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Norwich to Tilbury

Volume 8: Examination Documents

**Document: 8.3.34 Draft Statement of Common Ground - South
Norfolk Model Flying Club**

Final Issue A

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Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027

nationalgrid

South Norfolk Model Flying Club 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 South Norfolk Model Flying Club 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 South Norfolk Model Flying Club (hereafter referred to as the Club).

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 DCO 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 consultations and one statutory consultation to inform its proposals, together with further targeted consultations.

4. Stakeholder Interests

The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS 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, NPS 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.

NPS 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. South Norfolk Model Flying Club was identified and included in the scope for assessment recognising the potential for the proximity of the infrastructure to impact aircraft flight patterns and aerodrome operations. In accordance with NPS EN-1 requirements, the Club was identified as a priority stakeholder for engagement in relation to aviation impact considerations.

The chronology of National Grid's engagement with South Norfolk Model Flying Club to date, and the evolution of the Project's design is summarised as follows:

- 2022
 - National Grid presented information on how the Project was evolving from the evaluation of strategic options to a preliminary preferred graduated swathe within which new infrastructure (pylons and underground cables) could be located as well as a proposed new substation site on the Tendring Peninsula, as described within the [7.18 2022 - Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study \[APP-356\]](#)
 - 21 April – 16 June non-statutory consultation
- 2023
 - Development of the 2023 Preferred Draft Alignment, responding to feedback and other studies, as described within the [7.20 2023 - Design Development Report for the Project \[APP-358\]](#)
 - 27 June – 21 August non-statutory consultation on the 2023 Preferred Draft Alignment
 - 20 August telephone conversation between National Grid's appointed aviation consultants Alan Stratford and Associates (ASA) and the Club.
- 2024
 - Development of the 2024 Preferred Draft Alignment, responding to feedback and other studies, as described within the [7.21 2024 - Design Development Report for the Project \[APP-359\]](#)
 - 10 April – 26 July Statutory Consultation on the 2024 Preferred Draft Alignment
 - 3 May in-person meeting with National Grid, ASA and representatives of the Club. Matters raised included:
 - Concern regarding the proximity of the proposed overhead line to the site and its potential impact on continued operations.
 - Potential mitigation options, including relocation of the proposed alignment to increase separation distances from the site.
- 2025
 - Development of the proposed Project Alignment, re-positioning the overhead line further to the west of the Club site, responding to stakeholder feedback and other studies, as described within the [5.15 Design Development Report \[APP-122\]](#)
 - 9 May – 14 July correspondence between National Grid and the Club regarding draft Stakeholder Agreement / Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)
 - 3 October correspondence from National Grid notifying of Planning Inspectorate acceptance of DCO application and publication of [6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 - Review of Aviation Impact \[APP-267\]](#)

- 2026
 - 12 – 21 January correspondence between National Grid and the Club regarding progression of the draft SoCG
 - 28 January online meeting to discuss the draft SoCG

5. Matters Agreed

ID	Issue	Agreement reached	Date agreed	Relevant documentation
5.1				

6. Matters Currently Under Discussion

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
6.1	Impact Assessment Methodology and Key Assumptions	The airfield Club is in agreement, awaiting confirmation from all interested parties, that a clearance distance of 350m from the perimeter of the airfield will be satisfactory for operations to continue. (Feb 2026)	To fulfil its responsibilities to prepare an assessment of the Project on aviation interests, National Grid has developed a methodology to enable site-specific impact assessments for aerodromes within scope (as referred to in Section 4). Its primary aim is to evaluate risks of collision, with the proposed overhead line alignment representing a new obstacle within proximity of aerodromes. Operational safety impacts arising from potential increases to risks of bird strike, wind turbulence and electromagnetic forces as a result of the Project are also considered.	CAP 2320 The Drone Model Aircraft Code, March 2024; 6.15.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 15.2 - Review of Aviation Impact [APP-267]

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
			<p>The methodology enables a nuanced appraisal that considers a range of factors in addition to the height and location of the proposed overhead line alignment, including: runway length and orientation in relation to the overhead line; aircraft performance, flight paths and operational procedures (determined from published information, as well as via consultation with operators); and the surrounding context in terms of topography and existing obstacles (including other overhead lines).</p> <p>It is recognised that non-statutory guidance on the flying of model aircraft is provided by the Civil Aviation Authority’s CAP 2320 Drone and Model Aircraft Code. This states that model aircraft should be kept at least 150m from residential, recreational, commercial and industrial sites. A key assumption is, therefore, that separation distance between the overhead transmission line and the Club site should be, as a minimum, 150m.</p> <p>(May 2025)</p>	

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
6.2	Proposed Project Alignment and Impact Assessment Conclusions	<p>Concern raised regarding the potential impact of the 2024 Preferred Draft Alignment on the Club. Proposed changes for the Project alignment should be routed away from the site to mitigate impacts. (May 2024)</p> <p>The Club and its reps have recognised that the 150m distance is not satisfactorily safe for flying to continue as this does not take into account verticality of obstacles. Upon knowing that the clearance exceeds 350m for the airfield perimeter this is thought to be satisfactory clearance by the club. (Feb 2026)</p>	<p>In response to initial assessments and feedback received to the statutory consultation, a design change was implemented to re-align the Project overhead line further to the west to increase separation distances from the Club site to approx. 350m, exceeding the 150m minimum distance recommended by CAP2320. It is assessed that the design changes minimise potential adverse impacts, and the Club can continue to operate from the site. (May 2025)</p>	<p>5.15 Design Development Report [APP-122]; 2.3 Works Plans - Section A [APP-017]</p>
6.3	Mitigation Measures		<p>The Club may wish to consider reasonable and achievable operational procedure changes to address any residual risks. (May 2025)</p>	

7. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For South Norfolk Model Flying Club

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

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