

AENC-NG-CNS-REP-0226

Norwich to Tilbury

Volume 8: Examination Documents

Document: 8.3.10 Signed Statement of Common Ground - Equinor
- Tracked Changes Version

Final Issue D

August 2026

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027

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Revision History

Version	Date	Submitted at
A	26 February 2026	Deadline 1
B	12 May 2026	Deadline 4
C	21 July 2026	Deadline 7
<u>D</u>	<u>04 August 2026</u>	<u>Deadline 8</u>

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Equinor

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. 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. 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
74-	Concerns around environmental areas overlapping with SSDE apparatus have since been resolved in principal and formal plans detailing agreement are being drafted.	Close of Examination
7.2	Ongoing discussions related to access requirements	Close of Examination
7.3	Protective Provision/legal agreement negotiations are progressing but not yet fully agreed	Close of Examination
7v4	Document 8.4.3 Report on Interrelationship with Other Infrastructure Projects corrections requested	Close of Examination

3. 4 -Background

3.1 4.1-Description of the Project/Development

National Grid Electricity Transmission pic ('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 targeted consultations.

4. ~~5.~~ Stakeholder Interests

Equinor were the applicant for the SSDE DOO 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

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5. ~~6.~~ Matters Agreed

ID	Issue	Agreement reached	Date agreed	<u>Relevant documentation</u>
6-5. <u>1</u>	Collaboration	Both parties welcome the collaborative approach throughout the examination of the Project and post consent with a view to resolving matters. Equinor would welcome the opportunity to meet regularly 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. National Grid commit to a delivery stage working group to ensure collaborative engagement throughout the project lifecycle.	09/07/26	
6-25. <u>2</u>	Limits of deviation flexibility	The Applicant has agreed to assign Class 8 land rights to the eastern swathe option. This will also be further committed to in and otherwise committed not to construct this option. This commitment has been added into the Protective Provisions under discussion between both parties included within the draft DCO (Schedule 16, Part 10).	15/07/26	<u>The eastern alignment of overhead cable between pylons RG001 and RG007 is described in the first row of table 2.1 of document 8.11 Approach to Scenarios (Clean) (Final Issue C)</u>

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ID	Issue	Agreement reached	Date agreed	Relevant documentation
6.3 <u>5.3</u>	Location of Pylon RG006 within SEP/DEPSSDE cable corridor	The Applicant has agreed to not site Pylon RG006 nor its associated working area within the Equinor SSDE Project DCO underground cable swathe. This will be further committed to in legal agreements currently under discussion between both parties commitment has been added into the Protective Provisions included within the draft DCO (Schedule 16, Part 10) .	15/07/26	
6.4	NGET Haul Roads	Parties have agreed in principle that where the SSDE cable interacts with the haul road, the haul road can be ducted in advance to accommodate. This is being reflected in legal agreements currently under discussion between both parties.	15/07/26	
6.5 <u>4</u>	Proposed Overhead Line Pulling Area	Both parties agree this interaction can be successfully managed through appropriate notice, coordination and cooperation arrangements during delivery works.	15/07/26	

6. ~~7.~~ Matters Currently Under Discussion

ID	Issue	Equinor (including date)	National Grid response (including date)	Relevant documentation
7-1 <u>1</u>	Environmental areas conflicts	07/05/26 - 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 Environmental Area" with soft landscape enhancement and environmental proposals identified.	24/04/26 - The Applicant commits to planting environmental areas in such a manner that would not obstruct the SSDE permanent access road to its substation. A meeting is proposed between project	

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		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. Further information has been provided by SSDE ProjCo Limited within its response to ExAQ1 [REP3-120]. SSDE ProjCo Limited would welcome a meeting to discuss a solution to this conflict <u>29/07/26 - It is noted that the Applicant has committed not to undertake planting which would interfere with SSDE ProjCo Limited's access to its substation nor its cable corridor. That commitment is welcome. However, there remains a conflict between the Applicant's proposed ecological works and SSDE ProjCo Limited's proposed landscaping works immediately to the south of the Norwich Main substation extension. SSDE ProjCo Limited does not,</u>	ecologists to align on planting restrictions. 09/07/26 - Both parties ecology teams have discussed and agreed a resolution to Environmental Areas Conflicts, 15/07/26 - A revised OLEMP is being drafted to reflect commitments made. <u>03/08/26 - Through bespoke protective provisions, the Applicant has expressly committed not to plant over SSDEPL's access as part of its landscape and ecological management plan. In the updated</u>	

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		therefore, have certainty that the Applicant will not undertake ecological works under the dDCO in direct conflict with SSDE ProjCo Limited's proposals. A commitment to coordinate is not sufficient in this instance where the Applicant has not taken opportunities to update its outline plans to account for SSDE ProjCo Limited's presence.	version of those protective provisions included in 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order (Revision H) at Deadline 8, this commitment has been clarified to make clear it applies to both the permanent and temporary access routes to the substation.	
6 2	<u>NGET Haul Roads</u>	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. 29/07/2026 - SSDE ProjCo Limited's concerns remain that cabling works and associated haul road access consented under the SSDE DCO will be impeded by the proposed Norwich to Tilbury works and activities. The Applicant has sought to reduce the impacts by committing in the Applicant's protective provisions to	24/04/26 - The Applicant are engaging with SSDE ProjCo Limited to ensure access is maintained for both the SSDE cable installation and commissioning works within Norwich to Tilbury delivery phase. 03/08/26 - The updated version of the protective provisions included in 3.1 Draft Development Consent Order (Revision H) at Deadline 8 adds clarity to this commitment and is intended to reflect that the laying of ducting and drainage before the haul road is installed is not the only option to manage this	

