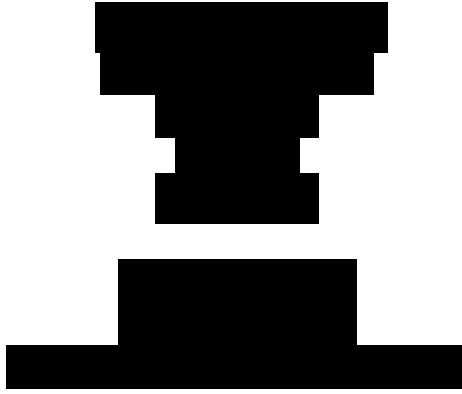




3<sup>rd</sup> August 2026

**To: Planning Inspectorate**

Dear Sir,

## **Objection to the National Grid's Norwich–Tilbury Proposals**

I wish to register my further objection to National Grid's proposals for the Norwich to Tilbury proposals. As a former County Councillor representing eleven rural parishes west of Chelmsford, I am acutely aware of the profound and lasting impacts that major infrastructure projects can have on local communities, landscapes, and the wider environment. The current proposals would cause significant and irreversible harm to this area and to many other communities along the route.

### **Grounds for Objection**

#### **1. Unacceptable Visual and Landscape Impact**

The proposal to install 55-metre pylons on the immediate borders of otherwise unspoilt rural parishes is wholly unacceptable. More than 16,000 residents in this part of Essex—and many tens of thousands more along the wider route from Norwich—would experience severe visual intrusion, loss of amenity and potential loss of property value. These pylons would dominate the skyline, permanently altering landscapes that have remained largely unchanged for centuries and are valued for their tranquillity, heritage, and rural character.

#### **2. Harm to Rural Character and Community Amenity**

Large overhead transmission lines would degrade the quality of the countryside, eroding the sense of place that defines these communities. The rural environment is not merely a backdrop; it is integral to local identity, wellbeing, and the social fabric of the villages affected. The proposals fail to respect this context and would impose industrial infrastructure on landscapes that are fundamentally unsuited to it.

#### **3. Availability of Less Harmful Alternatives**

I oppose the use of overhead lines altogether because viable, less damaging alternatives exist. These include:

- High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) undergrounding

- Offshore coordination of transmission routes
- Upgrading and modernising existing grid corridors using contemporary technology
- Using existing pylon routes even if some diversion were required

These options would significantly reduce environmental and social harm. To date, in the last 14 years there is no clear evidence that National Grid or its agents have undertaken a robust, transparent, or independent assessment of these alternatives.

#### **4. Lack of Proper Evaluation and Public Transparency**

If any comparative work on alternatives has been undertaken, it has not been communicated to the public in a meaningful or accessible way. After more than a decade of development, the absence of independently verified alternatives within public consultations is deeply concerning. It undermines confidence in the process and risks rendering consultation a procedural formality rather than a genuine opportunity for public engagement.

#### **5. Failure to Meet National Grid's Public Duty**

The omission of a transparent alternatives assessment represents a serious derogation from National Grid's governmental brief. A project of this scale demands rigorous scrutiny, yet the current approach appears to prioritise expediency over responsible planning.

#### **6. Threat to Areas of High Environmental and Community Value**

The majority of the affected landscapes hold significant ecological, cultural, and community value. Their preservation for future generations should not be compromised for infrastructure that serves only a portion of the wider Anglian region's energy needs. The proposals fail to demonstrate that the benefits outweigh the substantial environmental costs.

Moreover, the creation of new roadways and working sites will, on completion, be unable to return them to their original state

#### **7. Short-Term Thinking and Outdated Technology**

The reliance on overhead pylons represents a short-term solution to long-term energy transmission challenges. Persisting with superannuated technology risks higher financial and environmental costs in the medium and long term. Modern alternatives exist and should be prioritised.

#### **8. Questionable Justification Based on Cost**

Given the Government's progress towards a £49 billion investment in a new runway at Heathrow, it is difficult to accept that cost is the primary barrier to adopting less harmful transmission methods. The persistence with pylons appears to be driven more by institutional inertia than by genuine financial necessity.

#### **9. Compensation Funding**

Suggestions that funds would be available to compensate those living close to the route are ingenuous and in many ways an admission that there are alternative means

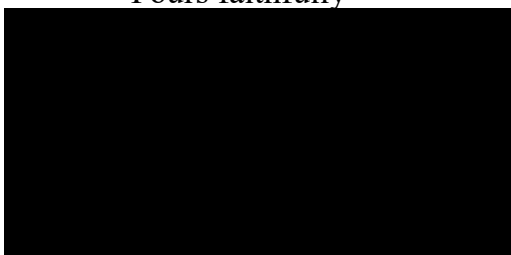
and routes to achieve the National Grids objectives. No amount of compensation could mitigate the impact that the proposals would have on the present and future generations.

### **Conclusion and Request**

For the sake of preserving our diminishing natural environment and safeguarding the heritage and wellbeing of rural communities, I would urge the Planning Inspectorate to require National Grid to undertake a full, and genuinely independent, and publicly accessible assessment of all feasible alternatives—including HVDC undergrounding and offshore routing—before any further action is taken. This review should also show full costings so that the public can judge the real value of all schemes irrespective of cost.

Only through such rigorous evaluation can a solution be identified that with public confidence meet national energy needs without sacrificing the landscapes and communities that define this region.

Yours faithfully



John Aldridge

Hon. Alderman of Essex