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Norwich to Tilbury

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IDBs - Water Management Alliance - Clean Version

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nationalgrid

Revision History

Version	Date	Submitted at
A	29 August 2025	DCO Application
B	26 February 2026	Deadline 1
C	12 May 2026	Deadline 4

Combined IDBs - Water Management Alliance

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 the Water Management Alliance (WMA) regarding the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project.

Where the section begins 'matters agreed', this sets out matter agreed between the Parties, with no further issues raised, where the approach is therefore agreed. Where the section begins 'matters currently under discussion', this sets out matters not agreed between the Parties, where further negotiations are required to agree upon an approach.

This SoCG is structured as follows:

- Section 1: An introduction to this SoCG and a description of its purpose
- Section 2: States the Parties involved and their roles within the DCO application process.
- Section 3: Gives a description of the project.
- Section 4: Identifies the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and their relevance to the project.
- Section 5: Summarises engagement between Parties to date
- Section 6: Sets out matters agreed by the parties
- Section 7: Sets out matters currently under discussion, and therefore still outstanding, and
- Section 8: Sets out the approvals and the signing off sheet between the Parties.

The aim of the SoCG is to clarify the shared understanding of any issues and facilitate an efficient resolution process. Any reference to 'the Parties' means the Applicant (National Grid) and the WMA.

2. Parties to the SoCG

This SoCG is agreed between National Grid (the Applicant) and the Water Management Alliance (WMA). The WMA is a consortium of seven Internal Drainage Boards (IDB): the Broads IDB, East Suffolk Water Management Board (WMB), King's Lynn IDB, Norfolk Rivers IDB, South Holland IDB, Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Drainage Board (WLYLDB), and Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (WLMB). An IDB is defined as a Risk

Management Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and also constituted under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) to undertake water level management and flood risk functions in their designated catchment areas.

The Project interacts with the following IDBs within the WMA: Norfolk Rivers IDB, WLYLDB, and East Suffolk WMB. Any reference to 'the Board' within this document should be taken to mean all of these three Boards.

3. Summary of matters under discussion

As requested by the Examining Authority, the below table provides an 'at a glance' summary of matters which are under discussion, together with a deadline by which such matters are expected to be resolved.

SoCG ID	Summary of matter under discussion	Deadline for resolution
7.1	Draft Protective Provisions have been shared with the WMA on 9 th April 2026 following the review of the WMAs response on the matter. WMA to confirm this matter is now agreed.	Deadline 5
7.2	The IDB suggests that the draft DCO is amended to ensure the definition of public sewer reflects the definition used in the Water Industry Act 1991, and that drain is excluded from this definition. The WMA would like to understand the rationale behind the definitions. The Applicant will review and provide an update at Deadline 5.	Deadline 5
7.3	The WMA does not support that the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 are appropriate to settle any dispute relating to a proposed discharge of surface water into a watercourse, which is currently implied by the draft DCO. Requires updates to the terminology presented. The Applicant will review and provide an update at Deadline 5.	Deadline
7.4	The WMA suggests the words "or drain" are removed from Part 4, Article 20, Paragraph 1 of the draft DCO. The Applicant will review and provide an update at Deadline 5.	Deadline
7.5	The IDBs affected by the project do not own any land within the development area. WMA to confirm this matter is now agreed.	Deadline 5
7.6	The Applicant has given an undertaking in respect of the WMA's legal costs associated with the negotiation of the protective provisions. WMA will continue to request a cost recovery agreement with the Applicant in relation to WMA officer as a wider agreement is taking place between WMA and National Grid. The Applicant will review and provide an update at Deadline 5.	Deadline 5

SoCG ID	Summary of matter under discussion	Deadline for resolution
7.7	The WMA requested confirmation of the location of all proposed watercourse crossings within the affected Boards' districts, including shapefiles. This was shared in February 2026. WMA has identified from the Watercourse Crossing Details document and spatial information and notes that they do not provide agreement for works such as watercourse crossings that require Board consent / approval, and therefore will not provide a blanket agreement with the proposals. They note that approval is required for each works once detailed drawings are provided by the Main Works Contractor. The Applicant will review and provide an update at Deadline 5.	Deadline 5
7.8	The Drainage Strategy was published at Deadline 1, and is being updated following feedback from the land drainage authorities and will be submitted at Deadline 4. The IDB note that it is not clear from the Drainage Strategy whether the project proposes to discharge surface or foul water into any watercourse within the Internal Drainage Districts and that if there is discharge of this nature proposed into any watercourse within an IDD, except a main river, consent under the relevant Board's Byelaws (or approval in accordance with the Protective Provisions) will be required, with approval being after receipt of drainage details for each proposed outfall. The Applicant will review and provide an update at Deadline 5.	Deadline 5

4. Background

4.1 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.

