

Submission ID: SBAE88F88

My submission in response to points raised and discussed at Issue Specific Hearing 4 are attached. This submission is also supported by my husband Interested party redacted

Deadline 6 Response

Interested Party References [REDACTED] (Joanne Elliott)

Also supported by [REDACTED] (Richard Davies) of the same address.

We submit this in response to the points raised and discussed at Issue Specific Hearing 4 held at Chelmsford Racecourse on 25th June 2026.

Agenda Item 5.2 The Colne Valley

We support the two independent Landscape Assessments (The Planscape Landscape and Visual Technical Note & The Landscape Partnership Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal) submitted.

As a resident of the Colne Valley, I walk my dog daily along the various public footpaths including the Essex Way, the footpaths through and around Hillhouse Wood and the many footpaths through the Fordham Hall Estate. This is a bedrock to my own wellbeing and mental health, I enjoy the exercise, views and open spaces, continuous birdsong, and wildlife sightings. I can walk a different route each day, the varying landscapes are a key part of the experience, river paths, at one point meandering through woodland or bat willows and then opening into grazing meadows or onto plateaus with far reaching views, or through ancient woodland. The lanes, bridlepaths and footpaths create a network which is stunningly varied and is appreciated by the public in significant numbers. The introduction of the proposed infrastructure will completely change the nature of the Colne Valley forever.

The Colne Valley is a special setting in its own right and deserves protection. The valley with its meandering river, areas of ancient woodlands, wetland meadows and grazing pastures create a very tranquil setting with far reaching views. The valley shares many of the characteristics of the Dedham Vale and is geographically connected. The landscape continuity and shared cultural history between the Colne Valley, Stour Valley and Dedham vale provide not only a valuable continuity of landscape but also of ecological habitat and wildlife corridors. The continuation of the landscape is valuable to each valley/vale and its setting. Fragmenting it by introducing industrial infrastructure would be cause significant harm to the Dedham Vale itself and to the neighbouring valleys.

The proposed site for the sealing end compound at Crabtree Lane will be widely seen and will cause significant harm to the setting of the National Landscape area as well as to the neighbouring valleys.

The Masterplans were set out by National Grid and covered as Agenda Item 5.1. The area where I have detailed knowledge is covered by Appendix E Action Point 27 – Colne Valley. The map for Action Point 27: Colne Valley (north) Draft Opportunities Plan covers the route from the sealing end compound at Crabtree lane across the plateau in front of Fordham Place to south of Fordham Village. Most of this area is already managed by the Woodland Trust and farmers through field margins for diversity and wildlife. NG are proposing a hedgerow along Fordham Lane crossing in front of Fordham Place. Given the size of the infrastructure and open setting, this would only have any screening effect for anyone standing immediately behind and very close to it. The plateau in front of Fordham Place is approached from either side through narrow lanes with high hedgerows, as the hedgerows end, the road turns and the line of sight opens out. It offers views of the meadows and woodlands along the side of the stream in each direction with far-reaching open views. It is stunning and changes in each season. After over 23

years of following this route every day from either direction, it still takes my breath away and delights me. Every Single Time. Planting hedgerows through this area would do nothing to mitigate the impact of the huge industrial structures and would damage what is so breathtaking about the view of the valley in the first place. This would significantly harm this valuable and sensitive landscape. The impact of 50m pylons in this landscape cannot be mitigated. They should not be there at all.

“Opportunities for connective green infrastructure enhancements” seem to run along existing farm tracks and footpaths – these mostly already have grass and wildflower margins, it is difficult to see that any real enhancement is possible.

We find it disturbing that National Grid maintain their position no matter what evidence to the contrary is presented to them. National Grid argue that the Colne Valley does not have National Landscape status and, in their view, would not qualify for such designation and therefore does not qualify for protection. They will not acknowledge the many attributes that the Colne Valley shares with a designated National Landscape (which are covered by other submissions) or guidance which would enable this landscape to be protected. The fact that the proposed overhead lines through the Colne Valley would be seen widely from the National Landscape itself is acknowledged by National Grid, but no attempt is made to avoid the harm to the National Landscape.

