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Norwich to Tilbury

Volume 8: Examination Documents

**Document: 8.3.63 Signed Statement of Common Ground - Sport
England - Tracked Changes Version**

Final Issue B

May 2026

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nationalgrid

Revision History

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Submitted at</u>
<u>A</u>	<u>26 February 2026</u>	<u>Deadline 1</u>
<u>B</u>	<u>12 May 2026</u>	<u>Deadline 4</u>

Sport England

~~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 Sport England regarding potential 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 Sport England.

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 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 targeted consultations.

4. Stakeholder Interests

Sport England is a non-departmental public body responsible for delivering the Government's community sport and physical activity objectives across England. Sport England holds a statutory consultee role in the planning system specifically for planning applications affecting playing fields. This means local planning authorities are legally required to consult Sport England where development may affect a playing field. For Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) including the Norwich to Tilbury DCO, Sport England is consulted as a non-statutory consultee.

Sport England has reviewed the Norwich to Tilbury proposals and submitted formal planning/consultation responses raising concerns over potential permanent and temporary impacts on the White Notley Football Club (WNFC).

White Notley Football Club has been established for nearly 75 years and provides two adult pitches (one over-marked for junior football), a small floodlit training pitch, clubhouse facilities, and parking areas along Church Hill and associated overflow grass areas. The club also serves the wider community, running multiple adult, youth and mini teams, and is used by the local primary school.

The chronology of National Grid's engagement with WNFC to date, through consultation and 121 meetings is as follows:

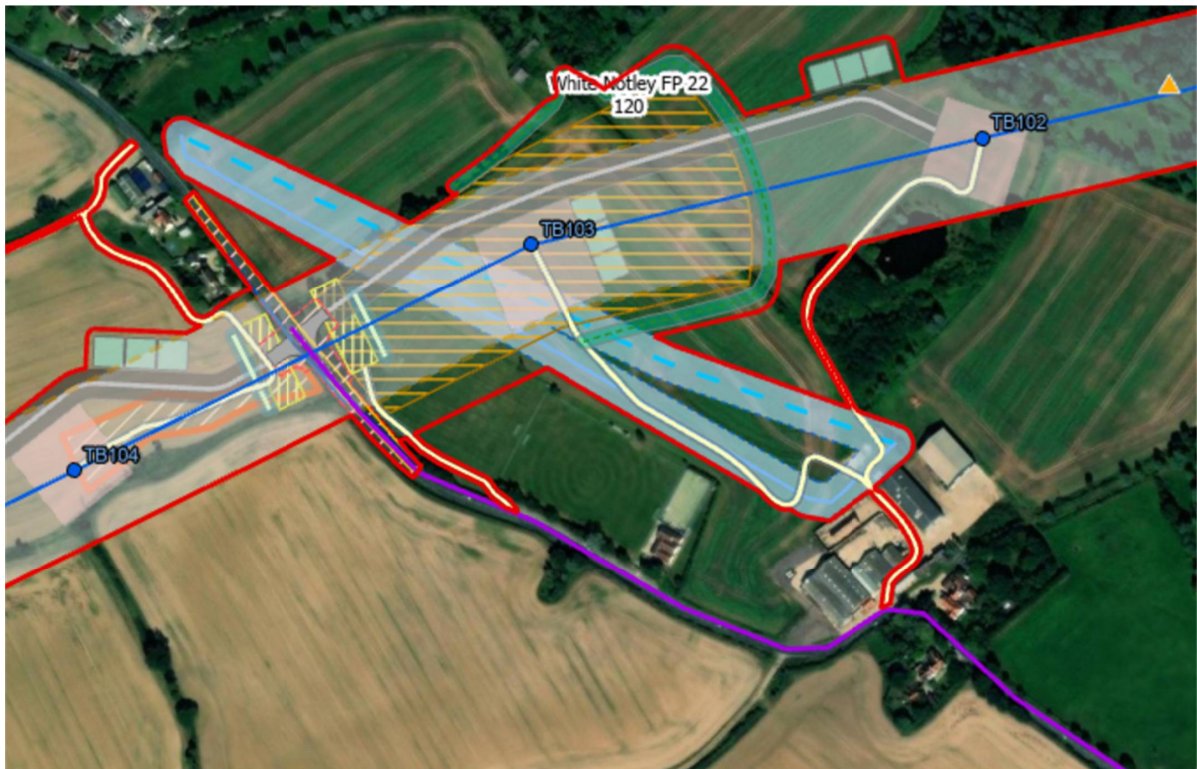
- Non-Statutory Consultation One – April to June 2022
- Non-Statutory Consultation Two – June to August 2023
- Statutory Consultation – April to July 2024
- Targeted Consultation - January to April 2025
- Virtual Teams Meeting – April 2025 (Attendees- National Grid, White Notley FC, Essex County FA and Sport England)
- Virtual Teams Meeting – November 2025 (Attendees- National Grid, White Notley FC, Essex County FA and Sport England)
- [Virtual Teams Meeting – 1st April 2026 \(Attendees- National Grid, White Notley FC, and Sport England\)](#)

