

**IN THE MATTER OF AN
APPLICATION BY NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION FOR AN
ORDER GRANTING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR THE NORWICH TO
TILBURY PROJECT
PINS REF: EN020027**

**Additional Submission On Behalf of
Ardleigh and Little Bromley
Parish Councils**

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Introduction

1. Ardleigh Parish Council (“APC”) and Little Bromley Parish Council (“LBPC”) (together “the Parish Councils”) invite the Examining Authority to accept this additional submission in support of comments made in the Parish Councils’ Relevant Representations [RR-0300 & RR-2172], specifically in relation to the harms identified by the Parish Councils.
2. In support of this additional representation, APC has also produced a *“Report on Proposed Route Alignment and EACN Substation Siting in Ardleigh,”* which is annexed to this further representation. The Report is provided as further supporting evidence of APC’s concerns about this proposal and should be read alongside this Further Representation (as well as the earlier representations), and the Applicant questioned on it accordingly.

The Parish Councils’ Position

3. In its Relevant Representation [RR-0300] APC set out:

“APC understands and supports the need to expand the capacity of the grid network to ensure a sufficient and protected energy supply for the UK. However, APC strongly objects to the proposals ... as the proposals fail to identify the best and least harmful approach to grid expansion.”¹

“Additionally, the Parish Council would like to raise concerns about general safety following the recent substation fires across the country. The rural location of Ardleigh, lack of infrastructure and inability to access these sites with emergency vehicles must be considered. Fire service resources are limited in this rural area... With many sites being accessed by single track roads, these locations are wholly inappropriate should an emergency situation occur.”²

4. LBPC set out in its relevant representation [RR-2172]:

“The close proximity of the [East Anglia Connection Node] to the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) near Ardleigh with its li-ion batteries and the risks of ‘thermal runaway’ should not be overlooked with cumulative impacts being considered and not underestimated.”³

5. Taken together, the Relevant Representations of APC and LBPC raise that whilst national energy need is accepted (EN-1 Part 3), there are concerns regarding safety, emergency response and the resilience of “clustered” nationally significant electricity infrastructure. Under EN-1 Part 4 and Part 5, these risks must be assessed, together with proposed mitigations, and with the remaining impacts weighed in the planning balance.

EN-1 (January 2026)

6. Part 3 of EN-1 sets out the explanation for the Government’s need for significant energy infrastructure projects. At §3.2.9, EN-1 confirms that the Secretary of State has

¹ Page 1

² Page 3

³ Page 4

determined that substantial weight should be given to the Government's perceived need for this type of infrastructure, when considering applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008.

7. Part 4 of EN-1 sets out the assessment principles to be followed in respect of the submission and assessment of applications relating to energy infrastructure. The starting point to be adopted by the Secretary of state is one of a presumption in favour of granting consent to such applications unless any more specific and relevant polices set out in the relevant NPS clearly indicate that consent should be refused. That presumption is also subject to the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. As summarised in EN-1 at §1.1.4:

The Planning Act 2008 also requires that, where an NPS has effect, the Secretary of State must decide an application for energy infrastructure in accordance with the relevant NPSs except to the extent the Secretary of State is satisfied that to do so would:

- *Lead to the UK being in breach of its international obligations*
- *Be in breach of any statutory duty that applies to the Secretary of State;*
- *Be unlawful;*
- *Result in adverse impacts from the development outweighing the benefits;*
- *Be contrary to regulations about how its decisions are to be taken*

8. §4.1.5 of EN-1 also provides that when considering the proposed development, and in particular when weighing its adverse impacts against its benefits, the Secretary of State should take into account:

- *Its potential benefits including its contribution to meeting the need for the Clean Power 2030 Mission and net zero, energy infrastructure, job creation, reduction of geographical disparities, environmental enhancements, and any long-term or wider benefits;*

- *Its potential adverse impacts, including on the environment, and including any long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate or compensate for any adverse impacts, following the mitigation hierarchy. 4.1.6 In this context, the Secretary of State should take into account environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts, at national, regional and local levels. These may be identified in this NPS, the relevant technology specific NPS, in the application or elsewhere (including in local impact reports, marine plans, and other material considerations as outlined in Section 1.1).*

9. Part 5 of EN-1 requires consideration of “generic impacts” including effects on human health, safety, amenity, community wellbeing and emergency response capacity. Structured reference: EN-1 §5.1–§5.4 (Generic impact assessment including human health and safety).

10. Accordingly, even where national need is accepted, and the presumption in favour of granting consent arises, EN-1 requires that impacts and risks be weighed in the planning balance. Where risks to public safety, emergency response capacity or resilience of critical electricity infrastructure remain unassessed or insufficiently mitigated, these risks disengage the presumption in favour of a grant of consent.

