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Norwich to Tilbury

Volume 5: Reports and Statements

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England

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nationalgrid

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (referred to as National Grid within this document) and Natural England. It identifies areas of the Norwich to Tilbury Development Consent Order (DCO) application (the Application) where matters are agreed, under discussion or not agreed between the parties.
- 1.1.2 The aim of a SoCG is to help the Examining Authority manage the examination phase of the 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.

Note: This draft SoCG has been prepared at an early phase of the DCO process, ahead of submission. It is intended to be a live and working document which will be updated as the Project progresses and shared with Natural England at key points for discussion. A final SoCG will be prepared ahead of the close of the DCO Examination. Unlike a final SoCG, this draft SoCG has not been officially signed by either party.

1.2 Project Description

Project Need

- 1.2.1 The Project is a proposal by National Grid to upgrade the electricity transmission system in East Anglia between Norwich and Tilbury, comprising:
- 1.2.2 A new 400 kilovolt (kV) electricity transmission connection of approximately 180 km overall length from Norwich Main Substation to Tilbury Substation via Bramford Substation, a new East Anglia Connection Node (EACN) Substation and a new Tilbury North Substation, including:
- Approximately 159 km of new overhead line supported on approximately 509 pylons, either standard steel lattice pylons (approximately 50 m in height) or low height steel lattice pylons (approximately 40 m in height) and some of which would be gantries (typically up to 15 m in height) within proposed Cable Sealing End (CSE) compounds or existing or proposed substations
 - Approximately 21 km of 400 kV underground cabling, some of which would be located through the Dedham Vale National Landscape (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)¹)
 - Up to seven new CSE compounds (with permanent access) to connect the overhead lines to the underground cables

¹ National Landscape is the rebranded name of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) from 22 November 2023

- Modification works to connect into the existing Norwich Main Substation and a substation extension at the existing Bramford Substation
- A new 400 kV substation on the Tendring Peninsula, referred to as the EACN Substation (with a new permanent access). This is proposed to be an Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation
- A new 400 kV substation to the south of Orsett Golf Course in Essex, referred to as the Tilbury North Substation (with a new permanent access). This is proposed to be a Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation
- Modifications to the existing National Grid Electricity Transmission overhead lines to facilitate the connection of the existing network into the new Tilbury North Substation to provide connection to the Tilbury Substation
- Ancillary and/or temporary works associated with the construction of the Project.

1.2.3 In addition, third party utilities diversions and/or modifications would be required to facilitate the construction of the Project. There would also be land required for environmental mitigation and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

1.2.4 As well as the permanent infrastructure, land would also be required temporarily for construction activities including, for example, working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, welfare, storage and temporary construction access.

1.2.5 The Project would be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with applicable health and safety legislation. The Project will need to comply with design safety standards including the Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS), which sets out the criteria and methodology for planning and operating the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS). This informs a suite of National Grid policies and processes, which contain details on design standards required to be met when designing, constructing and operating assets such as those proposed for the Project.

1.3 Format and structure of this document

1.3.1 This SoCG is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a summary of the key engagement undertaken to date with Natural England.
- **Section 3** summarises the key matters and captures the status of each issue / matter.
- **Section 4** includes the sign off sheet.

2 Record of Key Engagement

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 National Grid has engaged with Natural England on the Project throughout the pre-application process. This has included:

- Non-statutory consultation in Spring 2022 and Summer 2023
- Statutory Consultation in Spring 2024
- Targeted Consultation in Spring 2025
- One to one / small group technical meetings on specific detailed matters
- Sharing of papers and documentation at key stages

2.1.2 Further details on National Grid's engagement with stakeholders is provided in the **Consultation Report** and the **Environmental Statement**.

2.2 Summary of Key Engagement

2.2.1 Table 2.1 provides an overview of the key engagement that has taken place between National Grid and Natural England.

