

Interested Party Reference number: [REDACTED]

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

First of all, I would like to say that this project was sprung on us on 22nd April 2022. There were no prior discussions and we were only given their chosen route, which they admitted they came up with as a desk-based project. National Grid TOLD US that they will be installing 400kv overhead powerlines on 50m high pylons along their (desk) chosen route. There were no options.

I have a number of concerns, which you can see below.

The National Grid selected Viewpoint for the Planning Inspectorate's unaccompanied visit to Brick Kiln Lane, Bunwell was: 52°28'25.33"N, 001°07'25.73"E What3Words pizza.pixel.luggage

As I have pointed out previously, from this viewpoint, it is not possible to see the ecological impact that National Grid's proposed Norwich to Tilbury route will have through the unspoilt Tas Valley, as the land slopes down beyond the visible horizon and mature trees and hedgerows obstruct the view of this area. From this viewpoint, it is impossible to see the impact of the proposed pylon route, or even any part of our nature reserve that would be affected, even with very good binoculars. The routes that you drove/visited on your unaccompanied site visits to this area, do not allow you to see the true impact of the proposed powerline routes. I have driven them myself to check. It is not possible.

I suggested that as Brick Kiln Lane is owned by the council and not privately owned, there IS public access and you could continue down Brick Kiln Lane, potentially parking at my address (as it is difficult to turn a vehicle around at the very bottom of the lane), and have a viewpoint at a different What3Words location that I gave you previously, to give a true picture of the proposed route through Bunwell Hill / Tas Valley. Sadly, you chose not to.

I have tried to negotiate with National Grid (NG) since they announced their N2T project in April 2022. I have explained in full detail, the importance of our private nature reserve at the bottom of Brick Kiln Lane and in 2024, NG revised their route to avoid our small remnant of (probably) Ancient Woodland or Wood Pasture (see attached NG 2024 Changes to avoid small woodland), only to move it back again for 2025, to avoid an oak tree with a European honey bee population and to protect over-winter grazing for a small number of livestock.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk District Council all recognise the importance of our nature reserve, in particular the small ancient woodland / wood pasture and have pointed this out in their responses to yourselves. See their comments about Meadow Wood Nature Reserve CWS 2348, Ancient Woodland / Ancient Wood pasture Brick Kiln Lane, Bunwell.

NWT came and surveyed our nature reserve in 2025 and listed it as a County Wildlife Site – Grade 2 Mosaic. They also said that, even though they can't find evidence on an old map to support this, the structure, the veteran trees, the ancient coppice stools and the ground flora and fauna, all suggest that it is ancient. Because of this, NWT are supporting my wife and I to apply to Natural England for 'ancient' status, which is currently ongoing. This site should be avoided by National Grid due to its ecological and landscape value, especially when there are other less ecologically damaging options available.

Finding out that our nature reserve had been given official CWS status in March 2026 (CWS 2348 Meadow Wood Nature Reserve), National Grid's proposed solution (see attached excerpt from NG's EN020027-000295-5.15 Design Development Report, Page 46) is to move 1 pylon (RG49) 20m to the east and extend the height of pylons RG48 and RG49 by +6m to allow minimum canopy management across our County Wildlife Site nature reserve. According to NG, allowing another +6m on pylon height (up to the maximum deviation), would allow the management of the canopy of trees and vegetation to retain around 9m of the overall vegetation height, subject to arboriculture assessment and techniques.

As I specialise in Ancient Woodland Restoration and Management, I fully understand arboriculture assessment and techniques and appreciate that by increasing the pylon height to the maximum +6m deviation, mature trees below the overhead powerline do not need to be removed. Instead, they could be pollarded at a height of around 3m, which would enable them to then be managed safely, allowing up to 6m of regrowth.

So, if NG do the above, the following individual trees and tree groups could be managed (Pollarded), rather than removed: T1181, T1183, T1185, G37, G38, G403, G405, G407, VG404 and VG406 (see attached screenshot from NG's EN020027-00038-6.13.A6 Environmental Statement Appendix 13.6 – Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Pages 251 and 252). This would massively reduce the ecological impact through this part of the route.

This would be a much better solution than coppicing the trees, because if they are coppiced, they would then need to be protected and monitored until full recovery, due to the heavy browsing impact in this relatively wild area.

There are two different groups of red deer that I see passing through our nature reserve, as well as roe deer and large numbers of muntjac and rabbit, so coppicing is not really an option unless, the coppiced trees are fully protected and then checked weekly for damage, which is labour intensive.

Pollarded trees do not need protection from browsing and still support wildlife populations compare to coppicing!

That said, there is some overstood hazel coppice that would be directly below the overhead powerline, which would benefit from re-coppicing and protecting from deer and rabbit browsing, until it has recovered (3+ years later).

Although this is an improvement to the ecological impact on our nature reserve, there are alternative routes which appear to have been overlooked. Had you gone to the viewpoint location that I suggested, rather than the viewpoint location that National Grid gave you, this would have been apparent.

The huge ecological impact of the proposed route through Bunwell / Tas Valley could have been massively reduced by selecting a slightly different route and then using 2 deviation pylons to produce a slight 'wiggle' in the powerline route. Deviation Pylons are used where powerlines have to change direction, for example where they need to turn a corner, but are more expensive and require a bigger footing. National Grid blatantly do not care about our ecology. There is no profit in doing what is best for the environment.

Finally, I would just like to add that personally, I am against undergrounding of powerlines due to the ecological damage involved with the installation process and the numerous inspection blocks that will need to be built for maintenance. I do not want any undergrounding through our nature reserve. I would prefer pylons to undergrounding, but would prefer an off-shore grid to pylons. Going off-shore is the least environmentally damaging option due to our collapsing coastline.

