provided in addition to the measures which have been identified. And there was also discussion in relation to a existing UK Pear network line. So, um, we took that forward and we've committed to undertaking a feasibility study to look into a future removal of that.

00:29:44:20 - 00:30:23:14

But the current commitment just relates to the, um, the commitment to the feasibility study. Um, so that's all been outlined in the, um, the document, as I say, app 120 and we consider that those measures combined with obviously, the measures that have been undertaken through the project design, siting and routing and the mitigation measures that we've provided and have also been set out in that document. And as I say, meet the guidance in relation to identifying appropriate and proportionate and sufficient measures to to meet the duty.

00:30:29:15 - 00:31:00:15

I, Rebecca. Great tricks for the applicant. Just in response to Miss Curtis comment about when am Grove cable ceiling in compound and visibility of that ceiling in compound. I would just point everyone to app 247, which is a zone of theoretical visibility of the ceiling and compound illustrates that visibility is very low from within the national landscape in that where it's sited, there was a viewpoint. Just bear with me when I try and find the number.

00:31:02:29 - 00:31:21:11

325 from outside of the national landscape, close to William Grove. And then there's another one within the national landscape. So bear with me. Viewpoint .3.24 from a high point within a national landscape, which demonstrates that cable sealing end is not visible, nor the overhead line that connects into it.

00:31:25:12 - 00:31:47:12

Thank you. That's useful. Um, I've got a number of hands online. If I could just ask, I. Welcome to you all by. If I could ask you just to be as brief as you can, please, before we move on to next item. Um, because that was due to be the last comments on Dedham Vale. But if we can move, uh, to Mr. Giles, I believe, of Tendring District Council, please.

00:31:49:06 - 00:31:54:23

Thank you. Um, Jacob for Tendring district Council. Um, I.

00:31:55:12 - 00:32:28:01

Tendring just wants to briefly return to first principles because we don't think it's been covered, so. Um, the examining authority asked a question, but a question to the applicants. Question alt 1.4. The second part of that question is, at the time of writing, there's been no decision on the North Force application and the Planning Inspector National Infrastructure Project webpage in the case of submission of that application is expected in January 2028. So the applicant is asked to and then it's specifically point C of that question.

00:32:28:20 - 00:32:54:21

It's asked to provide details of the timing of the selection of the sites for the three projects in respect of the production of the strategic options in the corridor and prelim ratings, citing study to 2022. Given that North Wales and five estuaries were not submitted to the Planning Inspectorate until 2024 and Dawson Interconnector has yet to be submitted. We we have studied the answer. Can. Can you hear me?

00:32:55:29 - 00:32:57:06

Yes, I can, thank you. Yep.

00:32:57:08 - 00:33:29:11

Okay. It just looks like you. Okay. So we we have studied the applicant's answer in detail. Um, and we don't think that they've answered that question. So. And we think it's critically important. Um, for, uh, for the not only the examining authority, but also for tendering district council and indeed the impacts on the national landscape and, um, the residents of Audley and Little Bromley to get clarity around that question, because I haven't provided details of the timing.

00:33:29:15 - 00:34:00:23

And the reason why it's important is because, um, National Grid has earlier in the morning provided a detailed explanation around minimisation of harm and mitigation. Okay. We accept that that was in the Waveney Valley context, but they are yet to you know, we we don't we haven't seen um um clear evidence about around avoidance for TDC. Um that risk missing the central issue for, for Audley and Little Bromley.

00:34:01:07 - 00:34:42:17

Um because our core concern is that harm the decision from National Grid to place the East Anglia connection. In that in that location, the moment that decision was made, whenever it was made, um, to look to the national landscape was effectively locked in. So from TDC perspective, um, that decision appears to have been made very early on and around. Um, we think because we, we, we haven't been provided with the evidence, but we think that the decision was made around 2019 or 2020, because we've heard that in the North fourth and five Estuaries examination.

00:34:43:07 - 00:35:12:10

The point is, once that choice was made significant, in our opinion, national landscape impacts were inevitably embedded into the scheme. And um, Dickie's view then, is that National Grid has never genuinely tried to avoid, uh, the dead end Vale national landscape because it's not in their interest to do that because there's these, connection offers being made in 2019 2020. So.

00:35:13:18 - 00:35:14:03

Thank you.

00:35:14:05 - 00:35:16:12

And I'm not. I'm not finished yet. Um.

00:35:17:03 - 00:35:34:19

Well, um, I was just going to say thank you for those comments. I appreciate those. Um, you mentioned the question and that you you considered it hadn't been answered properly. Um, so I imagine you'll be responding in writing to that question, is that correct?

00:35:34:21 - 00:35:36:00

Yes. We will. Yeah.

00:35:36:02 - 00:36:02:05

Okay. Um, and then the applicant can respond in due course as well. Um, I'm just conscious that we are not only are we fairly short on time, but we're discussing landscape and visual effects. I know you, you. This is the. You consider that. That's because we're going through the, um, the denim veil. But these are questions that we've we've already asked and we can explore further. But I don't think we have the time to do that today.

00:36:02:21 - 00:36:09:10

I haven't finished my question, so I don't know how, you know, um, what question I was going to ask, but okay, I'll accept that. That's fine.

00:36:09:12 - 00:36:13:29

Um, okay. Thank you. Uh, Mr. Amstutz, please.

00:36:21:12 - 00:36:43:21

Simon Amstutz, national landscape manager for the Denver National Landscape Storage Partnership. Um, I thought it'd be useful for the examining authority to hear my thoughts on what Naomi Hayes,

who was speaking on behalf of the applicant, uh, said, um, and in a line I would say that the heads of term discussions are progressing well. Thank you.