Table 2.1 Summary of Key Engagement between National Grid and Natural England

Date	Format	Topic/Description
Agriculture and Soils		
June 2022	E-mail	National Grid issued the draft Agriculture and Soils Assessment Methodology for comment.
July 2022	Meeting	Meeting to discuss the proposed methodology and scope for Agriculture and Soils.
March 2025	Meeting	Meeting to discuss ALC Predictive Mapping.
Ecology and Biodiversity		
June – Sept 2022	E-mails and Meeting	A technical note was issued to Natural England to outline the proposed scope for wintering/passage bird surveys, in support of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). A subsequent meeting was held to discuss and agree the scope.
July 2022	Meeting	Meeting to discuss proposed approach to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping & Surveys.

Date	Format	Topic/Description
July 2022	E-mail	National Grid issued the proposed scope for wintering/passage bird surveys, in support of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and EIA.
July 2022	E-mail	National Grid issued the Biodiversity Assessment Methodology & Arboriculture Assessment Methodology for review ahead of Thematic Group.
July 2022	Meeting	Ecology and Biodiversity Thematic Group meeting - Biodiversity and Arboriculture.
July 2022	E-mail	LVIA methodology and arboricultural assessment methodology shared for review and discussion at the Thematic Group Meeting.
July 2022	Meeting	Landscape and Visual Thematic Group meeting – LVIA methodology and arboricultural assessment methodology.
August 2022	Meeting	Meeting to discuss proposed scope for wintering/passage bird surveys, in support of the HRA and EIA.
August 2022	Meeting	Discussion of the use of Great Crested Newt (GCN) District Level Licensing (DLL)
March 2023	Meeting	Meeting to discuss Tilbury Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) extension, Landscape and visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and biodiversity.
June 2023	Technical Note	National Grid issued the breeding birds, bats and hazel dormouse survey methodology technical note and associated shapefiles.
August 2023	E-mail / Technical Note	National Grid issued the proposed approach to obtaining baseline information in support of the HRA and the HRA Scoping Note.
September 2023	E-mail	Natural England provided advice to NG regarding bat survey methodology.
November 2023	E-mail	Natural England provided their response to the bat survey methodology.
February 2024	E-mail	National Grid shared the programme for sharing information regarding ecology surveys and next steps.
February 2024	Meeting	Meeting to further progress discussions regarding the use of DLL.
March 2024	Meeting	Meeting to discuss and agree survey methodologies for bats and dormice.

Date	Format	Topic/Description
March 2024	E-mail	National Grid provided further information in response to questions raised regarding the bat survey methodology.
March 2024	Meeting	Meeting to further progress discussions regarding the use of DLL.
May 2024	E-mail	National Grid provided further information, as requested, regarding the Bat Survey Methodology.
August 2024	E-mail	National Grid issued the Ecology Survey Scope for review.
September 2024	Meeting	Meeting to discuss the proposed approach to BNG.
October 2024	Meeting	Meeting to discuss the initial licencing approach and mitigation solutions for bats, badger, dormouse, water vole and otter.
October 2024	E-mail	National Grid issued responses to comments raised by NE with respect to the HRA Draft Screening Report.
January 2025	Meeting	Meeting to discuss comments on the proposed draft mitigation for bats, badger, dormouse, water vole and otter.
January 2025	Meeting	Meeting to discuss the proposed design and targeted consultation.
January 2025	E-mail	National Grid shared the Draft Environmental Net Gain Report for comment.
January 2025	Meeting	Meeting to discuss comments received on the Draft Environmental Net Gain Report.
February 2025	Meeting	Meeting to discuss comments received on the updated draft HRA Report.
March 2025	E-mail	National Grid issued the Draft Wintering Bird Report and Associated Figures to Natural England for consideration and comment.
April 2025	Meeting	National Grid held a meeting to discuss the draft species licences.
Landscape and Visual		
July 2022	E-mail	National Grid shared the LVIA methodology and arboricultural assessment methodology for review and discussion ahead of the Thematic Group Meeting.

Date	Format	Topic/Description
July 2022	Meeting	Landscape and Visual Thematic Group meeting – LVIA methodology and arboricultural assessment methodology.
January 2024	E-mail	National Grid shared an update on cultural heritage viewpoints, including ZTV (Zone of Theoretical Visibility).
October 2024	Meeting	Focus meeting to discuss the National Landscape.

