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The applicant
All local authorities

Our Ref: EN020027

Date: 30 June 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 17

Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an order granting development consent for the Norwich to Tilbury project

Request for further information from the applicant and all local authorities relating to matters deferred from issue specific hearing 3 (draft development consent order) and issue specific hearing 4 (socio-economics)

We are writing under rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 in respect of the following matters.

Reference to ‘**all local authorities**’ includes the following: Norfolk County Council (CC), Suffolk CC, Essex CC, South Norfolk District Council (DC), Mid Suffolk DC, Babergh DC, Tendring DC, Colchester City Council, Braintree DC, Chelmsford City Council, Brentwood Borough Council (BC), Basildon BC and Thurrock Council.

1. Draft development consent order (DCO) matters deferred from issue specific hearing 3

Agenda item 5.2 (Schedule 3 requirements and Schedule 4 discharge of requirements):

- a) The examining authority (ExA) notes that there are requirements contained within other DCOs which specifically relate to:
 - stages of the authorised development
 - management plans and commitments, including in relation to the employment and skills plan (ESP)
 - management plans to be approved
 - the provision of as-built details to relevant local authorities, especially in relation to underground cable corridors

The applicant is asked to explain why similar requirements are not to be incorporated into the draft DCO?

- b) The outline code of construction practice submitted with the Sea Link DCO application makes reference to 'mitigation of intra-project cumulative effects' (GG40). The ExA questions why the submitted outline code of construction practice, submitted in relation to the proposed development, does not contain a similar commitment bearing in mind the number of consented DCOs and other major developments, including potential emerging developments, that are or would be located close to order limits of the proposed development. The schedule of modifications for Sea Link proposes a requirement related to securing the commitments to mitigation required arising from the intra-project cumulative effects. The ExA seeks the applicant's considered response in regard to this matter.
- c) At issue specific hearing 2 the applicant referred to the possible use of development validation checklists with the relevant local authorities and/ or other bodies for the discharge of their requirement submissions. The applicant is asked to provide an update on discussions regarding such a checklist.

2. Socio-economic matters deferred from issue specific hearing 4

Employment and Skills Plan:

- a) The ExA asks **all local authorities** for their comments on the outline ESP [[REP5-215](#)], including whether they consider the applicant has adequately addressed the matter of supply chains within the document bearing in mind the number of other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consented in the vicinity of the proposed development. If not, do they suggest any measures the applicant could consider, if any, to address any concerns raised.
- b) Views are sought from the applicant, as well as **all local authorities**, as to whether approval of the submitted document should be secured within the wording of the new requirement (requirement 15) in schedule 3 of the draft DCO [[REP5-060](#)] relating to the ESP.

Community benefit funding:

The ExA notes caselaw such as *Newbury District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1981] AC 578, which relates to the fundamental principles of the planning system and the tests set out therein, and *R (Wright) v Forest of Dean District Council* [2016] EWHC 1349 (admin), as upheld in the Supreme Court in [2019] UKSC 53, which relates to community benefit funding. Notwithstanding that community benefit funds are primarily delivered outside the development consent process, the applicant is asked to:

- a) Provide a clearer explanation of its current consultation on its community benefits strategy, including in relation to the process of creating community benefit funds and the objectives of such funding. The ExA asks that it gives interested parties a better understanding of why such funding falls outside of the development consent process.

- b) Provide details of timings of and the methods used for consultation.
- c) Provide details of how the applicant would decide what is to be included within the community benefit fund strategy and how that will then inform the creation and delivery of community benefit funds.

The applicant and local authorities are asked to provide responses to the questions in this rule 17 letter by **deadline 6 (Tuesday 7 July 2026)**.

Yours faithfully

Susan Hunt

Lead member of the panel of Examining Inspectors

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