During the statutory consultation, Sport England in partnership with WNFC raised significant concerns regarding the Norwich to Tilbury Project's potential impact on its facilities and community role. An objection was raised in relation to the proposed Overhead line alignment, on the basis that it would result in the loss of the youth pitch, partial loss of the senior pitch, removal of parking areas, and restricted access to the clubhouse, rendering the site unusable. Sport England highlighted the importance of WNFC as a community hub serving over 120 playing members and 300 social members, supporting local schools and charities, and promoting physical and mental wellbeing. There was also an emphasis on operational and financial risks, including revenue loss and disruption to youth development programs, as well as safety concerns related to construction traffic and environmental impacts such as noise and pollution. Alternative routing options were requested, including offshore or underground solutions, and sought clear commitments on mitigation measures, timelines, and potential community benefits to offset temporary disruption.

Overhead line draft alignment description

The Norwich to Tilbury 400kV overhead line alignment passes adjacent to White Notley Football Club's grounds, located near Church Hill Road. The alignment runs parallel to the existing 132kV UKPN line, which will be removed as part of the project. The proposed towers in this section are positioned to avoid permanent intrusion onto the playing pitches, with clearances meeting statutory safety requirements. Temporary works, including conductor stringing operations, may require short-term access across part of the site, potentially affecting one pitch for a limited period. Mitigation measures include maintaining safe access routes, scheduling works outside peak football season where possible, and restoring any disturbed areas promptly after completion are currently being looked at.

Draft overhead alignment and temporary works



5. Matters Agreed

ID	Issue	Date agreed Agreement reached	Relevant- documentation Date agreed	Relevant documentation
5.1	Overhead line design – Alignment adjustment	<p>Following consultation feedback and further assessment, the draft overhead alignment was moved slightly in a north westerly direction, which results in the overhead line span from TB103 to TB104 no longer crossing the corner of the second football pitch.</p> <p>This would mean that following construction there would be no permanent apparatus on or above the WNFC area of interest.</p> <p>November 2025 At this point the corner of the second pitch does remain within the limits of deviation (LOD), until further detailed design and ground investigations have been carried out.</p>	November 2025	
5.2	Permanent access	<p>The red line boundary (RLB) / order limits currently show a permanent access route to the overhead alignment from Church Hill Road, cutting across the WNFC parking area adjacent to the second pitch.</p> <p>This access will not be used for construction and will only be used for future maintenance of the overhead line and temporary installation of a protection scaffold if required.</p> <p>When this access is required in the future WNFC will be given prior notice and consideration given to only being used when the carpark is not in use.</p> <p>November 2025 <u>The Applicant has confirmed that should the access be required for use the Applicant will seek agreement to install a new gate with a swing hight restrictor or alternatively compensate WNFC to</u></p>	November 2025	

ID	Issue	Date agreed Agreement reached	Relevant- documentation Date agreed	Relevant documentation
		install the gate.		
5.3	Traffic management	<p>When the works are taking place and the temporary access is installed off Church Hill Road, traffic management will be in place to ensure public safety and awareness.</p> <p>November 2025 This will involve vegetation management along a short section of Church Hill Road either side of the access point.</p>	November 2025	
5.4	Club parking	<p>November 2025 National Grid does not envisage affecting any of the WNFC parking areas including the off-road parking adjacent to the second pitch and the layby off Church Hill Road, adjacent to the first pitch.</p>	November 2025	
5.5	Restoration commitment	<p>It is National Grids ambition to avoid needing access on to the second WNFC pitch, but in a worst-case scenario if access was required to facilitate the overhead line works and damage was caused. Reinstatement works would be carried out to return the pitch to its current condition.</p> <p>The reinstatement if required would be carried out by a suitable sports field contractor and a survey would be carried out before access was taken to record the current condition of the pitch and inform the reinstatement.</p> <p>November 2025 if there were any costs incurred by the club due to damage or the pitch being out of use for a period, National Grid would seek to agree compensation and / mitigation measures with the club.</p>	November 2025	

