



## Rishi Sunak has electricity grid upgraded to heat his private pool

### Description

**UK: PM will pick up cost of upgrade work in North Yorkshire, and no suggestion he received preferential treatment**

**Rishi Sunak's new private heated swimming pool uses so much energy that the local electricity network had to be upgraded to meet its power demands, the Guardian has been told.**

While many Britons are facing increased electricity bills – and are trying to limit their energy usage – extra equipment was recently installed in a remote part of North Yorkshire to provide extra capacity from the National Grid to the prime minister's constituency home.

This followed Sunak's construction of a new heated swimming pool, gym and tennis court in the grounds of the manor house he occupies at weekends. Engineers had to install a substantial amount of equipment and a new connection to the National Grid that runs across open fields.

Sunak will personally pick up the cost of the electricity upgrade work – estimated to have cost tens of thousands of pounds – in addition to the ongoing cost of energy consumption for the swimming pool.

Construction work on Sunak's private 12-metre (40ft) swimming pool has finished just as many council-run baths, including in his local area, are being forced to reduce their opening hours owing to increased energy costs. This week, the House of Commons culture select committee called on the government to offer extra help to swimming pools in the forthcoming budget, suggesting 350 pools had closed or cut their hours as a result of energy costs.

Only last month, the operators of a swimming pool near the prime minister's home said it would reduce public access because of the increased cost of energy.

Meanwhile, the government is preparing to end its energy bills support scheme, although it is likely it will temporarily extend it in next week's budget.

Sunak's constituency home is an imposing Grade II-listed manor with extensive gardens including a private lake, weir and boathouse. The home is surrounded by a sprawling collection of isolated

farmhouses, and the immediate neighbouring buildings are three houses, a farm and the remnants of a medieval settlement.

Sunak's new pool was built on greenfield agricultural land that until recently was used for grazing animals.

A spokesperson for the prime minister declined to comment on the works at his constituency home.

Sunak is believed to have paid for the work on his home using personal funds, and there is no suggestion he used his status to receive preferential treatment from Northern Powergrid, which maintains the network in the region. Developers and businesses often pay to upgrade the local grid when constructing new buildings.

Sunak bought the home for £1.5m in 2015, shortly after becoming the MP for the constituency of Richmond. He still regularly visits the house, although he often eschews the direct rail service from London to nearby Northallerton in favour of a personally funded helicopter trip.

The home abuts an abandoned medieval settlement, and the remnants of ancient rig-and-furrow cultivation are still visible in the surrounding fields – a stark difference to Sunak's other private homes, which are a new-build flat overlooking the Pacific Ocean in California and a mews house in central London.

When Sunak's swimming pool was given planning permission in 2021, local councillors were told that the building was designed to look like a converted agricultural building clad in local stone and blend in with the local area.

But at the meeting, one councillor, John Noone, said: "It doesn't look like an agricultural building to me; it looks like a rather large bungalow."

by Betsy Reed

### Category

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