Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 8

Post-Submission Application Documents

8.18 Statement of Common Ground with National Grid Electricity Transmission

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

September 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to support the examination process for the proposed Meridian Solar Farm. A DCO application has been made by Meridian Solar Farm Limited ('the Applicant') to the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008.

1.1.2. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be considered during the examination. The purpose and possible content of SoCGs is detailed in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's guidance entitled 'Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the examination stage of an application' (2026), which states:

"*A SoCG is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another interested party or parties but led and submitted by the applicant, setting out the factual matters about the application on which they agree, for example, on data or methodologies concerning the determination of any significant effects, but can just as helpfully record disagreement.*

…

SoCGs are expected to be concise and focused on the key issues, with the scope agreed between the parties from the outset of discussions on the application during the pre-application stage. SoCGs are often revised during the course of the examination as matters are agreed or disagreements clarified between the applicant and interested parties."

1.1.3. This document relates to matters between the Applicant and National Grid Electricity Transmission. It confirms to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. This SoCG does not seek to replicate information that is available elsewhere, either within the DCO application and/or examination documents, referring out where appropriate.

1.1.4. The terminology used within the SoCG to reflect the status between the parties is either:

- "Agreed" to indicate where a matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties.

- "Not Agreed" to indicate a final position where parties cannot agree.
- "Under Discussion" to indicate where matters are subject of on-going discussion with the aim to either resolve or refine the extent of disagreement between the parties.

1.1.5. Where matters would require the involvement of third parties in order to come to an agreement, these dependencies are noted.

2. Summary of Engagement Undertaken

2.1.1. Table 2-1 summarises the key meetings and correspondence between the parties subject to this SoCG

Table 2-1 Summary of key meetings and correspondence

Date	Form of Engagement	Details
18 July 2024	Online meeting	A Keep in Touch (KiT) meeting to review progress across respective projects. Included a presentation from both projects on programmes and issues.
20 August 2024	Online Meeting	Discussion by NGET on stage 1 non-statutory consultation and initial feedback back from stakeholders.
20 September 2024	Online meeting	An update meeting to discuss progression of the projects and to request information relating to siting and design of Weston Marsh substation.
30 October 2024	Online meeting	A KiT meeting to discuss the progression of the Weston Marsh substation design and layout.
16 December 2024	Online meeting	A meeting was organised with an initial agenda to include public consultation plans, current programmes and interaction between the two projects.
3 March 2025	Email	Email correspondence between the parties regarding the project interaction and ongoing design discussions.
7 April 2025	Online meeting	An update meeting where Meridian Solar Farm Limited outlined and shared detail relating to the content of the forthcoming Stage 2 Consultation for Meridian Solar Farm.
14 April 2025	Online meeting	An update meeting to discuss work that has been undertaken by NGET in relation to the feasibility of a tee connection into the G2W overhead line for the Meridian Solar Farm.
30 June 2025	In person meeting	A collaborative design workshop between NGET & Meridian Solar Farm Limited to discuss OHL routing options for the Meridian Solar Grid Connection Route and Grimsby to Walpole project.

Date	Form of Engagement	Details
15 July 2025	Online meeting	A follow up meeting to the design workshop to confirm the options discussed on 30 June and agree the preferred options to take forward.
20 November 2025	In person meeting	A design workshop to discuss routeing options for the Meridian Solar Grid Connection Route to connect at Weston Marsh substation and design interaction between the projects.
8 December 2025	Online meeting	A follow up meeting between NGET and Meridian Solar Farm Limited to discuss a technical note relating to design interaction and stand-off distances where the projects are routed in parallel.
12 January 2026	Online meeting	A meeting to discuss the general approach to ornithology and habitats regulations assessment (HRA) considerations across the projects
14 January 2026	Online meeting	A meeting to discuss data sharing information requests in relation to the Weston Marsh area