6. ~~Matters Currently Under Discussion~~

ID	Issue	Sport England / WNFC position	National Grid response	Relevant documentation
6.15.6	Temporary Works	<p>At present <u>Minimising Impact on the main Second WNFC Pitch</u> The Applicant has taken steps to reduce and, where possible, remove any adverse impact on the WNFC could be the temporary unavailability of their second WNFC pitch. As shown in <u>According to confirmation from the image below (2nd pitch outlined in green) the order limits / temporary working area currently cuts across the westerly half of the pitch.</u> <u>Applicant's construction partners, access to</u></p>  <p>If the second pitch is unavailable for the club to use, this would have <u>will not be necessary. Should</u> a significant impact on the club's ability to accommodate matches for the youth / mini-teams and first-team training. <u>pulling position be</u> This would not just have a financial impact on the club, but also potentially increase the risk of players and supporters moving to another club.</p>	01/04/26	

ID	Issue	Sport England / WNFC position	National Grid response	Relevant documentation
		<p>Scheduling Works: Aim to carry out disruptive activities outside peak football season to minimise impact on fixtures. The main works contractor is currently assessing the phasing and programme of all works.</p> <p>Construction will be split into five separate phases: Haul Road installation, foundation construction, tower assembly, conductor installation and haul road removal / reinstatement. The only phase that may impact the second pitch would be the installation of the conductors, and this work is likely to be spread over several months but not result in several months of continuous disturbance with activities being likely limited to between 2 and 4 periods lasting between 2 and 4 weeks at a time as a guide.</p> <p>National Grid is seeking to reduce / remove this possible impact and has asked the construction contractor to look at whether the working area (yellow hatch area shown on image) can be reduced, and or accommodated outside of the second pitch footprint.</p> <p>National Grid has requested that WNFC provide a schedule where possible (and at the appropriate time) of all planned football fixtures and planned events that require the use of the second pitch.</p> <p>Alternative Facilities & Compensation: If the pitch becomes unavailable, mitigation could include access to local alternative facilities and financial compensation for loss of revenue. Although National Grid commits to supporting the club if alternative facilities are required, it is understood that this is not necessarily a simple option <u>for can be accommodated outside the club due to availability boundary of other facilities and the fact that they may need to commit financially</u></p>		

ID	Issue	Sport England / WNFC position	National Grid response	Relevant documentation
		<p>to other facilities for a longer period than required. A financial package will first need to be agreed between both parties before alternative facilities can be sought.</p> <p><u>pitch, ensuring the playing area remains unaffected.</u></p> <p><u>Safety Buffer and Fencing</u></p> <p><u>In addition, the Applicant has confirmed that a minimum distance of three metres will be maintained between the white goal line and the project's safety fencing. This precaution ensures a safe buffer zone is preserved between the construction works and the football pitch.</u></p> <p><u>Match Day Arrangements</u></p> <p><u>Specific arrangements will be implemented on match days, or immediately following them, to retrieve any footballs that may cross the fence and enter the designated work area. This measure will help to minimise any disruption to sporting activities and maintain safety for all users.</u></p> <p><u>Compensation and Reinstatement Commitments</u></p> <p><u>Restoration Commitments:</u> Any disturbed<u>As the detailed design process is ongoing, there remains some uncertainty regarding the exact positioning of the overhead line and pylons, which may in turn influence the location of temporary works. In recognition of this, the Applicant has expressed a willingness to enter into a side agreement. This agreement would formally set out the Applicant's commitment to provide compensation and to reinstate any areas</u> will be reinstated promptly after completion<u>that are affected as a result of the works.</u></p>		

6. Matters Currently Under Discussion

<u>ID</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Sport England / WNFC position</u>	<u>National Grid response</u>	<u>Relevant documentation</u>
6.2	Community Benefit	<p>WNFC has the need to resurface their all-weather pitch within the near future and has raised the question whether National Grid (Norwich to Tilbury Project) would be able to assist with the cost of the work under community benefit funding.</p> <p>The all-weather surface is a key revenue stream for the club and it is felt that resurfacing the pitch will help mitigate potential affects caused by the Project.</p>	<p>Applicant is committed to providing a coordinated local and regional approach to community benefits. The Government has published its guidance on community funds for transmission infrastructure (DESNZ, 2025). The Applicant is committed to working with Ofgem, industry partners, local communities and their representatives to ensure community benefits are delivered fairly and effectively, driving lasting, positive change for the people and places integral to our developing electricity network.</p> <p>This would be delivered outside the development consent process, since it is not a material consideration in the decision on the Project or a matter to be secured as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO), as per the Community Funds for Transmission Infrastructure: Guidance (DESNZ, 2025).</p> <p>Therefore, any community benefit or investment would be captured under the National Grid Community Grant Scheme and dealt with separately to the EIA.</p>	

7. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For Sport England

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

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<u>Table Insert</u>	9
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Format changes	0
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