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Norwich to Tilbury

Volume 8: Examination Documents

**Document: 8.3.53 Draft Statement of Common Ground - EXA
Infrastructure**

Final Issue A

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Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027

nationalgrid

EXA Infrastructure

Draft Statement of Common Ground

1. Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG, which can also be referred to as an interface agreement) has been prepared to outline the areas of agreement and any outstanding points of discussion between National Grid and EXA Infrastructure regarding utilities interfaces 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 EXA Infrastructure.

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 for development consent 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

EXA Infrastructure is a digital infrastructure platform company providing bandwidth and connectivity services. 24 individual interfaces between the Norwich to Tilbury Project and EXA Infrastructure assets have been identified. Engagement with EXA Infrastructure is sought to establish the nature of the interfaces and any assets or rights potentially impacted by the Project, and to agree the form of any required or recommended mitigations prior to conclusion of the DCO examination.

5. Matters Agreed

ID	Issue	Agreement reached	Date agreed	Relevant documentation
5.1				

6. Matters currently Under Discussion

ID	Issue	EXA Infrastructure position (including date)	National Grid position (including date)	Relevant documentation
6.1	Interface Identification and Categorisation	<p>05/02/26 - EXA confirm all 24 identified interface are in close proximity to our assets, namely, buried optical duct and cable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 overhead line – Impact Unlikely, TBC. • 2 underground cable clearance required -HVAC cables to cross perpendicular to EXA cable and not parallel -tbc • 3 haul road -650mm cover required • 6 bellmouth junctions -650mm cover required 	<p>30/01/26 - Following development of the Project design and the undertaking of utilities searches, 24 individual interfaces have been identified between the Project and EXA Infrastructure assets. These include the following crossing types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 overhead line • 2 underground cable • 3 haul road • 6 bellmouth junctions • 10 Distribution Network Operator (DNO) mitigation works <p>Further detail is provided within the relevant documentation. National Grid seeks EXA</p>	Norwich to Tilbury Interface Schedule with EXA Infrastructure August25; Crossing Points KMZ and GIS files.

ID	Issue	EXA Infrastructure position (including date)	National Grid position (including date)	Relevant documentation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Distribution Network Operator (DNO) mitigation works -Impact unlikely, TBC. <p>EXA have provided plans of duct routing and approx. depths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x 110mm UPVC optical ducts containing 4 x 32mm/28mm subduct • Approx buried depths of EXA duct: • 450mm depth in verge/footway • 650mm depth in carriageway <p>(February 2025)</p>	<p>Infrastructure’s verification of the location and nature of these interfaces.</p>	
6.2	Potential Project Impacts on Stakeholder Assets and Associated Mitigations	<p>05/02/26 - EXA Infrastructure agree that standard construction practices will be adequate to protect and maintain access to their assets but recognises the potential for diversionary works or other additional measures to be sought, dependent on impacts.</p> <p>EXA confirm the detail and implementation of such measures will be agreed via proposed engagement between the National Grid construction contractor and EXA Infrastructure during the detailed design phase.</p>	<p>30/01/26 - Subject to confirmation of the nature of interfaces, National Grid recognises the potential for the Project to impact EXA Infrastructure assets and their function during construction and/or operational phases.</p> <p>National Grid seeks agreement from EXA Infrastructure that standard construction practices will be adequate to protect and maintain access to their assets but recognises the potential for diversionary works or other additional measures to be sought, dependent on impacts. National Grid anticipates the detail and implementation of such measures will be agreed via proposed</p>	

ID	Issue	EXA Infrastructure position (including date)	National Grid position (including date)	Relevant documentation
		<p>EXA would engage Advance Telecom or OCU as their preferred civils contractor to produce C3/C4 proposals and quotes for any diversion works.</p> <p>Once agreed payment is made direct to civils company prior to undertaking the works.</p> <p>EXA agree any bespoke mitigation requirements will be by mutual agreement.</p>	<p>engagement between the National Grid construction contractor and EXA Infrastructure during the detailed design phase.</p> <p>Should EXA Infrastructure have bespoke mitigation requirements, National Grid requests these are shared for early review and mutual agreement, including in relation to associated matters of costs, liability and consents.</p>	
6.3	Potential Project Impacts on Stakeholder Land or Rights	05/02/26 - EXA await plans to conform locations of bellmouths, haul roads and UGC crossings but at this stage look to be affected.	30/01/26 - National Grid has not been able to confirm whether EXA Infrastructure land holdings may be affected by the Project but requests EXA Infrastructure to provide any further information on land or rights matters to be identified and considered.	

7. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For EXA Infrastructure

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