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Airfield**

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nationalgrid

Chase Farm Airfield

Draft 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 Chase Farm Airfield regarding potential aviation impacts in relation to the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project.

The aim is to clarify the shared understanding of any issues and facilitate an efficient resolution process.

2. Parties to the SoCG

This SoCG is agreed between National Grid and the operator of Chase Farm Airfield

3. Background

3.1 Description of the Project/Development

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 has submitted an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate. The Examining Authority (consisting of five examining inspectors), after a period of public examination, will make their recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who in turn will 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.

The Planning Act 2008 places duties on National Grid as the Applicant to consult with prescribed or affected persons as well as to take account of responses to consultation and publicity. In accordance with these statutory requirements, National Grid has undertaken two non-statutory and one statutory consultation to inform its proposals, with further targeted consultations.

4. Stakeholder Interests

The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) has effect for the decisions by the Secretary of State on applications for energy developments that are nationally significant under the Planning Act 2008. Amongst other impacts, it recognises that all aerodromes can be affected by new energy development and the need, therefore, for NSIPs to be developed collaboratively alongside aerodromes so that safety, operations and capabilities are not adversely affected. Reciprocally, EN-1 states that it is essential for aerodrome operators to work collaboratively with energy infrastructure developers essential for net zero, recognising the need for the important economic and social benefits of aerodromes to be balanced with the urgent need for new energy developments which bring about a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits.

EN-1 places a requirement on DCO applicants to consult with any aerodrome likely to be affected by the proposed development in preparing an assessment of the proposal on aviation interests. Chase Farm Airfield was identified and included in the scope for assessment, with its runway end being located within 5 km of the Project's proposed overhead line (OHL) alignment,

recognising the potential for the proximity of the infrastructure to impact aircraft flight patterns and aerodrome operations. In accordance with EN-1 requirements, the operator of Chase Farm Airfield was identified as a priority stakeholder for engagement in relation to aviation impact considerations.

The chronology of National Grid's engagement with Chase Farm Airfield to date, and the evolution of the Project's design is summarised as follows:

In the case of Chase Farm airfield, face-to-face meetings with representatives from Alan Stratford and Associates (ASA), as National Grid's aviation advisors and National Grid were held with the owner/operator on

- 14 August 2023 (at the site)
- 8 April 2024 (online)
- 25 April 2024 (at the site) and
- 15 August 2024 (online)

The meetings were also attended by a representative from Whirledge and Nott, the owner/operator's land agent and, in the case of the meetings in 2024, by a representative from the General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC).

In addition to these discussions, Whirledge and Nott, on behalf of the owner/operator of Chase Farm airfield, submitted formal feedback to the statutory consultation in July 2024. The written feedback contended that the OHL would be too close to the airfield for safe operations and that it would therefore need to close. It further stated that the closure of the airfield would represent a substantial loss to the regional aviation community, with East Anglia facing a shortage of general aviation airfields. Furthermore, the owner/operator has indicated both verbally and via written correspondence that there would be no possibility of operating larger aircraft types requiring a longer runway length as had been the case in the past. The submission put forward two alternative options to address aviation impacts, one underground and the other to reroute the OHL the west of the proposed alignment.

2023 Preferred Draft Alignment

The swathe for the OHL alignment (running broadly perpendicular to the runway) had an eastern boundary which overlapped with the western end of the runway and a western boundary which was around 590m from the nearest runway end. This was assessed as making continued flight operations at the site unviable with an OHL anywhere in the swathe. The initial recommendation from ASA was that the OHL location would need to change significantly to enable continued operation at the airfield for any aircraft type.

The 2023 Preferred Draft Alignment (IR03) placed the OHL close to the western boundary of the swathe, on a slightly diverging path relative to the runway. The proposed OHL would be 550m from the R07 end. Detailed assessment confirmed the initial view that there was insufficient room to take-off and turn away from the OHL safely. Approaches to land were equally difficult, with the approach angle required for a safe overflight over the OHL being well above normal and considered to be unworkable for many aircraft types, including microlights such as those based at Chase Farm.