Changes That Have Been Made as a Result of Feedback Received

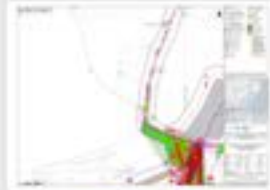
Table 4.18- Summary of changes identified in responses to the 2023 non-statutory consultation

Change Requested	Change Proposed
Concern about the impact on Bloy's Grove Solar Farm, suggestions to avoid archaeology site at RG012.	In the case of Bloy's Grove Solar Farm National Grid's proposals currently avoid the positioning of pylons within the proposed development area. While we do envisage some oversail, we do not consider this should interfere with the solar farm operation. We have also moved the position of RG012 (now RG013) slightly north to avoid the archaeological site identified at this location.
Suggest relocating pylon RG044 away from Hoggs Barn.	National Grid has amended the location of RG044 along the draft alignment to move it out of / to the edge of the open view to the north-west from Hoggs Barn and also repositioned RG043 to also benefit further from screening. The pylons have been moved so that they are both positioned to benefit from screening by some existing woodland though much depends on the viewing position and direction.
Suggest that an alternative project route would reduce effects on woodland including on a private nature reserve at Brick Kiln Lane, NR16 1SA- including by relocating pylons RG048 and RG049 away from small woodland.	National Grid is proposing a change between RG046 and RG050, this would move the 2023 preferred draft alignment further east and therefore further away from the woodland and private nature reserve at Brick Kiln Lane, thus overall, reducing potential effects on woodland.
Suggest that the Project is routed away from Heywood Road. Including, moving pylons RG069 to RG074 to the west to avoid residential areas and reduce visual impacts.	National Grid is proposing a change between RG070 and RG073, removing the single angle pylon at RG072 (replacing it with two angle pylons but each with smaller direction changes) and moving the 2023 preferred draft alignment further west in this area.
Suggestions to underground the section of the Project where it crosses the Waveney Valley.	National Grid continues to investigate the development of the appropriate design solution in the vicinity of the Waveney Valley via a range of investigations. Pending the outcome of those investigations the baseline remains the use of overhead lines as set out in the 2023 non-statutory consultation. However, for the 2024 statutory consultation we are proposing to also consult on a Waveney Valley Alternative which includes a section of underground cable between approximately RG084 and RG090. Whether this is ultimately taken forward (or taken forward in an amended form) will be informed by consideration of landscape and visual, ecology and heritage effects along with the findings of technical and ground investigations amongst a range of factors including feedback received. We will continue to make changes to the 2024 preferred draft alignment as we receive further feedback and as the Project develops.

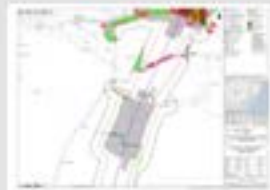
4.4 Crossing of the Tas Valley

- 4.4.1 Feedback to the statutory consultation and the findings of surveys completed to date have provided additional information that has now been taken into account. This includes a veteran tree positioned on the 2024 preferred draft alignment (which also includes an active honey bee population), information from arboricultural surveys about other veteran trees (a number on the site lead to categorisation as a veteran tree group – see Figure 4.4) and the implications for tree and canopy management from design responses, information that the open field (oversailed mid span between RG48 and RG49 and through which the haul road was proposed to be routed within the statutory consultation design) is the only field suitable for over-wintering of cattle, and the findings of site walkovers identifying a previously cleared area within the woodland as being potentially suitable as an alternative route for the haul road.
- 4.4.2 The proposed arrangements that have been considered are shown in Figure 4.4. These have been considered in conjunction with an increase in height of the pylons to the maximum Limit of Deviation. Alternative alignments passing just to the east of the single veteran tree would oversail a County Wildlife Site (CWS), would require additional angle pylons and would be less consistent with Holford Rules 2 and 3. A slight change of alignment to pass to the west of the single veteran tree would move the alignment midway between the 2023 and 2024 preferred draft alignments and ensure retention of the single veteran tree but require some canopy management of others. The change would potentially have been achieved by moving pylons RG48 and RG49 to the west by approximately 60 m with diminishing adjustments back to reconnect at RG46 and RG52 to the north and south respectively.
- 4.4.3 Subsequently, further feedback has indicated that Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Natural England are considering the findings of further surveys that suggest at least part of the woodland area may be designated as a County Wildlife Site in the near future. We have reflected further on this information and the distribution of trees and have established that the potential change referred to above, if implemented as described, could be optimised further to require a reduced level of canopy management and height reductions to veteran trees. If the movement of pylon RG49 is reduced (to an eastwards movement from the mapped position by 20 m, which would be within the Limits of Deviation) and pylon heights of RG48 and RG49 were to use the full vertical Limits of Deviation of 6 m then the level of canopy management would be reduced, allowing for around 9 m of the overall vegetation height to be retained subject to arboriculture assessment and techniques.
- 4.4.4 In proposing this change we have reviewed previous routing decisions to deviate southwards from RG46 passing to the east of Cargate Common or more directly over the CWS. The former remains less preferred because it increases conflict with activities at Tibenham airfield and increases impacts on the historic small field pattern. It is less direct and passes closer to Tibenham village leading to greater community effects reducing compliance with Holford Rule 3 and Supplementary Notes albeit reducing some effects on some aspects of Holford Rule 2. The latter alternative is similarly less preferred as a result of a less direct alignment and increased effects by closer routing to residential properties.
- 4.4.5 Tied in with the alignment change are amendments to the temporary and permanent access arrangements. The permanent access route to the adjusted pylon positions (used for infrequent maintenance activity) is proposed to continue southwards along Brick Kiln Lane before turning to the east along an existing track along the north edge of the woodland. This landowner requested change reduces the potential for effects

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