

00:00:04:28 - 00:00:06:10

Good morning everyone.

00:00:09:02 - 00:00:18:14

Good morning and welcome. Can I confirm with the case team that I can be heard clearly and the live streaming has commenced? Thank you.

00:00:20:08 - 00:00:53:04

It is now 10:00. And this open floor hearing in relation to the Norwich Tilbury project is now open. Thank you all for attending this hearing. Whether here at Chelmsford Racecourse or online. My name is Susan Hunt. I'm a planning inspector in Charleston, town planner, and I've been appointed by the Secretary of State to be lead member of the panel to examine this application. And I'm now going to ask my fellow panel members who have been also been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the project, to introduce themselves.

00:00:54:06 - 00:01:00:05

Yeah. Morning, everybody. My name is Christopher Butler. I'm a planning inspector, and I'm also a chartered town planner.

00:01:01:23 - 00:01:10:18

Good morning everybody. My name is John Hockley, also a planning inspector and chartered town planner. Yes. Good morning everyone. I'm Matthew Sims and I'm a chartered civil engineer.

00:01:12:18 - 00:01:17:18

Good morning. My name is Kenneth Stone and I'm a planning inspector and a chartered time planner.

00:01:20:03 - 00:01:45:04

I can confirm that all members of the examining authority have made a formal declaration of interest. There are no known conflicts of interest with regard to us examining this application, and together we constitute the examining authority, or X for this application. There are other colleagues from the Planning Inspectorate who are joining us today. And here in Chelmsford, our case manager here is Sian Evans.

00:01:48:21 - 00:02:03:23

Who is supported by our case officer Harrison Coles. And online we have our case manager Louise Haraway in case officer Jessica Dunlop. And this is them who you should contact. If you've got any problems today and any other, any other concerns regarding the process.

00:02:06:06 - 00:02:43:01

Today's hearing is being undertaken as a blended events and meaning. Some of you are present with us here at the hearing venue, and others are joining us virtually on Microsoft Teams and however you've decided to attend today, you'll be given a fair opportunity to participate. And you should also be aware from from the from the outset that the meeting is being recorded. So I'll firstly deal with a few

housekeeping and preliminary matters. Can everyone please settle their devices and phones to silence and online? Participants should make sure that their cameras are switched off and microphones are muted.

00:02:44:13 - 00:02:51:07

The there is no fire drill today. The emergency exits are out of the doors that you came in and into the car park

00:02:52:23 - 00:03:03:15

online. If any point you can't hear us, Just raise your hand. And that should be whether virtually online or in the room. If the sound goes.

00:03:05:19 - 00:03:14:11

We've had no requests for any special measures or arrangements to enable participants today, but if you do need assistance and please contact the case team.

00:03:16:27 - 00:03:49:23

The hearing is expected to finish late late morning. Today it won't it won't go on for the day. And as I've said, the event is being live streamed and recorded and our letter dated 13th of January, which we refer to as the rule six letter, that explained that because we retain and publish the digital recordings, they form a public record as to which the General Data Protection Regulation applies. And we do retain these recordings for a period of five years from the Secretary of State's decision.

00:03:50:09 - 00:03:59:18

So if you participate today, it's important you understand that you will be recorded and that you consent to the retention and publication of that recording.

00:04:03:22 - 00:04:35:21

And so it also to avoid the need to edit those digital recordings that are going to be published. We ask that you try your best not to add information to the public record that you'd normally wish to be kept private or confidential. And that includes things like address details, financial circumstances, or details of medical conditions. And if you do feel the need to refer to that sort of thing in your submissions, and please discuss it with the case team first, because it's really better that that's done in writing so it can be redacted.

00:04:38:19 - 00:04:47:23

For those watching the live stream, if at any point we need to adjourn, you'll, you'll have to, um, make sure you refresh your browser page before we come back.

00:04:49:21 - 00:05:21:14

And just to say a little bit about conduct during this hearing. both, both today and throughout the week, really. And we do understand people have strong feelings about the proposed development. It's important to recognize we do have a process to follow, as does the applicant. We therefore ask for good manners and respect to be shown to each other throughout the hearing and all of this week. And this includes the applicant's representatives, both at this week's hearings and in written submissions.

00:05:22:18 - 00:05:40:14

And we want to be able to hear everybody's submissions and get through them all. So please don't talk over anyone while they're speaking. No clapping, cheering or booing. And we need to be able to hear what people are saying and don't want anyone speaking time impacted or the hearing to be disrupted. Thank you.

00:05:43:19 - 00:06:14:02

And so just just so everyone deserves the same level of respect, no matter what their involvement is in the project. And even if you don't share the same views. Thank you. We also understand that sometimes this is the first time people have spoken publicly, front for a large number of people, and that people will feel nervous. That's absolutely fine. And we understand if you stumble over your words and if you need to repeat something, not a problem. Just just let. Just let let us know.

00:06:15:03 - 00:06:31:26

And also finally, um, there should be no vexatious, frivolous or libelous comments that if if they are made, you may be asked to stop speaking. And such comments may be redacted from the recording as they are from written submissions.

00:06:34:12 - 00:06:50:00

So just to make sure everyone's okay with the technology and those matters that I've just raised for today's hearing, are there any questions online or in the room? No.

00:06:52:19 - 00:07:24:05

So we did publish the agenda on the National infrastructure website last week. It was originally published last Monday and it was updated on Friday. And so it's a different list of people. But basically the agenda is the same, the running order of things. The only difference is the list of attendees is slightly altered. There's some of the interested parties who are listed, cannot speak today, and there may be some additional people as well, but we'll come on to this shortly. Now Mr.

00:07:24:07 - 00:07:27:17

Stone will go through item two of the agenda. Thank you.

00:07:30:20 - 00:08:06:15

Thank you very much. Item two is on the purpose of the open floor hearing. And we've already held three open floor hearings. Uh, during the examination on the 10th, 11th and 12th of February in three different locations, one in each county, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. These were well attended and recordings and transcripts are available for you to view online via the examination library, and these are. References EV 2001, EV 2003 and EV 2004.

00:08:07:08 - 00:08:40:01

This is the fourth open floor hearing, and it's being held for two reasons. Firstly, because the examining authority wanted to give the opportunity to those who those interested parties who had not been able to

Speak at the first set of hearings in February to appear at an open floor hearing. In this case, we asked those interested parties to submit their request to appear at a further open floor hearing by deadline one. We received a limited number of responses to this from IPPs who had not already spoken.

00:08:40:06 - 00:08:48:26

It should be noted that once an interested party has spoken at one open floor hearing, they cannot speak again at another?

00:08:50:14 - 00:09:32:28

Second reason is, in accordance with regulation 162 of the Infrastructure Planning Compulsory Acquisition Regulations 2010, the SEC is giving an opportunity for any additional interested party or additional affected persons as a result of the accepted change requests submitted by the applicant to amend its development consent application. This was due to the 27th of March 2026, and the reference numbers for that are CR 1001 to CR 1017 and CR 2001 to CR 2017.

00:09:34:21 - 00:10:06:02

We are familiar with your representations, so when speaking you don't need to repeat these at length. What we are seeking is for you to provide further detail or evidence to help us understand your issues. We are aware that the applicant is attending this morning. The applicant will not be participating, however, and we will ask the applicant to respond to everything they've heard through all the open floor hearing sessions in writing. It is not the purpose of these hearings to enable the applicant to make their case.

00:10:06:27 - 00:10:12:21

Thank you very much. I will now hand over to Mr. Butler for agenda item three.

00:10:13:25 - 00:10:49:21

So agenda item three is confirmation of those who have notified the examiner authority of a wish to be heard at this open floor hearing and the order in which those interested parties will be heard. As we did with the first three open floor hearings, and you will have seen from the agenda that we will firstly hear from the interested parties who have pre-registered to speak, and the order of those speakers is listed at the end of the agenda after that. And if time permits, we may choose to hear from other interested parties or non interested parties who have not pre-registered but who wish to speak.

00:10:49:23 - 00:11:21:10

And finally from other persons and again non interested parties who wish to speak after that. However, this is at the authority's discretion. Um. To be consistent with our approach from the previous set of open floor hearings, we have set a time limit per person, and we have set a maximum of five limits for those representing groups, which include membership organisations, clubs, societies, as well as councillors and members of Parliament. Three minutes has been allowed for other individuals.

00:11:21:23 - 00:11:53:05

Um, when you were speaking, uh, if you're here in the room, you must take account of the time remaining shown on the monitor that will be in front of you when you come up to the seating area. Uh, for those

attending virtually, we will let you know verbally when you have one minute left to speak. Uh, again, from previous open floor hearings, we are unlikely to ask questions. Uh, during your speaking, Um, uh, or indeed after you've spoken. Um, but but we hold. We may possibly do that if we have any questions for any individual.

