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The applicant
All local authorities
All relevant local highway authorities and
local flood risk authorities (including the
Water Management Alliance)
Historic England
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Ministry of Defence Land Management
Services
Natural England
Norfolk Wildlife Trust
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
Essex Wildlife Trust
Raydon Wings Aerodrome
Affinity Water Limited (Ltd)
Anglian Water Services Ltd
Cadent Gas Ltd
Equinor New Energy Ltd
National Gas Transmission PLC,
National Highways and National
Highways (Lower Thames Crossing)
Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
Northumbrian Water Ltd
Scottish Power Renewables UK Ltd
(including East Anglia 1 and East Anglia
3 Ltd) and
TC East Anglia 1 OFTO Ltd

Our Ref: EN020027

Date: 14 July 2026

Dear Sir/ Madam

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – rule 17

Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission for an order granting development consent for the Norwich to Tilbury project

Request for further information relating to: the Development Consent Order; compulsory acquisition and temporary possession of land and rights; biodiversity, ecology and the natural environment; the historic environment; land use, soils and green infrastructure; landscape and visual effects; safety and security; socio-economics, recreation and tourism; and the water environment

We are writing under rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 in respect of a range of matters which are set out in Annex A of this letter.

The ExA asks for responses from the relevant parties that each question is addressed to by **deadline 7 (Tuesday 21 July 2026)**.

Yours faithfully

Susan Hunt

Lead member of the panel of Examining Inspectors

This communication does not constitute legal advice.

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Annex A

Request for further information under rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Reference to ‘**all local authorities**’ includes the following: Norfolk County Council (CC), Suffolk CC, Essex CC, South Norfolk District Council (DC), Mid Suffolk DC, Babergh DC, Tendring DC, Colchester City Council, Braintree DC, Chelmsford City Council, Brentwood Borough Council (BC), Basildon BC and Thurrock Council.

Ref	Question to	Question
1. Draft Development Consent Order		
1.1	All local authorities Norfolk Wildlife Trust Suffolk Wildlife Trust Essex Wildlife Trust Natural England	Requirement 11: Biodiversity Net Gain At deadline 6 the applicant submitted a revised draft Development Consent Order (DCO) [REP6-030]. In Schedule 3 of [REP6-030] a new requirement 11 on biodiversity net gain has been included. Comments are sought on this additional requirement, including any alterations to any of the wording that you would recommend.
1.2	The applicant	Requirement 11: Biodiversity Net Gain The ExA notes that in the revised draft DCO [REP6-030], as it is currently written, requirement 11(1), (2) and (3) only state that interim and final biodiversity net gain assessments, and the biodiversity offsetting scheme (if required), must be submitted to each relevant planning authority. Notwithstanding, article 55(1) of the draft DCO, there is no wording within the current requirement 11 that states that written approval of each relevant planning authority is required and that the assessment/ scheme shall thereafter be implemented as approved. The applicant is requested to provide amended wording to either reflect this in the next version of the draft DCO, or justify its proposed wording in this regard.
1.3	All local authorities	Validation checklists for discharge of requirement submissions/ requirement 15 of Schedule 3 (Employment and Skills Plan) The ExA draws the attention of all relevant local authorities to the applicant’s response to questions 1c and 2b of [REP6-132]. Question 1c relates to the possible use of development validation checklists for the discharge of requirement submissions.

		The applicant previously responded on this matter in [REP4-303], acknowledging such check lists could be helpful, noted it would be appropriate for drafting to be proposed by the host authorities for its consideration. The applicant advises “No drafting has yet been proposed however the applicant will continue discussions on this matter with the host authorities as it progresses ways of working for the discharge of requirements.” All local authorities are asked to signpost where such drafting has been previously provided in examinations submissions or to enter such drafting into the examination. Question 2b concerned the Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) and whether requirement 15 of schedule 3 of the draft DCO should be worded to require the document submitted pursuant to that requirement to be approved by the relevant discharging authorities. In the light of the applicant’s comments on this matter, as set out in [REP6-132], the ExA seeks the views of all relevant local authorities on this matter, especially in relation to the tests of necessity, relevance to planning, relevance to the development sought, enforceability, precision and reasonableness in all other respects.
1.4	All local authorities who replied to second written question (ExQ2) [PD-023] DCO 2.S3	Outline Code of Construction Practice Appendix E (Community Engagement and Public Information) and Appendix F (Outline Noise and Vibration Management) The applicant responded to ExQ2 questions DCO 2.S3 and DCO 2.S6 in [REP6-115]. Revisions were made to the ‘Outline Code of Construction Practise Appendix E - Community Engagement and Public Information’ [REP6-078] and the ‘Outline Code of Construction Practise Appendix F - Outline Noise and Vibration Management’ [REP6-080]. The ExA seeks a response from all local authorities who responded to ExQ2 [PD-023] DCO 2.S3 and DCO 2.S6, regarding the adequacy of the revisions submitted, bearing in mind their previous responses to ExQ2 submitted at deadline 5.
1.5	Applicant Suffolk Wildlife Trust Suffolk County Council Essex County Council	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan and ecological working group In its response to ExQ2 DCO 2.S5, Suffolk Wildlife Trust advised it was happy to support the wording, including in relation to the wording of a requirement, for an ecological working group, as proposed and submitted by Suffolk CC [REP5-270]. The applicant has amended the outline

		Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) [REP6-084] to confirm the remit of the ecological working group broadly aligns with the text suggested by Suffolk Wildlife Trust [REP1-278]. The establishment of such a working group is supported by Essex CC ([REP5-241], [REP5-243]), who also request the expansion of the scope of the group to include landscape matters, which is reflected in the outline LEMP [REP6-084]. To the applicant: a) Explain why you have chosen to amend the text to broadly align with the text suggested by Suffolk Wildlife Trust in its deadline 1 submission and not amended the outline LEMP to reflect the more up to date position where Suffolk Wildlife Trust had agreed to support the wording submitted and proposed by Suffolk CC ([REP5-270] Appendix A (entitled LEWG Requirement)) concerning an ecological working group (which may include landscape considerations). b) Explain why you consider in your response to Essex CC [REP6-114] the remit of such a working group should be constrained to ecological matters only and justify why the draft DCO requirement has not been included with reference to both landscape and ecology matters. To Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk CC and Essex CC: c) Advise whether you are satisfied in regard to the applicant's wording, as set out in the applicant's outline LEMP [REP6-084], which it advises broadly aligns with Suffolk Wildlife Trust's suggested text, as contained in its deadline 1 submission [REP1-278] at paragraph 2.3. d) Provide examples of the types of landscape matters that you consider should fall within the remit of this working group.
1.6	Applicant	Protective Provisions (1) The ExA notes a number of Protective Provisions (PP), including some PPs already incorporated into the draft DCO, have not been finally agreed with the interested party (IP)/ statutory undertaker (SU) to which they relate. The ExA understands currently some 16 bespoke PPs are to be included, with the applicant also negotiating in regard to number of side/ other agreements. In the absence of confirmation from relevant IPs, including SUs, in regard to: i) withdrawal of

		outstanding objections; ii) agreeing finalised PPs; and/ or iii) reaching agreement with regard to any side/ other agreements required, the ExA is concerned about the status of PPs and any side/ other agreements. In the absence of finally agreed PPs and/ or any necessary side/ other agreements being satisfactorily concluded, the ExA is concerned it will not have adequate information required to make a firm recommendation regarding the matter of PPs and/ or any related side/ other agreements, in its recommendation to the secretary of state. This is especially important in regard to SUs in regard to the matter of serious detriment to a SUs undertaking. In the light of the above concern, the ExA would urge the applicant to resolve outstanding matters related to PPs and/ or any side/ other agreements as a matter of urgency. The ExA would also remind the applicant that it will be unable to consider any matters resolved after the close of the examination in its recommendation. This would include any agreement as to PPs, side agreement, interface agreement or other relevant agreements received after the close of the examination.
1.7	All relevant local highway authorities and lead local flood authorities (including the Water Management Alliance), Affinity Water Ltd, Anglian Water Services Ltd, Cadent Gas Ltd, Equinor New Energy Ltd, National Gas Transmission, National Highways and National Highways (Lower Thames Crossing), Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd, Northumbrian Water Ltd, Scottish Power Renewables UK Ltd (including East Anglia 1 and East Anglia 3	Protective Provisions (2) A number of preferred PPs having been submitted into the examination. If you have not submitted a preferred PP into the examination, the listed interested parties are asked to do so. If you have already submitted your preferred PP into the examination, please signpost the reference where it can be located in the Examination Library.

