

Date: 18th July 2026

Subject: Comments on the RIES and responses to any associated questions

We refer to a letter to the Inspectorate of 7 July 2026, from Sir Bernard Jenkin MP for Harwich and North Essex.

The points made by Sir Bernard regarding the impact on his constituency, specifically the Colne Valley, which adjoins Dedham Vale AONB, can be applied to Offton and Willisham, and surrounding villages in Suffolk. National Grid (the applicant) have themselves stated that Offton is as severely affected as Dedham by the plans for 50m pylons and associated undergrounding of low voltage Power Networks distribution cables.

Sir Bernard points out, as have we and all members of the campaign, that the Holford Rules, while not part of planning law, remain the best practice framework, which is expected to apply to decisions about overhead powerlines. It is possible that if that policy had been properly applied, the route would not have impacted upon the Offton/Mid Suffolk area at all or at least would have been undergrounded. The Project therefore fails the fundamental policy test and is not capable of approval.

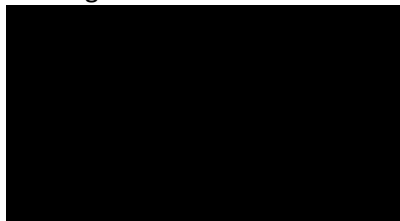
Overhead lines are not an appropriate solution for East Anglia as a whole, and harm to the Offton/Mid Suffolk area within the wider compass of the route can be avoided by upgrading the existing grid using high-temperature, low-sag converters, an offshore solution or HVDC undergrounding for the entire Norwich to Tilbury route. None of these alternatives have been put forward by the applicant.

NESO's East Anglia Network Study, and Pylons East Anglia's analysis, tell us that HVDC undergrounding is feasible, and Richard Buxton points out that the applicant has not refuted this with any substantial evidence. NESO found it broadly comparable in costs to the overhead line option for the whole route between Norwich to Tilbury, if lifetime costs are included in the business case as they should be.

We will not repeat the full text of Sir Bernard's letter but agree with his conclusion;

"the enormous harm caused to the... entire region, by the proposed overhead lines could be avoided through a grid upgrade using high-capacity conductors, offshore coordination or HVDC undergrounding. Given the harms of the Applicant's proposed transmission solution and the benefits of the alternatives, the Secretary of State cannot approve this Development Consent Order."

Regards



Chair - Offton and Willisham Parish Council