00:11:53:23 - 00:12:25:10

Um, so the order in which you'll be invited to speak, uh, will follow that on the agenda. Um, we've had a few people notify us that they no longer wish to speak. Uh, and a few people that were on the agenda, um, have, uh, have been removed because they've spoken at previous open floor hearings. Um, but I'll run through the list of speakers now, if your name is not on the list and you wish to make a submission, uh, please put your hand up after, uh, if you believe you have pre-registered to speak.

00:12:25:22 - 00:12:58:17

Um, I do, with people that haven't pre-registered after we've gone through this list. So, uh, James Cartledge MP, Essex County Council, and that's either Andy Higham or Francesca Potter. Uh, Chris Whitfield, who's speaking on behalf of himself as opposed to the parish council. Um. Dick. Langham. Langham. Sorry. Apologies. Claire. Langham. Um, Andrew Buxton, uh, Alexander Mickleham. And I believe either Charles Mickleham or, uh, or his wife will speak on his behalf.

00:12:59:00 - 00:13:33:14

Um, or their behalf, I should say. Um, Carolyn Mason, uh, James Abbott. Uh, Carolyn Gordon for Northumbrian water. Um, Elizabeth Reynolds. William Peterson. Uh, speaking on behalf of himself and not Birstall Parish Council because they've previously spoken, uh, Russell Matthews. Um, then I've got R.D. and Jay Burrage. Um, and then I've got, uh, Richard Long Group limited, uh, Broomfield, a history group.

00:13:34:14 - 00:13:57:16

Um, D and J Starling and Steven Knight from Stanford LLP for Ghent Fair Head and Co Limited. That's the total number of people I've got listed that have pre-registered to speak. Uh, have I missed anybody that believes they've pre-registered to speak and wish to speak? Can we get a mic to the chat with his hand up, please?

00:14:09:16 - 00:14:23:16

Yeah. We are registered on behalf of my father because he's got no internet or email, and it always gets lost in the fog. So he's. I've got emails saying that you've accepted him, but he's not on your list, so can we. Mr.. Mr.. Paul lanham.

00:14:24:07 - 00:14:25:03

Paul lang.

00:14:34:07 - 00:14:38:12

Has he previously spoken at an open floor hearing at all?

00:14:38:18 - 00:14:40:04

Not none of the ones you mentioned. No.

00:14:40:06 - 00:14:58:22

No. Okay. Thank you very much. You're Mr. Langham, are you? Yeah. Thank you. Uh, what we'll do is we'll head in to the to the end of the list, and we'll come to him as as, uh, as one of the speakers towards the end, if that's okay with you. So that's it. Hi.

00:14:59:00 - 00:15:07:03

Yes. Um, I was offered a discretionary, um, being able to speak at the end, um, where the rocks world flood prevention group.

00:15:07:05 - 00:15:13:29

Yeah. That's fine. We were up to you on that. Sure. Sorry, sorry. No, we know you're here now. Thank you.

00:15:19:15 - 00:15:28:24

Right. Um, sorry. Just moving on through my agenda, and there's. I've got a hand up on line a H.

00:15:31:29 - 00:15:50:18

Uh. Thank you. Uh, Andy Hine from Essex County Council. I think we've obviously made various submissions through the examination, but we not specifically requested to speak today. We had it was just to respond if necessary. We have advised the team, but just to clarify that we've got nothing to say today, so.

00:15:50:20 - 00:16:07:28

Okay, well, um, in that case, what we'll do is I won't call you out specifically to, to speak. Um, but, um, or we won't call you out specifically to speak. But, uh, if you do feel you have to add anything at an appropriate point, by all means, you'll be allowed to to come back in.

00:16:08:00 - 00:16:08:21

Thank you.

00:16:09:03 - 00:16:11:06

Thank you. Uh,

00:16:12:22 - 00:16:32:27

what we'll do then, um, because. Is there anybody else that, uh, other person or interested party other than the Flood Prevention society, um, that wish to speak in addition that our non interested parties or other persons and by non interested party we don't mean you're not interested. It's just a term.

00:16:36:17 - 00:17:11:07

No. Okay, I'm going to move on. Then what we'll do is we'll ask people to come forward to the front, uh, five at a time. Uh, if if you've informed us you don't want to be filmed, um, you do not need to come to the front. You will instead be given a roving mic, and you can remain seated where you currently are. Um, when we've heard from people that speak, um, you're more than welcome to return to the general seating area. Um, just as a convenience thing, if you wait for the others at the table to finish speaking at the same time, and then all move back at the same time, that might be of assistance and avoid disturbing them as well.

00:17:12:00 - 00:17:49:08

Um, it would assist us today if written summaries of anything that you say are submitted. Um, that would be by deadline six, which is Tuesday, the 7th of July. Uh, these can include any additional points or further details that you may wish to make, but when I'm able to do so because of the time constraint, uh, please be reassured that when coming to our conclusions, we will give equal weight to both oral and written submissions. There's no disadvantage to not having presented something orally here today. Does anybody have any questions with regard to the speaking process, either in the room or online?

00:17:52:01 - 00:17:52:23

Yes.

00:18:00:06 - 00:18:17:20

You did. We'll give you a warning. Um, um, I say we give you a warning. There's a clock in front of you. If you're in the room, you can see the count down yourself. If you run over slightly, we're not going to cut you dead. But if you run over significantly, then we might ask you to bring it to a close. So.

00:18:20:14 - 00:18:46:25

Apologies. Um, I didn't wait for the microphone to come up there, but they were just asking if we would cut them dead. Uh, if they ran over. And we won't, we'll just notify you and then ask you to draw to a close. That's what I said in response to the question. Right. So no other questions online or in the room. So I'm going to pass to Mr. Hockley, who's going to introduce each person to come up to the front.

00:18:49:11 - 00:18:50:09

Okay. Thank you.

00:18:50:11 - 00:19:20:13

I'm now going to ask Mr. Bartlett said. I'm not going to invite those listed in the agenda to speak. Um, when I read out your rooms, if you're in the room, um, read out your names. I'm sorry. If you're in the room, please come to the table at the front. Unless you've informed us that you don't want to be filmed. And if online, please turn your camera on when it's your turn to speak. If you could, um, turn on the microphone. That's the button on the front of the microphone stand. Um, for those in the room, it will light up red when you do so. And then start by introducing yourself and if relevant, who you are representing.

00:19:20:26 - 00:19:56:03

Um, again, as Mr. Button said, a timer is displayed in the room which you should be able to see when you come up to the table. Um, we'll let those online know when they have a minute remaining. Uh, could I just remind you again not to supply any personal details when speaking here today. For example, don't state your home address, your age, or any medical conditions you may have. Um, if you feel that you need. You'd like us to know that information, then please talk to the case team about how this can be done without it going on to public record. Okay, so the first group of people, bearing in mind that, um, the comments from Essex County Council, the first group is a four.

00:19:56:13 - 00:20:03:26

Um, so we have James Cartlidge MP, Chris Whitfield, Dick Lanham and Claire Lanham.

00:20:18:00 - 00:20:33:12

And when we've heard from all of you, your you can return to the general seating, um, and we'll call the next group forward. Um, once you've spoken, feel free to leave the venue if you wish. But if you do, please do so quietly. Okay, so the first speaker we have is James Cartlidge MP.

00:20:34:27 - 00:20:39:18

And you have five minutes. And please start when you're ready.

00:20:40:16 - 00:21:15:03

Uh good morning. Yes my name is James Cartlidge MP member of Parliament for South Suffolk. And I'm joining you from my office in Parliament. Uh, I'm speaking in this open hearing today on behalf of my South Suffolk constituents, but in particular from the following ten villages affected by National Grid's proposals for Windlesham and Chatham Holton, Saint Mary, Raiden, Higham, Stratford, Saint Mary, Birstall, Broughton, Great and Little, Wenham and Washbrook. My contention is straightforward, and it is based on my understanding that it is a fundamental principle of planning that the process must not be predetermined.

00:21:15:10 - 00:21:51:21

However, throughout the planning process for Norwich to Tilbury, National Grid have only ever seriously considered one option. Pylons. From the very outset, my constituents visiting parish rooms for national grid engagement sessions on Norwich and Tilbury were only ever shown one option a single swathe of pylons. At those sessions, my constituents would ask, what about going offshore? They were told by National Grid staff that offshore alternatives were not possible, and yet billions of pounds have been spent elsewhere carrying electricity offshore in the United Kingdom at a cost of billions of pounds to bill payers such as the Western and Eastern links.

00:21:52:01 - 00:22:26:08

Now, my constituents may have found a dismissal of any other option than pylons as more understandable if they had been presented with evidence for each of the options. In fact, no such comparative data was ever publicly presented by National Grid. To underline this point, at a meeting on teams organised for MPs, National Grid and Ofgem on Monday the 18th of July 2022, I asked National Grid to share their

detailed evidence of alternatives to pylons and they said they would provide me with such information and I quote in a few months, why not immediately I asked.

