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Norwich to Tilbury

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**Document: 8.3.65 Draft Statement of Common Ground - Southfields
Development Group**

Final Issue A

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Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027

nationalgrid

Southfields Development Group 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 Southfields Development Group regarding specific issues arising during construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the proposed Norwich to Tilbury Project (the Project) and its interface with Southfields Development Group, West of Buckingham Hill Road, Linford, Stanford-le-Hope. 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 pre-examination and examination stages of the DCO process.

2. Parties to the SoCG

This SoCG is between National Grid and Southfields Development Group.

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	The proposed pylon positions would adversely affect the viability of the proposed village development.	Deadline 7

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.

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.

5. Stakeholder Interests

Southfields Development Group has legal land interests that have the potential to interact with the Norwich to Tilbury proposals. This has been identified as Land West of Buckingham Hill Rd, Linford, Stanford-le-Hope. The development in question is a proposal for *A village site with capacity for approximately 800 new dwellings, together with supporting infrastructure including a village centre, primary school, local retail provision, and areas of public open space*. At this time, planning permission has not been granted for the development.

National Grid is seeking to ensure that the interests of both parties, and how they may be affected by the interaction, are understood. 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. On this basis we seek the input from Southfields Development Group to demonstrate how their interests may be affected, how Southfields Development Group or National Grid and its contractors can collectively reduce those effects and input to agree the implementation of such measures.

Engagement History

- Non-statutory consultation April - June 2022 (graduated swathe), non-statutory consultation June – August 2023 (draft alignment), Statutory consultation April – July 2024, Landowner consultation June – July 2025
- Teams Meeting Date: 5 June 2025
- The parties continue to engage through regular email correspondence in relation to the matters described in this Statement of Common Ground.

6. Matters Agreed

ID	Issue	Agreement reached	Date agreed	Relevant documentation
6.1				

7. Matters Under Discussion

ID	Issue	National Grid position	Stakeholder position	Relevant documentation
7.1	Pylon Positions	<p>The Applicant acknowledges Southfields Development Group's concerns regarding the alignment of the proposed overhead line and its potential interaction with the village and wider regeneration proposals.</p> <p>Throughout the design process, the Applicant has sought to identify an alignment that minimises impacts where practicable. In particular, efforts have been made to keep the overhead line as close as possible to the existing gas pipeline corridor, thereby limiting the extent of additional land affected and consolidating infrastructure where feasible.</p> <p>However, there are a number of technical and environmental constraints that limit flexibility in this location. Due to local topography and</p>	<p>The 'line' presently shown as running across the southern part of the 800 dwelling village site, and the Thurrock Council owned filled refuse tip, which is to the immediate east of the village site, blight the whole of the village site to the point of making the proposed dwellings unsaleable, in addition the agreement for Thurrock Council and National Grid to jointly participate in regeneration of the 80 acre filled tip area would also be prejudiced by the presently proposed positions of two of the new pylons and the proposed pylon line.</p> <p>Prima facie it looks as if the new pylon cable line could continue further south along the east side of Buckingham Hill Road to cross the BHR just to the south of the junction of Holford Road with the</p>	

ID	Issue	National Grid position	Stakeholder position	Relevant documentation
		<p>ground conditions, it has not been possible to route the line across the landfill. These constraints significantly restrict the range of alignment options in this area.</p> <p>With regard to tower position TB261, its location has been determined through detailed engineering design, including span length, safety, and structural requirements. Relocating this tower outside of the refuse tip area is not feasible without exceeding acceptable span distances or necessitating additional infrastructure, which could result in greater overall environmental and visual effects.</p> <p>The Applicant notes the concerns raised in relation to the potential implications for the proposed development and has, to date, sought to take account of emerging master planning where reasonably practicable within the design process. However, given the constraints outlined above, there is limited scope for further modification to the alignment in this area.</p> <p>The Applicant remains committed to ongoing engagement with stakeholders and will continue to consider any reasonable opportunities to reduce effects where practicable.</p>	<p>Buckingham Hill Road. The latter line would remove the blighting effect upon the proposed village site and the regenerated for recreation purposes Buckingham Hill Road 'Council owned refuse tip, while occupying land which is presently vacant and unlikely to ever be considered for residential development.</p> <p>I cannot see any material difference in the construction cost to 'Grid of the overhead line as presently indicated, as against moving the 'line' to continue further south along the east side of Buckingham Hill Road. Given the height, substantial nature and position of the pylons and the 'line' as presently proposed, my proposed scheme for the new Southfields Village and a Country Park which will, all being well, include the regenerated refuse tip as referred to above, will not be viable.</p> <p>People do not like living near pylons and overhead lines and the incidence of the proposals as presently indicated, albeit over a very small length of the overall 'line', renders the ten years of work spent upon creating the new 'Village and Country Park, and obtaining local residents support, as completely wasted.</p>	

8. Signatures

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

For National Grid

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

For Southfields Development Group

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

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