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Norwich to Tilbury

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IDBs - Water Management Alliance - Letter

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nationalgrid

Combined IDBs - Water Management Alliance Stakeholder Agreement

Norwich to Tilbury Statement of Common Ground

1. Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to outline the areas of agreement and any remaining points of discussion between National Grid and the Water Management Alliance (WMA) regarding the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project.

Where the section begins 'matters agreed', this sets out matter agreed between the Parties, with no further issues raised, where the approach is therefore agreed. Where the section begins 'matters currently under discussion', this sets out matters not agreed between the Parties, where further negotiations are required to agree upon an approach.

This SoCG is structured as follows:

- Section 1: An introduction to this SoCG and a description of its purpose
- Section 2: States the Parties involved and their roles within the DCO application process.
- Section 3: Gives a description of the project.
- Section 4: Identifies the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and their relevance to the project.
- Section 5: Summarises engagement between Parties to date
- Section 6: Sets out matters agreed by the parties
- Section 7: Sets out matters currently under discussion, and therefore still outstanding, and
- Section 8: Sets out the approvals and the signing off sheet between the Parties.

The aim of the SoCG is to clarify the shared understanding of any issues and facilitate an efficient resolution process. Any reference to 'the Parties' means the Applicant (National Grid) and the WMA.

2. Parties to the SoCG

This SoCG is agreed between National Grid (project developer) and the Water Management Alliance (WMA). The WMA is a consortium of seven Internal Drainage Boards (IDB): the Broads IDB, East Suffolk Water Management Board (WMB), King's Lynn IDB, Norfolk Rivers IDB, South Holland IDB, Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Drainage Board (WLYLDB), and

Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (WLMB). An IDB is defined as a Risk Management Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and also constituted under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) to undertake water level management and flood risk functions in their designated catchment areas.

The project interacts with the following IDBs within the WMA; Norfolk Rivers IDB, WLYLDB, and East Suffolk WMB. Any reference to 'the Board' within this document should be taken to mean all of the aforementioned Boards.

3. Background

National Grid Electricity Transmission plc ('National Grid') owns and maintains the national high voltage electricity transmission network throughout England and Wales. The transmission network connects the power from where it is generated to the regional Distribution Network Operators who then supply businesses and homes.

National Grid holds the Transmission Licence for England and Wales, and its statutory duty is to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission and to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity, as set out in the Electricity Act 1989.

National Grid has developed plans for Norwich to Tilbury (referred to as the 'Project'). The Project would support the UK's net zero target through the connection of new low carbon energy generation in East Anglia and by reinforcing the transmission network.

The Project comprises reinforcement of the transmission network between the existing Norwich Main Substation in Norfolk and Tilbury Substation in Essex, via Bramford Substation, the new East Anglia Connection Node (EACN) Substation and the new Tilbury North Substation.

The reinforcement is needed because the existing transmission network, even with current upgrading, will not have sufficient capacity for the new renewable energy (a substantial proportion of which would be generated by offshore wind) that is expected to connect to the network over the next 10 years and beyond. Completion of the Project, together with other new reinforcements across the country, will meet this future energy transmission demand both in East Anglia and across the UK.

The Project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and National Grid is seeking development consent under statutory procedures set by government. NSIPs are projects of certain types, over a certain size, which are considered by the government to be of national importance, hence permission to build them needs to be given at a national level, by the relevant Secretary of State (in this case the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero). Instead of applying to the local authority for planning permission, the developer must apply to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) that would grant development consent.

National Grid will submit an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate. The Examining Authority (consisting of one or more examining inspectors), after a period of public examination, would make their recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who in turn would decide on whether development consent should be granted for the Project.

The Project is identified as critical to delivering a network which supports the clean power pathways for 2030 delivery.

4. Stakeholder Role

An IDB is defined as a Risk Management Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and also constituted under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) to undertake water level management and flood risk functions in their designated catchment areas. The WMA comment on planning applications and national infrastructure projects (such as Norwich to Tilbury) to promote sustainable development and ensure compliance with the Boards' regulatory requirements as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including Byelaws. The project is proposing to undertake several works which will require prior written consent from the Board (Land Drainage Consent) in relation to drainage arrangements, new areas of temporary haul road, working areas and watercourse crossings, and potentially to pylon and substation foundations and underground cables, depending upon their location.