	Ltd) and TC East Anglia 1 OFTO Ltd	
2. Compulsory acquisition and temporary possession of land and rights		
2.1	Applicant	Affected Persons Respond to the specific matters raised in the following deadline 6 submissions and update the ExA on your intended actions to resolve outstanding issues: a) ARU Writtle [REP6-134] b) Cullum Agri Ltd [REP6-191] c) TA Cullum Contracting [REP6-236] d) D N Grady and Sons Ltd [REP6-192] e) Kathleen Lee [REP6-214] f) Conrad Energy [REP6-146]
2.2	Applicant Ministry of Defence Land Management Services	Crown Land (1) In [REP6-046] the applicant notes “<i>Applicant received email 04/06/26 confirming 'The MOD Land Management Services (LMS), on the information provided by the DCO to date, is content to confirm that there are currently no land impacts on the MOD landed estate. However, LMS reserves its position should the DCO route or design change in the future'. 26/06/26 The Applicant issued draft consent wording to the MOD, with the request that the MOD submit this to the ExA at Deadline 6.</i>” No such confirmation has been received at deadline 6 from the Ministry of Defence (MOD). To MOD-LMS: Please confirm the above quote is your understanding and provide the consent wording in relation to crown land. To the applicant: Provide the email exchange to confirm the comment.
2.3	Applicant	Crown Land (2) In [REP6-046] the applicant notes that progress is being made to the transfer of the crown estate (Escheat/Bona Vacantia) interaction land. This has not been executed as yet.

		Confirm the latest position on the transfer and if complete identify the resultant effect on documents – removal from crown land book of reference and crown land plans and whether this becomes Class 8 white land as it is then in the applicant's control. Furthermore, in the event the transfer is not complete by the close of the examination outline the applicant's position.
2.4	Affinity Water Ltd Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd Northumbrian Water Ltd	Sec 127/138 applications The applicant has submitted applications under sections 127/138 in respect of the following SUs. The ExA requests responses from the named SUs in respect of those submissions: a) Affinity Water Ltd [REP6-129] b) Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd [REP6-130] , c) Northumbrian Water Ltd [REP6-131]
2.5	Applicant	Karl Owen [REP6-213] Respond to the issues raised and update the ExA on progress and how and if the applicant proposes to resolve the issues raised.
2.6	Applicant	Claire Lanham and Dick Lanham At page 22 of [REP6-114] reference is made to alternative access arrangements via third party land to address the Lanham's issues. Update the ExA on the latest position, including whether this land is within the application site boundary, how access would be secured and any potential timescale for reaching agreement.
2.7	National Highways All local highway authorities: Norfolk County Council Suffolk County Council Essex County Council Thurrock Council	Compulsory acquisition of operational highway Notwithstanding your reply to question 1.7 above, please confirm if the applicants submitted PPs, (or other mechanisms secured in the draft DCO) ensure that if compulsory acquisition powers are approved the highway authority will be able to ensure operation of the public highway.
3. Biodiversity, ecology and the natural environment		
3.1	Applicant All local authorities Natural England	Assessment of impacts on bat species and proposed mitigation In paragraphs 6.1.11 to 6.1.14 of the revised version of the outline LEMP [REP6-084] , the applicant has included further details of mitigation measures for bat species.

		To the applicant: For the sake of consistency clarify whether the references made within [REP6-084] to “preliminary roost features” are the same as the “potential roost features” references that are stated in the Bat Roost Report [AS-034] and amend accordingly. Furthermore, confirm that all trees that have currently been classified “further assessment required” as per [AS-034] would be assessed in order to determine the presence or absence of potential roost features. Also, justify why the use of a 10% figure for bat boxes and/ or tree veteranisation for trees with potential roost features that you have cited in paragraph 6.1.12 of [REP6-084] would provide an adequate level of mitigation. To all local authorities and Natural England: Comment on whether the amendments made to the revised outline LEMP [REP6-084] now satisfy your concerns in relation to the assessment of impacts on bats and proposed mitigation. This should include whether you think the 10% figure, as proposed in paragraph 6.1.12, would be sufficient. If you have any remaining concerns then please set these out, including what specific actions you consider should be undertaken by the applicant to resolve your concerns.
4. Historic environment		
4.1	Historic England	Bush Hall non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) The Code of Construction Practice [REP6-072] contains new proposed restrictions to ensure that proposed pylons RG68 and RG87 do not move to the south or east respectively to prevent physical impact to Bush Hall. Please confirm if this allays your concerns relating to this NDHA.
4.2	Applicant	Outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy and Outline Written Scheme of Investigation At deadline 5 the applicant submitted a revised version of the outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (AMS) and outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) [REP5-161]. Essex CC [REP6-147] (also included in [REP6-170] from Thurrock Council) and Suffolk CC [REP6-165] have responded and raised concerns about elements of the wording and matters that they consider have been omitted. It would appear to the ExA that both Essex CC and Suffolk CC have expressed doubt that the outline AMS and outline WSI, in its current form, would be suitable as a control document to inform future archaeological evaluation and mitigation. Matters and/ or specific wording still not agreed include those relating to geoarchaeology, trial trenching proposals and proposed mitigation. As stated in requirement 5 of the draft DCO [REP6-030] no stage of the authorised