00:22:26:13 - 00:22:58:21

And the answer is because they hadn't undertaken any such assessment and would have to go away and do the work. As this point is so critical to my contention that the process has been predetermined. I repeat what I said on the record in Parliament the following day, and I quote. National grid said yesterday that given the concern about what is happening in Scotland and the sense of unfairness, it would publish a detailed assessment of an offshore option later in the summer. Why will that be published later in the summer? Because it has not been done.

00:22:58:23 - 00:23:32:00

There has been no detailed assessment of an offshore option. Indeed, there has been no detailed assessment of any other option than pylons. This illustrates a key failure of National Grid's consultation. How could they have possibly consulted on any alternatives to pylons, if they hadn't done the detailed work on those options? And how could they have decided pylons were the best option without such an assessment? Consequently, after I repeatedly demanded a detailed look at all transmission options. Options for Norris to Tilbury in 2023.

00:23:32:04 - 00:24:10:16

National grid ESO, now Niso, agreed to undertake an expert and independent assessment of all viable options for Norwich to Tilbury. Known as the East Anglia Study. Bearing in mind that ISO was then part of National Grid, clearly expert and wholly neutral on the proposal in question, and certainly not inclined against pylons approaching the matter with an open mind. ESO found that a fully underground HVDC route was cheaper than pylons over the lifetime of the project, assuming a 2034 baseline, such a baseline being necessary to take into account the cost advantage enjoyed by the pylon option.

00:24:10:18 - 00:24:46:15

Given that so much of the preparatory work has already been done. National grid ESO admitted to me that the cost competitiveness of underground HVDC surprised them, and was primarily caused by lower constraint payments. I would stress these findings were retested repeatedly by Ieyasu's senior engineers and found to be fully justified. In addition, ISO concluded that the underground onshore HVDC proposal is under, quote, technically feasible in the timescales that the capacity is needed. Finally, their assessment did not include the huge benefit to the countryside of underground HVDC, not least the lack of permanent disablement.

00:24:46:21 - 00:25:26:12

To emphasize this point, a huge strategic water pipe is being built through my constituency by Anglian Water to assist with drought and whilst its construction has been disrupted, I have received no correspondence at all against it because all the infrastructure is being buried and the landscape made good in Germany underground. HVDC is the legal default. This is not a crank option and actually avoids the vastly wider trenches required to underground AC cabling through protected landscapes. To conclude, I

must object to these proposals for Norwich to Tilbury because the applicant has never seriously entertained any other option and in my opinion, has been predetermined throughout.

00:25:26:15 - 00:25:48:00

Had they considered other options from the outset, they could have treated my constituents fairly and presented the full facts on all options. Had they done so, they would have discovered the fact that underground HVDC would be cheaper over the project lifetime. And I would urge the inspector, even at this stage, to reject the plan so that a more open minded reconsideration can be undertaken. Thank you for your time.

00:25:48:26 - 00:25:50:12

Thank you very much, Mr. Cartlidge.

00:25:52:06 - 00:25:59:28

Okay. Our next speaker, please, is Chris Whitfield. And Mr. Whitfield, you have three minutes. Thank you. Good morning.

00:26:00:00 - 00:26:32:07

My name is Chris Whitfield, and I'm speaking as an interested party and resident of Ardley for more than 35 years. I'm here to address the profound and irreversible harm the National Grid's proposed pylon alignment will inflict on the historic core of Ardley. Our village crossroads contain a dense, sensitive cluster of medieval listed buildings and the grade two star listed churches. Saint Mary's all protected with a within a designated conservation area.

00:26:33:01 - 00:27:09:00

National grid's application proposes to encircle this ancient settlement on three sides with 50 metre lattice pylons. Crucially, the 400 kV conductor arrays will hang directly in the visual airspace of our listed buildings and slice through the historic street scene immediately behind the church. The revised visualisation 7.12 C show with a single dotted line how the cable array would be seen above the medieval listed buildings and crossing the street behind the church.

00:27:09:10 - 00:27:43:17

7.12 E shows how the array would be visible to the east of the crossroads under National Policy Statement n one. The applicant is required to minimise harm to the historic environment. In their environmental statement. AP 205. National grid assesses the impact on Saint Mary's Church as lower, less than. Substantial harm. We strongly reject this downplaying of the impact. Less than substantial is a broad spectrum, not a minor category.

00:27:43:23 - 00:28:21:29

By literally surrounding a village core with 50 meter pylons and cutting off the historic context of Saint Mary's Church, this project does not cause lower harm. It pushes the impact to the absolute upper boundary of the threshold, in our view, to substantial harm. We believe National Grid is confusing the absence of physical damage to the bricks and mortar, with the scale of visual destruction to the setting.

Stringing industrial cables across the street layout behind Saint Mary's permanently destroys the day to day views and character of the village Experienced by the public.

00:28:22:09 - 00:28:53:00

This is a severe high level impact on the setting that their assessment conveniently minimizes. National graders fail to prove that a less harmful alternative route is impossible. The applicant has already conceded that undergrounding cable is necessary through the adjacent Dead and Vail national landscape. However, they have failed to provide a robust, transparent justification as to why the East Anglia connection node cannot be located elsewhere.

00:28:53:18 - 00:29:25:07

The concentrated heritage that the center of our village deserves protection. The cumulative impact of the massive new substations, the hall roads and this arc of pylons will completely obliterate the historic character of this rural parish. We urge the examining authority to robustly scrutinize, scrutinize national grades of options appraisal, and recommend the refusal of this specific pylon alignment in your final report to the Secretary of State.

00:29:25:11 - 00:29:26:07

Thank you.

00:29:27:06 - 00:29:36:17

Thank you, Mr. Whitfield. Okay. Our next speaker is, uh, Dick Lanham. Um, Mr. Lanham. Good morning. You have three minutes. Thank you.

00:29:36:24 - 00:30:10:05

Uh. Good morning. My name is Dick Lanham. I live and working with my wife, Claire, and my children. I've spoken about the devastating impact this project will have on our farm in a previous meeting. If it stays unchanged. So I want to explain what this proposal means to us as a family. The proposed access route does not simply cross farmland. It comes from our main residential entrance and passes within just a few meters of our front door before continuing into the farm. If somebody looked at our property and asked, where's the most harmful place to put an access route would be, it would be very difficult to choose a worse location.

00:30:10:12 - 00:30:42:09

It is not simply agricultural land, it is our home. It is where our children live and play. It is where we come home at the end of the day. is a place where we should feel safe and secure. We are being asked to accept third party access through the heart of this environment. Whenever national, wherever National Grid describes this access to the inspector as temporary, occasional, it is unclear to us. As our last heads of terms say differently. Any access through its residential entrance would change the way we live in our own home.

00:30:42:11 - 00:31:18:06

It affects our privacy. It affects our security. It affects our peace of mind. We have serious safeguarding concerns about introducing project related access through our family home environment, where children live and play. The impacts don't stop at the house. Settings farm is a working farm. It manages livestock and agricultural land every day. We have to take biosecurity extremely seriously and have to do so as part of our farming operations. As I explained in previous meetings, any increase in third party access creates additional risk and disruption to the way our farm operates and will cause us to lose two main income streams.

00:31:18:24 - 00:31:51:02

We find what we find most frustrating is that none of this appears necessary. For approximately two years, we have identified and promoted an alternative access route. We are not saying National Grid cannot access the land. We are asking what I need to access it through our home and a farm where there is less alternative access exists. The question has never really been answered. I have heard of a map from a neighbor from supply by Fisher German, who is also affected by this project. The map shows land of interest to access to his site the proposed site.

00:31:51:11 - 00:32:23:08

We also have access right over this land to our rented land. The project site, the access route through our land and through the land of interest meet at the same place. So my question is to you, why is there a need to have two access routes across two separate areas to end up at the same point? We're not opposed to National Grid as a whole doing the project. We understand infrastructure has to be built and we understand difficult decisions have to be made. But we cannot understand why our family life and our home and our business should be expected to accept these impacts.

00:32:23:10 - 00:32:37:26

When there is another option identified by National Grid that would avoid most of them. All we're asking is that the impacts of our home, our children and livelihood are properly considered and that the alternative route is given some serious consideration it deserves. Thank you.

00:32:38:28 - 00:32:55:10

Thank you, Mr. Lanham. And the plan you referred to just then, if you if you may already have done so, but if not, if you wish to submit it to us, then you're welcome to do that by the next deadline. Thank you. Um, our next speaker now is, uh, Claire Lanham, who I believe is online.

00:32:56:03 - 00:32:57:00

Good morning.

00:32:57:07 - 00:33:00:01

Good morning, Miss Lanham. Um, yeah. Three minutes. Thank you.

00:33:00:03 - 00:33:30:25

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. So, uh, my name is Claire Lanham, and I live in with my husband, Dick and our children. We also run our farming business from the property. I'm speaking today

because this proposal does not simply affect a piece of foreign land. It affects our home, our family, and our livelihood. The proposed access route would enter through our main residential gateway and pass within only a few meters of our front door, before continuing into the farm.