5. Engagement to date

Engagement undertaken to date with the WMA includes:

Date	Method	To	From	Description
30/10/2023	Email	WMA	Gavia Environmental on behalf of LSTC on behalf of National Grid	Drainage stakeholder engagement request
01/12/2023	Email	WMA	Gavia Environmental on behalf of LSTC on behalf of National Grid	Drainage stakeholder engagement request
11/12/2023	Consultation Meeting	N/A	N/A	Drainage stakeholder engagement meeting providing project overview and preliminary discussion of watercourse crossings, associated design requirements and consenting arrangements. Attended by WMA, Norfolk County Council, and National Grid (with Mott McDonald, Gavia Environmental and LSTC on behalf of National Grid).
19/12/2023	Email	WMA	Gavia Environmental on behalf of LSTC on behalf of National Grid	Issue of drainage stakeholder engagement meeting minutes
08/02/2024	Email	Gavia Environmental on behalf of LSTC on behalf of National Grid	WMA	Provision of requested watercourse/drain shape files for IDBs

Date	Method	To	From	Description
23/07/2024	Statutory Consultation	National Grid – shared with Gavia Environmental by LSTC	WMA	Response to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), providing information on Board byelaws, spatial overlap between project and Board Internal Drainage Districts, and stating WMA's expectation of detailed design and case-by-case discussions around watercourse crossing methods, anticipation of flood risk assessment and drainage strategies, discussion around conditions for IDB consents, comments for haul road crossings, and request to discuss land ownership matters.
30/8/2024	Email	WMA	Fisher German LLP on behalf of National Grid	Request for information on WMA area impacted by the Project; suggestion for future discussion regarding consents. Provided link to interactive map of route.
03/09/2024	Email	Fisher German LLP on behalf of National Grid	WMA	<p>Provided links to dynamic maps of IDB areas and watercourse networks; offered shapefiles of the same; list of catchments and watercourses / IDB districts overlapping with Norwich to Tilbury route;</p> <p>Requested shapefiles of red line boundary of Norwich to Tilbury Scheme (Norfolk and Suffolk area only).</p> <p>Offer to discuss consents/approvals process; disapplication of Land Drainage Act 1991 and use of Protective Provisions for IDBs.</p>
17/09/2024	Email	WMA	Arcadis on behalf of National Grid	Technical note shared with WMA which outlined the proposed principles regarding the management of rainfall runoff and land drainage during the construction and operational stages of the Norwich to Tilbury Project.

Date	Method	To	From	Description
10/10/2024	Email	Fisher German LLP on behalf of National Grid	WMA	Follow up request for shapefiles of Norwich to Tilbury red line boundary; follow up request for discussion re. Land Drainage Act 1991 and Protective Provisions.
11/10/2024	Email	WMA	Fisher German LLP on behalf of National Grid	Holding response for providing shapefiles of Norwich to Tilbury route. Request for shapefiles of WMA managed sites. Arrangements for a follow up call.
15/10/2024	Email	National Grid – shared with Arcadis	WMA	The WMA have no comment to make on the technical note; however, we do support the comments made by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA -Suffolk County Council).
23/10/2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting to discuss the Project’s proposed approach to undertaking works to WMA watercourses and making discharges to WMA watercourses under the Land Drainage Act. WMA expressed preference for disapplying the Land Drainage Act, agreeing suitable protective provisions with the WMA and securing these via a suitable Requirement within the DCO. Attended by WMA and National Grid (with Gavia Environmental, LSTC and Fisher German on behalf of National Grid).
30/01/2025	Email	WMA	National Grid	Targeted consultation on updated Project proposals
03/03/2025	Email	National Grid	WMA	Comments on changes in sections “Norfolk 2, Suffolk 1 and Suffolk 1A”. Further request for shapefiles of Development Order Boundaries.
11/03/2025	Email	National Grid	WMA	No comments on Essex and Thurrock areas.

Date	Method	To	From	Description
17/03/2025	Letter	WMA	National Grid	Targeted consultation on updated Project proposals (Essex & Thurrock areas)
28/03/2025	Email	National Grid	WMA	No comment on targeted consultation for Essex and Thurrock areas as these are outside of the WMA IDBs' districts and catchments.

