



Tuesday 12th May 2026.

To: The Planning Inspectorate

Subject: Objection to the Norwich to Tilbury Overhead Pylons and Request for Undergrounding Through Offton, Suffolk - Deadline 4.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a resident of Offton, Suffolk, to formally object to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury overhead pylon route and to express the deep concern, distress, and frustration felt throughout our community regarding the devastating impact this project will have on our village and surrounding countryside.

The proposed development will irreversibly damage the historic and rural character of Offton. The plans include enormous 50-metre-high overhead pylons that will effectively split our village in two, together with two proposed 125m x 75m construction 'compounds' on prime agricultural farmland along Offton Road and Holly Road (both registered 'green lanes' themselves). These compounds are planned only metres away from ancient woodland, historic landscapes, public footpaths, and bridleways that are heavily valued and used by residents and visitors alike.

The impact on the landscape, biodiversity, agriculture, heritage, and daily life of villagers will be severe and long-lasting. Construction traffic is proposed to use narrow rural roads and green lanes never designed for industrial-scale activity, with the potential to block village access and exit routes entirely. This poses serious concerns not only for residents but also for emergency access, farming operations, and public safety.

Most concerning is the apparent failure by National Grid to properly and transparently evaluate less destructive alternatives.

National Grid's own documentation the comparison is made in the **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Chapter 13)** of the Environmental Statement for the Norwich to Tilbury where a particular Landscape Character Type (LCT) would experience **likely significant adverse effects**. National Grid identifies the landscape surrounding Offton as an area that will experience one of the highest levels of significant adverse impact from the Norwich to Tilbury infrastructure proposals. Only one other location has been identified at a comparable level of severity — Dedham Vale.

However, despite the comparable level of acknowledged harm, the mitigation approach differs fundamentally. In Dedham Vale, undergrounding is proposed to reduce damage to the landscape, heritage, and community value. In Offton, despite facing similarly severe impacts, the proposal remains large-scale overhead pylons.

This inconsistency raises serious concerns regarding fairness, proportionality, and transparency in the decision-making process.

If one community is considered worthy of underground mitigation due to landscape and heritage sensitivity, why is Offton not being afforded the same protection?

Our community is not opposing the national need to improve energy infrastructure or support renewable energy transmission. We understand the importance of modernising the electricity network. However, we

strongly object to the continued reliance on outdated overhead transmission infrastructure where modern and less destructive alternatives exist.

It is deeply concerning that a 21st-century energy challenge is being addressed using infrastructure technology developed generations ago, despite advances in underground cabling and HVDC solutions. Undergrounding the cables — particularly through Offton and its surrounding farmland — represents a far more responsible, sustainable, and community-conscious solution.

Residents have repeatedly asked National Grid to explain the logic behind this contradictory approach, yet no satisfactory answer has been provided.

A further major concern that has continually been overlooked, minimised, or ignored entirely by National Grid and associated agencies is the serious and increased aviation safety risk posed by the proposed pylons due to their close proximity to RAF Wattisham.

RAF Wattisham is located less than a mile from parts of the proposed route and is an active military airbase and helicopter training facility operating throughout the year. The area surrounding Offton, Ringshall, and Barking Tye experiences frequent low-flying helicopter activity 365 days a year, often at very low altitude as part of operational and training exercises. I can provide photographic and film evidence of this.

Introducing multiple 50-metre-high overhead pylons into this established low-flying environment significantly increases the risk of a catastrophic accident. These structures would create dangerous new aerial obstacles within an area already heavily used by military aircraft. Residents are deeply concerned not only for the safety of RAF personnel, but also for the neighbouring villages directly beneath these flight paths.

The consequences of even a single helicopter collision involving this infrastructure could be devastating, with potentially fatal outcomes for aircrew and civilians alike. This concern has repeatedly been raised by residents and local representatives, yet it appears to have been continually brushed aside without proper public explanation or transparent assessment.

It is unacceptable that such a serious public safety issue appears to have received insufficient scrutiny during the planning and consultation process. Before any approval is considered, there must be a full, independent, and publicly transparent assessment of the aviation risks associated with constructing large-scale overhead pylons so close to RAF Wattisham and its low-flying helicopter operations.

Residents of Offton, Ringshall, and Barking Tye should not be expected to live beneath infrastructure that could materially increase the risk of a fatal aviation incident.

The people of Offton feel ignored time and again. Meaningful engagement has been lacking, and many residents feel decisions are already predetermined without proper consideration of local knowledge or viable alternatives. Requests for an accompanied site visit, on foot with Villagers, and transparent evaluation of alternative routing and undergrounding options have not been adequately addressed.

We respectfully request that:

- The impacts on Offton are reassessed in full and independently reviewed.
- Underground cable solutions through Offton and surrounding land are properly considered and transparently evaluated.
- National Grid provides clear evidence explaining why mitigation applied elsewhere, such as Dedham Vale, is not being applied in Offton.

- A formal accompanied site visit is arranged with villagers and local representatives to fully appreciate the scale of harm the proposed pylons and compounds will cause to our community, farmland, woodland, rights of way, and historic setting.
- Greater weight is given to the cumulative social, environmental, agricultural, and heritage impacts that this proposal would impose on our village for generations to come.

We also respectfully request proven evidence is shared with us regarding aviation safety & RAF Wattisham and that the serious public safety issues have been scrutinised during the planning and consultation process and are in actual fact legal, as National Grid have dismissed this as a safety issue.

Offton is a historic rural community, not an industrial corridor. Once this landscape is damaged, it cannot be restored.

We ask the Inspectorate to ensure that all viable alternatives — particularly undergrounding — are properly explored before irreversible harm is inflicted upon our village and surrounding countryside.

Yours faithfully,

Doug Wade