

DEFICIENT CONSULTATION. I remain of the opinion that National Grid's consultation process has been appalling. From the outset in 2022 National grid have insisted that pylons and high voltage overhead lines are the only possible method of transferring electricity from Norwich to Tilbury. I was told at the first consultation that an offshore grid was not possible. This has been shown to be untrue. The attitude of National Grid representatives at every consultation stage has been "this is the only way, this is what you're going to get and other methods are too expensive". The fact that no alternative methods to pylons such as an offshore grid and HVDC underground cables have not been presented for discussion means that the process has not been a consultation but rather blatant predetermination.

DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

I remain very concerned about the damage to the environment if the Norwich to Tilbury pylons project is approved. In my locality the pylon route is on high ground above the River Tas valley. The pylon route crosses tributaries and numerous ditches that feed into the River Tas. The upheaval of the landscape during construction would present a serious risk of pollution through run off into the river which is a rare chalk stream and the White Clawed crayfish that live in the river would be at risk of extinction. The proposed pylon route through Fornsett would destroy vital habitat for Brown Hares which are in decline. The removal of trees and hedgerows would eradicate habitat for red listed bird species such as Yellowhammer which nest within the project order limits. There is also the risk to birds from the high voltage overhead lines. Bird collisions with overhead lines are well documented and even on the proposed inland route the danger would exist. Huge flocks of 200 - 300 Fieldfares overwinter in the Fornsett area and are often seen in the fields which would be crossed by the pylon route. Seasonal ploughing attracts hundreds of birds following the plough searching for food. Large flocks of Gulls, Rooks and Red Kites follow the tractors and on the return passes of the tractors the flocks take off, circle round and drop back in behind the plough again. This activity would easily put the birds up among the overhead lines and the risk of electrocution.

HARM TO FARMLAND

The majority of farmland in South Norfolk is high grade soil and a huge swathe would be lost to the pylon route. In these uncertain times the UK should be prioritising home grown food not covering it with infrastructure. It is not certain that the area covered by the haul road and construction activity would ever be returned to it's original usable state after all the upheaval.

HARM TO COMMUNITY ASSETS

The proposed Norwich to Tilbury project has caused untold mental distress for many people over four years of 'consultation'. The local lanes and footpaths through unspoilt farmland and countryside in Fornsett are a valuable asset for residents who use these facilities for their wellbeing. If Norwich to Tilbury goes ahead National Grid intends to close footpaths and impose road closures therefore freedom of use for walkers and horse riders would be curtailed. This would only add to the stress that residents are already suffering.

CONCLUSION

Over the four years of 'consultations' and during the examination it is evident that National Grid have not listened to the concerns of residents who live along the proposed route. I respectfully ask that the Planning Inspectorate refuses permission to build this project.