00:33:30:28 - 00:34:02:15

This is not a remote corner of a field. This is our home. It's where our children live, play, and grow up. It's where we should feel safe and secure. Whether the access is described as temporary, permanent, occasional, maintenance related or otherwise, the impact on our family is the same. The reality is that the rights would be granted over our home environment, and our family would be expected to live with that interference indefinitely.

00:34:02:25 - 00:34:34:27

The issue is not how often the access may be used. The issue is that it's been taken through our home. At all, would a less harmful alternative exist. For the last two years, we have lived with the uncertainty of not knowing what the future holds for our home and our business. The stress of that and uncertainty has had significant impact on our family and our well-being. As a mother, I have serious safeguarding concerns. As a family, we have concerns about privacy and security.

00:34:35:02 - 00:35:08:20

As farmers, we have concerns about biosecurity and the impact on our business. The proposal affects far more than just the land shown, and a plan affects how we live every single day. But the most important point I want to make today is this. None of this appears to be necessary. We are not standing here saying National Grid cannot access the land. We are asking why they need to access it through our home. There is already a public road leading directly to the field where the pylon is proposed.

00:35:08:22 - 00:35:40:20

There is already a gateway installed. Permission has already been granted for that gateway to be used. For approximately two years, we have repeatedly identified and promoted that alternative access route. It avoids our residential entrance. It avoids our front garden. It avoids the safeguarding concerns. It avoids the privacy concerns. It avoids most of the biosecurity concerns. Most importantly, it avoids turning a family home into an access route.

00:35:41:04 - 00:36:12:22

Yet, despite repeatedly raising the alternative, we still do not understand why the more harmful route through our home is being pursued. That is the question we keep coming back to. Why? Why does access need to come within a few meters of our front door, when there is already a public road leading directly, directly to the destination field? Why should our family be expected to accept these impacts when a lazy, harmful, harmful alternative already exists.

00:36:13:02 - 00:36:35:29

We are not opposed to the Norwich Tilbury project as a whole. We understand infrastructure projects have to be delivered. We understand that difficult decisions sometimes have to be made, but where there is a

choice between a route through a family home and a route that already exists via a public road directly to the destination field, we believe the less harmful option should be chosen.

00:36:37:05 - 00:36:39:03

Can I ask you to bring it to a close now, please?

00:36:39:23 - 00:36:52:02

All we ask is that the impacts on our family, our home and our livelihood are properly understood and given appropriate weight and that the alternative route is properly considered. Thank you.

00:36:52:14 - 00:37:18:03

Thank you. Okay. Thank you. To our first group of speakers. You welcome to return to your seats or leave the venue if you wish. Um, and our next group of speakers, please. Um, we have Andrew Buxton. Um, Charles McLean, I believe on behalf of Alexander McLean, Carolyn Mason, James Abbott and Carolyn Gordon for Northumbrian Water.

00:37:38:06 - 00:37:46:20

Thank you. So our first speaker is Andrew Buxton. Good morning, Mr. Buxton, and welcome. You have three minutes. Thank you.

00:37:47:00 - 00:37:48:03

Um, under.

00:37:48:05 - 00:38:19:29

Your chairmanship, sir. Um, I spoke right at the end of, um, each day. Two on the subject of heritage at Sir William Castle, which is a scheduled monument and is covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979, which creates a legally binding schedule for any works that could damage or alter these sites. Historic England states, in their report dated January 28th this year, that the national importance of the site is not in question.

00:38:20:25 - 00:38:56:15

The NPF backs this up by saying that the threshold for acceptable harm to a scheduled monument is exceptionally high. After my presentation, chairman, you asked National Grid to reply in writing to the points I made. There's a recording of you turning to them and saying that as far as I know, that hasn't happened. I've looked through National Grid's replies on issue two, can find no reference, and have been in regular contact with your staff who've been very helpful but have found nothing.

00:38:58:01 - 00:39:41:06

In an earlier presentation, we described the heritage management of of National Grid is sloppy because their records didn't appear to recognize the scheduled monuments and their settings require special attention. Now, the map of listed buildings that they produced in August last year showed only two of the eight listed buildings in the setting, and the fact that the castle is scheduled isn't even recorded. It's

extraordinary also that National Grid think they have no need to comment on apparent disagreements with Historic England, who say that there is not substantial harm but there is mid-level harm.

00:39:41:27 - 00:40:12:21

Historic England also assesses that there is harm to the grade two star tithe barn, which is part of the setting and is the nearest building to the pylon line. Given that the barn is part of the important setting at Little Bet Wenham, it's also covered by the 1979 act. National grids say, in their assessment of harm, that the project will be only partially visible due to distance in some vegetation in the flatland of Suffolk. That is not true.

00:40:13:09 - 00:40:58:23

It's interesting that national grids say in another, it's in another context that the significant effects are identified within 1.5km of overground infrastructure in Suffolk. But in the context of it or Wenham, they're trying to say that a distance of 1.2km on flat Suffolk farmland is a long way. My guess is that Historic England will know much more about scheduled monuments than National Grid, and in my view, the inspectors were quite right in their schedule of questions dated March the 20th to asked National Grid why a mid level of harm is acceptable given the 1979 act of the NPF guidance.

00:40:59:28 - 00:41:22:26

I'm not an objector to the project, which is needed to improve the infrastructure of the UK, but it shouldn't be driven purely by monetary price. I have here an email from National Grid's agents dated April 8th, which says that under Off Jam's funding rules, we are required to use the lowest cost option, that that is acceptable.

00:41:22:28 - 00:41:29:20

If I could ask you to bring it to a close now, please, Mr. Buxton. Thank you. Sorry, sir. If I could ask you to bring it to a close now, please. Thank you.

00:41:30:15 - 00:42:02:12

Um. And I remember Mr. Harris making the same point, but there is considerable community cost to this development. In addition to the monetary costs. I'd like to draw your attention to the submission from the Churches Conservation Trust dated July 24th, 2024. My real purpose today, sir, is to US National Grid. To reply to your own question to them, which I don't think they have.

00:42:02:15 - 00:42:34:07

Thank you, Mr. Buxton. Um, just on on that point, um, I'm not sure if you're aware, but on the, um, just check the date on the 5th of June. Um, we, uh, wrote a letter to the applicant, um, asking that specific question. Um, but not just for your comments, but for other comments that are made at the end of that hearing. Um, so that is in our examination library as well. Um, and they have responded now to that question that we raised.

00:42:34:15 - 00:42:46:29

Um, as I said to your comments and other comments, if you want to have a look at that as well, and obviously if you have any comments on their response or anything else you wish to raise, and you're welcome to do so by the next deadline.

00:42:47:12 - 00:42:47:27

Thank you.

00:42:47:29 - 00:42:48:27

Very much. Thank you.

00:42:52:11 - 00:43:00:24

Okay. Our next speaker, please, is, uh, Charles McLean, on behalf of Alexander McLean. Uh, good morning, Mr. McLean. Do you have three minutes. Thank you.

00:43:01:00 - 00:43:33:15

Good morning. My name is Charlie Meckler. I'm here to speak on behalf of Alexander Mickleham and the Langley estate. Firstly, I'd like to thank the Planning Inspectorate for taking the time to visit Langley and view firsthand the impact this proposal will have on my property. I hope my drone photo submitted in deadline five helped highlight the impact. I took these photos from from the position of TV. 140 at 52m. How thinking that's two metres higher. How? With the recent documents released, it states the pile to be 56.8m. So almost another four metres onto this or five metres onto this.

00:43:33:17 - 00:44:04:20

So the impact will be even greater. We object to these pylons and want an alternative. According to National Grid's website, the pylons are approximately 35m tall, five metres shorter than what they were proposing, which is um, and significant than the 56m. In addition, they were lattice pylons, 1.5 times more concrete for their foundation, and operate and occupy approximately three times more land area than tea pylons. Why can't these be used mitigation states? It should mean change.

00:44:04:22 - 00:44:44:28

National grid has not changed apart from their route at all. Apart from the height of it, to try and protect our property. Um, I'd also like to draw the planning authorities attention to National Grid's response to my written questions contained in document 8.4.12. Several of these responses refer to our meeting on the 1st of June 26, and an email was sent to the landowner on 3rd of June 26th, with the applicant's position on a number of the queries raised on the 1st of June. However, on the of the 11 action points recorded by our agent and shared with both National Grid and German, the email referred to by National Grid addresses only two of these action points and fails to respond to the remaining matters.

00:44:45:00 - 00:45:15:12

National grid is actively engaging with the affected parties, but this simply isn't the case. We constantly have to chase and wait months for reply. Since the last set of hearings, where I set out several of the frustrations we've been dealing with National Grid. Has engaged with us and met us on three different dates. However, most of our action points are ignored and not much has really been achieved from these

meetings. In the same email, I was advised I should expect to receive a section 172 notice by the end of the week or early in the week commencing the 8th of June.