00:36:44:23 - 00:36:47:29

Thank you, Mr. Amstutz and Brian Curtis, please.

00:36:49:12 - 00:37:19:19

Thank you, sir. Brian Curtis, the district council. Um, just to clarify the point that I was making on behalf of Baber a moment ago, um, colleague from National Grid referred to AP 247. That actually clearly demonstrates my point that we are concerned about the kinetic views from the extensive right of way network, not just views from the national landscape towards the cable ceiling in compound, but the experience of the cable ceiling in compound, part of the development within the landscape that is enjoyed as part of approaching to and from the respective parts of the national landscape.

00:37:19:21 - 00:37:20:12

Thank you.

00:37:21:07 - 00:37:25:17

Thank you very much. Um, did the applicant wish to come back on any of those points before we do?

00:37:25:22 - 00:37:26:13

Thank you. No.

00:37:26:15 - 00:37:38:10

Thank you. Thank you. Okay, so we move on now to, um, discuss Burslem Brantford, please. Um, I just have one question on this area. Um,

00:37:39:27 - 00:37:58:09

and there's a, um, this is the applicant acknowledges there's a considerable wire scape already around, uh, Brantford, obviously with the existing substation and works going on there, which will be added to by the proposed development. Um, how do you intend to mitigate those effects, if indeed you do?

00:38:01:29 - 00:38:32:00

Paul Richardson for the applicant. I'll sort of just give an initial overview and then hand over to my colleagues. Um, part of the, um, sorry, the detail of the design that we're taking forward includes the removal of some existing overhead line lattice. The 132 network. So to the north of um, Bramford substation, there's about an eight kilometres section from often down to Brantford that's, um, being replaced by underground cable. And to the south.

00:38:32:05 - 00:39:08:03

There are two separate one three, two, uh, lattice lines that various sections are being removed. My, um, colleagues just cut it up onto the screen. Um, it's a little difficult to see at this scale, but they're, um, along the alignment of the 400, both the north and south. There are some removal of existing pylons. So there's an actual sort of reduction in the number of, um, sort of one, three twos to, to respond, but I'll pass over to my colleagues and talk a bit more about the implications of that.

00:39:12:09 - 00:39:51:19

Laura Cargill for the applicant and the landscape and visual chapter in chapter 13 has considered embedded mitigation measures proposed as part of the project. This includes the rerouting and siting of the overhead line into and out of Bramford substation and the measures just referred to by Mr. Easton, which include the removal of parts of three existing overhead lines which converge at the substation. Other relevant mitigation measures would be the reinstatement of vegetation removed as part of the scheme, and also the applicant's 3 to 1 tree replacement planting ratio, which was referred to earlier by Mr.

00:39:51:21 - 00:39:52:09

Harris.

00:39:59:01 - 00:40:08:28

Thank you. Um, in terms of the the lines being removed, is it? Um, you have to forgive me. Is there one line being removed?

00:40:11:11 - 00:40:37:22

Paul Royston for the applicant. Um, there are three sort of separate elements of connections. So the 132 comes, I think, from Stowe Upland down to Brantford. The other two, I can't remember their exact location. So there are three separate sections of 132 lattice line that are being removed at varying distances. Um, with the in the corridor.

00:40:38:16 - 00:40:39:21

Okay. Thank you.

00:40:45:28 - 00:40:49:29

But anyone else would like to make any comments about this area?

00:40:53:10 - 00:40:58:01

We have two hands up online. I believe it's, um, Mr. Peterson of, um.

00:40:59:27 - 00:41:00:28

Parish Council.

00:41:02:13 - 00:41:05:16

Hi. Yes. Thank you. William Peterson, Birstall parish council. Can you hear me?

00:41:05:24 - 00:41:07:05

I can, thank you. Yes.

00:41:07:07 - 00:41:38:10

Brilliant. Thanks very much. I'd like to reiterate, to start off with the words from Waveney and from Richard Buxton. We agree with all those and those roads. Those points are equally applicable to Birstall. I think it's just important to state that Birstall is very different to the other areas. We are not in a valley. We are on high ground. Um, and as you say, we're impacted by either other wire skate, but also by other, uh, significant projects, mostly of which are solar farms and battery sites.

00:41:38:12 - 00:42:11:13

So this project can't be considered on its own. There is an absolute need to take into account the projects that will be, um, uh, approved and certainly applied for as a result of this project. And I know that National Grid said they'd had no contact with the, um, Brantford, uh, Bess, which is in pre-application, uh, but that obviously is much required, bearing in mind it is as a direct result of this project, um, in terms of the pylon removal.

00:42:11:24 - 00:42:43:00

Um, the case is being made here is the removal of three pylon lines to erect one. Uh, surely it would make more sense to, uh, retain the three in place and bury the one? Uh, as a result of this project, the farmland around here will be taken completely out of operation because of the need to bury three pylons and erect one high velocity pylon. Um, that would be negated if one pylon was buried and the others were retained.

00:42:45:03 - 00:43:16:04

Um, in terms of mitigation and landscaping, um, very little can be offered in terms of planting for a site that sits on high ground. Even when that planting is mature, these views won't be mitigated at all. First on itself is islandwide through pylons. If this project goes ahead and the now in progress Bramford to twin STD works.

00:43:16:19 - 00:43:35:10

Um, so it is with that in mind that this needs to be considered as a special case, and more focus needs to be applied to the mitigation hierarchy and to the residual effects of this project to Birstall and the people who live in the vicinity. Thank you.

