



Botley West Solar Farm

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND –
NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION PLC

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July 2025

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SIGNATURES

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by SolarFive Ltd and National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC ('NGET')

NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION PLC

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Organisation]

[Date]

SOLARFIVE LTD

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Organisation]

[Date]

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (**SoCG**) is between Photovolt Development Partners GmbH on behalf of SolarFive Ltd (**the Applicant**) and National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (**NGET**) relating to the application for development consent (**the DCO Application**) for the Botley West Solar Farm (**the Project**), which includes a new National Grid substation (**the NGET substation**) as part of the proposed development.
- 1.1.2 This SoCG has been prepared in accordance with the guidance for the examination of applications for development consent for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (**NSIP**) (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2015).
- 1.1.3 This SoCG has been prepared in order to facilitate discussions between the Applicant and NGET, and to ensure a clear record of the agreed position between the parties.

2 Description of the project and interface with NGET

- 2.1.1 The Project will comprise the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a photovoltaic solar farm and associated infrastructure with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts, in parts of Oxfordshire County and the West Oxfordshire, Cherwell and Vale of White Horse districts. The Project will export electricity for connection to the National Grid at Botley West.
- 2.1.2 The Project's solar arrays (comprising all the mounting structures, frames and foundations) will be connected by underground electrical cables within each section of the site, and via underground electric cables to the substation at the grid connection point. The interconnecting cable route will largely follow the public highway, but some parts will cross land controlled by the Applicant.
- 2.1.3 The Applicant has been engaging with NGET, on the basis that the Applicant has included provision for the NGET substation within the DCO Application. As is set out in Section 3 below, NGET is pursuing an adjacent alternative site for the proposed NGET substation but accepts inclusion of the substation within the DCO application is necessary for the Project to ensure deliverability whilst being a fallback position for NGET, to cover the scenario that NGET is unable to acquire the other land or consents required for NGET to deliver the NGET substation.
- 2.1.4 NGET own and maintain the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales. NGET is therefore responsible for developing and maintaining any new substations as part of this network, so despite the substation being included within the DCO application, it will ultimately be for NGET to build-out, own and maintain the proposed NGET substation in accordance with its statutory duties and connection requests.
- 2.1.5 NGET have a number of statutory duties pursuant to the Electricity Act 1989 (**the 1989 Act**), including the requirement *"to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission"*, in addition to specific responsibilities pursuant to Schedule 9 of the 1989 Act with regard to the preservation of amenity.

- 2.1.6 NGET's current preferred site is not within the order limits of the DCO Application. The preferred site is as indicated within the DCO Application's Environmental Impact Assessment, being "*close to the Southern Site at its western end*" (the **NGET preferred site**) – see appendix A which shows the site that NGET is progressing. The site included within the DCO Application was considered by NGET in its optioneering and is still a feasible site.
- 2.1.7 The NGET substation is required as a priority, in order to meet increased connection demand from generation developments in the area to accommodate the Project and other connections. Development of additional substation infrastructure is vital to ensure that the increased volume of renewable energy being generated can be efficiently connected to the national grid and transmitted as required to meet consumer demand. Delays to development of vital substation infrastructure will have implications for the UK's energy security and ability to meet net-zero targets, as well as putting NGET at risk of failing to comply with its statutory duties, as noted above.

3 Purpose of this SoCG

- 3.1.1 The purpose of this SoCG is to assist the Examining Authority by summarising the points of agreement which have been reached between the Parties, on matters which are relevant to the Examination of the Project and also to set out the matters which currently remain unresolved and under discussion between the parties.
- 3.1.2 The Applicant and NGET continue to engage in relation to the proposed NGET substation within the DCO Application.
- 3.1.3 NGET is promoting a standalone planning application pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the NGET substation at the NGET preferred site and will concurrently promote a compulsory purchase order for the necessary land, to ensure the land can be secured if acquisition of the land through voluntary agreement is not successful.
- 3.1.4 NGET does not object to the principle of the DCO Application including scope for the substation, as a fallback position. This ensures that if NGET is unable to obtain the required consents or land rights required to build out the preferred option, the DCO would authorise the substation within the Project's DCO order limits. An alternative use of the Applicant's proposed site for the NGET substation is included in the DCO, with powers for additional solar installation in substitution for the new NGET substation, which the Applicant intends to pursue if NGET successfully promotes the NGET substation at the NGET preferred site. Generally, NGET would support this position.
- 3.1.5 This SoCG details engagement between the parties to date and in relation to various matters, states whether these are agreed or in discussion. NGET has contributed to this SoCG without prejudice to NGET's primary position of promoting, consenting and developing the proposed substation on its own accord at the NGET preferred site.

4 Record of Engagement

- 4.1.1 Appendix B identifies the discussions and correspondence that have taken place between the Applicant's project team and NGET to date.

5 Position of the parties

- 5.1.1 Without prejudice to NGET's position of promoting, consenting and developing the proposed substation on its own accord at the NGET preferred site, NGET does not object to the principle of the DCO Application including scope for the substation and continued to engage with the Applicant in relation to the matters set out in Table 5-1 below.