3 Matters Agreed, Not Agreed or Under Discussion

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 This chapter details the matters relevant to Natural England which have been agreed, not agreed or are under discussion between the parties. Matters are arranged by topic (using broad headings, or EIA chapter headings where appropriate) and each matter is given a unique reference number to aid identification.
- 3.1.2 The red, amber, green status shows the level of agreement with Natural England. Descriptions of the different levels are summarised in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Agreement status for matters presented in Section 3

Status	Description
Not Agreed	Indicates a final position, where it has not been possible to resolve the issue to the agreement of both parties and there remains a difference of opinion.
Under Discussion	Indicates where issues are the subject of active on-going discussion.
Agreed	Indicates where an issue has been agreed or resolved satisfactorily to the agreement of both parties.

- 3.1.3 Engagement will continue as the Project develops and progresses through the various stages of the DCO process.
- 3.1.4 Sections that remain highlighted in yellow within these tables show points where both parties will seek to discuss and where possible agree a position in due course. The parties have been unable to do so at this stage because the relevant information is still being authored ahead of submission of the DCO application. These points will be the subject of ongoing discussion with stakeholders once the Environmental Statement and other relevant documentation is published.
- 3.1.5 Table 3.2 to Table 3.4 provides the matters agreed, not agreed or under discussion in relation to the various topics.

3.2 Ecology and Biodiversity

Table 3.2 Matters Agreed, Not Agreed or Under Discussion in relation to Ecology and Biodiversity

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
EIA – Regulatory, Planning Policy Context and Guidance				
3.3.1	Policy and legislation	<p>The policy context, legislation and guidance considered when undertaking the Ecology and Biodiversity assessment is presented in Chapter 2 (Key Legislation and Planning Policy Context) and Section 8.2 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES.</p> <p>All relevant legislation, policy and guidance has been identified and appropriately considered to inform the assessment.</p>	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion
EIA – Approach and Methods				
3.3.2	Study area	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	Agreed
3.3.3	Data sources	<p>Sufficient desktop and survey data has been collected to inform the assessment as presented within Section 8.4 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES.</p>	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion
3.3.4	Assessment methodology	The assessment methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the	The assessment methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping	Agreed

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
		Planning Inspectorate. Technical notes reviewed and discussed.	Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	
3.3.5	Survey Methodology	National Grid issued a technical note in May 2024 outlining survey methods and the scope of surveys for species outside the remit of Natural England for agreement / comment.	<p>Natural England is not providing bespoke comment on survey methodology that does not inform European Protected Species (EPS) licence or affect a protected site, although may provide detailed advice in exceptional cases where significant harm is likely (for example to an important but non-designated population) or on specific issues not covered by the standing advice.</p> <p>Natural England has directed National Grid to the relevant standing advice where appropriate. It is for National Grid as the applicant to determine that the survey methodology is appropriate for the EIA in line with the standing advice and agree this with the relevant planning authorities.</p>	Agreed
3.3.6	Great Crested Newt (GCN)	<p>National Grid intends to offset the effects of the Proposed Development on GCN by obtaining a licence through the Natural England (NE) District Level Licence (DLL) scheme.</p> <p>The Scoping Opinion stated that the Inspectorate agrees that detailed consideration of GCN can be scoped out of the ES.</p>	<p>Natural England are in agreement with the approach of obtaining a licence through the Natural England (NE) District Level Licence (DLL) scheme.</p> <p>Letter of comfort received from Natural England DLL team in August 2022.</p>	Agreed
3.3.7	Bat surveys	The bat survey scope was presented to NE on 4 th March 2024.	Natural England are in agreement with the scope for bat surveys.	Agreed

