

Having listened carefully to National Grid's responses to my concerns during the hearings, I wish to raise the following points.

It is concerning that landowners were not informed that National Grid had changed its position regarding the infrastructure that was originally presented as potentially benefiting farms. We now understand that this infrastructure is to be temporary and removed following construction. Why were landowners not notified of this significant change? It raises the question of whether the original proposals were presented in this way to encourage landowner support and reduce objections to the project.

The destruction of productive agricultural land to accommodate temporary infrastructure is neither environmentally responsible nor consistent with the project's stated sustainability objectives. It represents a significant waste of resources. Furthermore, what is National Grid's plan for the substantial volumes of concrete and other materials that will need to be disposed of once this temporary infrastructure is removed?

The extensive use of heavy construction machinery will inevitably cause soil compaction across agricultural land. Even with reinstatement works, it is unrealistic to suggest that the land can be restored to its current condition and agricultural productivity. Had National Grid engaged constructively with landowners and farmers, whose local knowledge of the land is invaluable, much of this avoidable damage could potentially have been minimised.

I am also concerned that National Grid and its agents are seeking agreement for pre-access works before Heads of Terms have been agreed with landowners. On our land alone, approximately 8 hectares would be taken out of agricultural production, and the proposed works would have a significant impact on both Larks Lane and Chatham Hall Lane. These are rural lanes rather than major roads and are characteristic of the quiet rural environment in which they are situated.

It seems wholly inappropriate to seek early access for works that may ultimately prove unnecessary if the route is altered, if HVDC undergrounding is recommended, or if the Development Consent Order is not granted. In these circumstances, are National Grid intending to rely on

compulsory powers to gain access and undertake these works before agreement has been reached?

National Grid submitted Document 8.4.12.2, *Response to ISH2 Action Point 27 – Masterplans* (Planning Inspectorate Reference EN020027), in June 2026. Despite being a recent submission, the document contains significant inaccuracies.

We have been informed directly by National Grid that the pylon route between TB137 and TB143 has been altered. However, this document continues to show low-height pylons to the south of the River Chelmer. At this advanced stage of the Examination, it is entirely reasonable for affected landowners to expect accurate plans. The continued publication of incorrect mapping makes it extremely difficult to understand the proposals affecting our land and undermines confidence in the information being provided.

In Appendix F (page 28), *Action Point 27: Great and Little Waltham – Draft Opportunities Plan*, National Grid identifies "opportunities for enhancements along watercourses". One of the proposed areas lies within woodland, while the other two are existing Cricket Bat Willow plantations. National Grid has been informed on several occasions that these willows are a valuable commercial crop forming part of the Estate's farming business, yet this appears to have been disregarded.

The document also proposes planting trees and hedgerows across an active agricultural field. Such planting would divide the field into smaller parcels, making efficient commercial farming impractical. A further proposed planting opportunity is along Chatham Hall Lane, even though, with the exception of approximately 60 metres, the lane is already bordered by mature trees and hedgerows.

These examples demonstrate that the document is based on an inadequate understanding of the land it seeks to "enhance". National Grid itself acknowledges that: "No discussions have yet been held with the relevant landowners and no agreement has been reached to pursue compensation or enhancement measures between the Applicant and other parties."

This admission prompts an obvious question: why were landowners not consulted before these proposals were prepared and submitted?

Meaningful engagement with those who know and manage the land would have avoided many of these inaccuracies and resulted in far more realistic and credible proposals, eg on the same plan there are three fields of permanent pasture where hedgerows would have been a beneficial suggestion. These fields can easily be seen on Google Maps, as can the hedgerows and trees down Chatham Hall Lane and the wood. This document was written to answer Action Point 27 from the EA, but in my view for Great and Little Waltham it fails to do so on many points.