6. Matters Agreed

Matter	Agreement	Date agreed
Land Drainage Consent Requirements	<p>Haul road crossings will be minimised, with the Applicant seeking to reuse existing crossings wherever viable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Drainage Consent will be sought for the following byelaws: Byelaw 3: Discharge of water to a watercourse Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (and Byelaws 4 and 6): Alteration of a watercourse Byelaw 10 (and 17 for WLYLDB): Works within 9m* of an arterial watercourse ('Main Drain') *It is noted that in Waveney area, consent will be sought for all works within 7m of the top of bank as per their local requirement. <p>It is agreed that a spreadsheet and single consent application form will be used to apply for consenting of multiple actions in different locations. The Board's written consent will be in letter format and may be conditional as per the Board's Planning and Byelaw Strategy document available online via the Water Management Alliance webpages.</p>	23 rd July 2024/ 11 th December 2023
Watercourse crossings and appropriate crossing methods	<p>It is agreed that a watercourse crossing schedule including method statement will be prepared and issued with the application for a Development Consent Order, and include recommendations of crossing type (e.g. culvert or clear span bridge for access crossings, HDD or open cut trenching for cable crossings).</p> <p>The general principles of crossings should be included within the watercourse crossing schedule submitted with the application for Development Consent Order.</p> <p>Detailed design drawings will be required by the Boards for each work (e.g. each watercourse crossing) requiring Land Drainage Consent.</p>	23 rd July 2024

Matter	Agreement	Date agreed
Design criteria for temporary construction Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	<p>The Board is supportive of the proposal that SuDS will be being designed to contain up to the 1 in 100 year plus 25% Climate Change (as per the most conservative allowance along the project works from Essex County Council LLFA). The Board will defer to the relevant LLFA's guidance regarding on-site drainage design.</p> <p>The Board is supportive of the proposal that SuDS will be designed to discharge at a restricted rate as determined by the relevant LLFA's guidance. The Board understands that the Project is proposing to discharge at a maximum rate of 1.4l/s/ha or 1l/s (whichever is greater).</p> <p>Drainage into the IDBs' district will require consent from the relevant Board. Consent may be conditional as per the Board's Planning and Byelaw Strategy document available online via the Water Management Alliance webpages.</p>	11 th December 2023
Design requirements for watercourse crossings	It is agreed that the Applicant will seek to prevent damage to existing watercourse crossings and the design of proposed watercourse crossings will follow IDB standard requirements.	11 th December 2023

7. Matters currently under discussion

The following outstanding matters require further discussion with the WMA:

Matter	WMA position (including date)	National Grid Position (including date)
Draft DCO Wording	WMA wishes to understand whether the project is proposing to incorporate a Protective Provision within the draft DCO wording, perhaps further to disapplication of the relevant sections of the Land Drainage Act 1991. Although the Board supports the use of suitable Protective Provisions for Drainage Authorities, the Board realises that this would impact other Risk Management Authorities in addition to the Board. The Board requires further information and welcomes discussion with National Grid on this matter (14 July 2025)	Draft Protective Provisions have been issued for further discussion (8 August 2025)
Land Rights	The proposed project could affect land that is owned by the IDBs, further clarification is required regarding any potential impact. (14 July 2025)	Further discussion pending confirmation of affected IDB land (4 June 2025)
Cost Recovery	WMA would like to agree a cost recovery process with National Grid for officer time spent on the project during the pre-application, examination and post-DCO periods. This is separate from the consent application fee and development contribution charges. (14 July 2025)	National Grid notes the comments from the WMA and will continue to engage on this matter. (14 July 2025)
Draft Watercourse Crossing Method Statement	Although the Board has agreed that a watercourse crossing schedule including method statement will be prepared and issued with the application for a Development Consent Order, the Board wishes to be involved in the review of this draft document for watercourses within the Board's area ahead of any application for a Development Consent Order. (14 July 2025)	National Grid notes the comments from the WMA and will continue to engage on this matter. (14 July 2025)

8. Signatures

This Statement of Common Ground is agreed upon by the undersigned parties:

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For WMA

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

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