

TDC August 2026 – Report

General Update for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Energy Projects

In July I was asked to attend TDALC, the Tendring District Association of Local Councils, to give an overview on the latest position for National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury grid upgrade and the associated wind farm and interconnector projects, affecting Ardleigh and Little Bromley and wider Tendring, and TDCs ongoing work. I felt it would be useful to share this as my report for August.

As we know, there are currently three nationally significant energy infrastructure projects affecting Tendring, with a further interconnector project between Germany and the UK to come. These are:

1. North Falls Offshore Wind Farm
2. Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm
3. Norwich to Tilbury (N2T) Electricity Transmission Project
4. Tarchon Interconnector Project between Germany and the UK

The two offshore windfarm projects FE and NF have now secured Development Consent Orders (DCOs), whereas the Norwich to Tilbury project remains under examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Tarchon is much earlier in their programme, currently nearing the conclusion of its second non-statutory consultation.

North Falls and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farms

Current Position

Both North Falls and Five Estuaries have now received Development Consent Order (DCO) consent and have therefore moved from the planning and examination stages into detailed design and implementation planning.

From a Tendring District Council perspective, the principal focus has shifted away from consenting and towards:

- Detailed design development of the onshore infrastructure, particularly the substations.
- Agreement of design principles and landscaping proposals.
- Development of Construction Environmental Management Plans and associated mitigation.
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement regarding public rights of way and local impacts.
- Early discharge of requirements where necessary.

Substation Design and Landscaping

Developers are continuing work on detailed substation design guidance, including:

- Building design and appearance.
- Materials and colour palettes.
- Landscape planting and screening.
- Integration into the surrounding rural landscape.
- Biodiversity and ecological enhancement measures.

These matters are particularly important in reducing the long-term visual effects of the substations on nearby communities and the countryside.

Public Rights of Way

Further consultation is expected regarding:

- Temporary and permanent Public Rights of Way (PROW) arrangements.
- Footpath diversions.
- Construction-period access restrictions.
- Restoration proposals following construction.

This consultation will provide further opportunities for local input on the detailed arrangements.

Early Works

Some limited early activities are beginning to emerge, including:

- Archaeological investigations.
- Ground investigations and surveys.
- Other preparatory works necessary to support detailed design.

Their (FE/NF) Relationship with Norwich to Tilbury

A key consideration is that both offshore windfarm projects ultimately require connection into the emerging **East Anglia Connection Node (EACN)** infrastructure associated with National Grid's wider transmission network proposals.

Consequently, TDC's expectation is that the majority of significant construction-related discharge of requirements, and onshore infrastructure delivery, are unlikely to be progressed at full pace, until there is greater certainty regarding the Norwich to Tilbury project and associated transmission infrastructure. There is limited benefit in constructing elements of

the connection infrastructure ahead of the transmission network required to receive the generated electricity.

National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury Project (N2T)

Current Position

The Norwich to Tilbury project remains at the Examination stage of the Development Consent Order process. The examination is currently nearing completion and is expected to close in mid-August 2026.

The proposal includes a new 400kV transmission reinforcement route extending between Norwich and Tilbury, including significant infrastructure within Tendring and a new connection substation associated with the East Anglia Connection Node.

Tendring District Council Position

Throughout the examination, TDC has consistently raised significant concerns relating to matters including:

- Landscape and visual impacts.
- Cumulative impacts with other major infrastructure projects.
- Impacts on local communities and settlements.
- Agricultural land and countryside impacts.
- Environmental mitigation.
- Construction management.
- Socio-economic effects.
- Adequacy and certainty of proposed mitigation.

While detailed discussions with National Grid have continued, the Council's in-principle objections remain **substantially unchanged**.

Frustratingly, the majority of the issues identified by TDC remain unresolved to the Council's satisfaction. National Grid's position has generally been that many detailed mitigation measures can be secured later through the discharge of requirements process should consent be granted.