2024 Preferred Draft Alignment

The 2024 Preferred Draft Alignment (IR05) was slightly different to IR03. The OHL diverged more to the south-west of the airfield but was otherwise unchanged in the immediate vicinity. This increased the distance between the OHL and the R07 runway end. Further assessment confirmed that although the alignment represented a small improvement, this was not sufficient to change the view that the OHL design would make airfield operations unviable. This design was presented at the statutory consultation. The airfield owner and other interested parties (including representation from the General Aviation Awareness Council -GAAC) agreed that the IR05 alignment was not acceptable to them and that an OHL built in that position would lead to closure of the airfield. A site meeting on 25 April 2024 during the statutory consultation period confirmed the nature of constraints to the west of the airfield, which would make westward relocation of the OHL unlikely. There was some discussion around the possible relocation of the runway, as the operator farmed the field immediately to the south of the current runway. An option was designed and assessed following the meeting, and this was presented to the operator in August 2024. Under this option, the runway would have the same length, but it would be reorientated to an R03/21 direction which would maintain the alignment with the prevailing wind. As a result of this reorientation, the distance to the OHL on the extended centreline would be increased.

The option presented to the operator in August 2024 was not preferred on two grounds: -The CAP 793 recommendation that there should be no obstacles greater than 150 ft above the average runway elevation within 2,000 m of the runway mid-point) would not be met -The gradient of the land (estimated to be -1.6% from NE to SW) was felt to be excessive for aircraft operations. Paragraph 15.3.23 of **6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 – Review of Aviation Impact [APP-267]** explains how National Grid’s impact assessment methodology also responds to the Civil Aviation Authority’s (CAA’s) CAP 793 guidance with regards to the 150ft/2,000m measure, but notes this does not distinguish where an obstacle is in relation to a runway, or consider the impact of the combination of obstacle height and location, or additional factors such as aircraft performance, runway length or flight paths. National Grid considers that a more nuanced means of appraising impacts associated with obstacles is appropriate in this context. Furthermore, National Grid does not assess the estimated runway gradient to be excessive, being within gradient parameters required under the CAA’s CAP 168 requirements for a licensed Code 1a runway. Table A15.2.7 of **6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 – Review of Aviation Impact [APP-267]** illustrates the National Grid impact assessment that, if the Chase Farm runway was re-orientated, safe operations from the airfield could continue. Notwithstanding, National Grid recognises that reorientation or relocation of the runway to allow continued operations is subject to the agreement of the owner and operator that the measures would provide reasonable mitigation to aviation impacts.

Paragraphs 2.6.6 and 10.3.5 of **5.15 Design Development Report [APP-122]** summarise the consideration of alternative overhead line alignment and pylons types as well as the runway realignment during the development of the proposed Project alignment.

5. Matters Agreed

ID	Issue	Agreement reached	Date agreed	Relevant documentation
5.1	Restricted use / closure of the existing airstrip on its current alignment.	Agreement has been reached that the current Project design, as of statutory 2024 and targeted 2025 consultation, that the airfield will no longer be able to operate in its current capacity with a runway alignment East to West.		5.15 Design Development Report [APP-122] 6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 - Review of Aviation Impact [APP-267]

6. Matters Currently Under Discussion

ID	Issue	Chase Farm Airfield position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
6.1	Extension of the airstrip to the East of its current position, to allow operation to continue.	An Obstacle Limitation Surfaces(OLS) expert is producing a compliant plan of the triangular area to which the OLS applies both in distance and width at the point it reaches the proposed pylon/cables to demonstrate where a pylon could safely be placed and at what height.	National Grid is supportive of further consideration of a potential runway extension to mitigate aviation impacts by increasing overflight clearances or avoiding Project obstructions. National Grid notes Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) definition is a regulatory requirement for licenced aerodromes in accordance with CAP 168 but	