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
		<p>The following was agreed with Natural England and has been considered within this ES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of bat surveys which include a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA), static detector surveys, Advanced Licence Bat Survey Techniques (ALBST) (radiotracking) surveys at one location and aerial tree climbed inspections. • Aerial tree inspections will only be undertaken pre-consent on those trees where barbastelle pass rates meet the agreed threshold. • BCT guidelines will be followed for GLTA surveys. 		
3.3.8	Badger	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate and through the PIER.	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate and through the PIER.	Agreed
3.3.9	Water Vole	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate and through the PIER.	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate and through the PIER.	Agreed
3.3.10	Otter	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate and through the PIER.	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate and through the PIER.	Agreed

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
3.3.11	Dormouse	A technical note was issued to Natural England in June 2023 outlining the proposed scope for hazel dormouse.	Natural England are in broad agreement on survey methodology to be in line with best practice and the approach to defining survey areas.	Agreed
3.3.12	Breeding Bird	A technical note was issued to Natural England in June 2023 outlining the proposed scope for breeding bird.	Natural England are in broad agreement on survey methodology to be in line with best practice and the approach to defining survey areas.	Agreed
3.3.13	Key parameters and assumptions	Key parameters and assumptions associated with the Ecology and Biodiversity assessment are summarised in Section 8.4 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES. The key parameters and assumptions presented are considered appropriate.	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion
EIA – Baseline Conditions				
3.3.14	Baseline conditions and receptors	The baseline conditions and receptors for Ecology and Biodiversity are presented in Section 8.5 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES. The baseline conditions and receptors presented are considered appropriate.	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion
EIA – Embedded, Standard and Additional Mitigation Measures				
3.3.15	Embedded mitigation	Embedded mitigation measures, designed as an inherent part of the Project relevant to Ecology and Biodiversity effects, are set out in Section 8.6 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES.	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
		Embedded mitigation is considered appropriate and adequate, in terms of its nature and scale, to address potential effects.		
3.3.16	Standard mitigation	<p>Standard mitigation measures to reduce potential Ecology and Biodiversity effects during construction are summarised in Section 8.6 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES and set out in the Outline CoCP (document reference 7.2). The standard mitigation is considered appropriate and adequate, in terms of its nature and scale, to address potential effects.</p> <p>A draft Project wide bat licence will be applied for to enable the removal of and/or disturbance to non-maternity summer roosts of low conservation value and maternity roosts of high value (common and rarer species).</p> <p>The Project will seek to obtain bespoke licences to remove and/or disturb bat roosts not covered by the Project wide licence, on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>As part of the licensing approach to be submitted to Natural England with the DCO application the Project will set out a procedure to be used during construction, that would avoid the need for separate conversations/licences for each bat roost found.</p>	<p>Bats - National Grid proposed that the Project will follow a post-consent approach to survey roosts due to transient nature of roosts and long timeframe between the design phase and anticipated construction start date.</p> <p>Agreement was sought regarding mitigation measures under a Project wide licence based on pre-agreed criteria for non-maternity summer roost of low conservation value and maternity roost of high value (common and rarer species).</p> <p>Badger - National Grid outlined that for outlier and subsidiary setts an approach for agreeing principles of mitigation, similar to a class licence, would look to be agreed to allow flexibility should a new sett be found prior to/during construction.</p> <p>Water Vole - Natural England stated for a LONI, the 50 m displacement would be in line with class licence conditions. Natural England could approve this, assuming conditions of the licence are met. Natural England noted that they likely wouldn't want to go down a Project wide licence unless the conditions of class licence could be met.</p> <p>Hazel Dormouse - National Grid outlined that mitigation would include replacing vegetation (noting restrictions on planting under overhead lines and over the top of cables)</p>	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
		<p>A draft Project wide badger licence will be sought to enable the temporary or permanent closure of outlier and subsidiary setts that will be disturbed or removed by the Project.</p> <p>A bespoke badger licence will be applied for on a case-by-case basis to disturb or close a main or annexe sett. Such licences are to be sought as a last resort when impacts cannot be avoided, with appropriate mitigation in place to minimise impacts to badger.</p> <p>Works undertaken to displace water vole will be undertaken under a class licence that allows for the lawful displacement of water vole.</p> <p>A draft dormouse licence will be applied for to remove or manipulate habitat that supports hazel dormouse where these works are required to facilitate the Project.</p> <p>A draft otter licence will be applied for to close any confirmed holt sites where these works are required to facilitate the Project.</p>	<p>and installation of dormouse boxes prior to vegetation clearance.</p> <p>Otter - National Grid outlined that the mitigation being considered is a bespoke package for locations where impacts are unavoidable (i.e., within 30 m of holt). Potential for inclusion of otter ledges on bridges/culverts where fragmentation issues identified.</p>	
3.3.17	Additional mitigation	<p>The consideration of additional mitigation measures are presented in Section 8.6 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES. Additional mitigation is considered appropriate and adequate, in terms of its nature and scale, to address potential effects.</p>	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
3.3.18	Mitigation Hierarchy	<p>The mitigation hierarchy has been considered in Section 8.6 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES. The use of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise effects to biodiversity receptors is considered appropriate and adequate.</p> <p>The Project has considered opportunities to enhance ecosystem services and natural capital within the design following the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise effects to biodiversity receptors. Where effects to biodiversity receptors would be unavoidable, the design incorporates appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures. The Project assesses effects on the biodiversity receptors within the ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application) and includes justification of any residual effects.</p>	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion
EIA – Assessment Conclusions				
3.3.19	Construction effects	<p>The assessment of effects during construction is presented in Section 8.7 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES. The assessment of effects during construction presented is considered appropriate.</p>	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
3.3.20	Operational (and maintenance) effects	The assessment of effects during operation (and maintenance) is presented in Section 8.7 of Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES . The assessment of effects during operation (and maintenance) presented is considered appropriate.		
Draft DCO / Outline Management Plans / Mitigation and Monitoring				
3.3.21	Outline CoCP	The Outline CoCP includes all relevant construction related mitigation measures specified in Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES and is appropriate for managing construction impacts from the Project. The Outline CoCP was shared with Natural England on the 3 rd April 2025.	No comments received on the structure of the Outline CoCP at the time of writing.	Under discussion
3.3.22	Outline LEMP	The Outline LEMP includes all relevant operational related mitigation measures specified in Chapter 8 (Ecology and Biodiversity) of the ES and is appropriate. The Outline LEMP was shared with Natural England on the 3 rd April 2025.	No comments received on the structure of the Outline LEMP at the time of writing.	Under discussion
Biodiversity Net Gain				
3.3.23	Calculation	National Grid issued the Draft Environmental Gain Report to NE on 17th January 2025. A meeting was held on 22nd January to discuss comments received on the draft Environmental Gain Report.	Natural England welcomes the commitment to the delivery of a minimum of 10% ENG and BNG throughout the project. Whilst 10% is the minimum requirement, we encourage the applicant to consider a more ambitious percentage biodiversity net gain target than the minimum.	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
			Any potential losses in high distinctiveness habitats (e.g. floodplain mosaic) will require a bespoke approach irrespective of mandatory requirements for BNG. Impacts on habitat condition/distinctiveness should be avoided, minimised, mitigated or compensated in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.	
Protected Species Licences				
3.3.24	Badger	It is anticipated that Natural England are in agreement with draft license following upon its issue.		Under discussion
3.3.25	Bat Roosts	It is anticipated that Natural England are in agreement with draft license following upon its issue.		Under discussion
3.3.26	Dormouse	It is anticipated that Natural England are in agreement with draft license following upon its issue.		Under discussion
3.3.27	GCN	It is anticipated that Natural England are in agreement with draft license following upon its issue.		Under discussion
3.3.28	Otter	It is anticipated that Natural England are in agreement with draft license following upon its issue.		Under discussion
3.3.29	Water Vole	It is anticipated that Natural England are in agreement with draft license following upon its issue.		Under discussion

