

Application Number (EN020027)

Interested Party Reference: [REDACTED]

I am writing in response to National Grid Document 8.4.12.2, focusing on Appendix A for the Waveney Valley area.

Having attended the Roydon Parish Council meeting and spoken with several neighbours, I wish to express my full support for the council's position and the views shared by residents. Roydon has already been severely affected on three sides by the Norwich to Tilbury route. In the Waveney Valley, the pylons have been re-diverted through one of the most distinctive and beautiful landscapes west of Diss. There is no meaningful mitigation that National Grid (NG) can offer for such harm other than placing the infrastructure underground or taking the route offshore.

The village was briefly presented with an undergrounding option, the so-called *Waveney Valley Alternative*, but it quickly became apparent that NG's engagement was aimed more at appearing responsive than at genuinely investigating this solution. By offering an underground route at all, NG implicitly acknowledges the importance and sensitivity of this landscape.

On the draft opportunities plan—which is surprisingly amateur in style—NG suggests mitigating harm through “green enhancements.” It is nonsensical to describe opportunities for additional tree or hedge planting in areas already rich in mature vegetation, such as Roydon Fen and Wortham Ling. Walking along the northern footpath through Wortham Ling, walkers will be confronted with an uninterrupted line of pylons for approximately 500 metres, stretching directly towards Roydon Church and running adjacent to the Angles Way, a designated long-distance footpath. This view cannot be “filtered” unless NG intends to blanket the entire private meadowland in new woodland. This meadowland is also the proposed location for the WaLOR project, which NG appears keen to attach itself to by offering support. However, while the WaLOR project is valuable, it involves the creation of water meadows and will not provide any meaningful screening of the pylons.

The proposed pylon route passes close to the important Grade I listed round-tower church in Roydon, and regardless of NG's assertions, the pylons will dwarf it within its historical setting. The route is then forced between Roydon Fen—a rare fenland nature reserve—and Wortham Ling SSSI, both of which support numerous red-listed species. Furthermore, the renowned Angles Way follows the line of pylons west from the Fen, meaning the visual impact will be unavoidable for walkers and visitors.

We were never given any clear and plausible explanation as to why the Waveney Valley Alternative was ultimately dismissed, ‘unsuitable soil conditions’ do not really cut it when you compare it with other feats of modern civil engineering, this then was a flimsy fob off. In fact, there has only ever been a dismissive approach by NG to exploring other alternatives such as the more viable, cheaper and less intrusive method of cable ploughing which was never explored at all.

I have left it to others to describe more fully how the Holford rules are obviously not adhered to in this beautiful landscape, and I support their views entirely.

We own the land just north of Snow Street, where a popular public right of way leads directly through the field to pylon RG80. From this point, the footpath splits east and west, with pylons visible in both directions as far as the eye can see. On the draft opportunities plan, NG suggests mitigating this harm through “green enhancements.” However, at no stage in the planning process have they discussed these proposals with us. Moreover, the location they highlight contains our own substantial mature hedgerow surrounding the field—part of which NG intends to remove (despite the presence of an adequate gate) to install scaffolding. This hedge is nowhere near tall enough to mitigate views of the pylons for residents along the northern edge of Snow Street. What’s more, any additional planting proposed by NG would be refused by us, as it would be placed within our crop-growing field, which forms part of our livelihood.

The other marked “enhancement” on the map is very unclear, I would go as far as to say it’s just a squiggle, blindly drawn, but appears to indicate existing trees and hedges and an existing woodland known as Little Green or it might indicate the County Wildlife Site of Brewers Green, I’m not sure. Both are close to each other and both have extensive existing woodland. There is no room for NG to claim that they can mitigate successfully in this area without planting woodland all over our field. As I have already stated, this is the first time I have seen or heard about any such attempt at compensating in this way for the loss of our beautiful views.

In summary then, there is a reason why NG offered the Waveney Valley Alternative and it’s because they recognise that this really is a landscape of outstanding beauty. For that reason, it is also why NG have been unable to abide by the Holford rules here unless they go underground or offshore.

It is astonishing that only now—at this very late stage—those living closest to the proposed pylons are seeing any form of a draft opportunities plan, even if the map provided is both inaccurate and poorly produced. In their response NG appears to be relying on existing woodland, established hedgerows, and even the WaLOR project to give the impression of meaningful mitigation. In reality though they offer nothing new. This response is a lazy fob off, a tick box exercise which simply repackages what already exists while failing to address the fundamental and unavoidable visual harm the pylons will cause.

NG are unable to minimise harm in the Waveney Valley unless they go underground, because this small, treasured area holds too many obstacles for them to avoid or mitigate against. Obstacles in the form of our grade one listed round tower church, our important and rare nature reserve, our very much loved and used SSSI, our designated County Wildlife Site, a multitude of red listed bird species, a famous and popular footpath in the form of the Angles way as well as a huge network of other footpaths, all of which lays within a unique and designated ‘Special Landscape’ of water meadows. It is all this that NG will be harming by installing and squeezing 50 metre pylons directly through it.