00:43:35:28 - 00:43:39:21

Thank you, Mr. Petersen. Um. Bronchitis, please.

00:43:41:05 - 00:44:14:04

Thank you, sir. Brian Curtis for Baber district Council and Suffolk District Council in this instance. Um, just to refer you to, um, our rep 3089 our response to SSC one. Um, and previous submissions. We note the applicant refers to their commitment to working with the Branford Twins to team to deliver appropriate mitigation for the impacts of cumulative effect development around Branford substation. We don't believe that's been submitted into the application pack, and we've yet to see that despite requesting that information.

00:44:14:07 - 00:44:57:01

And we are engaged in dialogue with, um, the applicant and with colleagues at Suffolk County Council to try to achieve the appropriate, um, strategic mitigation that we are we've referred to in our Q1 response. Um, but just to just to make it clear and I know that you have seen this site because I've seen, uh, the route of the unaccompanied site inspections, but there is a significant amount of development that has been enabled by the substation, but there will be more enabled customers of the applicant that will be enabled by Branford, Quincy and the the project that we're considering here, Norwich, Tilbury, um, within a landscape that has a lot of other development being as it is close to the edge of Ipswich.

00:44:57:03 - 00:45:28:05

So there are significant impacts from those cumulative effects on the local communities, environment, heritage, etc. that needs a strategic approach. The substation is um, based on the need case from the applicant of the outmoded design of the network, etc. the substation is of that era. It was designed many years ago, um and eight into ancient woodland and was not designed with the amount of infrastructure that it supports. So we would like to see that mitigation delivered appropriately.

00:45:28:07 - 00:45:38:13

It goes beyond the 3 to 1 planting. We believe in order for that to be satisfactory. Um, but we are in dialogue with the applicant and hope to see the detail of that soon. Thank you.

00:45:39:00 - 00:45:44:01

Thank you very much. Um, does anyone else wish to make any comments about this area?

00:45:45:04 - 00:46:11:18

Sir Michael Bedford, Suffolk County Council Sir Miss Curtis has effectively said all I was going to say, so I don't need to repeat it. We think this is absolutely an area where one needs a strategic landscape response because of the challenges of the site, and therefore we need to see rather more from the applicant's proposals than hitherto. But there is a dialogue about that, and obviously we would hope that that has a productive outcome. Thank you sir.

00:46:11:29 - 00:46:20:25

Thank you, Mr. Bedford. Um, if I could ask the applicant for their response to the comments from both Mr. Peterson and Mr. Curtis, please.

00:46:21:00 - 00:46:29:03

Yes. Um, in terms of the choice of undergrounding the three existing one, three, two CVS. That's Mr. Eastham.

00:46:30:21 - 00:47:06:01

Yeah. Paul. Written for the applicant. Um, I think we've responded to this in a written submission, but I'll clarify the terms. But in very limited summary, the 400 connection is 18 cables, six trenches of three, with the cables over around a 55 to 60 meter width compared to each of the one three twos. Um, can be sort of, um, underground via, uh, a single train. So fundamentally, the scale of the activity doesn't sort of like supports undergrounding the one, three, two rather than the 400.

00:47:06:04 - 00:47:20:05

Um, and I think, just to clarify, I think there was a point about battery storage. We do mention that in the, um, in app one, two, two at um, paragraph 6.1.3, I'll pass to, uh, Laura Cargill.

00:47:23:18 - 00:48:01:04

Laura Cargill for the applicant. I just wanted to respond to some of the points that were made about, um, the assessment of effects of existing and future infrastructure around the substation, just to provide reassurance that existing infrastructure, including the overhead lines and solar farms, form part of the baseline. And they're considered in the Landscape and Visual Chapter, which is document

reference app. 226 um, future report, Future proposals around the substation have been considered in the accumulative assessment, which is document reference, AIP 284 and future proposals that we're not aware of yet, which would be considered under their own merits.

00:48:01:06 - 00:48:03:09

Thank you. That's all. Thank you.

00:48:03:16 - 00:48:15:18

Thank you. Was there any kind of response to the point that Mr. Curtis made at Mr. Bedford in terms of, um, looking again at those that area in terms of advance mitigation?

00:48:17:07 - 00:48:18:12

Sorry if I missed it.

00:48:19:06 - 00:48:47:18

Laura Cargill for the applicant. Um, you may be aware that there is no environmental area around Bramford substation, and this is due to a lack of space due to other existing and planned development. Um, there is a plan which illustrates the sort of issues here which was provided in response to, um, the examiner's question, Gen 115, which is document reference rep 074.

00:48:48:21 - 00:49:02:12

Yes. Thank you. Yes. I wondered if there was a specific point, I think, from, uh, Miss Curtis about. It seemed like, uh, an agreement in terms of joint mitigation with the Bramford twin sister scheme.

00:49:04:06 - 00:49:09:11

Laura Cargill for the applicant. And we would have to take that that question away and respond later, if that's okay.

00:49:10:18 - 00:49:12:11

Okay. Thank you. Useful.

00:49:16:11 - 00:49:22:03

Okay. Thank you. Um, if we move on now, then to, um, Ardley and Little Bromley.

00:49:31:04 - 00:49:33:04

Just continue my questions.

00:49:40:27 - 00:49:41:17

Um,

00:49:43:07 - 00:50:04:16

we had some comments from, uh, Tendring District Council about a need for more viewpoints in the Ardley area. Specific examples the north west, the north and west edges of the conservation area, the church, vicarage, Bad Lift Hall, Hunger Downs and Bounce Farmhouse. Um.

