THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

The Droves Solar Farm

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (Tracked)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared as part of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) (the DCO Application) for The Droves Solar Farm (the Scheme) made by The Droves Solar Farm Limited (the Applicant) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (SoS) pursuant to the Planning Act 2008.

1.1.2 SoCGs are an established means in the DCO consenting process, of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.

1.1.3 This SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority (the ExA) where agreement has been reached between the parties, and where agreement has not yet been reached.

~~1.1.3~~1.1.4 This document has been updated at Deadline 5 to reflect ongoing discussions. The document references have not been updated from the original submission. Please refer to the **Guide to the Application [APP/1.3.7]** for the list of current versions of documents.

1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by the Applicant and National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET).

1.2.2 Collectively, the Applicant and NGET are referred to as 'the parties.'

1.3 Purpose of this Document

1.3.1 This SoCG is a 'live' document and will be amended as the examination progresses, including as more information becomes available and as a result of ongoing discussions between the Applicant and NGET, in order to enable a final version to be submitted to the ExA.

1.3.2 The SoCG is intended to provide information for the examination process, facilitate a smooth and efficient examination, and manage the amount of material that needs to be submitted.

1.4 Terminology

1.4.1 This SoCG summarises the main topics covered and the status of the matter. The colour coding system used within the table in **Section 4** has been outlined below.

Cell	Status
	Agreed – indicates where an issue has been resolved.
	Under Discussion – indicates where points continue to be the subject of ongoing discussions wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.
	Not Agreed – indicates a position where both parties have reached a final position that a matter cannot be agreed between them.

2 The Scheme

2.1 Scheme Description

2.1.1 The Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station and associated development comprising a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure, including a new National Grid Substation. The Scheme would allow for the generation and export of over 50 megawatts (MW) Alternating Current (AC) of renewable energy, connecting into the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) overhead line that passes through the Site.

2.1.2 The **Location Plan [APP-007]** shows the Order Limits for the Scheme, which is approximately 840 hectares (ha) of land within Norfolk (the 'Order limits').

3 Record of Engagement

3.1 Summary of Engagement

3.1.1 The parties have been engaged in consultation since May 2022.

3.1.2 A non-statutory consultation took place between 17 September and 1 October 2024. The statutory consultation process took place between 21 May and 9 July 2025.

3.1.3 The Applicant and NGET have engaged extensively prior to and throughout the pre-application and Environmental Impact Assessment stages of the Scheme. The key engagement has included:

- Prior to the pre-application stage, discussions regarding the potential to connect into Kings Lynn substation where Island Green Power (IGP), parent company of the Applicant, was advised by NGET to apply for, and subsequently connect, directly onto the overhead line (OHL) running between the Walpole and Necton substations;
- During the pre-application stage, the Applicant was advised by NGET to identify a site for a new substation for the Scheme (the National Grid Substation), alongside obtaining land rights and planning consent for this. A connection offer was made reflecting this requirement by National Energy Systems Operator (NESO);
- During the pre-application stage, the Applicant had regular monthly meetings with representatives from NGET which commenced before the grid connection application was submitted. It is standard practice that these meetings are the primary mechanism by which Users, NESO and NGET keep each other updated on progress, including the location of sites and substations. It was during these meetings the Applicant shared the proposed location of the National Grid Substation with NGET; ~~and~~
- Additionally, the Applicant has confirmed the requisite land rights secured to NGET; and
- Held ongoing discussions arising as a result of the Applicant's Gate 1 offer and the implications for the location of the connection point and construction of the new substation proposed under the Order.

3.1.4 **Table 3.1** shows a summary of key engagement that has taken place between the Applicant and NGET in relation to the Application.

3.1.5 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between the Applicant and NGET in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

Table 3.1 – Record of Engagement

Date	Form of Correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes
31 May 2023	Grid Connection Agreement	As part of accepting an offer for a Grid Connection, the Applicant agreed to contractual obligations to "obtain land and consent" for the National Grid Substation under the terms of the grid connection offer.
August 2024	Email	The Applicant provided confirmation of its secured requisite land rights to NGET.
September 2024	Email	During the pre-application stage, the Applicant shared two options for location of the National Grid Substation with NGET.
September 2024	Meeting (online)	During this meeting between the Applicant and both NGET and NESO, the Applicant: • Provided a summary of programme milestones leading up to submission. • Confirmed that the land needed for the project and the National Grid Substation has been secured by the Applicant. • Confirmed that the only outstanding information requested by the Applicant from NGET as part of progressing the DCO Application was the location of Cable Sealing ends i.e. whether or not this will be adjacent to the OHL and on which side of the National Grid Substation.

