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nationalgrid

Station Flying Operations Centre
Wattisham Flying Station
Building 132
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP7 7RA

17 February 2026

Dear Mr Warbuton,

Norwich to Tilbury Project Interactions with Wattisham Flying Station and Proposal for Progression of Statement of Common Ground

Further to recent correspondence, and ahead of the Planning Inspectorate Examining Authority's (ExA's) Deadline 1 for receipt of initial and updated Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) as established in its [Rule 6 letter \[PD-009\]](#) of 13 January, we are writing to confirm our proposed approach to the ongoing consideration and resolution of matters concerning Project interactions with Wattisham Flying Station (WFS).

National Grid first met with representatives of WFS in April 2023, following the 2022 non-statutory consultation on the Project's preliminary preferred graduated swathe. We discussed potential impacts of the Project on aerodrome operations and radar interference. Since these initial discussions, we have appreciated continued engagement with WFS to share information on the development of the Project design, recognising its infringement of safeguarding zones for the aerodrome as well as the STAR NG technical asset, and the need for Ministry of Defence (MoD) assessments of potential impacts.

At the meeting of 27 May 2025, WFS confirmed it had no outstanding safeguarding concerns regarding the aerodrome but was awaiting an update on an Air Defence and Electronic Warfare Systems (ADEWS) appraisal of the acceptability of the STAR NG safeguarding zone infringement. A draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) was agreed on this basis (correspondence of 7 July 2025 refers) but was not submitted with National Grid's Development Consent Order (DCO) application. This decision was due to National Grid concerns that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) had not yet confirmed its review of the proposed Project alignment, nor reaffirmed its conclusion that it held no safeguarding concerns regarding WFS aerodrome as per its response to the 2024 Statutory Consultation. We were seeking clarity on these matters via a draft SoCG with the DIO. The draft SoCGs with both DIO and WFS were listed as engagement ongoing within **5.9 Draft Statement of Common Ground – Overview [APP-088]**.

National Grid understands the DIO Safeguarding Team represents the MoD as a consultee in UK planning and energy consenting systems to ensure that development does not compromise or degrade the operations of defence sites such as aerodromes, technical sites, or training resources such as the Military Low Flying System. Following the DIO's response to the Project 2024 Statutory Consultation, National Grid has engaged the DIO directly with regards to WFS and the safeguarding of other MoD assets. As you are aware, the DIO has recently clarified it will be providing the MoD safeguarding response for the whole of the Project, including WFS, incorporating updates on the completion of Subject Matter Expert (SME) impact assessments. National Grid is awaiting receipt of the DIO response and their review of the draft DIO SoCG. In the interim, we have sought confirmation that their response will consider the safeguarding of the STAR NG asset (not previously addressed by the DIO) as well as WFS's recently raised Project infrastructure lighting requirement. We suggest lighting is related to safeguarding if necessary to ensure the safe operation of aircraft in the vicinity of the aerodrome but are happy to explore the matter further with all parties as appropriate.

Subject to National Grid's review of the DIO response and confirmation it addresses all relevant matters previously discussed with WFS, we are anticipating that a separate SoCG with WFS may no longer be required. We are therefore copying this letter to the DIO and plan to submit it to the ExA to advise of this National Grid position in advance of Deadline 1 (26 February 2026).

If you have any further queries or wish to raise any non-safeguarding matters concerning WFS with regards to the Project, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours Sincerely,

Simon Pepper
Project Director

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