00:50:06:18 - 00:50:08:29

From our site visits we considered that

00:50:10:26 - 00:50:28:10

certainly um the the line to the north of Ardley warrants further consideration in relation to the historic environment. Um, and I was wondering if you were intended to provide any, um, additional visualisations for that area. Thank you.

00:50:33:14 - 00:50:35:02

Laura Bishop, the applicant.

00:50:35:08 - 00:51:05:23

Um, I believe these comments, these are the ones that were submitted in response to the written questions from Tendring. Um, so we will be providing a full written response to those at deadline for. Um, we do consider that the viewpoints we've currently provided, um, we've chosen viewpoints that are identified as key views within the conservation area appraisal and specifically those views that are orientated towards the project, those ones that might be affected.

00:51:06:03 - 00:51:47:23

And so we have a viewpoint, HB 25, in the centre of Ardley, which obviously includes the church itself, um, to give that representation of what might be visible from that area of the, um, of the village. Um, and then we have VPI 3.11, um, on the northern edge, which is also slightly beyond the conservation area. And the screening that is provided by some of the hedgerows in the built form at that northern edge. So I would consider that in terms of the actual conservation area, that one on the northern edge is very much a worst case scenario, um, for visibility, as one of the features of the conservation area is its enclosed nature, which is set out in the conservation area.

00:51:47:25 - 00:51:48:16

Appraisal.

00:51:50:16 - 00:51:58:03

Okay. Thank you for that. Um, Mr. Bell, was there anything you wish to raise here? I imagine there is. Um.

00:51:58:16 - 00:52:08:11

You are, you are preempting, um. So. Well, as you're aware, this this has been a massive concern, this project for Ardley, Little Bromley Parish Council.

00:52:08:18 - 00:52:09:20

Just sorry.

00:52:09:22 - 00:53:12:04

Thank you. And, um, I have to put on record that the parish councils are disappointed that we're not dealing with an issue specific hearing in respect of the Alba, because as time goes on and more of these hearings take place, it becomes more and more apparent that there is a need for for such a hearing. And dealing with it piecemeal is not necessarily going to help you, um, as much as a specific

hearing would. Um, in respect to this particular question on on the viewpoints, the parish councils are obviously those most informed as to the appropriate viewpoints for the Alba, and in that regard they have at point sought to supply viewpoints to National Grid to take into account and consider that actually the viewpoints that have been taken are inadequate to, to kind of demonstrate the, the impacts that this is going to have on the, on the Alba.

00:53:13:08 - 00:53:21:06

Um, I think that that probably deals with your question there. So, um, I'll pause for now to allow you to carry on.

00:53:22:16 - 00:53:27:10

If there's other points you, you wish to make now that I'm happy to take those as well. Thank you.

00:53:28:29 - 00:53:59:05

Um, aspect of, um, some of the, some of the points that have been raised in respect to other areas, um, equally applied to the Alba. And there are concerns about the number of visualizations, what they show. And you've heard me on that already. Um, the other concern is, is obviously in respect of, um, the sightings and the cumulative effects, um, of all the projects. And I think we, we come on to that later on.

00:53:59:16 - 00:54:31:11

Um, but we set out what our concerns are in some detail in the written submissions to date, and there may be points, depending on what questions you have and the applicant response to it that are raised at that point. Um, but but essentially we are concerned as to how the root was fixed as it was in respect of the Alba and what, um, alternatives have been considered. And we're still not satisfied by the answers that we've seen.

00:54:31:17 - 00:55:05:08

Um, there are obviously going to be another round of written submissions coming in from us. at the end of this hearing in time for deadline for, um, this probably gives you a bit of a flavor as to the type of things we're going to be saying in those, but, um, those are the points I have to raise for now. Um, we were listening with some interest in respect of what, uh, Tendring was saying earlier and appreciating that you've directed that they put those in writing in the same way that I suspect you would direct us to put our points in writing.

00:55:05:16 - 00:55:52:06

Um, but we'd very much like to hear whether or not Tendring have any any further comments in respect of our Ardley specifically. Um, and Little Bromley. Sorry, I should say, because they are the ones who are informed with more expertise than my clients are. We have local knowledge. We have some experience, local knowledge. Um, but in terms of the planning judgments that you're going to have to make, we are falling in line with the points that Tendring are saying are putting out and we are supportive of the points they are bringing forward and we got from at Tendring, they are about to move on to further points in respect of Ardleigh, and we would like to hear them today if at all possible.

00:55:53:24 - 00:55:54:24

Thank you, Mr. Bell.

00:56:01:24 - 00:56:07:20

Tendring District Council is anything you wish to raise about Ardley and Little Bromley in terms of landscape and visual effects?

00:56:10:12 - 00:56:45:15

Thank you, Jacob, for Tendring District Council. Um, so in terms of your, your your question initially about those two viewpoints, just a quick observation. Um, we you know, there's only two viewpoints provided for that, um, crucial conservation area of Ardley. Um, it's a it's an east west linear conservation area. And those in Tendring view. Um Opinion. Those two viewpoints have been very selectively chosen by the applicant to obscure views, open views of those fields to the north of Ardley.

