

I attended the hearing of the Inspectorate and National Grid last week at the Chelmsford racecourse. Further to recent communications, I noted that the KC representing National Grid (NG) was intent on using convoluted language in order to support fully the proposals for construction of the pylons from Norwich to Tilbury. He seemed simply to wish to justify NG's plans regardless of the regulations and regardless of the negative impact on local communities. Much of his commentary was simply not true.

I have a particular interest in the Colne Valley. I responded previously to questions raised by the Inspectorate in respect of two listed properties in the Colne Valley; Coney Byes Farmhouse CO6 3DR and Highfields Farmhouse CO6 3DP. The Inspectorate asked questions specifically about these two properties in paragraph HE 1.34 of their enquiries to NG following NG's submission of their planning application. National Grid responded by stating that there would be no significant impact upon the environment enjoyed by these properties as a result of constructing pylons. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I wrote to the Inspectorate challenging NG's assertions at the time but have been unable to find any reference to either of these properties in subsequent documentation. The proposed route for the pylons would result in these structures being within 200 metres of the curtilage of both of these properties. Within the immediate vicinity there is also Grade II listed Kings Hall which would be dramatically affected by these proposals.

Only Kings Hall has been noted in the Environmental Statement (Volume 6, Document 6.13.A4, Final Issue, June 2026) that has been prepared by NG. It refers to 364 residential buildings that have been identified within the 200m study area. Since the curtilages of both Coney Byes Farmhouse and Highfields Farmhouse are clearly within that limit, and both have been excluded from the Statement, this can only lead one to the conclusion that NG materially understates the impact of these pylons along the whole route.

It should also be noted that in "Landscape Opportunities" NG propose to plant a single hedge in this part of the Colne Valley. This will have no benefit to the properties noted above; such a hedge could only be a small fraction of the height of the proposed pylons, even when mature in many years' time, and would make no difference to the overwhelming impact of the proposed pylons in the valley and is entirely unsympathetic to fact that the valley will have been despoiled.

I am also aware that NG have started significant works in the countryside in anticipation of this project being granted approval. They have also applied for permission to undertake further major preparatory works in anticipation of the permission being granted. This seems to me to be entirely inappropriate and should not be permitted.

The Inspectorate are aware of the significant disruption that this proposed project is having and will have to people's lives including their mental wellbeing. It is to be hoped that NG will be required to change their plans to a project that is more reasonable and acceptable.