

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

The following points summarize the principal matters which remain unresolved despite the Applicant's responses during the Examination.

Cumulative Assessment

Failure to undertake a single integrated cumulative assessment of the Colne Valley. Landscape, heritage, ecology, recreation, flood risk, public amenity and residential effects continue to be assessed separately rather than as one interconnected landscape system.

Route Selection

Repeated failure despite multiple requests to demonstrate that the chosen alignment through Fordham, Ford Street and Aldham is the least harmful reasonably available option.

Undergrounding

Failure to demonstrate that undergrounding was assessed through a robust and consistent methodology taking proper account of cumulative effects, or any cost-benefit analysis

Waveney Valley Contradiction

Failure to explain the inconsistency between the treatment of the Waveney Valley and the Colne Valley. National Grid accepted that cumulative landscape, heritage and environmental sensitivities justified detailed consideration of undergrounding in the Waveney Valley, yet no equivalent cumulative assessment has been undertaken for the Colne Valley before concluding that undergrounding is not justified. The Applicant has not explained why comparable cumulative sensitivities in the Colne Valley have been treated differently.

Ford Street Conservation Area

Failure to assess the effect on the Conservation Area as a whole, including the combined effects of pylons, conductors, vegetation loss, access tracks and construction activity. Also the impact on the local rural road network

Heritage

Failure to assess cumulative heritage significance, group value, intervisibility and cumulative setting effects.

Woodland Trust Land

Failure to assess impacts upon publicly accessible Woodland Trust land, woodland creation, biodiversity enhancement and long-term habitat management.

Public Amenity

Failure to assess cumulative impacts upon the Essex Way, National Cycle Route 13, public rights of way, tranquillity and recreational enjoyment.

Green and Blue Corridor

Failure to assess the Colne Valley as an interconnected Green and Blue Infrastructure corridor.

Floodplain and Hydrology

Failure to assess cumulative impacts on the functional River Colne floodplain and natural floodplain processes.

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Failure to quantify and assess cumulative tree, woodland and hedgerow loss and the consequences for landscape, heritage, biodiversity and climate resilience.

Biodiversity and Bird Collision Risk

Failure to undertake a cumulative assessment of bird collision risk and ecological connectivity along the River Colne corridor.

Holford Rules

Failure to demonstrate compliance with the Holford Rules, particularly regarding areas of highest amenity value, skyline intrusion and use of landform.

Landscape Character

Failure to assess sequential views, skyline intrusion and the industrialisation of the Colne Valley landscape.

Examination Process

Repeated reliance on cross-references to earlier documents rather than substantive engagement with the evidence submitted by Interested Parties.

Overall Conclusion

The cumulative effect of these unresolved matters is that the Applicant has not demonstrated that the Environmental Statement adequately assesses the cumulative effects of the proposal upon the Colne Valley, that the selected alignment is the least harmful reasonably available option, or that the rejection of undergrounding has been reached through a consistent and robust assessment methodology