Table 5.1: Record of Matters of Specific Agreement to Date

Matter	NGET Position	Applicant Position	Agreed / In Discussion / Not Agreed
Precluding optionality	Inclusion of a proposed NGET substation site within the DCO Application does not indicate that this is the only feasible option for siting the substation.	No further comments.	Agreed
'Fallback' position	Inclusion of the proposed NGET substation within the DCO application is on the basis that this is necessary to ensure that the Project will be deliverable in the event that NGET is unable to obtain the necessary consents and land rights for the substation at the NGET preferred site. If NGET is successful in obtaining such consents and land rights, the Applicant intends to utilise the site identified within the DCO application for additional solar panels and the existing DCO Application facilitates this.	No further comments.	Agreed
Need for the substation	The position set out in the DCO Application is correct, that there is a need for a new substation within this area on the basis that the existing Cowley substation does not have sufficient capacity for the Project connection or to facilitate connection of other upcoming development in the area (many of which already have connection requests). The need for and timing of the new substation is therefore triggered by several projects	No further comments.	Agreed

Matter	NGET Position	Applicant Position	Agreed / In Discussion / Not Agreed
	in the area, including but not limited to the Project.		
Feasibility of the site	<p>NGET have provided the Applicant with the current required dimensions for a substation and understand that these have been used in the design process. This site was considered within the NGET siting study.</p> <p>It should be noted that such dimensions may change as the design evolves and so some flexibility will need to be included to allow for any necessary changes.</p>	<p>To confirm, the Outline Layout and Design Principles document will be updated to capture the below dimensions to meet NGET's requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3.8ha site area • 93.020m x 16.725m footprint of main GIS building • 14.495m height of main GIS building • Gas Insulated substation • 95 dB(A) sound power level • 105.020m x 10m footprint of adjoining building • 4.8m height of adjoining building <p>Otherwise, no further comments.</p>	Agreed
Suitability of search parameters	The initial search parameters used by the Applicant are aligned with the parameters which NGET itself typically employs when undertaking its siting and optioneering exercises.	No further comments.	Agreed
DCO Drafting	No further comment.	The ability for NGET to build-out, own and maintain the proposed NGET substation is suitably facilitated by Article 34(2) of the draft DCO which confirms that the benefit of the Order in respect of Work No. 2, 4(a)(ii) and	Agreed

Matter	NGET Position	Applicant Position	Agreed / In Discussion / Not Agreed
		4(a)(iii) (i.e. the works relating to the NGET substation) are for the benefit of the undertaker and National Grid.	
	<p>NGET understands that this wording will be added to the latest version of the DCO but suggests that it should be amended to read as follows:</p> <p><i>"47. If National Grid elects to undertake any elements of the works described in Works No. 2, 4(a)(ii) and 4(a)(iii) pursuant to planning permission granted under Part 3 of the 1990 Act or Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 then the requirements contained in Schedule 2 will not have effect will not be enforceable in so far as they relate to those works and National Grid will serve written notice of the same on the relevant planning authority".</i></p>	<p>If NGET is able to obtain the necessary consents and land rights for the NGET substation on its preferred site, then the DCO includes drafting to ensure that the Requirements under the DCO will not apply to any works carried out pursuant to those necessary consents. Article 47 of the draft DCO (submitted at Deadline 3) gives this clarity:</p> <p><i>"47. If National Grid elects to undertake any elements of the works described in Works No. 2, 4(a)(ii) and 4(a)(iii) pursuant to planning permission granted under Part 3 of the 1990 Act or Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 then the requirements contained in Schedule 2 will not have effect in so far as they relate to those works and National Grid will serve written notice of the same on the relevant planning authority".</i></p>	Agreed
	No further comments.	Work No. 2 provides sufficient works powers for the development of the "New National Grid Substation" defined as "a compound containing electrical equipment (including power	Agreed

Matter	NGET Position	Applicant Position	Agreed / In Discussion / Not Agreed
		<i>transformers, gantries, switchgear, reactive compensation equipment, electrical protection equipment devices (disconnectors, circuit breakers), harmonic filters, cables and back-up generators), control buildings, lightning protection masts, communications masts, access, fencing and other associated equipment, structures or buildings".</i>	
	No further comment.	Work No. 4(a)(ii) provides sufficient works powers for the electrical connection between the main project substation and the New National Grid Substation.	Agreed
	No further comment.	Work No. 4(a)(iii) provides sufficient works powers for the electrical connection between the New National Grid Substation and the National Grid network.	Agreed
Connection date	October 2027 is the current grid connection offer date. However, this is likely to be varied to a new connection date. This is being discussed between the parties.		In discussion

Appendix A

NGET Preferred Site

[National Grid to provide – awaited]

Appendix B

Record of Relevant Correspondence

Date	Topic	Outcome
31.01.2022	Introduction to NGET by NGESO and discussion of land set aside by Applicant for NGET substation	Agreed to share design information
20.06.2022	Sharing red line boundary and project design with NGET	NGET acknowledged project design and boundary
09.08.2022	Sharing details of site at Farmoor – ground conditions, site access, landowner	NGET conducting desktop study of area and have appointed Atkins as consultants
01.12.2022	First consultation, timetable for project post-consultation.	NGET request updated design when ready.
01.02.2023	Surveys	NGET request all survey work at Farmoor – we agree
05.06.2023	NGET outline substation design and layout	NGET share the outline design with PVDP
28.08.2024	Statement of Common Ground	PVDP share first draft SoCG with NGET
26.02.2025	Matters regarding SoCG, access agreement to Denmans for sub-soil investigation work, LIDAR surveys	Agreement signed for NGET access to Denman's, LIDAR data shared, SoCG discussed.*-
04.06.25	Design	NGET share final plans for the Farmoor substation, including dimensions.
26.06.25	Planning consent	NGET confirmed they will make a TCPA application to VoWHDC and are seeking exemption from requirement to submit an EIA
10.06.25	Surveys	NGET request and are granted access to Denman's land for cable earthing tests.
03.07.25	Construction	Agreement to cooperate at Farmoor on access to Denman's land for construction and compound location

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