

Norwich to Tilbury – The **not so** Great Grid Upgrade

Residents may not be aware of the implications of National Grid's proposed plans to bring 18 semi-conductor cables from Norwich - through the Dedham Vale AONB - to Tilbury.

It's almost comforting to know that all the cabling will be underground when it passes through the Dedham Vale AONB, protecting this stunning landscape ...until that is, you take a closer look at what 'undergrounding' really means!

National Grid's stated preference to crossing the Vale is to use a combination of excavated trenches and/or horizontal directional drilling (boring). Either approach will bring about a permanent and catastrophic change to the Dedham Vale.

Construction works will involve felling mature woodland; digging up precious wetland; excavating fragile arable land and wetland soil; removing hedges and - during and after construction - permanently changing or preventing access to areas of the AONB. Vital habitats for critically endangered barbastelle and serotine bats will be impacted along with a myriad of other habitats for other at-risk mammals and bird life now living and breeding in the AONB.

Take a look at NG's own graphic and photos of a typical construction swathe. As you look at these remember these are for just 3 cables, we will have 18!



NG - Construction best practice for underground cable installation



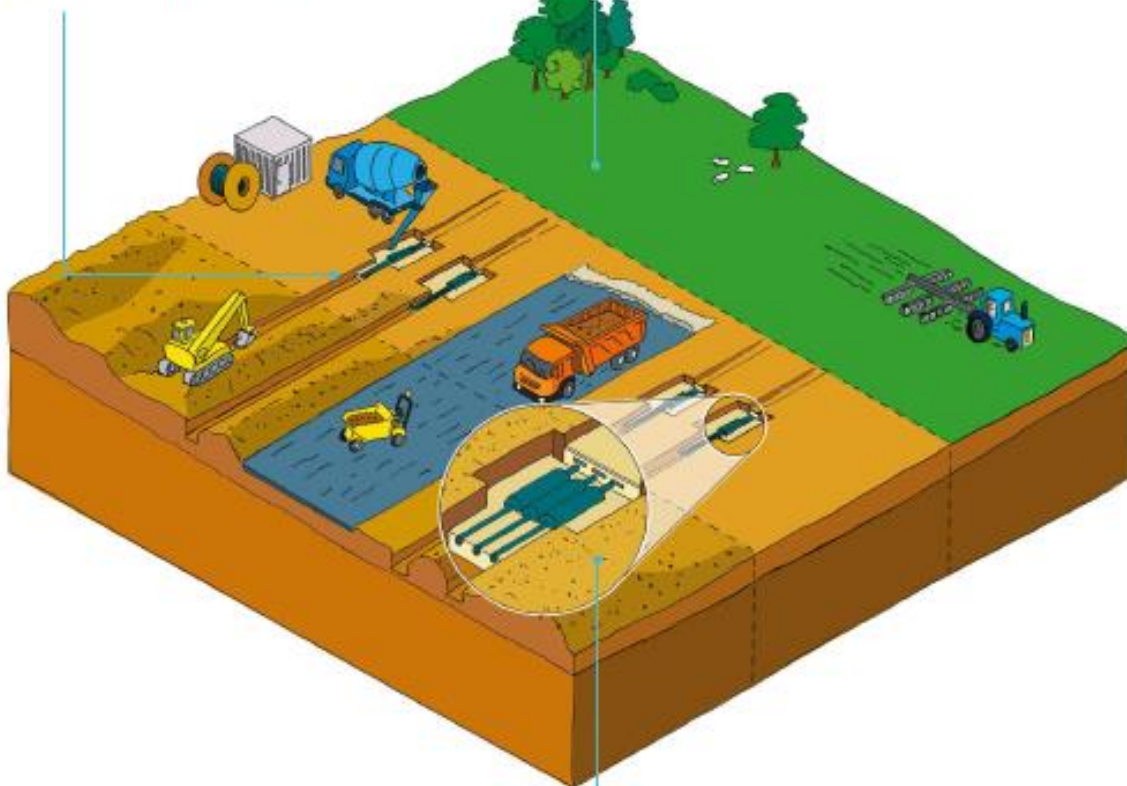
Direct buried cable installation in a rural area

Direct Buried Cable Installation

For a 400kV double circuit connection we would need to excavate four trenches each containing three cables