5. Stakeholder Interests

An IDB is defined as a Risk Management Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and also constituted under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) to undertake water level management and flood risk functions in their designated catchment areas. The WMA comment on planning applications and national infrastructure projects (such as Norwich to Tilbury) to promote sustainable development and ensure compliance with the Boards' regulatory requirements as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including Byelaws. The project is proposing to undertake several works which will require prior written consent from the Board (Land Drainage Consent) in relation to drainage arrangements, new areas of temporary haul road, working areas and watercourse crossings, and potentially to pylon and substation foundations and underground cables, depending upon their location.

6. Engagement to date

Engagement undertaken to date with the WMA includes:

ID	Date	Method	To	From	Description
5.1	30/10/2023	Email	WMA	National Grid	Drainage stakeholder engagement request
5.2	01/12/2023	Email	WMA	National Grid	Drainage stakeholder engagement request
5.3	11/12/2023	Consultation Meeting	N/A	N/A	Drainage stakeholder engagement meeting providing project overview and preliminary discussion of watercourse crossings, associated design requirements and consenting arrangements. Attended by WMA, Norfolk County Council, and National Grid (with Mott McDonald, Gavia Environmental and LSTC on behalf of National Grid).
5.4	19/12/2023	Email	WMA	National Grid	Issue of drainage stakeholder engagement meeting minutes
5.5	08/02/2024	Email	National Grid	WMA	Provision of requested watercourse/drain shape files for IDBs
5.6	23/07/2024	Statutory Consultation	National Grid	WMA	Response to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), providing information on Board byelaws, spatial overlap between project and Board Internal Drainage Districts, and stating WMA's expectation of detailed design and case-by-case discussions around watercourse crossing methods, anticipation of flood risk assessment and drainage strategies, discussion around conditions for IDB consents, comments for haul road crossings, and request to discuss land ownership matters.

ID	Date	Method	To	From	Description
5.7.	30/8/2024	Email	WMA	National Grid	Request for information on WMA area impacted by the Project; suggestion for future discussion regarding consents. Provided link to interactive map of route.
5.8	03/09/2024	Email	National Grid	WMA	<p>Provided links to dynamic maps of IDB areas and watercourse networks; offered shapefiles of the same; list of catchments and watercourses / IDB districts overlapping with Norwich to Tilbury route.</p> <p>Requested shapefiles of red line boundary of Norwich to Tilbury Scheme (Norfolk and Suffolk area only).</p> <p>Offer to discuss consents/approvals process; disapplication of Land Drainage Act 1991 and use of Protective Provisions for IDBs.</p>
5.9	17/09/2024	Email	WMA	National Grid	Technical note shared with WMA which outlined the proposed principles regarding the management of rainfall runoff and land drainage during the construction and operational stages of the Norwich to Tilbury Project.
5.10	10/10/2024	Email	National Grid	WMA	Follow up request for shapefiles of Norwich to Tilbury red line boundary; follow up request for discussion re. Land Drainage Act 1991 and Protective Provisions.
5.11	11/10/2024	Email	WMA	National Grid	<p>Holding response for providing shapefiles of Norwich to Tilbury route.</p> <p>Request for shapefiles of WMA managed sites.</p> <p>Arrangements for a follow up call.</p>
5.12	15/10/2024	Email	National Grid	WMA	The WMA have no comment to make on the technical note; however, we do support the comments made by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA -Suffolk County Council).

ID	Date	Method	To	From	Description
5.13	23/10/2024	Meeting	N/A	N/A	Meeting to discuss the Project's proposed approach to undertaking works to WMA watercourses and making discharges to WMA watercourses under the Land Drainage Act. WMA expressed preference for disapplying the Land Drainage Act, agreeing suitable protective provisions with the WMA and securing these via a suitable Requirement within the DCO. Attended by WMA and National Grid (with Gavia Environmental, LSTC and Fisher German on behalf of National Grid).
5.14	30/01/2025	Email	WMA	National Grid	Targeted consultation on updated Project proposals
5.15	03/03/2025	Email	National Grid	WMA	Comments on changes in sections "Norfolk 2, Suffolk 1 and Suffolk 1A". Further request for shapefiles of Development Order Boundaries.
5.16	11/03/2025	Email	National Grid	WMA	No comments on Essex and Thurrock areas.
5.17	17/03/2025	Letter	WMA	National Grid	Targeted consultation on updated Project proposals (Essex & Thurrock areas)
5.18	28/03/2025	Email	National Grid	WMA	No comment on targeted consultation for Essex and Thurrock areas as these are outside of the WMA IDBs' districts and catchments.
5.19	25/09/2025	Email	WMA	National Grid	Water crossing schedule shared
5.20	16/01/2026	Email	National Grid	WMA	Request undertaking for protective provision review
5.21	02/02/2026	Email	WMA	National Grid	Provision of undertaking for protective provision review