ID	Issue	Chase Farm Airfield position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
		<p>The feasibility study is looking at whether it would be possible to extend the runway to east effectively displacing the threshold to comply with OLS requirements for an appropriate take off distance free from any obstruction.</p> <p>An appropriate specification for the runway extension will follow.</p>	<p>has considered OLS infringement by the Project for all civil aerodromes in scope, recognising CAP168 standards to be best practice, offering an objective measure of aviation impact (paragraph 15.3.27 of 6.15.A2 Environmental Statement – Appendix 15.2 – Review of Aviation Impact refers).</p> <p>National Grid has confirmed financial support for further assessment to be carried out in regard to the feasibility of realigning, extending or the relocation of the airfield.</p>	
6.2	<p>Realignment of the airstrip to the Southwest, allowing operation to continue.</p>	<p>Representatives of the airfield (GAAC) have stated that the realignment of the airstrip will not be an option due to the gradient of the land sloping away from the existing position of the airstrip.</p>	<p>National Grid’s appointed experts at Alan Stratford Associates have concluded that the realignment to the Southwest is achievable and that the estimated gradient of the land does not prove insurmountable.</p> <p>National Grid has acknowledged the realignment of the airfield would have impacts on the agricultural land, but the existing airstrip could then be used for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>If the realignment of the airfield was accepted National Grid would cover the costs of any associated works.</p>	

ID	Issue	Chase Farm Airfield position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
6.3	Closure of the airfield and repurposing of the land	At present the owners of the airfield would prefer operations to continue at the airfield. The desire remains for the proposed overhead line alignment to be moved to the West or suitable mitigation be agreed.	National Grid agrees that the preferred option is for the airfield to remain operational, but consideration will need to be taken in regard to the cost of extending or realigning the airfield against the cost of compensation for closing the airfield. National Grid continues to engage with the owners of the airfield while the future of the airfield is agreed and associated compensation package negotiated.	
6.4	East Anglia shortage of general aviation airfields.	The airstrip owner has stated that the closure of the airfield would represent a substantial loss to the regional aviation community, with East Anglia facing a shortage of general aviation airfields.	National Grid's assessment of the significance of Project effects on Chase Farm is summarised within 6.15.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.1 – Built and Other Assets within the 3km Study Area [APP-266] . Furthermore, 6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 – Review of Aviation Impact [APP-267] describes how National Grid has taken account of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provisions in relation to the importance of maintaining a network of general aviation airfields, as well as relevant Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) in having regard to the extent to which an aerodrome contributes to connectivity as part of a network.	6.15.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.1 - Built and Other Assets within the 3km Study Area [APP-266] 6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 - Review of Aviation Impact [APP-267]

ID	Issue	Chase Farm Airfield position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
			<p>Engagement to date has informed National Grid’s understanding that Chase Farm airfield is lightly used for private flying, is not publicly listed, nor known to be used by the emergency services or for pilot training. A number of similar general aviation airfields are available as alternatives to Chase Farm within the vicinity. In this basis, National Grid has been unable to verify that the airfield’s closure would result in a substantial loss to the regional general aviation network.</p>	
6.5	Airstrip Options Study – Technical and commercial proposal	<p>The airstrip owner has appointed a third-party consultant (Straten CSL) to carry out a technical assessment and option study to determine if the airstrip can be extended, realigned or relocated internally.</p> <p>The final report to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concise Alternative Airfield Strip Options Report (PDF and editable format), suitable for submission to National Grid and other stakeholders. • Supporting figures illustrating candidate runway locations/orientations and key safeguarding constraints. 	<p>National Grid has agreed to cover the cost of this option study, confirmed via an email dated 19th January 2026.</p> <p>Agreed on the grounds that the study is carried out as per the agreed scope shared with National Grid and that a copy is provided to National Grid once available.</p> <p>The findings of the study will then be discussed between both parties and reviewed against assessments already carried out on behalf of National Grid</p>	

7. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For Chase Airfield

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

National Grid plc
National Grid House,
Warwick Technology Park,
Gallows Hill, Warwick.
CV34 6DA United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales
No. 4031152
nationalgrid.com