3. Statement of Common Ground

3.1. Grid Connection

3.1.1. Table 3-1 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Grid Connection matters.

Table 3-1 Grid Connection matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.1.1	Status of Connection Agreement	NESO has now confirmed to NGET that the Meridian Solar Farm has been assigned Gate 1 status as part of the connections reform process. This means that Meridian Solar Farm can remain in the connections process, but it does not reserve capacity, a place in the queue, provide protected status, or guarantee a connection for the project. To progress, the Applicant must submit a Gate 2 application during an application window and meet the prescribed evidence requirements to be eligible for a place in the connections queue. Considering this, NGET will not be progressing further with any works specifically associated with the Meridian Solar Farm, as it is not deemed to be required to support wider connections or other network reinforcements.	Meridian Solar Farm agrees that it currently holds a Gate 1 offer and intends to submit a Gate 2 application at the next available opportunity. The Applicant considers it important to continue discussions on how the projects interact and to ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of the assumptions that are being relied upon as the various projects progress through their respective consenting processes.	Not Agreed
3.1.2	Point of Connection for the Meridian Solar Application	Please see NGET's comments above.	Meridian Solar has designed and submitted the DCO application to reflect a connection to the Weston Marsh B substation as this would result in a shorter connection that would result in the lowest amount of required infrastructure, less overall interaction between the projects and a lower environmental impact.	Not Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.1.3	Point of connection subject to future grid reform process	Please see NGET's comments above.	The Applicant's position is that, should the results of Connection Reform dictate the necessity to move the connection to an alternative location or substation, Meridian Solar would amend the DCO at the appropriate time to accommodate the change. This would also be dependent on further power system and technical feasibility studies that would need to be carried out by NGET.	Not Agreed
3.1.4	Suitability of PEIR and targeted consultation response	NGET submitted representations during the targeted consultation held between September and October 2025. NGET maintains its position as set out in those representations. NGET has not withdrawn its objection to the proposed development.	The Applicant considers that the PEIR materials provided to NGET during the targeted consultation were appropriate and sufficient to inform NGET's response. Using the publicly available information, the Applicant considered the likely significant effects of cumulative projects (including G2W) within the individual topic chapters of the PEIR and took the appropriate conservative, worst-case assessment approach that there would be likely significant cumulative effects from the routing of the projects at that time, so that stakeholders and the community were adequately informed of the likelihood of such impacts for their consultation. It should be noted that this is not dissimilar to the approach that the G2W project took, during their statutory consultation, which identified a list of projects where there could be cumulative effects and the relevant disciplines to be considered further (Route Wide Assessment – Volume 3, Part C, Chapter 10 Cumulative Effects – Appendices).	Not Agreed
3.1.5	Ornithology and HRA approach	NGET does not agree that the Applicant can assume that G2W will mitigate all significant effects on designated sites. G2W will carry out its own environmental assessment,	Meridian Solar has considered the implications for their own project and shared information with NGET.	Not Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		including Habitats Regulations Assessment, and will identify and implement appropriate mitigation measures through its own DCO process. NGET's position on ornithological matters is subject to ongoing specialist review.	The Applicant's position has considered combination effects qualitatively and not quantitively as it is too early in the design process for G2W. The Applicant's position is that that G2W should consider the modelling approach of Meridian Solar and determine the most appropriate way forward at the relevant stage. The Applicant's position is that it can assume that G2W would mitigate any significant effects on designated sites	
3.1.6	Design Interaction	NGET confirms that collaborative design workshops have taken place. However, NGET does not agree that compatibility between the two projects has been demonstrated. NGET's further design work has identified that the separation between the two schemes is less than the required standoff. Operating inside that distance would leave a residual hazard that NGET cannot accept on safety, asset management and regulatory grounds. Accordingly, NGET is not able to support a close parallel arrangement at less than the approved standoff distance and does not consider that the two overhead lines can co-exist in the manner discussed at the collaborative design workshop.	Collaborative design workshops have taken place to discuss the pinch point between the two projects. A close parallel solution was identified through those discussions. The Applicant is of the view that this is a suitable solution that would enable both projects to co-exist in these corridors. The Applicant has requested and awaits the outputs of the further design work undertaken by NGET in order to fully consider and respond to these technical concerns. NGET has not provided this information to Meridian Solar Farm. Subsequent correspondence has indicated that NGET is not currently progressing technical engagement discussions with the Applicant because of the Scheme's Gate 1 status. This has inevitably limited the extent to which discussions can continue on matters relating to the interaction between Meridian Solar Farm and the Grimsby to Walpole project. This reflects NGET's current position regarding project-	Under Discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			specific engagement rather than any reluctance on the part of the Applicant to engage.	
3.1.7	Tee Connection	NGET confirms that a tee connection into the G2W overhead line is not technically deliverable and is not a reasonable alternative for the Meridian Solar Farm connection. Please also see NGET's comments above in relation to the Applicant's connection status.	Meridian Solar Farm Limited have requested a tee connection directly into the Grimsby to Walpole overhead line and, in its view, consider that this would result in the most economic and efficient solution for both projects with the lowest potential for environmental effects. It is acknowledged however that NGET have determined that this would not be deliverable and therefore it is not considered a reasonable alternative by NGET to deliver the connection. The Applicant is of the view that this matter should be marked as 'agreed' as it is a factual statement which confirms a tee connection is not a viable alternative that the Applicant could further pursue.	Not Agreed

4. Signatures

4.1.1. This SoCG is agreed between the following:

Duly authorised for and on behalf of Meridian Solar Farm, the Applicant	Name Job Title Date Signature
Duly authorised for and on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission	Name Job Title Date Signature