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Replying to National Grid's response to the Planning Inspectorate's questions in document EN020027-002426

BIO 1.15 Presence of White Clawed Crayfish.

How can National Grid find it acceptable to 'scope out' surveys for White Clawed Crayfish in the River Tas following a review of a desk study and an assessment of potential impacts?

White Clawed Crayfish are an endangered and protected species and with a project of the magnitude of Norwich to Tilbury surely significant on site surveying and research must be undertaken to establish the size of the crayfish population and identify their locations in the River Tas and tributaries. It is not acceptable for National Grid to make decisions, that potentially could eradicate the Crayfish, based on desk studies.

National Grid acknowledge White Clawed Crayfish are present in the wider River Tas catchment but they say there are no records of the species within 2 km of the order limits in the 10 years preceding 2022. Again this assumption is based on desk studies and does not prove that White Clawed Crayfish are not present within the order limits.

From desk studies National Grid found that there is evidence of invasive Signal Crayfish within the order limits. Because of predation and disease Signal Crayfish are a danger to the native White Clawed Crayfish. Based on the presence of Signal Crayfish National Grid state it is 'unlikely' that the native

species are present in the study area. But this is an assumption again based on desk studies and not the result of carrying out thorough surveys.
It is apparent from the response from National Grid that desk studies are deemed sufficient for decision making when dealing with the White Clawed Crayfish in the River Tas. I ask the Planning Inspectorate to insist that National Grid obtain a conservation licence from Natural England for the project, appropriate for this protected species.

The River Tas being a rare chalk stream would be vulnerable to pollution from the Norwich to Tilbury project. National Grid say that the river and its tributaries would be protected from pollution during construction. However, because the pylon route is on higher ground above the River Tas valley, the substantial ground works, the presence of concrete and risk of spillage from refuelling plant etc would present a scenario of high pollution risk through drainage into the river. The proposed pylon route crosses the river and tributaries / feeders in several places and there would be a high risk of pollution from construction particularly near RG049, RG042, RG032 and RG024 as these pylons are at crossing points on the river and its tributaries / feeders. Besides the main tributaries and feeders there are numerous ditches across the landscape, crossed by the pylon route, that link up and eventually drain into the River Tas thus posing further possibilities for pollution. It is difficult to accept that the River Tas and it’s wildlife would not be

adversely affected by the Norwich to Tilbury project. This is an inappropriate project and should be rejected especially as there are better alternatives to upgrade the grid that National Grid have dismissed.