00:56:45:27 - 00:57:06:22

So that's just the first observation. Observation. I know you've asked the the applicant whether they would be open to providing more, um, viewpoints, and they haven't really directly responded to that right now, and they will be responding in writing. So we'll keep a close eye on that. Um, I earlier I was I was just going to make the point, um, that

00:57:08:09 - 00:57:51:23

so I'm not going to repeat what I said earlier, but we Tendring clearly recognise National Grid's legal obligation to provide connections to customers in in the Audley, Little Bromley or Albert area. Um, but that duty does not remove the need, in our opinion, to to properly consider avoidance of the national landscape, particularly in relation to, um, to the national landscape itself and its setting. So why is this important? Um, it's important because we we we have asked the applicant to provide evidence, um, of, uh, why why they've chosen that location.

00:57:52:00 - 00:58:22:04

Uh, in, in consultation or in partnership with their customers. Um, and Mr. Reason has repeatedly explained that there is, um, you know, um, environmental constraints and cost constraints in terms of, um, the two wind farms trenching further to the west or elsewhere. Um, but we, you know, we think the need for that information is absolutely critical because of the landscape problem that's been locked in the moment when that decision was made.

00:58:22:17 - 00:58:30:23

Um, but again, we will we will take that further in our, um, written response at deadline. Deadline for. Thank you.

00:58:31:03 - 00:58:43:16

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is there any other comments on Ardley and Little Bromley? There's a hand up in the audience, please. If the case team could take the mic to Miss Fairley.

00:58:46:08 - 00:58:47:00

Thank you.

00:58:56:09 - 00:59:35:10

Tamsin Fairley, on behalf of Fairley and Sons Limited. The Eaton site is characterized by open farmland interspersed with farmsteads and clusters of residential properties. The siting of the ECN and the connections of the applicant prematurely granted to North Forres and five estuaries, amongst others, results in a disproportionate burden on a small number of landowners, the Little Bromley and Ardley community, and the character of this landscape. Throughout the examination of five estuaries in North Wales. Both projects cited that they only chose their sites due to the need to be within three kilometres of the connection point National Grid offered to them, which was the ECN, the applicant clearly accepts that the substations will cause significant harm to the area.

00:59:35:12 - 01:00:10:08

Given the scale of landscaping and environmental mitigation proposed, yet they fail to recognize that in this circumstance, policy requires avoidance first. N1 and N5 require applicants to avoid best and most versatile land, which is defined as grades one, two, and three wherever possible. The applicant's ECN site selection results in more than 260 acres of grade one land being removed from agricultural production on a permanent basis at the substation site alone, not grades 2 or 3 A, which are still deemed to be best and most versatile, but grade one land that is classified as some of the best land in the country.

01:00:10:17 - 01:00:43:20

Policy requires where best and most versatile land is to be used, that the applicant demonstrate that no alternative poorer quality land was available. They have not done this. Looking at the agricultural land classification maps, great grade one land is estimated to make up less than 3% of land in England. Looking at the county of Essex approximately 0.00 0.02% of the geographical land area is classified as grade one. The applicant therefore needs to demonstrate that none of the remaining 99.98% of land in the county of Essex is available or suitable for the ecology.

01:00:43:26 - 01:01:06:16

They have not done this. Turning to Little Bromley and Ardley. Approximately 43% of Essex's Grade one land is in Little Bromley, Ardley and on the edge of Colchester. If the applicant had appropriately assessed the siting and routing of their project against N1, N5 or the Holford rules, they would not have identified a site for the ECN that is directly in the middle of the largest contiguous block of grade one land in the county.

01:01:08:21 - 01:01:10:14

Thank you. Um.

01:01:12:22 - 01:01:23:08

I'm not seeing any of you. So if we could revert to the applicant. Um, the point about BMV may well be best answered in writing or signposted to where you've already answered. That would be useful. Thank you.

01:01:23:14 - 01:01:31:16

Yes. I was just going to suggest that Russell Harris. Casey. And just on the issue of the view points, which is the other issue raised. I was going to ask Sir Moxley to say something very quickly.

01:01:33:26 - 01:02:12:17

Yes. In relation to the viewpoints as highlighted, there are two currently illustrated within the application pack. There's the historic environment viewpoint in the centre of Ardley, which is more obscured, but does show how the infrastructure would be seen in relation to the church. It is an obscured view and that was, uh, it was chosen because, well, Larus already told us it was representative of the conservation area, but the viewpoint on the outer edge of Ardley, VP 3.11, isn't an obscured view.

01:02:12:19 - 01:02:45:10

It's very much the worst case view taken from the edge of the village. Um, it's relatively close to the route of the lines. Um, and I would dispute the fact that that was chosen to be deliberately obscured by hedgerows and suchlike. It's very much a worst case view. Um, that said, um, we are happy to consider, um, requests for other locations. Uh, so long as, uh, some specific information is provided to us and we can take that away and see if we can produce something.

01:02:45:12 - 01:02:49:16

Maybe in time for deadline five. Thank you.

01:02:49:18 - 01:03:09:27

Thank you. That's that's appreciated. Um, if, um, the relevant parties. Uh, so Tendring and potentially, um, Ardley and Little Bromley parish, if you want to. I know you've already suggested some locations, but perhaps some more detailed, um, locations, grid references and so on that would that would be useful for deadline for. Thank you.

01:03:13:11 - 01:03:17:15

Okay. So if we move on now to the Colin Valley, please.

01:03:20:24 - 01:03:27:23

Uh, yes. Please. If. Um, just bring you a microphone. Thank you. I'm sorry if you had your hand up before. I didn't, I didn't see.

01:03:30:10 - 01:04:11:05

I would like to talk about the heritage asset numbered. My name is Jillian Whittle. I would like to talk about the heritage asset. Numbered 1147743, which is one of the worst affected by this proposed project. The boundary of this rural grade two heritage asset is just ten metres from the boundary of National Grid substation site in Ardley. The asset itself is a mere 34m from National Grid's boundary. National grid's invasive infrastructure was surrounded on nearly three sides underground cables, substations connecting to the North Falls and five estuaries wind farms.

