

Sea Link

Volume 9: Examination Documents

Document 9.61: Draft Statement of Common Ground Between National Grid Electricity Transmission and Suffolk Constabulary

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to support the application (“The Application”) for the Sea Link Project (“Proposed Project”) made by National Grid Electricity Transmission Ltd (“the Applicant”). The Application was submitted to the Secretary of State for a Development Consent Order (DCO) and accepted for examination on the 23 April 2025.
- 1.1.2 A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the Examination. It is prepared jointly between the Applicant and another party(s) and sets out matters of agreement between both parties, as well as matters where there is not an agreement. It also details matters that are under discussion.
- 1.1.3 The aim of a SoCG is to help the Examining Authority manage the Examination Phase of a DCO application. Understanding the status of the matters at hand will allow the Examining Authority to focus their questioning and provide greater predictability for all participants in examination. A SoCG may be submitted prior to the start of or during Examination, and then updated as necessary or as requested during the Examination Phase.

1.2 This Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1.4 This SoCG is between the Applicant and Suffolk Constabulary. It has been prepared in accordance with the guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024).
- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been sent to Suffolk Constabulary on the 4 September 2025 for review and we are currently awaiting comments. Therefore their position on the statements in Section 3 is awaited.
- 1.2.2 This SoCG will be progressed during the pre-examination and examination periods to reach a final position between the Applicant and Suffolk Constabulary and to clarify if any issues remain unresolved. This SoCG will be revised and updated as appropriate and/or required by the Examining Authority at relevant examination deadlines.
- 1.2.3 For the purpose of this SoCG, National Grid and Suffolk Constabulary will jointly be referred to as the “Parties”. When referencing Suffolk Constabulary alone, they will be referred to as “the Consultee”.

1.3 Description of the Proposed Project

- 1.3.1 The Proposed Project is a proposal by National Grid to reinforce the transmission network in the Southeast and East Anglia. The Proposed Project is required to accommodate additional power flows generated from renewable and low carbon generation, as well as accommodating additional new interconnection with mainland Europe.
- 1.3.2 National Grid owns, builds and maintains the electricity transmission network in England and Wales. Under the Electricity Act 1989, National Grid holds a transmission licence

under which it is required to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated, and economic electricity transmission system.

- 1.3.3 This would be achieved by reinforcing the network with a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Link between the proposed Friston substation in the Sizewell area of Suffolk and the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400 kV overhead line close to Richborough in Kent.
- 1.3.4 National Grid is also required, under Section 38 of the Electricity Act 1989, to comply with the provisions of Schedule 9 of the Act. Schedule 9 requires licence holders, in the formulation of proposals to transmit electricity, to:
- 1.3.5 Schedule 9(1)(a) ‘...have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest;’ and
- 1.3.6 Schedule 9(1)(b) ‘...do what [it] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects’.
- 1.3.7 The Proposed Project would comprise the following elements:

The Suffolk Onshore Scheme

- A connection from the existing transmission network via Friston Substation, including the substation itself. Friston Substation already has development consent as part of other third-party projects. If Friston Substation has already been constructed under another consent, only a connection into the substation would be constructed by the Sea Link project.
- A high voltage alternating current (HVAC) underground cable of approximately 1.9 km in length between the proposed Friston Substation and a proposed converter station (below).
- A 2 GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station approximately 26 m high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials, similar small scale operational plant, or other roof treatment) near Saxmundham.
- A HVDC underground cable connection of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed converter station near Saxmundham, and a transition joint bay (TJB) approximately 900 m inshore from a landfall point (below) where the cable transitions from onshore to offshore technology.
- A landfall on the Suffolk coast (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness).

The Offshore Scheme

- Approximately 122 km of subsea HVDC cable, running between the Suffolk landfall location (between Aldeburgh and Thorpeness), and the Kent landfall location at Pegwell Bay.

