

Good afternoon,

Re: Open floor hearing 4, Tuesday 23rd June 2026

Please find below the full version of my statement, as originally prepared before it was condensed to comply with the three-minute time allocation for the hearing:

Thank you for allowing me to speak today.

My name is Elizabeth Reynolds, and I am speaking as a directly affected homeowner.

After five years of planning applications, surveys and consultations, my husband and I finally obtained planning permission for our home. Because our property is within the Green Belt, we had to satisfy extremely strict planning requirements, and rightly so. We accepted those restrictions and worked with the planning authority throughout the process.

We invested our life savings, our pensions and years of hard work into creating our family home. We were unable to build a two-storey property because of Green Belt restrictions, so we designed a home with a full basement instead. Every aspect of the design was centred around its exceptional countryside setting and views.

The defining feature of our home is its position within the valley. As you enter the property, ten-metre floor-to-ceiling glass doors frame panoramic views across the landscape, with floor-to-ceiling glazing throughout the house specifically designed to capture those views. We would never have undertaken this project had we known that pylons of this scale were being proposed so close to our home.

The views are what make our property unique. Almost everyone who visits comments on them. Even representatives from National Grid's project team, when they visited our home, acknowledged how exceptional they are. During that visit, it was accepted that previous comments made by members of the project team suggesting that "there is no value in a view" should never have been made to us.

Under the current proposal, one pylon is expected to stand approximately 80 metres from our bedroom window, with pylons positioned on the highest ground on both sides of the valley. We have repeatedly been told that every effort would be made to minimise impacts wherever possible. Yet these proposed locations appear to maximise their visibility and dominance within the landscape.

The visual impact on our home, and on the surrounding countryside, will be severe, overwhelming and permanent.

In addition, a haul road is proposed metres from our bedroom window. This will bring years of heavy construction traffic, noise, vibration, dust, lighting and continual disturbance.

Even after construction has finished, we will be left living alongside overhead transmission lines, with the ongoing hum and crackle that high-voltage infrastructure can generate, particularly during damp weather. This represents a substantial and permanent loss of residential amenity in what is currently a peaceful rural environment.

I am also deeply concerned about flooding.

During construction of our home, our basement flooded every single day until the structure became watertight. Before building began, extensive ground investigations were undertaken, including boreholes extending significantly deeper than the basement itself, and no groundwater issues were identified. However, once excavation started, the reality was very different.

Today, two permanent pumps operate continuously to manage groundwater beneath our home.

Ivy Barn Lane regularly floods because of its location within the valley, yet I remain unconvinced that the cumulative effects of additional hardstanding, access roads and construction activity on local drainage have been properly assessed. No one has assessed the potential impact these works could have on our basement or on the groundwater conditions surrounding our property.

The impact of this proposal is already affecting us.

Reluctantly, we have attempted to sell our home. Properties in our area normally sell quickly, and we have had considerable interest. However, around 80% of prospective buyers have lost interest once they became aware of the proposed pylons.

We received one offer from buyers who were aware of the proposal. They submitted a substantially reduced offer because they believed the pylons would significantly affect the property's value. They later withdrew altogether, explaining that they simply did not want to live next to the proposed infrastructure.

Another couple viewed our home twice and told us they intended to make what they described as a sensible offer.

Following their second viewing, they discovered the pylon proposals and immediately withdrew their interest. They told us that, if the scheme did not proceed and they had not found another home, they would still be interested in purchasing ours.

Whilst I appreciate that property values are not the primary consideration for this Panel, these experiences clearly demonstrate how the proposal is perceived by ordinary members of the public.

The uncertainty surrounding this scheme, together with the prospect of living with these permanent changes, has had a profound effect on my mental health and that of my family.

National Grid has acknowledged that we are significantly affected by this proposal. However, those words offer little comfort when they are accompanied by no meaningful mitigation whatsoever.

It is incredibly difficult to understand how a company can acknowledge that a family will be significantly harmed, yet conclude that nothing further should be done.

We now face the possibility of either losing a substantial proportion of everything we have invested in our home or remaining trapped in a property that has been fundamentally changed for years to come.

The stress has become overwhelming. I suffer sleepless nights, constant anxiety and [REDACTED]. This proposal has affected every aspect of our lives.

I firmly believe that where homeowners are acknowledged to be significantly affected, National Grid should be required to offer meaningful compensation, including purchasing properties at their unaffected market value where appropriate.

There are also wider environmental concerns.

Established hedgerows are proposed for removal despite their importance to local wildlife and the character of the landscape. We regularly see red kites, buzzards and many other species around our home, and I am deeply concerned about the cumulative ecological impacts.

Traffic impacts also appear to have been underestimated.

It takes very little for congestion on the A12 to divert traffic through surrounding villages. During construction, the additional volume of construction traffic has the potential to cause significant disruption across the wider local road network, affecting residents well beyond the immediate route of the scheme.

I respectfully ask the Panel to consider whether less harmful alternatives have genuinely been explored.

I have evidence in correspondence showing that offshore transmission routes have been selected elsewhere because the visual impact on communities was considered unacceptable. I respectfully ask why the same level of consideration has not been afforded to the communities affected by this proposal.

I therefore ask the Inspectorate to give full and careful weight to the cumulative impacts on residents, residential amenity, landscape character, ecology, flooding risk and the long-term consequences for families like ours.

My husband and I did everything the planning system asked of us. We accepted the restrictions that came with building in the Green Belt because we understood the importance of protecting this landscape. We invested everything we had into creating a home that respected its surroundings and was designed around the very views that are now under threat.

I simply ask that our family is given the same consideration and protection that the planning system required of us. We are not asking for special treatment. We are asking for fairness, for genuine consideration of less harmful alternatives, and for recognition of the devastating impact this proposal will have on our home, our future and our lives.

Thank you for listening

Elizabeth Reynolds