		• Reiterated that removing the National Grid Substation is not an option and would significantly hold up progress. • Confirmed the transmission line the Scheme is connecting to, relative to the nearest large schemes. • Noted NGET's stance in that they were looking at the whole network and doing what was best for bill-paying customers. Concluded that the Applicant was still committed to the contracted position (to find the land and secure consent for a substation for the project to connect into) and saw no reason why this position would need to change.
September 2024	Email	Email correspondence following meeting with NGET and NESO with a request by NGET for further information on the Scheme and clarification by Applicant on circuits as part of the connection.
October 2025	Email	The Applicant shared its preferred option for the substation location with NGET and NESO. A separate email was also sent to NGET with a draft copy of the Works Plans and extract of Schedule 1 of the draft DCO. NGET confirmed it was unable to make a definitive decision regarding the location of the substation until the Connections Reform process was finalised.
May 2026	Meeting (online)	During the meeting, attended by representatives from both NESO and NGET, the content of what the Applicant and NGET intended to say during

			the upcoming hearings was discussed and agreed.

4 Matters of Discussion

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The following tables detail, by topic, the matters agreed, under discussion, or not agreed between the Applicant and NGET at the point of this document being published.

4.1.2 Where discussions are ongoing, the parties will include an indication of the likelihood that disagreement will remain by the end of the examination in accordance with the Rule 6 letter **[PD-006].**

Reference	Topic	Consultee's Position	Applicant's Position	Status
GC-01	Location of substation	Due to the Gate 1 status of the project, NGET are not currently developing proposals to build a new substation within the Project's Order limits. If the status of the connection changes, the new substation location will still need to be confirmed,~~The location of the new substation is still to be confirmed,~~ with siting studies to be reviewed post Connection Reform, and therefore may be sited in a different location. NGET is unable to confirm the connection point at this stage.	The Applicant has provided the location of the National Grid Substation as part of the DCO Application. This was shared with NGET during pre-application and in accordance with the Applicant's contractual obligation. The Applicant also notes that its site selection methodology for the National Grid Substation was akin to NGET's site selection process and guidance, and notes that in **NGET's Written Representation [REP1-090]**, NGET states that it "*does not in principle object to the Project or to the inclusion of the New Substation within the Order Limits*". The Applicant refers to the **Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [REP2-028]**, specifically with reference to items NGET1 and NGET3, for its full position on this matter.	Under Discussion
GC-02	Grid Connection Agreement	NGET urges the Applicant to confirm, in their connection agreement with NESO, the connection point. The project has a Gate 1 Status. NESO will send an updated connection offer at the end of the reform process. The	The Applicant has confirmed the connection point with NESO and has a legally binding contract to connect in place. The Applicant satisfied the Gate 2 Readiness Criteria, but did not satisfy the Gate 2 Strategic Alignment Criteria and therefore has received notification from	~~Agreed~~Under discussion

		connection point on Gate 1 offers are indicative only.	NESO that it will receive a Gate 1 connection offer for the Scheme. The Applicant refers to the **Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [REP2-028]**, specifically with reference to items NGET3, NGET7 and NGET8, for its full position on this matter.	
GC-03	Connection point	~~NGET disagrees with the project on the basis that the connection point has not yet been determined or agreed with NGET.~~ Due to the status of the Project's Gate 1 offer, NGET are not in a position to express a view on the size, design or location of the substation proposed in the Order. A Gate 1 offer does not trigger a commitment by NGET to deliver or take responsibility for operation of a substation of the design, size and location of the New Substation. NGET consider that the Applicant's notification of its Gate 1 offer represents an early step in the process of connecting the Project to the national grid. Progression to a binding connection agreement with NESO and any associated infrastructure delivery will be	The Applicant has proposed a suitable connection point through feasibility studies and following NGET guidance and parameters. The Applicant also refers to the text provided in GC-02 above on this matter. Further, the Applicant refers to the **Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [REP2-028]**, specifically with reference to items NGET3, NGET5, NGET7 and NGET8 for its full position on this matter.	Under Discussion

		subject to further steps. These include receipt of a Gate 2 offer in the future, commercial negotiations with the Applicant, having regard to any other customer requirements, detailed technical and siting assessments and relevant planning processes and approvals.		
GC-04	Protective Provisions	NGET requires robust Protective Provisions to be included within the draft DCO to ensure the protection of existing and future National Grid infrastructure, operational assets, land interests, access rights and the safe operation of the electricity transmission network. NGET has engaged constructively with the Applicant throughout the pre-application and examination stages and has provided its preferred form of Protective Provisions. NGET awaits input on the Protective Provisions shared with the Applicant's solicitors on 4 September 2026.	The Applicant acknowledges that discussions are ongoing between the parties in respect of the drafting of the protective provisions, and that NGET is waiting for the Applicant's comments on these. The Applicant is progressing its consideration of NGET's drafting and notes that the parties are not far from reaching agreement on the form of these protective provisions, particularly given that NGET and IGP (the Applicant's parent company) are very close to agreement on these in relation to the Green Hill Solar Order 2026 (the negotiations of which have caused the Applicant's delay on this Scheme). The Applicant understands that NGET must protect its position and will therefore submit a robust position in defence of its preferred drafting for the protective provisions at Deadline 5. The Applicant will review this response, once submitted, and will respond accordingly; however, the Applicant wishes to reiterate that the parties are not far from reaching agreement on the	Under Discussion

			form of these protective provisions and remains very confident that these will be fully agreed before a decision on the Scheme is made by the Secretary of State.	

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