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
Habitats Regulation Assessment				
3.3.30	HRA Report	NG issued responses to comments raised during consultation on 7 th October 2024 with regards to the HRA Draft Screening Report. A meeting to discuss the updated HRA Screening Report was held on 24 th February 2025.	A number of comments were raised in the consultation responses dated 15 and 17 September 2024 with respect to the HRA Draft Screening Report. Further comments were received from NE by E-mail on 5 th December 2024.	Under Discussion
3.3.31	Mitigation Hierarchy (HRA)	The mitigation hierarchy has been considered in the HRA Report (document reference 5.3). The use of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid adverse effects on the integrity (alone or in combination with other plans and programmes) on European Sites is considered appropriate and adequate.	NE position pending confirmation.	Under discussion
3.3.32	Wintering/passage bird surveys	Meetings held in June, July, August and September 2022 to outline and agree the proposed scope for wintering/passage bird surveys, in support of the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and HRA. In July 2022 a technical note was issued to Natural England to provide detail on the proposed scope for wintering/passage bird surveys. The September 2022 meeting was held to further discuss the methodology and agree the scope for further details see the HRA. Agreement of wintering/passage bird survey scope for the Project with Natural England was obtained on 13 September 2022.	Agreement of wintering/passage bird survey scope for the Project with Natural England was obtained on 13 September 2022.	Agreed