The Kent Onshore Scheme

- A landfall point on the Kent coast at Pegwell Bay.
- A Transition Joint Bay (TJB) approximately 800 m inshore to transition from offshore HVDC cable to onshore HVDC cable, before continuing underground for approximately 1.7 km to a new converter station (below).
- A 2 GW HVDC converter station, approximately 28m high plus external equipment (such as lightning protection, safety rails for maintenance works, ventilation equipment, aerials, and similar small scale operational plant, or other roof treatment), near Minster. A new substation would be located immediately adjacent.
- Removal of approximately 2.2 km of existing HVAC overhead line, and installation of approximately 3.5 km of new HVAC overhead line from the substation near Minster and the existing Richborough to Canterbury overhead line.

1.3.8 The Proposed Project also includes modifications to sections of existing overhead lines in Suffolk (only if Friston Substation is not built by SPR) and Kent, diversions of third-party assets, and land drainage from the construction and operational footprint. It also includes opportunities for environmental mitigation, compensation and enhancement (which could include hedgerow creation, native tree planting, or habitat creation). The construction phase will involve various temporary construction activities including overhead line diversions, use of temporary towers or masts, working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, parking spaces, storage, accesses, bellmouths, and haul roads, as well as watercourse crossings and the diversion of public rights of way (PROWs).

1.4 Format of Document and Terminology

- 1.4.1 Section 2 of this SoCG summarises the engagement the Parties have had with regard to the proposed project.
- 1.4.2 Section 3 of this SoCG summarises the issues that are ‘agreed’, ‘not agreed’ or are ‘under discussion’. ‘Not agreed’ indicates a final position where the Parties have agreed to disagree, whilst ‘Agreed’ indicates where the issue has been resolved. The Parties have also indicated the likelihood that agreement will be reached on each item.
- 1.4.3 Abbreviations used within the SoCG are provided in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Abbreviation

| Abbreviation/Term | Definition |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| AIL | Abnormal Indivisible Load |
| DCO | Development Consent Order |
| NG | National Grid |
| SC | Suffolk Constabulary |

2. Record of Engagement

2.1 Role of Suffolk Constabulary in the DCO process

- 2.1.1 The Consultee is a member of the emergency services, and the SC is the official police force for the county of Suffolk. SC handles everything from emergency response and crime investigation to community safety and public events. The SC have a responsibility to help maintain road safety and collaborate with the proposed project regarding AIL deliveries. Additionally, support the proposed project in upholding security and safety concerns associated with the works. The consultee should provide guidance and comments on the Sea Link proposal and co-own the SoCG between Suffolk Constabulary and National Grid.
- 2.1.2 Suffolk Constabulary is encouraged to discuss and work with the Applicant at the pre-examination stage of the application process for the proposed project.

2.2 Summary of pre-examination discussions

- 2.2.1 Table 2.1 summarises the consultation and engagement that has taken place between the Parties.

Table 2.1 Record of meetings and correspondence with Suffolk Constabulary

| Date | Topic | Discussion points |
|------------|---------------------------|---|
| 17/07/2025 | Initial Contact from SC | <i>Initial email sent from SC to NG. The email requested a meeting between SC and NG regarding the potential impacts of Sea Link on policing in Suffolk. The email includes details as to why SC are concerned, namely the requirement of escort vehicles for AIL vehicles.</i> |
| 03/09/2025 | Meeting between NG and SC | <u><i>Attendees at meeting:</i></u> <i>National Grid Suffolk Constabulary.</i> <i>Meeting to discuss the information the Suffolk Constabulary requires to inform their traffic modelling and forecasting of AIL movements. This will inform if they can support the Sea Link project as 'business as usual' or if it will need a 'dedicated team'. It was agreed that the Design Team will provide Suffolk Constabulary with the below information to support their initial modelling and forecasting. Subsequent discussions with NG and SC will take place following this.</i> <u><i>Required information (provided below in Table 3.1)</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of AILs• Delivery Schedules• Dimensions of vehicles |

| Date | Topic | Discussion points |
|------|-------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routes • Port of Origin <p><u>It was noted in the meeting that the above information can be provided, however it is caveated that it will be subject to change following the appointment of a contractor and their supply chain and the development of detailed design.</u></p> |