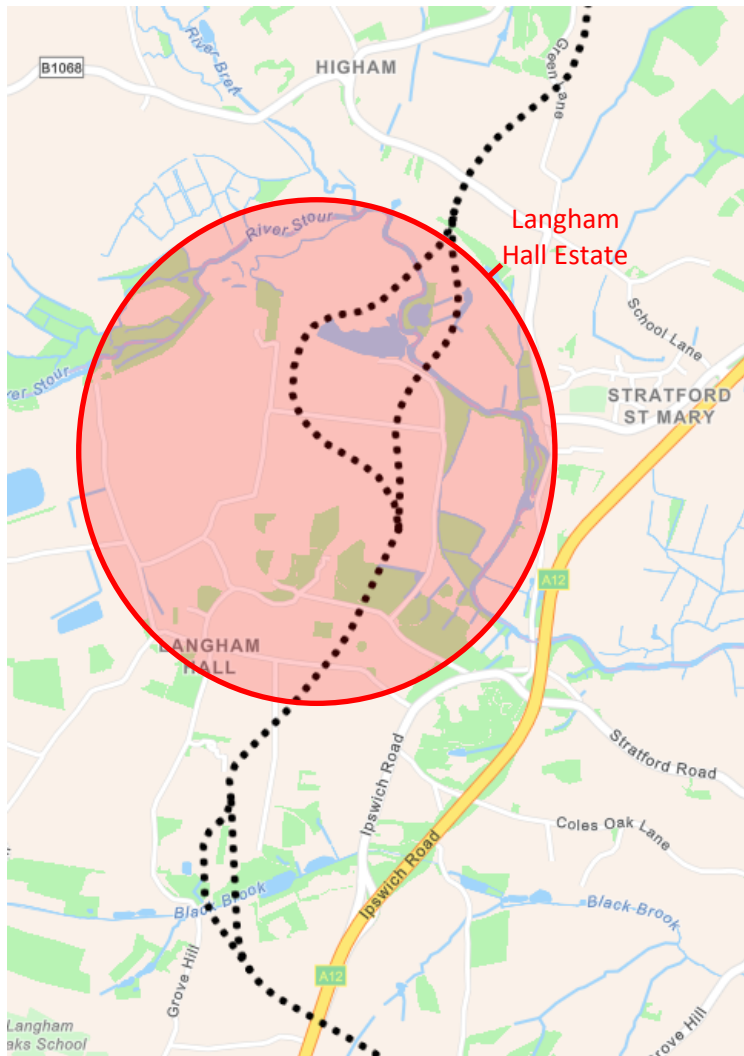
A trench approximately 1.5m wide and 1.2m deep needs to be excavated for each cable

Once land is reinstated, land-use restrictions may apply to avoid risk of cables being disturbed or damaged



During construction the working width of the land needed is typically 40-65m

Joining bays are needed where one section of cable joins the next



Here is NG's proposed routing through the Dedham Vale AONB.

Don't be fooled by the simple dotted line. Where the route splits there will be 9 cables buried in each trench, the construction swathe for these trenches will be **65-100m+** wide, where the trenches re-join, the width of the construction swathe will be **100-150m wide, that's 1½ full-size football pitches.**

Where the proposed route heads through woodland (areas in green) all the trees will be felled – permanently. In our case, on the Langham Hall Estate, that means the destruction and felling of mature woodland within the

historic area known as The Coombs.

As the route passes through Langham Hall Estate across the River Stour it severs two historic public footpaths: **The Stour Valley Path and The Essex Way**, across the very spots where in the 1820s our celebrated landscape artist - **John Constable** painted various versions of Church Farm and St Marys Church, Langham (The Glebe Farm). Versions of this evocative and genre defining landscape painting now hang at the Tate Britain.



The Glebe Farm c.1828 John Constable (5th v) © Sotheby's

For those of us unfortunate enough to be on or near the proposed route, the socio-economic impacts are genuinely scary. The scale of the works will also cause irreparable damage to the environment, sensitive landscapes and vital wildlife habitats. Make no mistake, however temporary the works, post construction the changes will be permanent and will be experienced for generations.

And if NG's own studies are to be believed it seems that all this is completely unnecessary.

Yes, we must improve our electricity transmission capacity. As consumer demand scales up, renewable energy from the North Sea needs to find a route to market and the existing network will not provide that. But the best way to achieve a scalable, dynamic and efficient solution is not to build more linear/radial, point to point connections. NG's own research and approach to development elsewhere in the UK is to adopt a more holistic network design (HND). Why is it not adopting this approach here? Applying HND principles for Norwich to Tilbury will obviate the need for any onshore transmission through the Dedham Vale AONB and very many other sensitive areas along the proposed route. Indeed, NG's own studies indicate that a coordinated offshore solution would be more cost effective and future proof. So why is NG not following its own findings?

To find out more, to get involved and/or donate to help us persuade National Grid and UK.Gov to consider and implement a more co-ordinated and far less damaging upgrade please visit: **pylonseastanglia.co.uk**

Charlie Warburton
Langham Hall Estate
info@langhamhallestate.com