As a result, TDC's principal concerns continue to be reflected in the latest [Statement of Common Ground \(SoCG\)](#), which is expected to be published shortly on the Planning Inspectorate project webpage.

N2T What Happens Next?

Following closure of the Norwich to Tilbury examination in mid Aug:

1. The Examining Authority has up to **three months** to prepare its recommendation report to the Secretary of State.
2. The Secretary of State then has a further **three months** to make the final decision on whether to grant Development Consent (although we expect this to take slightly longer).

Based on the current programme:

- **Examination close:** Mid-August 2026
- **Examining Authority recommendation:** Approximately November 2026
- **Secretary of State decision:** Approximately February 2027

These dates remain indicative and are subject to the statutory process.

Why This Matters to Tendring

The Norwich to Tilbury project is of particular significance because:

- It is the key transmission infrastructure required to connect a number of major offshore renewable energy projects.
- It has substantial direct impacts within Tendring.
- Decisions taken on N2T will influence the timing and implementation of other energy projects, including North Falls and Five Estuaries (and later Tarchon).
- Many of the detailed mitigation measures sought by TDC and other local authorities and communities may only be developed, if and when consent is granted, which leave affected communities in limbo, the same goes for any s106 mitigation and community funds which also remain very much unresolved, in the main due to National Grid inaction and trying to argue away the need for most of TDCs requests for mitigation (that together with the inability of the examining authority to take a stand on necessity, reasonableness, relevance etc) – leaving everyone incl TDC and affected communities frustrated, in limbo and frankly in the dark around precisely what is proposed in respect of mitigation, compensatory planting/landscaping etc and community funds/skills and employment benefits).

Tarchon

The current non-statutory consultation closes at 11:59pm on Thursday 13 August 2026 and the final deadline for comments is also on this day. TDC will be responding raising concerns and objections to multiple aspects of the project but will also focus on mitigation and

opportunities, even though Tendring is clearly opposed to this large interconnector being placed on BMV agricultural land with its resultant wide-ranging implications.

Following completion of the current consultation, Tarchon has indicated the following (updated) provisional programme:

- January – March 2027: Statutory consultation.
- Throughout the remainder of 2027: Preparation of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application and supporting environmental assessments and documentation.
- August / September 2027: Potential targeted consultation, if required.
- January 2028: Indicative submission of the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate.

It's worth noting that Tarchon is a very substantial 1.4GW international electricity interconnector involving approximately 650km of infrastructure, multiple European landfalls and converter station connections, together with planning, environmental and regulatory processes in more than one country. The Tarchon consultants that TDC are dealing with have highlighted that securing the necessary permissions and approvals for such a route is a significant undertaking in its own right – this has resulted in delays to a previously set programme and in simple terms, the delays appear to be driven primarily by:

- The need to complete complex marine and transboundary environmental assessments across the UK, Dutch and German sectors of the North Sea.
- The requirement to work through further regulatory and economic approvals, including demonstrating project costs and benefits to regulators.
- The inherent complexity of delivering a major international energy infrastructure project involving multiple consenting authorities and jurisdictions.

So once the DCO application is submitted, it then enters the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process, which includes the acceptance, pre-examination, examination, recommendation and decision stages.

The examination phase alone can take up to six months, followed by recommendation and decision-making periods. Based on Tarchon's current programme, it is unlikely that a final decision would be reached before late 2028, with a determination potentially extending into early 2029, depending on the progress of the application, the complexity of issues raised, and any revisions to the project timetable.

It should be noted that all dates remain indicative and are subject to change as the project develops.

Project Webpage Links for reference

[North Falls Offshore Wind Farm](#)

[Home - Five Estuaries](#)

[Norwich to Tilbury | National Grid](#)

[Tarchon Interconnector | Connecting Germany and the UK](#)

Tendring District Council – Consultations ending this month

There are none

Consultations can be found following this link: [Consultations](#)