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
3.3.33	Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar Site	Meeting took place in February 2025 to discuss and agree alternative agricultural land to provide refuge for birds relating to the Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and screening out impacts on Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar.	Correspondence from NE dated 20th May 2025 – Further to our call of the 20 May 2025 I can confirm that Natural England are content for you to screen out impacts on Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar	Under discussion
3.3.34	Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Site: Field Availability	Meeting took place in February 2025 to discuss and agree alternative agricultural land to provide refuge for birds relating to the Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and screening out impacts on Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar.	Correspondence from NE dated 20th May 2025 – Based on the information that you have provided relating to the Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar, Natural England do consider that there is sufficient alternative agricultural land to provide refuge for any birds disturbed during the construction phase of the development.	Under discussion

Other matters as required

3.3 Landscape and Visual

Table 3.3 Matters Agreed, Not Agreed or Under Discussion in relation to Soils

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
3.4.1	Study area	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	Agreed
3.4.2	Landscape Viewpoints	In January 2024 National Grid shared an update on cultural heritage viewpoints, including ZTV (Zone of Theoretical Visibility).		Under discussion
3.4.3	Scope of the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA)	In July 2022 National Grid shared the LVIA methodology and Arboricultural assessment methodology with Natural England for review. Meeting held in July 2022 to discuss LVIA methodology.	The scope of the LVIA was agreed through a technical note and meeting held in July 2022.	Agreed
3.4.4	Mitigation Hierarchy	The mitigation hierarchy has been considered in Chapter 13 (Landscape and Visual) of the ES . The use of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise effects to landscape receptors (where practicable) is considered appropriate and adequate.	NE position pending sight of the ES	Under discussion
Other matters as required				

3.4 Agriculture and Soils

Table 3.4 Matters Agreed, Not Agreed or Under Discussion in relation to Soils

ID	Matter	National Grid's Position	Natural England's Position	Status
3.5.1	Study area	<p>The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>The study area was also agreed through a letter issued to Natural England setting out the proposed methodology and scope, and meetings held in July 2022.</p>	<p>The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>The study area was also agreed through a letter issued to Natural England setting out the proposed methodology and scope, and meetings held in July 2022.</p>	Agreed
3.5.2	Assessment methodology	The methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	The methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion received from the Planning Inspectorate.	Agreed
3.5.3	ALC predictive mapping	National Grid held a meeting on 12 th March 2025 to discuss ALC predictive mapping and the methodology for assessing the impacts of the proposal on agricultural land/BMV.	E-mail from NE dated 13 th March 2025 stated that Natural England were in agreement with the approach to assess the impacts of the proposal on agricultural land/BMV.	Agreed
Other matters as required				

4 Confirmation of Agreement

The above SoCG is agreed between National Grid and Natural England on the date specified below.

Signed for and on behalf of National Grid:

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Date:

.....

Signed for and on behalf of Natural England:

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Date:

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Reference
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CoCP	Code of Construction Practice
DCO	Development Consent Order
DLL	District Level Licensing
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
GCN	Great Crested Newt
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
NETS	National Electricity Transmission System
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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