01:04:11:16 - 01:04:27:28

The towering four storey talk on interconnector and no fewer than 550 metre pylons. TB one, TB two, TB three, TB four and TB five will all loom over this asset.

01:04:29:20 - 01:05:16:15

The asset is mentioned in FH Earth's book. Oddly, in 1796 on page 58, it is a building of historical interest to the village and to the area. National grid is severely downplaying its importance and is failing to assess its true value. The origins of this grade two heritage asset date back to the 16th

century, and buildings then had very little foundations. What will happen when National Grid's heavy machinery moves into the area? How can such a structure withstand the ground disruptions and years of noise, relentless lighting and vibrations caused by this project? How will National Grid mitigate for large cracks in the walls and the potential instability to a heritage asset?

01:05:18:06 - 01:05:46:21

The current owners have tried to engage in dialogue with National Grid. A meeting took place with representatives from National Grids and Fisher German on 19th June 2024, during which National Grid promised to address their concerns within weeks. To this date, there has been no response. National grid has failed to consult and communicate, and has done nothing to consider how to ameliorate the disastrous effects of the proposed project on this grade two heritage asset.

01:05:46:24 - 01:06:06:13

Thank you. Thank you very much. Um, thank you for your statement there. Um, if we could refrain, please, from the clapping and so on. But thank you for your statement. I do appreciate it. And we hear it. Um, National grid was there in the applicant. Is there anything you'd like to respond to on these points, please?

01:06:06:15 - 01:06:08:04

We will respond in writing. Russell. Harris.

01:06:08:06 - 01:06:11:01

Katie. Thank you. It's appreciated. Thank you.

01:06:14:18 - 01:06:47:08

Okay. If we could move to the Coal Valley, please. Um, and in this context, I'm specifically talking about the valley to the west of great Hawksley through Fordham, Ford Street and Oldham. Um, the area has some different characteristics in terms of topography, and hence is perhaps an area where pylons may be more visible, um, to the applicant. How is your approach to the proposed route in this area varied, if indeed it has given those characteristics?

01:06:53:19 - 01:06:56:20

I'm going to ask Rebecca. Great to answer that, please.

01:07:00:18 - 01:07:17:20

Um, Rebecca, great tricks. Um, for the applicant. So, um, the landscape and visual impact assessment has identified significant landscape and visual effects in the Colin Valley. Um, the landscape assessment I would refer you to.

01:07:21:00 - 01:08:02:22

Bear with me. I'm just finding the app two, two, eight, which is a landscape baseline and assessment and the landscape character areas that are relevant to this area are the coal River Valley floors, LCA, A4, which we have judged to be of high sensitivity, and there would be significant effects up to 1.5km from the project. LCA, A5, Holme Valley, coal River Valley slopes. Again, we've assessed these to be high sensitivity and with significant effects up to 1.5km, and the other two landscape characters are Great Farmland Plateau and Rochlitz Farmland Plateau, LCA b4 and LCA b5.

01:08:02:24 - 01:08:33:06

Again, significant effects on those landscapes, as you say. Um, the landscape in this area is undulating due to the cone valley, which runs in an east west um orientation, and the tributary valley which connects from the north, um, which is the top of which is situated the, um, great Hawksley Tilbury side cable ceiling and compound in terms of visual effects.

01:08:33:09 - 01:09:02:16

And we have grouped visual receptors into three visual receptor areas. These are D5, D6 and D7. And you'll find the assessment of these in Environmental Statement. Appendix 13.3 Visual Baseline and Assessment part one of four, which is up 229. I believe I hope that's the correct reference because I've got two written down here.

01:09:04:26 - 01:09:41:02

Um, within these visual receptor areas, um, just point out that the extent of identified visual effects is defined using both location specific place names and also estimated Distances and all the distances in the assessment are approximate and not exact. And it is important to note that there would be a transition in terms of the level of effect, and there's not an absolute and abrupt change. So where we're seeing significant effect up to 1.5km, in some instances, we have identified visual effects that are significant beyond one and a half such as viewpoint.

01:09:42:21 - 01:09:43:21

Bear with me.

01:09:50:21 - 01:10:08:10

Viewpoint 4.35, which is taken from public right away at Kemp's Green and the app reference is at two three, one and it's on PDF page 106 of that app reference. We've um, sorry, that's the wrong one.

01:10:10:16 - 01:10:21:14

I think my question was more about how your approach has varied to to possibly other parts of the route, given the differing topography around in terms of valley.

01:10:22:19 - 01:10:54:01

Yeah. For eastern, for the applicant, maybe if I can sort of start that one and then Rebecca can, um, chip in. Um, fundamentally the methodology of that we apply through the routing and siting is the same wherever you are. It's that the, the different, um, constraints, environmental features and findings of assessment play in a different way at each location. So the the balance of factors being considered will vary. So it's fundamentally the same method.

01:10:54:03 - 01:10:59:28

But the detail of the assessment will say inform a different decision in response.

01:11:05:12 - 01:11:50:06

So Harris Casey. Um, so looking at the way we looked at the Waveney Valley, it's exactly the same here. So, um, the topography is different, but the question is, is it in the national landscape? And therefore does the strong presumption for undergrounding apply? And the answer was no. Then the

next question is applying 2.9.24. Is there a high potential for widespread adverse impact, which wouldn't by itself rebut the strong presumption for underground, but ought to give rise to consideration? And it's at this stage that, um, there was found not to be a high potential for widespread adverse impact for the reasons that Rebecca was just, um, beginning to explain.