		development may commence until a detailed WSI has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. Consequently, the applicant is requested to respond to the concerns raised by these authorities and submit at deadline 7 a further version of the outline AMS and outline WSI that seeks to address the matters raised by Essex CC and Suffolk CC. This further version can be submitted on a 'without prejudice' basis, either in full or in part, with the appropriate elements marked accordingly. For any comments from Essex CC and Suffolk CC that the applicant is not proposing to take on board in a revised outline AMS and outline WSI, the applicant is requested to justify its position and explain why it considers requirement 5 of the draft DCO would still be capable of being 'discharged' in order to allow works to commence. The applicant is also requested to explain what it considers the process would be if the applicant and the discharging authorities could not reach full agreement on the contents of any future detailed WSIs.
5. Land use and soils, green infrastructure		
5.1	Applicant	Green Infrastructure At [REP6-147] paragraphs 1.6 and 1.12-1.20 Essex CC refers to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and how it has been fully integrated in the identification of mitigation to ensure multifunctional environmental outcomes. Can the applicant explain how it has fully embedded and aligned its compensation, enhancement and mitigation strategies to accord with the LNRS and how this addresses green infrastructure requirements as a cross-cutting matter along the length of the proposed development, given that this is an issue wider than just in Essex.
6. Landscape and visual		
6.1	Applicant	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) A number of IPs raise concern over the accuracy of the information contained within the RVAA. Respond to such concerns, specifically, representations over the accuracy of measurements used in the RVAA, the accuracy of RVAA visualisations (the ExA notes in this respect that the visualisations are not verified views as data has not been collected in person), and representations over the 200m distance as taken from properties' curtilages [REP6-212], [REP6-218] [REP6-203], [REP6-212], [REP6-229]
6.2	Applicant All local authorities	Masterplans

		A number of IPs have made representations at deadline 6 concerning the Masterplans [REP5-199]. The ExA acknowledge that these plans have been produced in consultation with local authorities, their draft status, and that such plans are illustrative in nature. The ExA also note the applicant's point of view, as made in ISH4 and restated in [REP6-118] that the provisions within the masterplans are not necessary to make the application acceptable in planning terms. To the applicant: a) While accepting the illustrative nature of the plans, some information submitted from IPs could be usefully incorporated within the masterplans. For instance (but not limited to), Aldham Parish Council [REP6-175] identify a number of veteran trees and notable trees from the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory that do not appear on the constraints plans. Consider whether the plans should be updated and resubmit if necessary. b) The ExA would appreciate further information on the preferred method of the applicant to deal with the matter via an article in the DCO and how this was dealt with in the London Luton DCO (noting the applicant caveat that compensation for residual landscape and visual effects is not required pursuant to the legal and policy framework). To all local authorities: a) Provide your views on the potential mechanism provided by the applicant to provide funding for provision of landscape compensation (as contained in Annex of [REP6-118]).
6.3	Applicant	Good design and lighting controls The ExA notes the submission of the amended Design and Access Statement (DAS) [REP6-090] and Design Approach for Site Specific Infrastructure (DASSI) [REP6-092]. a) The DASSI states that the operational lighting at the proposed East Anglian Connection Node (EACN) substation will "have regard" to the Dedham Vale Lighting Design Guide. Should such wording be strengthened, and if not, why not? b) Would similar wording as for (a) be useful for all substations, extensions and sealing end compounds? While not all are within the setting of the National Landscape, the use of dark skies principles for such lighting would seem appropriate in such rural areas. The ExA note in this respect the submissions of Burstall Parish Council at deadline 6 [REP6-143] and their existing issues of light pollution. c) In particular around the EACN and Burstall, how will potential cumulative lighting issues be dealt with given other works potentially happening in their vicinity?

		d) Pylons East Anglia [REP6-229] note that the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment DCO included a requirement for a lighting design strategy. Would such a requirement be appropriate in this case, and if not, why not?
6.4	Applicant All local authorities Norfolk Wildlife Trust Suffolk Wildlife Trust Essex Wildlife Trust	Good design The ExA notes the design review panel (DRP) proposals contained within the DAS [REP6-090] and DASSI [REP6-092] and the provisions for local planning authorities, Dedham Vale National Landscape officials, wildlife trust representatives and North Falls and Five Estuaries project representatives to be invited to meetings where relevant. To the applicant: a) How often is the DRP likely to meet and at what stages of the process will the DRP have input into the design? b) Notwithstanding issues of safety regulation and security, what powers or control or influence will the DRP have and how will this be secured? c) The more formal inclusion of the environmental areas around the cable sealing ends for DRP review would seem useful. A similar table to table 6.1 of the DASSI should be provided in this regard to provide more certainty than currently exists within the DASSI. To all local authorities and the Wildlife Trusts: d) Provide your views on the DRP proposals and any other final comments you wish to make on the subject of good design.
6.5	Applicant	Design scenarios The ExA notes design scenario B is being taken forward around Flying Trade Group and Crown Quarry east and west of the A12 (table 2.4, [REP6-122]). [APP-130] details this option. Provide a summary and signpost to the environmental assessment undertaken for design scenario B.
6.6	Applicant	Offsite planting The outline Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme (OPDS) [REP6-128] includes a section on management and maintenance. Separately the outline LEMP [REP6-084] has been updated to include a number of adaptive aftercare measures.