7. Matters Agreed

ID	Matter	Agreement	Date agreed
6.1	Haul Roads	Haul road crossings will be minimised, with the Applicant seeking to reuse existing crossings wherever viable.	23 rd July 2024
6.2	Watercourse crossings and appropriate crossing methods	<p>It was agreed that a watercourse crossing schedule including method statement would be prepared and issued with the application for a Development Consent Order, and include recommendations of crossing type (e.g. culvert or clear span bridge for access crossings, HDD or open cut trenching for cable crossings). 6.4.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 4.2 – Watercourse Crossing Details [APP-132] refers.</p> <p>The general principles of crossings should be included within the watercourse crossing schedule submitted with the application for Development Consent Order.</p> <p>Detailed design drawings will be required by the relevant Board for each work (e.g. each watercourse crossing) requiring the Board's approval (see also Matter 7.4).</p>	23 rd July 2024
6.3	Design criteria for temporary construction Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	<p>The Board is supportive of the proposal that SuDS will be being designed to contain up to the 1 in 100 year plus 25% Climate Change (as per the most conservative allowance along the project works from Essex County Council LLFA). The Board will defer to the relevant LLFA's guidance regarding on-site drainage design and climate change allowances.</p> <p>The Board is supportive of the proposal that SuDS will be designed to discharge at a restricted rate as determined by the relevant LLFA's guidance. The Board understands that the Project is proposing to discharge at a maximum rate of 1.4l/s/ha or 1l/s (whichever is greater).</p> <p>Drainage into the IDBs' districts will require approval from the relevant Board. Consent may be conditional as per the Board's Consent Policies available online via the Water Management Alliance webpages.</p>	11 th December 2023

ID	Matter	Agreement	Date agreed
6.4	Design requirements for watercourse crossings	It is agreed that the Applicant will make good any damage to existing watercourse crossings and the design of proposed watercourse crossings will follow IDB standard requirements.	11 th December 2023

8. Matters Currently Under Discussion

The following outstanding matters require further discussion with the WMA:

ID	Matter	WMA position (including date)	National Grid Position (including date)
7.1	Draft DCO Wording [REP3-004]: Schedule 16, Part 3 Protective Provisions for the Protection of Drainage and Flood Authorities	WMA has undertaken legal review of the draft Protective Provisions within the draft DCO. Whilst progress has been made towards agreeing wording, WMA currently still considers that the current wording of the draft Protective Provision is unsatisfactory. WMA will continue to engage with National Grid on this matter. (5th May 2026)	Draft Protective Provisions have been issued for further discussion (8 August 2025) National Grid understands the WMA is in the process of reviewing the draft Protective Provisions and will continue to engage with the Board to agree appropriate wording. A response on protective provisions was received from Water Management Alliance on 17 March. The Applicant has returned the protective provisions on 9 th April 2026. (April 2026)
7.2	Draft DCO [REP3-004] Part 4 Supplemental Powers, Article 20	The Board suggests that the draft DCO is amended to ensure the definition of public sewer reflects the definition	The Applicant notes the WMA's comments and an update will be provided in the next

ID	Matter	WMA position (including date)	National Grid Position (including date)
	Discharge of Water: Definition of public sewer or drain	<p>used in the Water Industry Act 1991, and that drain is excluded from this definition.</p> <p>Notably there is no such thing as a public drain in the Water Industry Act 1991.</p> <p>A drain is a watercourse under the Land Drainage Act 1991.</p> <p>Alternatively the Board wishes to understand the applicant's rationale for this definition. (6 May 2026)</p>	revision of the Statement of Common Ground at Deadline 5.
7.3	Draft DCO [REP3-004] Article 20 Discharge of Water: Settlement of disputes	<p>The Board does not support that the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991 are appropriate to settle any dispute relating to a proposed discharge of surface water into a watercourse, which is currently implied by the draft DCO (Article 20, Paragraph 2).</p> <p>The Board suggests the words “or drain” are removed from Part 4, Article 20, Paragraph 4 of the draft DCO so that it reads as follows:</p> <p><i>“(4) The undertaker must not make any opening into any public sewer except...”</i></p> <p>Land Drainage Consent is required from the Board for any temporary or permanent discharge of surface water or groundwater into watercourses within the Board's internal drainage district under WMB byelaws (Byelaw 3) pursuant to s.66 of Land Drainage Act 1991. A dispute resolution process is already established through the Land Drainage Act 1991 / Byelaws.</p>	The Applicant notes the WMA's comments and further responses will be provided in the next revision of the Statement of Common Ground at Deadline 5.