00:45:15:14 - 00:45:46:25

To date, I have not received his notice. However, I will be addressing this matter in greater detail tomorrow as it forms part of a wider pattern that, in my view, demonstrates National Grid's misuse of its position and its bullying tactics that have been employed throughout this process. And I do not use that term lightly. Turning again to National Grid's response to my written questions, it states heads of terms were discussed at the meeting on the 24th of February 26. This is incorrect. No heads of terms were discussed. That meeting because we were waiting for version two of them, which were not released until the 2nd of April.

00:45:47:15 - 00:46:21:10

National grid has also responded to my request for information regarding the alternative route, by referring for me to section 5.5 of the Design Development Report, specifically paragraph 9.2.4, how the section does not address the alternative route that it said discusses high and low pylons and underground cables. They will not provide us with this data. At our meeting on 30th June, we requested evidence support National Grid's assertion that Historic England had specifically requested the use of low height pylons. The documents provided by National Grid merely shows Historic England agreeing with National Grid's proposal.

00:46:21:12 - 00:46:38:15

It does not demonstrate that Historic England directly requested low height pylons. National grid states during the meeting that four low height pylons were proposed to the north of the river. Due to heritage impact, my family created and designed the parkland. Yet our view on how this historic landscape should be preserved appear to be disregarded, if not.

00:46:38:24 - 00:46:41:06

To bring it to a close. Now, please, Mr. Linklater. Thank you. Okay.

00:46:41:10 - 00:47:13:29

National grid is effectively dictating how the landscape should look with regard to itself. As I stated, I would like to see National Grids desktop survey as a house has been in private hands and never been open to public. And having looked online. Very little information is there. And then lastly, mental health is a significant challenge within the farming community. In 2019, 2% of all suicides were that year. This has been about the most stressful process of my life. Having lost three weeks so far of work to dealing with this DCO this year and meetings alone.

00:47:14:10 - 00:47:41:16

And lastly, sorry, my agent has stated that National Grid is under increasing pressure from the Planning Authorities Inspectorate to show progress on heads of negotiation. National grid has asked my agent well, not and other agents to write to the Planning Inspectorate confirmed to affirm the progress being made.

My agents do not consider it as appropriate to do so, and it feels like they are just pushing and pushing to get a response. And it's all about pleasing you guys, not about pleasing us. Thank you.

00:47:41:18 - 00:47:53:14

Thank you, Mr. McLellan. Okay. Our next speaker, please, is Carolyn Mason. Um, good morning, miss Mason. Um, you have three minutes. Thank you.

00:47:53:16 - 00:48:28:11

Good morning. Thank you for allowing me to speak this morning. Um, my name is Carolyn Mason, and I've lived in Ardsley for over 20 years. I support renewable energy, and I recognize the need to upgrade the grid. But this proposal asks our small rural communities at Ardley and Little Bromley to accept permanent damage to some of our best farmland when secure food security has never mattered more. My objection is simple. National grid would take irreplaceable land conflict with national policy and place an unfair burden on our communities.

00:48:29:04 - 00:49:00:00

This is not ordinary farmland. The project project's own documents say the proposals will result in the damage and loss of prime agricultural land. Much of it is grade one and grade two, the best and most versatile soil we have. Once cut through by whole roads, cable trenches, compounds through substations and one interconnector. this land cannot be restored simply by putting soil back. National policy recognises this. The National Planning Policy Framework says.

00:49:00:02 - 00:49:31:02

Best and most versatile land should be protected, soil used prudently and significant adverse impacts avoided, not softened afterwards. This proposal does not avoid harm, it creates it. The government Food strategy commits the UK to maintaining domestic food production. The UK Food Security Report 2024 shows food production is already under pressure from extreme weather, climate volatility and import independence.

00:49:32:10 - 00:50:03:15

Sorry, import dependence in that context. Losing our best farmland is not a local inconvenience. It is a national concern. The burden of national proposed proposal falls with extraordinary force on Ardley and Little Bromley, alongside five estuaries, North Falls and Taken. The cumulative loss, estimated at over 170 hectares, is far greater than any single project suggests the two small rural parishes.

00:50:03:17 - 00:50:41:09

This is not a balanced share of national infrastructure. It is a disproportionate concentration of harm. And harm is not only agricultural, it would industrialise our countryside, change the character of our villages, affect wildlife networks and add to existing pressures from housing, logistics, warehousing and mineral extraction. All take land away from production and enjoyment. That is why reasonable alternatives must be properly tested offshore, brownfield or industrial sites, and undergrounding where it would reduce land take routes can change.

00:50:41:12 - 00:51:09:00

Engineering can bring new opportunities, but great grade one soil, once lost, cannot be replaced. I asked the examining authority to give real weight to what would be lost irreplaceable farmland, rural character, nature recovery, and local resilience. Renewable energy should not mean sacrificing the land that feeds us when less damaging options have not been fully tested. Thank you.

00:51:09:27 - 00:51:19:27

Thank you, Mr. Maxim. Okay. Our next speaker is James Abbott. Good morning, Mr. Abbott. Um, you have three minutes. Thank you. Good.

00:51:20:01 - 00:51:21:04

Good morning everyone.

00:51:21:13 - 00:51:54:22

My name is James Abbott. I live in the rural parish of River Hall. Um, I'm also speaking on behalf of my wife, Cheryl, who can't be here today. By way of background, I have been a local parish and district councillor for 27 years, but I'm speaking as an individual. I wish to raise four main points. Firstly, sewage pipes, not a usual subject. I know it's important. The silver and mains runs underneath our property and out eastwards under this field next to our property, which will be the works will go over, including the whole road.

00:51:54:28 - 00:52:28:13

Ourselves and our neighbors connect to that by a private private sewer on the edge of the field. There has been woeful consultation with us from National Grid about these utilities. We have had to try to work out ourselves what the L-shaped and I refer to. Plan for stroke 011 sheet. Four of eight works are right next to our property. We believe it's to underground our electricity supply, but it could interfere with the sewage pipes. And we have not had any meaningful conversations with National Grid about that.

00:52:28:15 - 00:53:03:09

How deep will those cables go? The field is plowed. The private sewer rises to about 1.5m at the back of our neighbor's property. Will it be affected? National grid actually refuse to reveal to us what this band was around the back of our property, which is to say, we think is that the electricity. Undergrounding in the pre submission plans. And it was only thanks to the good offices of a landowner who alerted who was being consulted because they were within the red line, that they alerted us to this. Secondly, our property is a long standing and active bat roost.

00:53:03:27 - 00:53:44:00

We have been observing, filming, recording bats for 40 years on our property. In fact, that's part of the whole is that is about habitat. Again, we have and we've had professional surveys done. Again, National Grid have hardly engaged with this at all on this matter. We've had to chase them. Thirdly, we are one of the closest properties to the cable pylon route in Brentwood district. As well as being very deeply upset by the prospect of a permanent line of sight. Visual impact of two 170 foot high pylons. We are concerned

about being within the non-trivial electromagnetic field band, being close enough to experience night time buzzing from cables and damp conditions.

00:53:44:02 - 00:54:15:21

And we have an astronomical observatory. I have an astronomy degree. I'm an active astronomer, which will be adversely affected by these, by these pylons and the cables. And frankly, we are frightened by the prospect of a long period of construction with heavy vehicles and machines being so close to our home. We understand with work starting as early as 6:00 in the morning, will we suffer vibration, dust, light, pollution? Will we even be able to stay in our home during the works? Finally, our only means of safe exercise is the public right of way.

00:54:16:00 - 00:54:48:19

Hall 11, which will be heavily impacted going southwards from our property to the River Hall six ancient woodland. The Hall road and pylons cross it. How will we be able to go for walks? Will we be allowed to that corridor and the adjacent line of trees with the veteran Oak Henry, which you may have heard of on Park Road? 300 year old oak tree being very close to the route, as strong features in the local landscape and environment. There are bats there too, as well as barn owls. How many of these trees will survive? We don't know. Will the wildflower verges survive? We don't know.

00:54:48:21 - 00:55:13:19

We've looked after them and looked at them for decades. And very finally, the route where we live. Passes between the grade one listed Rivendell Church and the grade two star listed Raven Hall Park, which is an historic parkland setting. There is so much to be lost and disrupted in this area, and whilst we totally support the provision of renewable energy, we firmly believe this project should be offshore.

00:55:13:21 - 00:55:31:09

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Abbott. Okay. Our last speaker in this group, please, is Caroline Gordon for Northumbrian Water, who's I believe, online. Good morning, Miss Gordon. Uh, welcome. You have three minutes. Thank you.

00:55:31:24 - 00:56:06:08

Good morning. My name is Caroline Gordon. I'm employed as a programme manager by Northumbrian Water Limited, and I'm authorized to make representations on their behalf for the purposes of this hearing. Northumbrian water also operates under the trading name Essex and Suffolk Water. We are a statutory undertaker, a landowner affected by the project and a statutory party for the purposes of the 2015 regulations. The project affects a number of our operational water assets and several parcels of land that we owned within the proposed order limits.