01:11:50:08 - 01:12:20:16

That's so the approach is the same. Um, it's a matter of judgment and the matter of landscape judgment is embedded in the test in 2.9.24 and in order to get the gate. So again, 20, 23, 24, 23 and 24, um, in order to get through the gate in order to consider whether there ought to be a removal of the strong presumption to go over ground, you have to find high potential for widespread and adverse impact.

01:12:20:18 - 01:12:36:06

And, um, and that was a finding that was not the case in the circumstances of this case, because of the limited number of views and the narrowness of the, um, viewpoints, uh, available.

01:12:37:26 - 01:13:14:00

Okay. Thank you. I guess this area, um, there are of areas similar, obviously, which were discussed and we will discuss, but it you have not only the topography, but there's um, a lot of listed buildings in this area as well, quite a narrow route through, um, right from the top end, um, near kind of Cody By's around those list of buildings around that area, right through the Cone Valley there. Um, and as you'll know, we've had a lot of relevant representations and interested parties comments about this area down through fourth Street and Oldham as well.

01:13:14:13 - 01:13:28:24

Um, it seems to be an area where there's lots of different competing constraints, if you like. So it's how I understand the point you were making before about your assessment of the route, but how how they've been considered directly.

01:13:36:00 - 01:14:07:24

For the applicant, again, I'll give an overview of some of the work that's done and see if colleagues want to chip in. So, um, in the app. 122 um, figure 7.4, which is in section 7.3. Um, it reviews some of the alternative routes. So if we're, um, not in one location, the routing has to be somewhere else or a different technology adopted. Uh, Mr. Harris has explained, um, why we don't need to test in the technology.

01:14:07:26 - 01:14:45:12

So in that in the design development report, we do review the alternatives because there are alternatives, but they bring a different set of consequences and effects. Um so that sort of comparison is done. And we I prefer the um, draw the conclusion that the route we have identified is preferred. And that's taken into account of the, the effects on the different technical topics. And as, um, Miss Greateorex, as um said on landscape, I don't know whether miss, uh, Lara wants to say anything about the heritage aspects.

01:14:48:15 - 01:15:09:26

Uh, Lara Bishop for the applicant. Um, so we have concluded a significant effect for Ford Street Conservation Area. Um, due to the proximity of the overhead line in relation to it. Um, and we have concluded a number of adverse effects, um, both not significant and significant, for the listed buildings in this region.

01:15:12:06 - 01:15:19:14

Thank you. Um, Mr. Hamilton, nice to you. Is there anything you'd like to raise at this point on behalf of Fordham Parish Council?

01:15:19:16 - 01:15:51:01

Yes. Thank you. Um, I'm also representing the History Society and Colchester Archaeological Group. Um, we were to have a parishioner speak on the environment side of things, but because things have gone on, she's had to leave now. The Combe Valley, if you don't know it, the views across from the southern part of Fordham, you can see five miles straight to Colchester. You can see the water tower. The whole valley is has become a tourist, um, venue now. We have lots of cyclists around us and all kinds of things.

01:15:51:03 - 01:16:16:10

The Essex Way runs through it. Um, now, as people enter the village, there'll be a pile on right beside the road, looming over everybody. The whole visual aspect will be completely destroyed. Now, my personal interest and I was hoping to speak later, but we may be running out of time is something that hasn't been mentioned. That and that's the archaeology. Um, no, I have gone.

01:16:16:14 - 01:16:36:04

No, sorry. It's just, um, it's I, I have read, obviously, um, a number of relevant citations considering archaeology in that area. Um, the hearing today, the heritage section, we were concentrating on the above ground assets in there. That's not to say we're not looking at archaeology, just not in a hearing today.

01:16:36:15 - 01:16:39:25

Okay. Um, it does say heritage assets.

01:16:39:27 - 01:16:45:25

It's not. Yes. I think it says on the agenda we concentrate on above ground assets. Okay. It should say.

01:16:46:04 - 01:16:48:16

So. Historic environment wouldn't cover that either.

01:16:49:00 - 01:17:15:14

Um, if you just had historic environment, it would. But as the agenda says, we're concentrating above ground assets today. Um, if there's something specific you want to raise about the archaeology, we can consider that. Um, I'll just put the little caveat in it. Obviously, I have read your relevant stations and your representations concerning archaeology in that area. Okay, but you're welcome to point out any anything. Anything to you.

01:17:15:16 - 01:17:46:19

For the benefit of the room. Um, we have four. Roman. This is confirmed. Four Roman archaeology sites, a medieval one which dates from at least 1250. Um, we have, um, prehistoric sites, and we have an active Roman dig. This has been this work started in 2013. It's still ongoing with years of more work to do. And ng plans to put a cable pulling station literally on top of it now.

01:17:46:21 - 01:18:25:11

They claim to have done a desktop survey. Images of our site has been on Google Earth since 2016. The site is all over the internet. It's nationally and internationally known and it has a number of unique features. And I do mean unique. And yesterday we discovered yet more building foundations, which extend beyond our current perimeter and head directly to where our pylon. What is it? TB 47 is um, I've repeatedly written to Ng over three years, and I've had letters saying thank you.

01:18:25:13 - 01:18:39:26

We're passing it on to our team, but not once have they contacted us in any respect or answer the questions about how they can mitigate damaging it, because it is nationally important. I'll leave it there.