CNP

11. If it is considered that the Norwich–Tilbury scheme qualifies for CNP status under EN-1 and EN-5, that status does not displace the EN-1 Part 4 and Part 5 duties to assess and mitigate safety, emergency-response and resilience risks. Per §4.1.7 of EN-1:

“...For projects which qualify as CNP Infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy, in all but the most exceptional cases. This presumption, however, does not apply to residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, or irreplaceable habitats. Further, the same exception applies to this presumption for residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference offshore to navigation, or onshore to flood and coastal erosion risk.” (emphasis added)

Harms

Clustering of Infrastructure

12. The Parish Councils have set out their concerns regarding the harms posed by this proposed development in their Relevant Representations, which are not repeated here but do fall to be examined, assessed and weighed in the decision-making process as set out above.
13. In addition (and by way of further clarification), the Parish Councils wish to raise the issue as to whether or not the “clustering” of infrastructure around the Ardleigh and Little Bromley Area (“the ALBA”) does give rise to an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, public safety and defence (in addition to the other impacts already raised by the Parish Councils).
14. In addition to the EACN, it is currently proposed that the North Falls and Five Estuaries offshore windfarm substations and the Tarchon interconnector converter station⁴ would connect at or adjacent to the same Ardleigh location (see Section 8 of the Report). A battery energy storage facility has already been consented in the immediate vicinity (50MW, (LPA Ref: 21-02070-FUL) on land adjacent to Lawford Grid Substation, Ardleigh Road, Little Bromley CO11 2QB, a site very close to the proposed EACN).
15. The Report demonstrates that this would create an energy infrastructure hub of exceptional scale within and around the ALBA, resulting in cumulative impacts that are difficult to overstate, including industrialisation of a rural landscape, concentrated construction impacts, and overlapping operational risk zones. This close proximity of the BESS to the EACN is a clear example of the risk that clustering of infrastructure can present.
16. Developments such as the Norwich-Tilbury proposal are scrutinised through the DCO process at a national level. “Lesser” developments bringing forward BESS sites are

⁴ §3.3 and 8.2 of the Report

often dealt with at a local level, often having due regard to the cumulative risk posed to national infrastructure in the event of an incident at a BESS site and how that could impact operational national infrastructure.

17. Here there is an identified risk arising from the fact that a highly flammable lithium battery site is clustered around proposed critical national infrastructure seemingly without:

- a. A realistic assessment of worst-case fire scenarios,
- b. A ready water supplies to fight a major fire, and;
- c. An evaluation of contamination risks to local water sources that keeping such events under control (such as the Ardleigh Reservoir and the chalk aquifers that supply drinking water to this part of the country).

18. The Examining Authority (and Applicant) will undoubtedly be aware of the hazards that BESS sites pose, particularly with respect to fire or “thermal runaway”, and the difficulties such events pose for the fire service. As such, the Examining Authority is invited to specifically examine the risks posed by BESS sites (existing and future) when located close to infrastructure of the type involved in this proposed development.

19. The Parish Councils consider that the Applicant has not presently assessed the cumulative effects arising from the co-location of multiple nationally significant energy projects in this location, either in terms of environmental effects or in terms of safety and resilience of clustered critical infrastructure⁵.

20. The Report identifies that the co-location of high-voltage overhead lines, converter infrastructure, substations and BESS in the ALBA presents both local and national security risks, including vulnerability to hostile interference, cascading failure risk and operational disruption. The Report further notes that the proposed overhead line alignment encircling Ardleigh village centre introduces tall, visually prominent and physically exposed infrastructure crossing strategic transport corridors, thereby increasing exposure to security and safety hazards.

⁵ See Sections 9-10 of the Report

21. These matters fall within EN-1 Part 5 considerations concerning human health, safety, emergency response and resilience of energy infrastructure, and within the exception in EN-1 §4.1.7 where residual impacts present unacceptable risk to public safety or defence interests.
22. The Parish Councils submit that these risks have not been adequately assessed in the application documentation and require examination
23. The Examining Authority is invited to request further details from the Applicant as to how:
 - a. It has assessed worst-case incident and emergency response scenarios affecting clustered energy infrastructure assets along this route, particularly in respect of the sites in and around Ardleigh
 - b. It proposes to ensure proper governance and accountability arrangements for managing safety, security and resilience across connected nationally significant infrastructure
 - c. it can demonstrate that residual safety and resilience risks have been properly assessed and mitigated in accordance with EN-1 Part 4 and Part 5

The Horlock Rules

24. In their Relevant Representations, both Parish Councils raise the issue of the siting of the EACN and compliance with the Horlock Rules. The Report further sets out the Parish Councils' contentions that these rules have been breached (see the Report at Sections 8 and 11)

Loss of BMV

25. The Parish Councils wish to further draw the Examining Authority's attention to the national importance of agricultural land in this area. The Report explains that the proposed EACN site and associated cable routing would result in a significant loss of

BMV, including Grade 1 land, thereby severely impacting active farming enterprises. (see Section 4 of the Report).

26. The Report further identifies that the cumulative scale of energy infrastructure proposed in the ALBA would materially reduce productive agricultural capacity in a location of high-quality soil. The Parish Councils understand that food security is now recognised as a component of national resilience and security, and that this dimension of impact has not been adequately addressed by the Applicant in its documentation in support of its application.
27. The Parish Councils consider that the impact on the locally available BMV falls to be weighed under EN-1 Part 4 as long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, and under EN-1 Part 5 in relation to socio-economic and community wellbeing effects.
28. The Examining Authority is invited to request further details from the Applicant as to how it has assessed, and proposes to deal with, the loss of BMV that its proposal will result in.

Conclusion

29. Whilst the Parish Councils recognise the need for a secure and resilient electricity network, they are not persuaded that the Applicant has carried out the analysis necessary to ensure that the Examining Authority can comply with the EN-1 requirement to properly assess impacts, harms, risks and mitigation in decision-making. Where residual safety or resilience risks remain insufficiently assessed or mitigated, these constitute material considerations capable of affecting the planning balance, to the extent that consent should be withheld for this proposed development, in its entirety, or in respect of its passage through the ALBA.

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27th January 2026