00:56:06:18 - 00:56:42:03

More recently, the applicant proposed changes known as KR one and CR2. However, Northumbrian Water was only provided with the relevant landscape files in respect of these changes on the 16th of June. Until then, our project team could not properly assess how these changes affect our land or our assets. We are now carrying out these checks. Early searches indicate that CR one affects additional Northumbrian

Water assets. Investigations are ongoing, so we reserve our position on the full extent of the impacts until the work is complete.

00:56:42:22 - 00:57:13:25

What we can say at this stage is that the additional assets identified so far are proposed to be subject to compulsory acquisition rights and powers of temporary use. We will provide a full account of the affected land parcels in our written submissions following this hearing. CR one impacts so far for water mains to our distribution mains that feeds 900 properties and two are strategic water mains that affects over 37,000 properties.

00:57:14:27 - 00:57:50:02

At present, there are no agreed protective provisions or site agreements between Northumbrian Water and the applicant. That remains the case in respect of proposed changes from KR one. Because of this, Northumbrian Water cannot confirm the compulsory acquisition of land or rights proposed in KR. One would not cause serious detriment to our ability to carry out our statutory duties. At the compulsory acquisition hearing in April, we raised concerns via our solicitor about the applicant seeking to introduce cost sharing arrangements similar to those under the new Roads and Street Works Act.

00:57:50:04 - 00:58:20:03

Even though the draft order stops short formally invoking the cost sharing regulations under Nizwa, this was an approach that was, and continues to be, firmly opposed by Northumbrian Water in relation to the draft order for Sealink. And our solicitor queried whether the applicant intended to take the same approach in relation to this project, flagging that if this were the case, Northumbrian Water would be similarly opposed to such arrangements here on the 8th of June.

00:58:20:05 - 00:58:57:12

The applicant solicitor provided revised protective provisions for which the first time introduced cost sharing. This is a serious concern. It has always been agreed that any interference with our apparatus must follow section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991. That statutory regime provides for a statutory form of compensation that does not allow for cost sharing. As drafted, the applicant's proposed provisions are internally inconsistent and are likely to lead to substantial dispute between the parties.

00:58:57:26 - 00:59:02:05

Examining clothes now, please, Miss Gordon. Yes. Thank you.

00:59:02:16 - 00:59:38:00

Our solicitor raised these concerns formally with the applicant on applicant solicitors on the 12th of June and requested a response on the 19th. But it was confirmed only yesterday that the applicant solicitor is still waiting, awaiting instructions from the applicant. At this point, unless and until the applicant softens its stance on the need for cost sharing or provides proper reason justification for those arrangement. Notwithstanding the significant legal problems highlighted by solicitors, it will not be possible for the applicant to progress the Aggressive negotiations and protective provisions of Northumbrian Water.

00:59:38:02 - 00:59:46:10

I would therefore, therefore respectfully ask the examiner to urge the applicant to meaningfully engage with us on this point.

00:59:46:21 - 00:59:47:22

Thank you very much.

00:59:49:23 - 01:00:13:03

Okay. If we can move on now to our next group of speakers. Thank you to our speakers just then. Um, and I believe we just have three, possibly two in this group at the moment. So we have Elizabeth Reynolds, please. Um, we have Russell Matthews joining us online, potentially. And we also have Johnny Burrage on behalf of our D and J Burrage.

01:00:19:20 - 01:00:26:03

Okay. Good morning, Miss Reynolds. Uh, welcome. Um, yeah. Three minutes. Thank you. Good morning. Inspectors.

01:00:26:05 - 01:00:59:06

Um, my name is Elizabeth Reynolds, and I'm speaking as a directly affected homeowner. After five years of planning surveys and consultations, my husband and I finally obtained planning permission for our home. We invested our life savings, pension, and years of hard work into creating a property designed around exceptional countryside setting and panoramic views. The defining feature of our home is its position within the valley. As you enter the property, ten metre panoramic floor to ceiling glass doors overlook the landscape beyond, with floor to ceiling windows throughout the house designed to capture those views.

01:00:59:08 - 01:01:30:12

We would never have proceeded with this build. Have we known pylons of this scale were being proposed so close to our home? Under the current proposal, one pylon is expected to be approximately 80m from our bedroom window, with pylons positioned on the highest ground on either side of the valley. We were told that measures would be taken to minimise impacts wherever possible. Yet these locations appear to maximise their visibility and dominance within the landscape. The visual impact on our home and the surrounding countryside will be severe and permanent.

01:01:30:20 - 01:02:04:05

In addition, a haul road is proposed only a short distance a few metres from our bedroom window, bringing years of construction, traffic, noise, dust, lighting and disturbance. Beyond construction, we will also be living with the ongoing presence of the overhead line and the audible German crackle associated with high voltage transmission infrastructure, particularly in damp weather. This represents substantial loss of residential amenity in what is currently a very peaceful rural environment. I am also deeply concerned about flooding during construction.

01:02:04:07 - 01:02:35:21

Our basement flooded daily until the structure became watertight. We weren't allowed to build two stories so we went down. Even now, two permanent pumps operate continuously to manage groundwater floods regularly due to its location within the valley, and I remain unconvinced that the impact of additional hard standing access routes and construction works on local drainage has been properly assessed. The impact has already been felt. We have attempted to sell our home reluctantly, yet prospective purchasers lose interest once they become aware of the proposal.

01:02:35:23 - 01:03:10:21

We're in an area where properties sell quickly. While I appreciate that property values are not the primary issue before this panel, this does demonstrate the extent to which these impacts are perceived by others. The uncertainty around this scheme, together with the prospect of living with these permanent changes, has had a significant effect on my well-being and that of my family. National grid have acknowledged we are significantly affected, but they are just empty words. There are also ecological concerns, established hedgerows or proposed to be removed, despite providing important habitat and contributing to the character of the landscape.

01:03:10:23 - 01:03:41:04

We regularly see red kites, buzzards and other wildlife around our home and I'm concerned about the cumulative impact on the local environment. Traffic impacts for the whole area during construction have not been considered properly. I asked the panel to carefully consider whether less harmful alternatives have genuinely been explored. I have evidence in an email that offshore transmission routes were selected elsewhere because the visual impact on communities was considered too great. I respectfully asked why the same level of consideration has not been applied here.

01:03:41:18 - 01:03:52:24

I ask the inspectorate to give full weight on the cumulative impact of this proposal on residents, the landscape, local ecology, flooding risk and residential amenity. Thank you for listening.

01:03:53:28 - 01:04:04:04

Thank you very much, Mr. Reynolds. Okay. Um, I will just check if, uh, Russell Matthews has joined us. Mr. Matthews, are you with us?

01:04:07:15 - 01:04:14:23

Doesn't appear so. So we'll move on to the next speaker. Um, Mr. Burrage, welcome. Um. Good morning. And you have a three minutes. Thank you.

01:04:14:25 - 01:04:15:29

And good morning. I appreciate.

01:04:16:01 - 01:04:16:16

The.

01:04:16:18 - 01:04:17:03

Opportunity.

01:04:17:05 - 01:04:17:20

To.

01:04:17:22 - 01:04:18:07

Speak.

01:04:18:09 - 01:04:52:20

Um, in 2024. The route was changed in our local area. The current route proposal is high. On a hill beside a valley. It is high risk to aviation and hot air balloons, for example, that operate in our area. It was moved higher to the west and out of the valley to avoid a tiny grass paddock that is occasionally used for model planes, but has no facilities. It's just a grass paddock. It was moved with no consultation with surrounding parties that are now heavily impacted by the new route.

01:04:53:13 - 01:05:32:09

The new route is more impactful in every way. It is closer to residential properties and a wedding business at Low Barn Farm. Six landowners got together to make a proposal of a route that is shorter, lowers the height of five of the pylons, significantly changes the background view from sky to land and trees, brings the basis of the pylons closer to field borders, to allow corridors for wildlife to access them. It moves it significantly away and into the bottom of the valley, away from the wedding venue and residential properties at Low Barn Farm.

01:05:33:15 - 01:06:04:29

We communicated regularly with various members of Fisher German, including numerous site visits and maps, etc. the feedback was that our route was far better route in every way, meeting the planning guidelines with full landowner and local resident approval. Sadly, the response from National Grid was that they would not change the route from their current proposal. I fear the current proposal puts the power lines at great risk of strike from numerous low flying aircraft in our area unnecessarily.

01:06:05:03 - 01:06:07:03

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

01:06:08:05 - 01:06:34:00

Thank you very much, Mr. Burrage. Okay. And thank you both for your contributions. Um, we'll now move on to the next group. We have, uh, Richard Long Group limited. Um, John Blake, on behalf of Broomfield, history group D and J. Stirling and Steven Knight of Stamford LLP. Um, looks like they might all be online. Well, gentlemen, in the back. Thank you.

01:06:49:26 - 01:06:55:21

Thank you. Um, so our first speaker is for the Richard Long Group limited.