ID	Matter	WMA position (including date)	National Grid Position (including date)
		<p>Notably there is no such thing as a public drain in the Water Industry Act 1991.</p> <p>A drain is a watercourse under the Land Drainage Act 1991.</p>	
7.4	<p>Draft DCO [REP3-004], Part 4, Article 20, Paragraph 1: Wording of Draft DCO, Part 4, Article 20, Paragraph 1</p>	<p>The Board suggests the words “or drain” are removed from Part 4, Article 20, Paragraph 1 of the draft DCO.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the WMA’s comments and further responses will be provided in the next revision of the Statement of Common Ground at Deadline 5.</p>
7.5	Land Rights	<p>It is currently understood that the IDBs affected by the project do not own any land within the development area. (13 February 2026)</p>	<p>Further discussion pending confirmation of affected IDB land. (4 June 2025)</p>
7.6	Cost Recovery	<p>WMA would like to agree a cost recovery process with National Grid for officer time spent on the project during the pre-application, examination and post-DCO periods. Further conversation is required, as National Grid’s position does not consider or address the pre-application or examination time period. (13 February 2026)</p> <p>WMA appreciates National Grid’s undertaking in respect of legal costs associated with negotiation of protective provisions. WMA will continue to request a cost recovery agreement with National Grid in relation to WMA officer time spent as set out above. Such agreement is being</p>	<p>National Grid notes the comments from the WMA and will continue to engage on this matter. (14 July 2025)</p> <p>National Grid has given an undertaking in respect of the WMA’s legal costs associated with the negotiation of the protective provisions. (18 February 2026)</p>

ID	Matter	WMA position (including date)	National Grid Position (including date)
		developed between National Grid and WMA in relation to other projects. (6 th May 2026)	The Applicant notes the WMA's comments and further responses will be provided in the next revision of the Statement of Common Ground at Deadline 5.
7.7	Draft Watercourse Crossing Method Statement	WMA has identified from the Watercourse Crossing Details document [APP-132] and spatial information shared by National Grid the proposed watercourse crossings that would require consent under the relevant Board's Byelaws (or approval in accordance with the Protective Provisions). WMA does not provide agreement in principle for works such as watercourse crossings that require Board consent / approval, and therefore will not provide a blanket agreement with proposals in the Watercourse Crossing Details document. Instead, the Boards will provide approval for each works (each watercourse crossing) once detailed drawings are provided by the Main Works Contractor (6 May 2026).	<p>National Grid notes the comments from the WMA and will continue to engage on this matter. (14 July 2025)</p> <p>National Grid has shared the now published 6.4.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 4.2 - Watercourse Crossing Details [APP-132], along with mapping information, but appreciates the WMA's request to further understand watercourse crossing methods and intends to enable this via engagement by its Main Works Contractor(s) during the development of detailed designs as necessary to secure approvals in accordance with the draft Protective Provisions. (January 2026)</p> <p>Additional information shared, including shapefiles, in February 2026. (24 February 2026)</p> <p>The Applicant notes the WMA's comments and further responses will be provided in the</p>

ID	Matter	WMA position (including date)	National Grid Position (including date)
7.8	Surface Water Discharge Strategy	<p>The project route crosses parts of the internal drainage districts (IDDs) of three Internal Drainage Boards: Norfolk Rivers IDB; Waveney, Lower Yare & Lothingland IDB, and East Suffolk Water Management Board. It is not clear from the Drainage Strategy [REP1-072] whether the project proposes to discharge surface water or foul water into any watercourse within the IDD, for example from any of the overhead line construction SuDS basins. Should discharge of surface water or foul water be proposed into any watercourse within an IDD, except a main river, consent under the relevant Board’s Byelaws (or approval in accordance with the Protective Provisions) will be required. Approval would be provided after receipt of drainage details (impermeable area served, discharge rate) for each proposed outfall.</p> <p>Section 2.3.1 of the Drainage Strategy [REP1-072] incorrectly refers to “Lower Yare & Lothingland IDB”; this should read “Waveney, Lower Yare & Lothingland IDB”.</p>	<p>next revision of the Statement of Common Ground at Deadline 5.</p> <p>National Grid submitted a surface water drainage strategy at Deadline 1 (8.2 Drainage Strategy DCO [REP1-072]). The Drainage Strategy is being updated by the Applicant in response to the comments and feedback received from the land drainage authorities and will be submitted at Deadline 4.</p> <p>(April 2026)</p> <p>The Applicant notes the WMA’s comments and further responses will be provided in the next revision of the Statement of Common Ground at Deadline 5.</p>

9. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For Water Management Alliance

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

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