01:18:40:01 - 01:18:43:18

Thank you. Um, yes. Of course.

01:18:44:00 - 01:18:45:26

James. Ron, Colchester city council.

01:18:46:03 - 01:18:46:18

Um, I.

01:18:46:20 - 01:18:50:13

Think in answer to your original question, um, that you asked National Grid.

01:18:50:20 - 01:18:52:18

I think they kind of skirted the answer.

01:18:52:20 - 01:19:24:29

I don't think they have correctly responded to the topography. I don't think they've done anything differently in particular, apart from scoped out the need for potential undergrounding. As the council advised. But that doesn't mean that they don't need to respond to the topography. It's going to be extremely invasive in landscape terms. I think they agree that, um, as Portland Parish Council have said, it's an extremely sensitive landscape and has the Essex Way one of the most important, um, long distance footpaths in the county, if not the most important.

01:19:25:01 - 01:19:25:25

Um, so.

01:19:27:27 - 01:19:37:20

We would like to hear how they have responded to the landscape and what they've done differently here that they have not done elsewhere, because it's a special landscape, as you noted. Thanks very much.

01:19:38:26 - 01:19:40:24

Thank you. Miss Pearson.

01:19:42:00 - 01:20:13:03

Rosie Pearson on East Anglia. Um, I'd like to endorse. What? Um, Mike Hamilton, Macey and James Wright have said. Um, this is my home patch. I grew up in Oldham. I now live in the Colne Valley. Firstly, I don't believe you can cross the Kane Valley using pylons at any point without destroying it. It's beautiful all along. So, um, at the point that we need a different technology or undergrounding, um, needs to be considered. I don't understand why the Waveney Valley got consideration of undergrounding and the Cone Valley didn't, um. All the points you raised, there's heritage, there's bridleways.

01:20:13:05 - 01:20:48:01

I'm not not going to go over them, but, um, it it must meet the high potential for widespread adverse impact. It starts with a huge harm up at the northern parts of Fordham parish, where there's a really steep and beautiful valley. The tributary going into the cone. Um, it'll be highly intrusive with pylons. There goes across the cone valley, which again, um, the river valley, it floods. It's stunning. There's lots of wildlife. There'll be birds that fly into the cables. Um, goes up the hill, um, highly obtrusive, on the hill towards Oldham. Um, and then continues through to the river corridor, which is a nature corridor that's now in Colchester's draft local plan.

01:20:48:07 - 01:20:57:13

Um, so it hits two, two river corridors in one stretch. So it must meet the test for high potential for widespread adverse impact, I would argue.

01:20:58:26 - 01:20:59:18

Thank you.

01:21:02:19 - 01:21:07:00

We have a hand up in line as well. Um. Caroline home, would I believe.

01:21:07:24 - 01:21:38:06

Uh, yes. I'd just like to, um, concur with everybody who's spoken. There are widespread impacts in the Cone Valley. And, I mean, I can list for every single specific issue that that the examining authority have raised as something that we can speak about. Every single one of those issues relates to the Cone Valley. And I just don't think that the national National Grid have have assessed the cumulative harms to the Cone Valley, which I appreciate.

01:21:38:08 - 01:22:06:29

The examining authority did raise in in the questions of the National grid. But I don't think they've answered because to every single point in the agenda I can I can give an example of how it hasn't been adequately assessed. And when you when you put all those impacts together. They are widespread and

will have a detrimental impact on on the Cone Valley, and it does need to be a properly assessed.
Thank you.

01:22:07:01 - 01:22:15:06

Thank you very much. Um, but I revert to the applicant, please, for your comments on the representations you've just heard.

01:22:15:24 - 01:22:17:13

Yes, I'm just checking.

01:22:34:06 - 01:23:08:29

Rebecca, great tricks for the applicant. Um, so in terms of the response to the widespread point, um, whilst we do accept the relocations where views of the overhead line would extend into more elevated surrounding rural areas in the vicinity of the cone valley, um, and into neighbouring lower lying farmland. Um, there are occasions where intervening landform of vegetation do filter views of parts of this section of the overhead line, and typically limit more distant views, and also the effects of the change in view over distance and the visual permeability of the infrastructure.

01:23:09:07 - 01:23:54:01

Um, in terms of how it disappears more readily into the distance, um, and effects within the lower lying river valley itself are generally more contained. Um, landscape and visual effects beyond approximately 1.5km are judged to be not significant, but there are some, um, isolated locations viewpoints where we've identified significant visual effects up to approximately two kilometers. Um, so the position is that the findings of the Elvia demonstrate there is not a high potential for widespread, significant adverse landscape and or visual impacts of the Cone Valley, albeit we do recognize that significant and adverse landscape and visual effects are reported in this location.

01:23:56:05 - 01:24:07:29

Okay. Thank you. Can I suggest, um, that this might be a point which could be followed up in writing? Um, given the comments that we've heard today and from the city Council as well. Um,

01:24:09:19 - 01:24:15:26

yeah. A more detailed response in writing, I think, would be useful. Thank you. Thank you.

01:24:16:02 - 01:24:19:05

Uh, in terms of archaeology, we'll deal with that in writing as well.

01:24:19:07 - 01:24:48:05

Thank you. That's appreciated. Okay. I'm going to suggest now that we, um, we take a break because it's 3:25. Um, as I said earlier, the, um, I'll, we will have a look at the remaining agenda for today during this break because clearly there's there's lots more to do and we'll have about an hour and a half until when we finish at 5:00. So we should do that and then come back with those proposals. So if we adjourn now until 1540. Thank you.