01:06:59:11 - 01:07:02:06

Just check if anyone is here. Is turning a camera on?

01:07:03:21 - 01:07:14:03

Doesn't appear to be. Um, so we'll move on to next speaker. Um, which is John Blake, on behalf of Broomfield, a history group. Broomfield.

01:07:16:27 - 01:07:21:25

I think I could see Mr. Blake's initials. Uh, there we go. Morning, Mr. Blake.

01:07:22:23 - 01:07:26:24

Good morning, sir. Um, thank you very much. Yeah. No problem.

01:07:27:20 - 01:07:29:26

Yes. That's fine. You have five minutes. Thank you.

01:07:30:01 - 01:08:06:14

Thank you very much. Um, thank you, sir, for this opportunity to address the panel. And, um, thank you also for studying our recent representation, uh, rep for 352 and for picking up on some of the issues we raised in written question. Um, h 211. I'm speaking. Sorry, I should have said I'm speaking on behalf of Broomfield, uh, a local history group. I obviously won't repeat what we said. Um, in that representation, which was essentially a report by our archaeological consultant, Simon Coxhill.

01:08:06:18 - 01:08:43:26

I'll just very briefly summarize that, um, the report that the site is potentially unique Romano-British temple site, because the uniqueness is that it appears to continue from, um, a prehistoric ritual site in the same, roughly the same position. There appears to be a strong relationship between the temple and a wider context of the surrounding landscape. And the third point is that the project is at an early stage of discovery, so there is much that cannot safely be predicted at this stage, and much that could be lost if we get things wrong.

01:08:44:25 - 01:09:27:27

Now, in your written question, 8211, you ask the applicant to comment on our representation, the Simon Croxall report, and to outline the scope for avoiding impacts through the potential to microsite pylons at the detailed design stage. Sadly, the applicant's response has left us feeling somewhat underwhelmed and very reassured. We didn't feel that the applicant had got to grips with the potential value of the site, which they classified as a relatively small asset, but that does not take account of the assets potential relationship with its wider setting.

01:09:28:27 - 01:10:02:27

It also seems extraordinary to the group that some six weeks before the end of the examination, the results of the trial trenching are not available and the geophysical surveys have only recently become so. We're puzzled as to how the applicant has taken into account. Ian five paragraph 210 one about considering and

addressing routing and avoidance. Um, if the if the applicant doesn't know what is there until such a late stage.

01:10:03:27 - 01:10:38:19

Um, we also note that the Essex County Council has raised concerns about the effectiveness of Geophys. Um, because of the soils concerned. And so the results may not be complete or illuminating. and also in one paragraph, um five nine. 18 notes that um, a documentary record is not as valuable as retaining the asset. So even if it can be excavated, it's not the priority compared with trying to avoid damage in the first place.

01:10:39:28 - 01:11:21:12

And turning to your question about the potential to avoid impacts through amended micro siting of pylons, uh, the applicant says that there would be potential to move the pylon working areas and haul road within the Lod, but then immediately says that this would depend on balancing various considerations such as engineering feasibility, ground conditions, and proportionality of costs. There is apparently only a small potential, uh, to move the working area for pylon TB 149 laterally, and probably no flexibility at all longitudinally.

01:11:22:09 - 01:11:58:00

So it seems to us that the answer to your question about potentially avoiding impacts through microsities, therefore appears to be very little to none at all. We're also confused somewhat about the potential need for a Faraday cage over the adjacent gas pipeline. At the formal consultation stage in 2024. There apparently was apparently was a need, and the order limits included a significant east west salient for this purpose, which took the working area even closer to the asset than the pylon itself.

01:11:58:12 - 01:12:35:24

Um, so we're unsure what the state of play is regarding that, um, Faraday cage. All in all, therefore, the history group's view is the site can best be protected by a change of alignment which follows on from the guidance in N5. Um, in one of our earlier written reps. Rep 1215 we propose a slight change of alignment of approximately 100m to the west. This would also have a slight but beneficial effect on the setting of the listed vault just west of Partridge Green Farm and a few hundred meters to the north.

01:12:36:21 - 01:12:57:10

More effective still would be the use of the West of Great Waltham alternative. This would only be 1.36km longer than the preferred route, but it would avoid our site altogether and at the same time would remove the overhead lines from the Waltham Gap and its host of sensitive heritage assets, both above and below ground.

01:12:57:12 - 01:12:59:21

If I can ask you to bring it to a close now, please, Mr. Blake.

01:12:59:23 - 01:13:23:05

Yes, I will. Thank you. We know from section 924 of the design development report. That's app one, two, two, uh, that even the applicant recognises the relative advantages of this alternative. And so we commend it. and all the other alternatives in the Chelmsford area to the examining authority. Thank you sir.

01:13:23:21 - 01:13:35:16

Thank you, Mr. Blake. Okay. Our next speaker, um, is D and J Starling. I don't believe they're here, but I'll just give them the opportunity just in case they have.

01:13:37:26 - 01:13:50:10

No. No sign. So, um, we'll move on then to, um, Steven Knight of Stamford LLP, on behalf of, uh, Jen Fairhead and Company Limited. Good morning, Mr. Knight. And you have three minutes. Thank you.

01:13:53:03 - 01:13:58:00

If you could just turn your microphone on, please. Yeah. Probably. Help. Good morning.

01:13:58:06 - 01:14:32:17

My name is Steven Knight. I'm employed by Stanford's daughter, agents for Jen Thayer and Co Limited, who operate through Blackwater Aggregates for sand and gravel and mineral extraction. Jen and Co owned the mineral rights and hold the auction for mineral extraction over Monks Farm, Kelvedon. Surveys over amongst farm shows, substantial mineral deposits lie within an area of about 55 hectares or 137 acres of monks farm contained within a broadly rectangular shaped block of land on the southwestern side of the farm. Current plans show the line of the pylons and cables to run through this block of land.

01:14:32:27 - 01:15:07:00

If the alignment of this route is confirmed, there will be some sterilisation of mineral. This area is designated as a mineral safeguarding area by the Mineral Planning Authority. If the pylon locations are as shown on the current plans, we believe the mineral sterilisation by virtue of the protection of the pylon bases could amount to up to 130,000 tonnes. Alternatively, if the excavation machinery is not allowed to work beneath the overhead cables due to safety concerns, then we consider the loss of minerals through the sterilisation could rise to up to about 650,000 tonnes.

01:15:07:23 - 01:15:42:22

We have raised this concern with National Grid and are currently in discussion with them as to seeing if it can be agreed with them to relocate the position of two pylons so that one pylon particularly is relocated approximately 200m in a southerly direction. In so doing, the alignment still remains within the application boundaries. If the route is realigned in this way, we consider that the loss of mineral will be minimal. Assuming that excavation and haulage can continue beneath the span of wires between the pylons, this realignment has been suggested by National Grid in order to to mitigate the partial sterilisation on the current route.

01:15:43:04 - 01:16:15:05

We support the minor realignment and wait for their confirmation. If this confirmation is not forthcoming, we shall need to pursue an objection to the scheme. In summary, my clients have been on site producing locally one sand and gravel. Investing heavily in modern infrastructure for more than 25 years. Gen Fairhead and Co hold the legal right to extract and process sand and gravel at Monks Farm. The current proposal results in lost reserves, which can easily be avoided over the years and currently my clients have employed staff, supported local businesses, local groups and local amenities.

01:16:15:18 - 01:16:49:06

Future contributions for which are all put at risk. If mineral reserves are wasted, we believe future greenfield developments within the area can easily be accommodated around a minor change in the alignment. The suggested realignment could be made within the scheme boundary. The suggested realignment can be built at nominal or very small additional cost to the scheme applicant. We do not wish to obstruct the applicant scheme, merely make it fit for purpose. Accordingly, we ask that your inquiry recommends the minor realignment of the route amongst farm in place of the current published one.

01:16:49:21 - 01:16:50:13

Thank you.

01:16:51:12 - 01:17:08:27

Thank you, Mr. Knight. Okay. Thank you all. We've heard everyone registered to speak in this session. We will now hear pleas from, um, Paul Lanham and from Rockwell Flood Prevention Group. If you if you both like to come to the tables at the front, please.

01:17:30:00 - 01:17:30:20

Thank you,

01:17:32:08 - 01:17:37:26

Mr. Lanham. If we could hear from you first. Please, sir. Um, you have three minutes. Thank you.

01:17:39:18 - 01:17:40:14

Thank you.

01:17:42:00 - 01:17:42:15

Uh.

01:17:43:19 - 01:17:50:15

Four main reasons why we're opposed to this, uh, pollen line. One, the.

01:17:50:17 - 01:17:51:02

Access.

01:17:51:04 - 01:18:16:21

Route through the farm, right by our front door and through our our buildings, which has the turkeys we rear 4000 turkeys for a company would have informed us that if this proposed route that they take to the new pylon. They will terminate our contract because of the threat of the bird flu.

