

Submission Complete

Your submission reference
number
S69F91DC0

Norwich to Tilbury Electricity Transmission Project (EN020027)

Interested party number [REDACTED]

Summary of outstanding concerns – Deadline 8

Ford Street Conservation Area, Fordham, Aldham and the Colne Valley

Throughout the pre-application consultation and Examination residents, landowners, parish councils, professional advisors and county councils have consistently raised concerns about the proposed alignment through Fordham, Ford Street Conservation area, Aldham and the wider Colne Valley. The issues have been repeatedly raised but National Grid has largely maintained its original position. National Grid continue to refer back to earlier documents and do not address the concerns that have been raised. The Examination has provided numerous opportunities for National Grid to explain, justify or reassess its approach in light of the evidence presented, but it has not. I summarise the outstanding concerns in relation to Aldham, Ford Street Conservation Area, Fordham and the wider Colne Valley:

Cumulative Assessment of the Colne Valley

1. Where has National Grid undertaken a single, integrated cumulative assessment of the Colne Valley encompassing Fordham, Ford Street Conservation Area and Aldham, rather than assessing landscape, heritage, ecology, recreation and residential effects in isolation?
2. How has the Applicant demonstrated that the combined interaction of these environmental receptors has been taken into account in route selection?
3. Why has no valley-wide cumulative assessment been produced despite repeated representations that the TB046–TB057 corridor functions as a single landscape, ecological and historic system?
4. Has the Applicant now identified any additional evidence demonstrating that the cumulative effects of the scheme have been fully assessed? If so, where is that evidence?

Route Selection

5. What is the engineering, environmental or operational justification for diverting the alignment behind Ford Street and onto elevated ground rather than adopting a less visually intrusive alignment?
6. Where has National Grid demonstrated that the selected alignment represents the **least harmful reasonably available option** through the Colne Valley?
7. How were cumulative landscape, heritage and ecological impacts compared when alternative alignments were assessed?

Ford Street Conservation Area

8. Where has the Applicant assessed the effect of the proposal on the Conservation Area as a whole rather than on individual heritage assets?
9. How has National Grid demonstrated that the rural setting and significance of Ford Street Conservation Area will be preserved where pylons are proposed on higher ground surrounding the settlement?
10. How has the combined effect of pylons, conductors, tree loss, construction compounds and permanent access been assessed on the setting of the Conservation Area?

Heritage

11. Where has National Grid assessed the cumulative heritage significance arising from:

- Ford Street Conservation Area;
- Grade I Church of All Saints, Fordham;
- Grade II* Church of St Margaret and St Catherine, Aldham;
- listed buildings;
- Roman archaeology; and
- the wider historic landscape?

12. Where has the Applicant assessed:

- group value;
- intervisibility;
- cumulative setting effects; and
- impacts on the historic landscape character of the Colne Valley?

Woodland Trust Land and Public Benefit

13. Why has National Grid not undertaken a specific assessment of the effects on the Fordham Hall Estate as publicly accessible Woodland Trust land managed for woodland creation, biodiversity enhancement and recreation?
14. How has the Applicant assessed the effect of the proposal upon the Estate's long-term environmental objectives?

15. Where has National Grid assessed the cumulative impact on public enjoyment of this landscape, including walkers, cyclists and horse riders using the Woodland Trust network and the Essex Way?

Green and Blue Infrastructure

16. Why has the Colne Valley not been assessed as a strategic Green and Blue Corridor?
17. How has National Grid demonstrated that the proposal is compatible with the strategic ecological connectivity of the River Colne corridor?
18. Where has the Applicant assessed the cumulative effect of the proposal on landscape, biodiversity, floodplain function and public access as a connected environmental network?

Ornithology and Bird Collision Risk

19. Where has National Grid undertaken a corridor-wide assessment of bird collision risk associated with overhead conductors crossing the River Colne valley, in particular egrets, herons, geese, swans, cormorants and birds of prey?
20. How has the Applicant assessed whether the proposed overhead line creates a barrier to bird movement along this established ecological corridor?
21. What assessment has been undertaken of bird collision risk in relation to:
- Woodland Trust habitats;
 - floodplain habitats;
 - river corridors;
 - restored woodland;
 - open farmland;
 - recreational open space?
22. What evidence demonstrates that overhead conductors will not materially affect species using the Colne Valley for movement between habitats?

Holford Rules

23. How does the proposed alignment comply with Holford Rule 1 regarding areas of highest amenity value?
24. How does the Applicant reconcile its stated design objectives with the proposed siting of pylons on elevated ground overlooking Ford Street?
25. Where has National Grid demonstrated that the route minimises skyline intrusion in accordance with the Holford principles?

Undergrounding

26. Why was undergrounding discounted before a comprehensive cumulative assessment of the Colne Valley had been undertaken?

- 27.** What evidence demonstrates that undergrounding would not materially reduce cumulative effects on:
- landscape;
 - heritage;
 - public amenity;
 - recreation;
 - biodiversity;
 - the Green and Blue Corridor;
 - Woodland Trust land?
- 28.** Why has National Grid not explained the apparent disparity in methodology between the consideration of undergrounding in the Waveney Valley and the Colne Valley?

Public Amenity

- 29.** Where has National Grid assessed the cumulative effect of the proposal on public enjoyment of the Colne Valley as an accessible recreational landscape?
- 30.** How has the Applicant assessed the permanent effect on tranquillity, openness and landscape experience for the wider public rather than solely on residential receptors?

Examination Process

- 31.** Which of the technical matters raised by Interested Parties at Deadlines 5–7 has the Applicant substantively rebutted through new analysis rather than by referring back to earlier submissions?
- 32.** Where has National Grid responded directly to the evidence challenging its topographical assessment, cumulative assessment and undergrounding methodology?
- 33.** Does the Applicant accept that several issues identified by the Examining Authority have remained the subject of repeated representations throughout the Examination, and if so, where has it provided a comprehensive response?

Final Question

- 34.** After years of submitting detailed written representations to National Grid, attending open days and hearings many questions remain unanswered. Having regard to all the evidence before the Examination, where has National Grid demonstrated that the proposed overhead line through Fordham, Ford Street Conservation Area, Aldham and the wider Colne Valley represents the least harmful, most proportionate and most appropriately justified solution, taking account of cumulative environmental effects, heritage significance, public amenity, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Woodland Trust land and the availability of alternatives?