

AENC-NG-CNS-REP-0226

# Norwich to Tilbury

**Volume 8: Examination Documents**

**Document: 8.3.10 Draft Statement of Common Ground - Equinor**

**Final Issue A**

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**Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027**

**nationalgrid**

# **Equinor**

## **Draft Statement of Common Ground**

### **1. Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground**

This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to reflect the current understanding of the areas of agreement and any remaining points of discussion between National Grid and Equinor regarding specific issues arising during construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project (the Project) and its interface with Equinor's Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects (Planning Inspectorate Reference EN010109). The aim is to clarify the shared understanding of any issues and facilitate an efficient resolution process. The SoCG is intended to be a live document and will be updated as necessary throughout the examination stage of the DCO process. It is without prejudice to any bespoke protective provisions included in the draft DCO for the protection of Equinor, and to the terms of any related side agreements between the parties.

### **2. Parties to the SoCG**

This SoCG is agreed between National Grid and Equinor New Energy Limited (Equinor) on behalf of Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Extensions ProjCo Limited (SSDE ProjCo Limited) (formerly known as Scira Extension Limited).

### **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 and one statutory consultation to inform its proposals, with further recent targeted consultations.

## **4. Stakeholder Interests**

Equinor were the applicant for the SSDE DCO which grants development consent to SSDE ProjCo Limited as “undertaker” in relation to SSDE.

SSDE ProjCo Limited is a statutory undertaker by virtue of an Electricity Act 1989 licence and has legitimate interests that have the potential to interact with the Norwich to Tilbury proposals. SSDE is a consented Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, which will deliver construction and operation of an array of up to 53 wind turbines and their foundations and associated onshore infrastructure including onshore cabling and an onshore substation. Onshore works will take place in the vicinity of the Norwich Main substation including the 400kV cable connecting into the Norwich Main substation and an onshore substation to the south of the Norwich Main substation as well as associated works and infrastructure.

National Grid is seeking to ensure that the interests of both parties, and how they may be affected by the interaction, are understood and can be managed. From this position the aim is for the parties to agree actions to avoid or reduce the implications and for any remedial measures to be agreed.

The chronology of National Grid's engagement with SSDE ProjCo Limited to date, and the evolution of the Project's design is summarised as follows:

- 2024
  - Introductory meeting to detail the proposed Norwich to Tilbury scheme and project team members
  - Consultation engagement on early stage design proposals
- 2025
  - Engagement on advanced design solutions ahead of DCO application submission
  - Provision of a draft SoCG and development of content
- 2026
  - Legal engagement to negotiate a bespoke legal agreement relating to the protection of SSDE ProjCo Limited assets
  - Further development of SoCG content

## 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	Status
6.1	Limits of deviation flexibility	27/11/25 - The Norwich to Tilbury Order limits to the south of the Norwich Main substation provide for two routes for the new pylons, within the limits of deviation. The eastern option would lead to a high degree of overlap with the SSDE DCO Order limits and pose significant constraints on the construction of the 400kV cable, the onshore substation and surrounding works which are critical to the delivery of SSDE. Seeking such a high degree of flexibility for the Norwich to Tilbury Order limits at this location therefore poses serious concerns for SSDE, risking SSDE ProjCo Limited's ability to deliver SSDE.	15/02/26 - National Grid is undertaking further detailed design engagement with parties within the scenario options with a view to providing a definitive project corridor and removing uncertainty. National Grid will continue engaging with SSDE ProjCo Limited and notes the points raised and the preference for the eastern corridor not to be utilised.		In discussion