01:18:18:27 - 01:19:00:24

Secondly, further along our farm, we've got some meadow that's got the cattle on it, and they're going to dig 30 trench pits across there for testing for some reason. And that will obliterate the grazing for these cattle. And we've had a word with them and they've said that they we can they can have a supplementary feed the cattle, which is impractical because the ground will be turned to dust within a couple of weeks where the cattle are moving around and, uh, and, and uh.

01:19:03:19 - 01:19:47:08

And also, uh, they've told us, I said, look how early. Well, this isn't what we do. This isn't, this isn't. This isn't the way forward after the. After the fiasco of the cattle, which they obviously know. Absolutely nothing about cattle farming. We get down to the main structure of the new pylon that they want to put on our farm, and we're opposed to that completely, because if the new pylon is put where they say they want to put it, the oversell of the wires go directly across our fishing lake and fishing and electric wires don't go together.

01:19:47:10 - 01:20:22:20

So they go. So there's going to be a cessation of of a fishery, an investment in activity on our farm. So we put a proposal forward showing our, our proposal as to where they can put these new power lines Without having any effect at all on our farm. Well, believe it or not, Fisher German actually replied to this letter, which is the first time they've actually been in contact with us for three years.

01:20:23:06 - 01:20:46:12

And in this letter, the the response to our proposed alterations to their line. They say they can't. One thing they can't do is for technical reasons why they can't move the pollen to the site. We have suggested technical reasons prevent National grid. I don't know what these technical reasons are.

01:20:48:21 - 01:21:19:07

And and then the next pollen along that isn't on our property, which is going to be another new pylon. We're suggesting that they move that west so the pollen lines don't run across our Alike, but they chose not to take that into account. They've only took into account the pylon that we have said should be replaced by the one they're going to take down.

01:21:19:24 - 01:21:23:12

If I could ask you to bring it to a close now, please, Mr. Lanham. Thank you.

01:21:25:26 - 01:21:28:16

So we've asked we've asked for this new.

01:21:31:04 - 01:21:39:24

New route to take effect. But the problem here is, you see, to avoid a farm and fishing like entirely in considering this change.

01:21:42:03 - 01:22:12:26

National grid must balance the loss of fishing income against the effect of loss of development. Opportunity and impact on the consented. Dunton Hills Garden Village, which is a building plot of 650 acres right next door to our farm. So they want to take the parlance off of his farm, where he sold for £400 million and put it on our little tap me out in the farm, which is what it is that's happening out in the open.

01:22:13:12 - 01:22:13:28

Thank you mister.

01:22:14:00 - 01:22:22:22

I want to put that pollen on on our farm as is to maintain the building of houses on the adjoining farm.

01:22:23:10 - 01:22:32:00

Thank you, Mr. Dunham. Thanks for your comments. Okay, now we move, please, to, um. Rockwell.

01:22:34:13 - 01:22:36:07

Sorry. I was told I had five minutes.

01:22:36:09 - 01:22:36:25

You do?

01:22:36:27 - 01:22:37:12

Oh.

01:22:37:14 - 01:22:43:14

Sorry. Just as a group. All right. Thanks. Yeah. Thank you. So. Yes. And if you could introduce yourself as well, please.

01:22:43:16 - 01:23:16:20

Yeah. Good morning. My name is Melanie Hedger, speaking from the Rockwell Flood Prevention Group, a community group working with local authorities, the Environment Agency and partners to manage severe flood risks in our village. I'm here because National Grid's plans for the Chelmsford six section of Rockwell Road present what we believe is a serious and insufficiently assessed risk to public safety. Last week, National Grid issued maps showing enabling works and temporary access routes around Blackwall Bridge and the 1060 Rocks Rail Road. These maps show a clear, dry red zones across fields and junctions.

01:23:16:22 - 01:23:48:09

I would like to bring the examining authority back to reality. This location sits where Newland Brook joins Rockwell Brook to form the River cam, and during heavy rainfall, these systems converge and bottleneck before passing through Blackwall Bridge. We know this from experience. Our flooding was featured on the BBC Look East after our brook became a sewage contaminated river. We have extensive photographic and video evidence showing this road submerged beneath deep, fast flowing water, trapping vehicles and posing risk to public safety.

01:23:48:15 - 01:24:20:14

The area identified for temporary work is not an empty field. It is an active floodplain that becomes overwhelmed during severe weather. We have three principal concerns. First, the cumulative impacts. There is an active allocation for 103 hectare extraction development two miles upstream, with potential to water runoff and drainage across the catchment. We have seen no evidence that National Grid has assessed its own proposals at Rockwell, let alone how those have been considered alongside other major developments. Second floodplain disruption.

01:24:20:16 - 01:24:53:00

National grid proposes temporary road compounds, heavy equipment and permanent infrastructure within an area that already plays a critical role during floods. That claim, they claim removing the temporary infrastructure removes the risk. But we doubt that introducing infrastructure here could alter water movement and increase pressure on already vulnerable homes and businesses. Third, emergency access Roswell's geography makes us vulnerable, and one key exit passes through the ford at Bolton Cross land, where the River cam can rise rapidly and block travel.

01:24:53:04 - 01:25:26:23

This leaves the 1860 the Blackwall Bridge as a critical route for residents and emergency services. exactly where National Grid proposes, works and traffic management. During major floods, roads have been blocked for hours, vehicles stranded and emergency services stretched. If flooding coincides with construction, what assurance can National Grid provide that access will be maintained? Our concerns do not end after construction. Our flow flood risk was recognised nationally when the Environment Minister, Theresa Coffey, approved a £100,000 grant to begin natural flood defences.

01:25:26:25 - 01:25:58:25

Today we are working with the Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency on a live mitigation mitigation scheme. National grid appears to treat this area in isolation despite ongoing flood management work. To give a personal example, when we bought our home in 2006, service showed no flood risk. Then came catastrophic flood. 2030 June 2016. Exactly ten years today, a 500 year old 500 year old home suffered around £140,000 worth of damage and the official maps were wrong.

01:25:59:12 - 01:26:33:24

Only after the flood maps were updated. Yet even today, the Blackwall Bridge area does not fully reflect non flooding. National grid relies heavily on desktop assessments, but models are only as good as their data. And we know this because official records show no risk and the flood still came. Questions have been raised about the continued use of older rainfall for some mythologies in Essex, while newer 22

methods are used elsewhere on the project. Residents deserve clarity on the inconsistency. We're also concerned that modelling based on incomplete baseline data cannot reflect real conditions.

01:26:33:26 - 01:27:06:09

Our evidence shows that even 2024 flood maps do not accurately represent significant events. Finally, downstream impacts. Water does not stop at parish boundaries. Flood waters here flow through Writtle and into Chelmsford city centre, which is already under flood pressure. National grid argues cost. But what is the true cost of flooding homes, undermining mitigation work, damaging countryside and increasing risk both upstream and downstream? Our request is simple.

01:27:06:11 - 01:27:36:10

We ask that the cycle of risk assessment be required for the Chelmsford, Essex and Roxboro Road sector. Based on robust evidence and local conditions, before any heavy construction begins, until National Grid can demonstrate that these works will not include increased flood risk, compromise emergency access, undermine mitigation efforts or worsen downstream conditions. We do not believe this project should proceed here when a viable offshore alternative exists.

01:27:36:29 - 01:27:43:11

We know what happens when flood risk is underestimated. We have lived through it. Thank you for your time.

01:27:44:04 - 01:27:48:25

Thank you, Miss Hedges. Okay. Thank you very much, both for your contributions. Thank you.

01:27:52:17 - 01:27:59:11

Is there anyone else here? um, either in the room or online who hasn't spoken and would wish to be heard today.

01:28:05:01 - 01:28:31:06

Seeing any hands up. Thank you. Okay. Um, as we noted earlier as well, if you could, um, submit what you've said in writing, um, at deadline six, that'd be very useful for us. Thank you. Um, deadline six is Tuesday, the 7th of July. Um, the applicant is also expected to provide a written response to all our oral submissions made today at the same deadline. I'll now move to Miss Hunt. Thank you.

01:28:33:27 - 01:29:10:12

Thank you. And thank you to those of you in the room and online for attending and participating in this open floor hearing today. Uh, digital recording of the proceedings today will be made available as soon as possible on the project page of the National Infrastructure website. And should any party still wish to make a contribution, but felt they were unable to do so. For whatever reason, they can still make their contribution in writing by deadline six Tuesday 7th of July. So just the order of proceedings for this week and tomorrow we will be back here.

01:29:10:14 - 01:29:42:07

We're holding a compulsory acquisition hearing, the third one that will be in the morning at 10:00 and issue specific hearing three and that's relating to the draft development consent order. That will be at 2 p.m. and on Thursday into Friday, there will be a fourth issue specific hearing relating to a range of environmental matters. And all hearings will be here at Chelmsford Racecourse. So thank you again for your contributions.

01:29:42:09 - 01:29:47:25

And the time is now. 1129 and this hearing is now closed. Thank you.