National Grid maintains their position no matter what is presented to them and seem to be of the view that it is only their opinion which has any standing.

It is frustrating, responses to questions seem to be inadequate and dismissive with an air that they cannot be challenged any further and the questions are closed. Even factual errors are not corrected.

How will they be held to account?

Agenda Item 5.4 Residential Amenity Assessment (Environmental Statement. Document 6.13.A4 Environmental Statement Appendix 13.4 – Residential Visual Amenity Assessment)

The Environmental Reports lodged by National Grid in June state that they have considered all properties where the property itself or its curtilage is within 200m of the proposed overhead line. Our own property, Highfields Farmhouse (ref 1225094), a grade II listed building is not included in this report. The original curtilage of the property, including the end of the driveway, is within 200m of the proposed line. The adjoining land, which includes grazing land and part of the garden and forms an integral part of the property amenity, is within about 30m of the overhead line. This garden, with a summerhouse and dining/seating area will be overshadowed by the line. This has been pointed out to NG and their agents on numerous occasions.

The report assesses the Magnitude of the Effect to Views and Visual Amenity. As previously illustrated the sealing end compound TB34/35 all the way to TB44 will be visible from Highfields Farmhouse. Pylons will be visible from almost every window in the house. The house is on a slope, and the main views/windows/aspect are to the east and south where the line of pylons runs, effectively curving around the property. As set out above the pylons/overhead line will be very close to a key part of the garden. The skyline on two sides of the property (the two with open views because of the setting against a hill) will be dominated by pylons and wirescape. The entrance to the property is directly opposite pylon TB40, this will be a substantial pylon due to

the change in angle of the line and will dominate the driveway entrance. The approaches to the property on the road from both directions, will be dominated by pylons and overhead wires.

How can a listed property so severely affected not be included in this account?

Highfield Farmhouse and neighbouring listed houses Coney Byes, Kings Hall and Fordham Place were all included in National Grid's Preliminary Environmental Information Report as properties within 200m of the draft order limits. The inspectorate questioned NG's assessment of Highfields Farmhouse and Coney Byes in their First Written Questions, recognising that the far-reaching views were an important part of their setting and appeal. We responded to the inspectorate for the deadline on May 12th giving the details previously submitted to National Grid as part of previous "consultations" on why we felt that National Grid's assessment was understated and setting out the factual inaccuracies included in their description (number and visibility of pylons and overhead wires etc). National Grid has refused to acknowledge the inaccuracies in their description and subsequently responded to the inspectorate that they considered their assessment to be correct. Our May submission included visuals which had been shown to us BY National Grid at one of the consultations showing very clearly that the whole line of pylons on two sides of the property and the sealing end compound at Crabtree Lane would be visible. National Grid's document 7.12 Visualisations also showed how the pylons run alongside the property and dominate the setting. National Grid's own landfall maps show the sealing end compound would be visible from the property.

Not only did we not agree with National Grid's presentation of facts and their impact assessment – the property has now been omitted altogether from a document which is supposed to illustrate the number of residences severely affected. Given the factors set out as under consideration in the report, our property falls clearly within the definition of harm.

It appears that, by changing the qualifying parameters to (the curtilage) being within 200m of the proposed line rather than within 200m of the draft order limits, all the listed properties set out above which were included in the Preliminary Assessments have been omitted. Some properties fall only just outside the 200m definition but are clearly materially impacted. In assessing which properties to include, the topography and landscape have not been considered, relative positioning/height/dominance of the infrastructure on the surrounding landscape (the positioning of the pylons, and their structure) or the approach to residential properties can make a difference to impact so broad brush distances cannot be imposed. This appears to have been a desktop exercise with a ruler and strict cut off with no understanding of the actual landscape.

In dealing with National Grid's assessment of the impact on our own property, they have refused to acknowledge our points, have not corrected factually incorrect data and seem determined to understate the harm.

In their most recent report, I believe that the number of properties severely impacted by this project is vastly understated. If I can give examples of four properties on a section of the project of less than 0.5km; this must add up to a considerable number across 180km.

Again, how will National Grid be challenged on their approach and how will they be held to account?