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation	Status
6.2	Location of Pylon RG006 within SEP/DEP cable corridor	27/11/25 - SSDE ProjCo Limited understands the indicative location of Pylon RG006, south of Hickling Lane, was previously sited in the middle of the SSDE cable corridor but was moved north as illustrated in the Proposed Project Design [APP-133] following feedback provided by SSDE ProjCo Limited to NGET. Whilst this change is welcomed, it is only reflected in the Proposed Project Design [APP-133] which does not provide sufficient certainty for SSDE ProjCo Limited that a conflict will be avoided at that location. SSDE ProjCo Limited is concerned that the Works Plans [APP017] Limits of Deviation still retain flexibility for NGET to place a pylon directly over the SSDE Order limits where the SSDE cable is to be laid.	15/02/26 – National Grid will engage with SSDE ProjCo Limited to formally record and commit to not siting RG006 atop the SSDE cable as currently allowed for by the SSDE DCO pending further engagement with SSDE ProjCO on exact limitations.		In discussion
6.3	Environmental areas conflicts	27/11/25 - The Norwich to Tilbury Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [APP-321] and the Norwich to Tilbury Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan Appendix D - Outline Landscape Proposals [APP-325] show land within the “Extent of the	15/02/26 – National Grid can commit to planting environmental areas in such a manner that would not obstruct the SSDE permanent access road to its substation.		In discussion

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation	Status
		<p>Environmental Area” with soft landscape enhancement and environmental proposals identified. Some of these areas of planting overlap with SSDE’s Order limits, including the SSDE permanent access road to its substation and the 400kV underground cable route consented for connecting into the Norwich Main substation.</p>			
6.4	NGET Haul Roads	<p>27/11/25 - According to the Norwich to Tilbury Proposed Project Design [APP-133], NGET is proposing construction haul roads in locations which directly conflict with the SSDE DCO Order limits. The haul road crosses the SSDE DCO cable corridor twice and creates conflicts in other locations. This causes a potential risk to the construction of SSDE, as access through the SSDE cable corridor must be maintained and secured for the duration of the proposed construction phase for cable installation and commissioning works.</p>	<p>15/02/26 – National Grid and its delivery partners will engage with SSDE ProjCo Limited to seek to ensure access is maintained for both the SSDE cable installation and commissioning works as well as the Norwich to Tilbury delivery phase.</p>		In discussion
6.5	Access Issues for SSDE	<p>27/11/25 - SSDE ProjCo Limited has concerns regarding restrictions on access to its development areas. This is due to</p>	<p>15/02/26 – National Grid requests further information from SSDE</p>		In discussion

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation	Status
		the significant overlap of the two projects around the north, west and southern sides of the Norwich Main substation. Should the projects be constructing simultaneously, there is a risk that insufficient access will be available to SSDE for construction of the 400kV connection and substation works to the south of the Norwich Main substation, including ancillary works and landscaping.	ProjCo Limited specific to the access restrictions concerns.		
6.6	Proposed overhead line pull areas	27/11/25 - The Norwich to Tilbury Proposed Project Design [APP-133] shows various proposed overhead line pulling locations around the proposed pylon locations. The significant areas over which these pulling locations are shown have a high degree of interactions with the SSDE DCO Order limits and proposed works.	15/02/26 – National Grid will, through detailed design, engage further with SSDE ProjCo Limited to provide further certainty to the extent overhead line pulling areas are required.		In discussion
6.7	Collaboration	18/02/26- Equinor welcomes a collaborative approach between the parties throughout the examination of the Project and post consent with a view to resolving matters. Equinor would welcome the opportunity to meet regularly	19/02/26 – National Grid agree with the views expressed; National Grid will arrange further meetings now on a detailed design basis to		In discussion

ID	Issue	Stakeholder position (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation	Status
		with National Grid to discuss these concerns and ensure the parties will work together, such that the interactions between the two DCOs are appropriately managed and both can be delivered without detriment to the other. Equinor considers that the collaborative arrangement should be formalised to give certainty that both Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects can proceed.	agree and formalise interactions.		
6.8	Protective provisions	18/02/26- Protective provisions are required within the Norwich to Tilbury DCO to avoid serious detriment to the SSDE DCO.	19/02/26 – There are standard protective provisions for the benefit of electricity and gas undertakers at Schedule 16, Part 1. National Grid welcome the Heads of Terms provided by SSDE ProjCo Limited and have instructed legal representation to consider a set of Protective Provisions between SSDE ProjCo Limited and National Grid.		In discussion

## 7. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Equinor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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