		a) The outline LEMP refers to the outline OPDS but do the documents need to be more interlinked? b) Do the adaptive aftercare measures within the outline LEMP also need to be included in the outline OPDS? If not, please explain why not.
7. Safety and security (aviation safety)		
7.1	Applicant Raydon Wings Aerodrome	Aerodrome safety A range of views were received at deadline 6 from aerodromes [REP6-219], [REP6-220], [REP6-227], [REP6-230], some of whom do not fully recognise the evidence provided in ISH4 [REP6-118]. To the applicant: a) Respond to such views and provide an update on any further meetings or progression made with the relevant aerodromes. b) Provide any evidence as may be available from the British Gliding Association to support your views regarding effects upon Tibenham airfield. To Raydon Wings: c) Provide evidence relating to commercial opportunities that may be lost in the event that the DCO for the proposed development is made.
7.2	Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Wattisham Station The applicant confirms at deadline 6 [REP6-118] that agreement has been virtually met concerning effects on Wattisham Station, with outstanding matters solely relating to the exact wording of requirements within the draft DCO [REP6-030]. Please provide an update and confirm (or otherwise) your agreement with the applicant.
8. Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism		
8.1	Applicant	Employment and Skills Plan Essex CC [REP6-147] and Suffolk CC [REP6-165] raise concerns regarding the ESP. For example, the outline ESP lacks sufficient detail, certainty, governance or evidence to demonstrate that workforce, skills and employment impacts have been fully understood or will be effectively managed, the matter of supply chains and inadequate consideration of the context of

		the scale, complexity and cumulative nature of demand arising from multiple projects across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. The ExA is concerned at the lack of focus from the applicant on socio-economics matters, and is not satisfied in regard to the concerns raised in local impact reports (Essex CC [REP1-161] and Suffolk CC [REP1-178]) relating to ESPs. Indeed Suffolk CC advises it “...remains concerned that the absence of this evidence limits the ability to understand the scale and nature of workforce demand arising from the Project and, in turn, restricts the ability to assess the significance of socio-economic effects and determine whether appropriate evidence-led mitigation can be identified and secured at the pre-consent stage, consistent with the expectations of NPS EN-1.” The applicant should revisit its outline ESP with a view to ensuring it adequately addresses the concerns raised, including utilising established mechanisms such as that referenced by Suffolk CC (ie the Regional Skills Coordination Function). Should the applicant choose not to amend the outline ESP, it should provide a full and reasoned justification as to how it considers the evidence submitted to date provides adequate evidence to enable the ExA to understand the scale and nature of workforce demand arising from the proposed development. In doing so, the applicant should provide evidence that adequately assesses the significance of socio-economic effects and that clearly defines appropriate evidence-led mitigation that has been or can be identified and secured at the pre-consent stage. The applicant should demonstrate this is consistent with the expectations of NPS EN-1.
9. Water environment: flood risk, hydrology and drainage		
9.1	Applicant	In its ISH4 post-hearing submission [REP6-158] Norfolk CC continues to raise concerns about infiltration rates not being undertaken and therefore concerns about the full assessment of drainage requirements and compliance with NPS EN-1. In your comments to responses at deadline 5 [REP6-115] you state.. “<i>The information the LLFA requests on infiltration testing will be provided following the DCO Examination as secured by the Surface Water Management Plan that is secured via commitment GG22 within 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice [Revision F]. The Applicant will follow the discharge hierarchy set out in Section 5.3 of 8.2 Drainage Strategy DCO [Revision C]. As stated in this section, appropriate justification will be provided for any progression between the hierarchy levels</i>”.

		How can the ExA be satisfied that, taking account of the acknowledged lack of infiltration testing results, the flood risk assessment is accurate and there will be sufficient land and ability to provide any resulting sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) infrastructure. Also provide comment on Norfolk CCs assertion that not including infiltration rates does not comply with EN-1.
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