



**The Examining Authority's First Written Questions  
Issued on 13 October 2023**

**Answers from the  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**

**Submitted for Deadline 3  
31 October 2023**

**Planning Act 2008 (as amended)**

**In the matter of:**

**Application by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc for the  
Bramford to Twinstead Reinforcement**

**Planning Inspectorate Ref: EN20002  
RSPB Registration Identification Ref: 20041326**

## **0. Miscellaneous and General**

### **The Proposed Development**

*Question MG1.0.18 to the Applicant, Natural England, RSPB and local planning authorities:*

*ES chapter 4 [APP-072] (paragraph 4.6.6) includes an illustration (4.2) that shows how trees would be cut back where the 400kV line passes through woodland. On either side of the 20m swathe there is a 12.5m band of 'graduated cutting back'. Is this appropriate? It could, for example, lead to tall tree stumps that look unnatural and may not regrow. Might coppicing and regrowth management be more appropriate to achieve a more natural and biodiverse woodland edge ecocline?*

RSPB response:

The area of woodland under the existing power lines has been managed by the Applicant as short rotation coppice due to the presence of the existing power lines. Given this existing swathe is therefore characterised by coppiced scrub rather than the surrounding high forest, we are content with the proposal to coppice (rather than cut to ground level) in the central part of the swathe, with the coppiced stools requiring protection from deer browsing to enable successful regeneration. We have not yet seen details of the Applicant's proposed method to achieve the 'graduated cutting back' either side of this central strip as illustrated in the ES but suggest that a similar result may be more easily achieved through coppicing linear patches of scrub on varying time lengths of rotation to manage the height of the regrowth. Whichever method is proposed, to avoid further impacts on Hintlesham Woods SSSI it is important that the existing swathe (the area of previously coppiced scrub) is not widened by planned or inadvertent encroachment into high forest trees.

## **3. Biodiversity, Ecology and Nature Conservation, including HRA Matters**

*Question EC1.3.1 to the Applicant and Natural England:*

*The Applicant's comments on RRs [REP1-025] do not seem specifically to address the suggestion from Natural England [RR-042] that the potential impacts on the Hintlesham Woods SSSI interest features 'lowland mixed deciduous woodland' and 'breeding bird assemblages - mixed: scrub and woodland' require further assessment, and that consideration of mitigation or compensation is required. Can you indicate your current position on these matters.*

RSPB response:

The RSPB would like to note its concern regarding the potential for noise disturbance to impact on breeding birds of the Hintlesham Woods SSSI and the need to consider mitigation for this issue (as raised in our Statement of Common Ground with the Applicant, REP1-028).