

In **Document 8.5.13 – Applicant's Response to the Oral Submissions Made at Open Floor Hearing 4**, National Grid states:

"Attention also needs to be given to the transitions between pylon types. Given it is the surrounding context that drives the need for alternative design mitigation, where this is not required along the entire route, any visual break and transition in pylon design also needs to be carefully sited. Assessment findings have concluded that, where there is not a reversal of the presumption to use overhead lines, the use of lattice pylons (either standard or low height) is consistent with planning policy throughout the route."

This supports the point we have consistently made throughout the examination regarding the proposed mix of tall and short pylons across the Langleys Estate. In our view, a continuous line of pylons of the same height and design would be far less visually intrusive than a route where the structures repeatedly change in height. Those changes naturally draw the eye and make the overhead line more noticeable. A uniform line of standard-height lattice pylons would create a more consistent feature within the landscape and, ultimately, have a lower visual impact.

For that reason, we continue to ask National Grid to replace the proposed short pylons with standard-height pylons. We recognise that this would increase the impact on Langleys Registered Park and Garden. However, as the owners and custodians of the parkland, we would support this approach because we believe it would achieve a better overall landscape and visual outcome.

In the same document, National Grid also states:

"However, the focus at this time continues to be the matters that should be negotiated as part of HoTs rather than simply practical matters that would be dealt with through the usual agricultural liaison / pre-entry schedule of condition workstream at the commencement of main works."

This is not our experience. The issues we have been waiting months to receive answers on are not simply "practical matters". They include fundamental design issues such as permanent access arrangements, replacement tree planting, landscape mitigation and other matters that directly affect the Heads of Terms.

The questions we raised during our meeting on **1 June** were not answered until **21 July**, almost seven weeks later. We then raised further questions at a meeting on **8 July**, and at the time of writing we are still waiting for responses. It is difficult to describe this as meaningful engagement when key questions affecting both the design of the scheme and the Heads of Terms remain unanswered for such long periods.

I have also reviewed **Document 6.11.A1 – Environmental Statement Appendix 11.1: Historic Environment Baseline Report (Revision B)**. Nowhere within that report can I find the desktop assessment of Langleys that National Grid repeatedly refers to. The report contains no description of the internal layout of the house, yet National Grid has reached conclusions about the effectiveness of mitigation in relation to the building.

Without understanding the layout of the principal rooms, it is difficult to see how National Grid can properly assess the impact on views from within the house or conclude that the proposed mitigation is adequate.

This issue was also raised by Historic England in **REP5-250**, where it stated:

"During the Issue Specific Hearing on 29 April... the applicant commented on the views from ground and principal first floor rooms... We consider it might be helpful to the ExA if the applicant provided more clarity on these views and their position."

National Grid responded in **Document 8.4.14**, stating that:

"...on the basis of desk-based research the Applicant understood that there are no significant rooms designed to have group functions, such as long galleries, on an upper floor from which views might be an important additional consideration."

Despite making this statement, National Grid has still not provided the evidence or desktop research that supports this conclusion.

What makes this even more surprising is that National Grid has visited Langleys on three separate occasions, including two meetings and one accompanied site visit. At no point did anyone ask about the layout of the house, the location of the principal rooms or which rooms are historically significant. As the owners of Langleys, we have attempted to carry out our own desktop research and, despite knowing exactly what we were looking for, we found very little information about the house and nothing that identified the internal room layout. It is therefore difficult to understand how National Grid has been able to reach such definitive conclusions based solely on desktop research when it has been unable to produce that research or explain its methodology.

National Grid also confirms within this document that the Section 172 notices were served. However, I remain concerned about whether those notices were served lawfully.

One notice was served on the landowner but not on the occupiers, despite the legal requirement to do so. Another included land that we had already informed National Grid, both in meetings in April and again in June, that we did not own. Once again, this suggests that statutory notices were issued without first ensuring the information was accurate, only for National Grid to amend its position once the errors had been pointed out.

Furthermore, as recently as **8 July**, the original notice remained attached to a pole on our land despite National Grid maintaining that it had not been placed there and despite us informing them on several occasions that it was still displayed.

In **Document EN020027-003972-8.5.10 – Applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions and Response to Action Points for Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 3**, National Grid states:

"From the information supplied by the affected person, the applicant's understanding is that the regulations and legislation concerning boreholes / spreading organic matter apply only where boreholes are being conducted to extract and supply water for human consumption."

While that interpretation is based on one of the documents I provided, it does not address the second document I submitted: **DEFRA's Code of Good Agricultural Practice for Farmers, Growers and Land Managers**. That guidance simply states that organic manures should not be spread within 50 metres of a borehole. It makes no distinction between boreholes supplying drinking water and boreholes used for other purposes.

I am therefore concerned that, because National Grid does not agree with the evidence, it has said it will produce its own position statement. In effect, National Grid will be interpreting the guidance in a way that supports its own proposal.

However, even if National Grid concludes that spreading organic matter close to the borehole is acceptable, that does not solve the real problem. If Anglian Water takes a different view and refuses to spread organic matter within the affected area, we will still suffer the consequences. We would lose access to an important source of organic matter, increasing our costs and reducing our ability to maintain soil health.

Unlike many services, we cannot simply use another supplier. Anglian Water is the only operator in our area providing this service. If it cannot continue to spread because of the presence of the borehole, National Grid's proposed mitigation effectively amounts to accepting that we lose that benefit. That is not mitigation—it simply transfers the impact of the project onto us.

Finally, although the pre-entry planning applications do not form part of the Development Consent Order, they provide a good example of how National Grid's "landowner engagement" has operated throughout this project.

National Grid and Fisher German assured us that they wanted to work collaboratively with us on these applications. We met with them on **8 July**, and part of that meeting was dedicated to discussing the proposed works. We are still waiting for a response to the points raised.

However, I have since discovered that National Grid had already submitted the planning application to Chelmsford City Council on **6 July** (Planning Reference **6/00921/EIASO**)—two days before meeting with us.

This means the application had already been submitted before they came to ask for our views. It is difficult to believe that our comments were ever intended to influence the proposals when the planning application had already been lodged.

For me, this perfectly summarises our experience of negotiating with National Grid throughout this process. They give the impression that they are listening, but the decisions have already been made. This planning application demonstrates that consultation has too often been treated as a procedural exercise rather than a genuine opportunity to engage with landowners and consider changes to the scheme.