3. Areas of Discussion Between the Parties

3.1 AIL deliveries

Table 3.1 AIL deliveries

| Ref | Relevant Application Document | Summary of Description of Matter | SCC Current Position | The Applicant Current Position | Status |
|-------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| 3.1.1 | N/A | Number of AIL movements and delivery routes | Awaiting feedback from SCC | <p>Seven AIL movements will be required for the Saxmundham Converter Station transformers, which will either be routed via the B1121 Main Road or from the Snape Road Access (via Leiston).</p> <p>The cable delivery drums may meet the AIL requirements depending on the detailed design and proposed section length to be used on the project, the number of cable drum movements will be defined at detailed design stage but it is assumed that approximately 40 vehicles will be required</p> | Under Discussion |

| Ref | Relevant Application Document | Summary of Description of Matter | SCC Current Position | The Applicant Current Position | Status |
|-----|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|--------|
| | | | | <p>(22 for the HVDC and 18 for the HVAC), these will access site from Snape Road (via Leiston).</p> <p>In addition, there is the potential that the Contractor may select cranes or piling rigs that require AIL movements, we have assumed crane and piling rig mobilisation to four areas of the site for the Fromus Bridge, Saxmundham Converter Station, Kiln Lane Substation and landfall works. The first two of these would be accessed from the B1121 Main Road, Kiln Lane Substation will be accessed from Snape Road and the landfall accessed from Leiston Road.</p> <p>We therefore anticipate approximately 55 AIL</p> | |

| Ref | Relevant Application Document | Summary of Description of Matter | SCC Current Position | The Applicant Current Position | Status |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| 3.1.2 | N/A | Delivery schedules | Awaiting feedback from SCC | <p>vehicles which would equate to 110 AIL movements.</p> <p>Should the project receive consent in mid 2026 we would be looking to commence works in Autumn 2026 with initial AIL movements associated with the Fromus bridge works in Winter 2026. The Converter station foundation works would likely occur in summer 2027 and the substation and landfall works in spring 2028, all requiring additional minor AIL movements. The significant AIL movements associated with the cable drums would occur over Summer and Autumn 2028. The transformers would likely be brought in in late 2028 or early 2029 following the cable drum movements.</p> | Under Discussion |

| Ref | Relevant Application Document | Summary of Description of Matter | SCC Current Position | The Applicant Current Position | Status |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| 3.1.3 | N/A | Vehicle dimensions | Awaiting feedback from SCC | <p>Transformer delivery vehicle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AL50 Girder 12 axial (with trailer) - Overall length 74.720m - Overall width 5.336m - Overall body height 4.020m - Min. body ground clearance 0.337m - Max. track width 3.000m - Lock to lock time 6.00s - Wall to wall turning radius 11.550m <p>Cable drum delivery vehicle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall length 25.440m - Overall width 4.500m | Under Discussion |

| Ref | Relevant Application Document | Summary of Description of Matter | SCC Current Position | The Applicant Current Position | Status |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------|
| 3.1.4 | N/A | Port of origin | Awaiting feedback from SCC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall body height 3.695m <p>The decision on the port used for the deliveries will be subject to the final decision of the Contractor. However, at this stage of the project the Port of Lowestoft should be assumed</p> | Under Discussion |

4. Approvals

| | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Signed | |
| On Behalf of | Suffolk Constabulary |
| Name | |
| Position | |
| Date | |

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Signed | |
| On Behalf of | National Grid |
| Name | |
| Position | |
| Date | |

5. References

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2024). *Planning Act 2008: Examination stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-examination-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects>

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