

Report on The Planning Inspectorate Pylons Consultation in Ipswich 1/5/2026

As our council is aware the pylons consultation has reached the next stage and our clerk was schedule to attend both days regarding the compulsory purchase hearing on Thursday and the next stage of the hearing when we could discuss Wildlife, Biodiversity, Traffic and Air quality and he presented his report to the planning inspectorate on Friday in a 15 minute slot where he was questioned on his report by National Grid solicitor and barristers along with those from the agent representing National Grid and his report is detailed below

1. Introduction

This report has been written for the Planning Inspectorate meeting. It explains the current situation in Hapton and the concerns local residents have about the proposed pylon construction. The main issues are air quality, health, wildlife, traffic, and the character of the village.

2. Current Air Quality

Air quality in Hapton is currently rated as **moderate**, with a reading of **53**, and it may get worse as the weather improves.

One important type of air pollution is called **PM2.5**. This refers to very tiny particles in the air that are too small to see. These particles are dangerous because they can be breathed deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream.

PM2.5 mainly comes from:

- Vehicle exhaust fumes
- Smoke
- Industrial activity

At the moment, the **Air Quality Index (AQI)** is usually between **0 and 3**, which is classed as "**Low**" or "**Good**." This means the air is generally safe to breathe for most people.

3. What the Pollution Numbers Mean

Air pollution is measured using **$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (micrograms per cubic metre)**.

In simple terms:

- A **microgram (μg)** is a very tiny amount of weight (one millionth of a gram)
- A **cubic metre (m^3)** is the amount of space in a box that is 1 metre by 1 metre by 1 metre

So, **$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ tells us how much pollution is in a small amount of air**. A higher number means more pollution.

Current pollution levels in Hapton are low:

- **Ozone (O₃):** 76.15 µg/m³
- **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂):** 6.41 µg/m³
- **PM10:** 9.89 µg/m³
- **PM2.5:** 8.21 µg/m³
- **Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂):** 1.96 µg/m³

Even though these levels are low, pollution can still affect health over time. In Norfolk, PM2.5 pollution is linked to around **164 deaths**, which is about **one death every five hours**. The average level linked to this is **7.0 µg/m³**.

4. Concerns About the Proposed Pylons

4.1 Air Quality

The construction of pylons is likely to make air pollution worse because:

- Large lorries will be bringing materials into the area
- These vehicles produce exhaust fumes
- Construction work creates dust and pollution

Residents are worried this will harm people's health and reduce air quality.

4.2 Wildlife

There is a local population of owls in the area. The proposed overhead wires could:

- Put owls at risk of electrocution
- Disturb their natural flying routes
- Reduce local wildlife numbers

This is a major concern for residents who value the local environment.

4.3 Traffic and Roads

Hapton's roads are not built for heavy construction traffic. The area is already experiencing problems from large lorries linked to nearby roadworks.

More construction traffic could:

- Damage road surfaces further
- Increase noise and disturbance
- Make roads less safe for residents

5. History and Character of Hapton

Hapton is a historic village that is recorded in the **Domesday Book**. Many homes in the area are over 100 years old.

Residents are concerned that the development will:

- Damage the look and feel of the village
- Spoil the surrounding countryside
- Destroy footpaths that people use regularly

These footpaths are important for walking, recreation, and community life.

6. Conclusion

Although air pollution levels are currently low, they already have a real impact on health in Norfolk. The proposed pylon construction could make this worse.

The main concerns are:

- Increased air pollution and health risks
- Harm to wildlife, especially owls
- Damage to roads from heavy traffic
- Loss of the village's character and footpaths

7. Final Statement

We welcome the Planning Inspectorate panel to visit Hapton and see the area for themselves. We hope all concerns will be carefully considered and that the best possible decision will be made for the community

The conclusion from attending the meeting was the level of objection to the scheme has grown and it was refreshing to hear the members of the Planning Inspectorate questioning the responses given to those that spoke against the scheme to ensure they got the correct information for their findings. Over 30 companies spoke on Thursday including among others National Highways who are totally against the scheme along with 5 members of the public and all were against the scheme and had serious about the lack of information being shared by National Grid and their agents.

Friday saw more members of the public along with our clerk address the Planning Inspectorate meeting and not as before they could be questioned by National Grid which was very daunting.

Our clerk spoke for 15 minutes in which time he was questioned by National Grid barristers for 10 minutes but really managed to get our points across as in the report which was detailed earlier in this long report.

Tharston and Hapton Parish Council were disappointed that South Norfolk Council did not appear at the hearing in person or online, but Norfolk County Council did online but will continue to fight the parishioners corner until they have exhausted all avenues left to them on this subject.

The main subject of the hearing on Friday was around Traffic management and public rights of way and may agencies did appear with most online except the following

Suffolk County Council

Essex County Council

Tendring District Council

Thurrock Council

National Highways

Thames Crossing Highways and Council

Pylons East Anglia

Joint Police forces Suffolk and Essex

With many others online that all were unhappy with the behaviour of National Grid around the sharing of information and how little had been shared before the meeting that had been promised.

Many forms of Traffic management were discussed after the plans by National Grid were put forward and one of the main ones was the traffic around the Diss area and how they National Grid would regulate and manage this. More details would be forthcoming when the final plans are formalised. Norfolk County Council were very strong on this and were disappointed that the plans had not been fully in place for the meeting and the inspectors commented that this should have been the case and that from now on formal discussions must take place and not wait till the next consultation before more talks are held.

The Public Rights of way issue was discussed at length and National grid assured the Inspector's that public rights of way that are next to each other would not be closed at the same time and that a safety management plan would be in place to ensure parishioners would be able to use them away from the construction site and any that are closed and any damage would be returned back to its original state after works had been finalised.