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		<u>coordinate the pre-laying of SSDE ProjCo Limited's cabling before the Applicant's haul road is installed. However, this does not account for the coordination of haul roads at this location and does not account for a scenario in which SSDE ProjCo Limited is not in a position to pre-lay its ducts before the haul road is in place. The Applicant's approach is restrictive on SSDE ProjCo Limited's consented activities, of which the Applicant has been aware since well before the grant of the SSDE DCO in April 2024 and has had ample opportunity to design in a collaborative manner to allow both projects to be in construction concurrently. The drafting as it stands creates a risk that SSDE ProjCo Limited will be prevented from accessing the relevant land to lay its cabling and haul roads for the duration of the Applicant's haul road being in place which SSDE ProjCo Limited understands could be years.</u>	<u>interface.</u> <u>The drafting now provides for there to be an agreement on the timing and installation of the ducting/drainage prior to commencement of the haul road and, if that agreement is that the ducting and drainage must be in place before commencement, then there is an obligation on NGET to ensure that is in place prior to commencement (subject to the proviso that SSDEPL supply a specification 60 business days prior to that commencement). Additionally, the drafting now includes wording to make clear that the agreement on the interaction must ensure that neither parties' activities or works within the overlap area will be rendered undeliverable or materially more expensive to deliver.</u>	

6 Access Issues 07/05/26 - SSDE ProjCo Limited has concerns

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<u>3</u>	for SSDE	regarding restrictions on access to its development areas. This is due to 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. SSDE- ProjCo Limited await further clarity from National Grid on this and would welcome further discussion. <u>29/07/26 - the Applicant has agreed in the its protective provisions to maintain SSDE ProjCo Limited's access to its substation in accordance with SSDE ProjCo Limited's existing land rights. However, the access to the substation rights have not been granted to SSDE ProjCo Limited by the Applicant, The Applicant is entirely in control of the process of granting those rights, as they pertain to the Applicant's land. By not committing to protecting that access (in principle, without linking it with the existence of those rights) the Applicant's protective provisions create a significant risk to SSDE ProjCo Limited's ability to access its substation construction area. This together with the absence of a commitment to provide for haul road access for SSDE ProjCo Limited along its cable</u>	09/07/26 - National Grid is reviewing the additional context provided regarding required junction improvement works and will revert back with comments once complete -1/07/ 6 Further commentary requested from SSDE ProjCo as to what is required from the Applicant to satisfy access concerns. <u>03/08/26 - The Applicant understands SSDE ProjCo Limited is progressing through the National Grid process for provision of land/access rights through National Grid owned operational land. This process is not linked to or allowed for within the draft DCO. The Applicant suggests SSDE ProjCo Limited continue engagement with the National Grid Asset Operations team to obtain the rights sought.</u>	

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		<u>corridor, this creates a risk that SSDE ProjCo Limited will still not be able to achieve access to deliver the SSDE Project in line with its consent.</u>		
<u>7.36</u> <u>A</u>	Protective provisions	07/05/26 - Protective provisions are required within the Norwich to Tilbury DCO to avoid serious detriment to the SSDE DCO. SSDE ProjCo Limited have provided heads of terms for a side agreement. The parties met to discuss these on 07/05/26 and a further meeting is being arranged to progress matters. <u>29/07/26 - SSDE ProjCo Limited and the Applicant are discussing a side agreement. However, discussions have not concluded and the Applicant's protective provisions offer insufficient protection for SSDE ProjCo Limited. SSDE ProjCo Limited will continue to engage with the Applicant following the close of the examination to seek a resolution that is satisfactory to both parties.</u>	15/07/26 - Protective Provisions remain under discussion between the parties. The Applicant will continue discussions to seek to reach agreement and will reflect its position on those matters still remaining in dispute in the Statutory Undertaker Tracker at Deadline 7. <u>03/08/26 - The parties have made significant progress in working together on both the protective provisions and side agreement. The Applicant acknowledges that full agreement has not yet reached and welcomes SSDEPL's commitment to continue to engage following the close of the examination.</u>	
<u>7r4g</u> <u>.5</u>	Document 8.4.3 Report on	Document 8.4.3 Report on Interrelationship with Other Infrastructure Projects [REP1-134] includes some	21/07/26—REP3-120 has been addressed in the Applicants-	{REP3-120J I <u>REP1-134J</u>

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	Interrelationship with Other Infrastructure Projects	incorrect statements which SSDE ProjCo Limited have clarified in its response to ExAQ1 [REP3-120]. SSDE ProjCo Limited requests further updates to JREP1-1341 are made to correct these at the earliest opportunity.	follow up response to- ExAQ403/Q8/26 - <u>The Applicant has noted the response provided in JREP3-120 specific to Document 8.4.3 Report on Interrelationship with Other Infrastructure Projects and will continue to engage with SSDE ProjCo.</u>	
6.6	<u>Land rights</u>	<u>29/07/26 - the Applicant has included insufficient protection for SSDE ProjCo Limited's land rights within its protective provisions. SSDE ProjCo Limited has a consented DCO with powers of compulsory acquisition and temporary possession which overlap with the Applicant's order limits. In addition, SSDE ProjCo Limited is in possession of land interests with respect to its project. The Applicant is seeking to limit the protection offered to SSDE ProjCo Limited's land rights to rights which SSDE ProjCo Limited has in respect of its apparatus. However, this position does not account for how the overlapping powers of both DCOs will operate, nor does it account for rights which SSDE ProjCo Limited may hold in respect of other aspects of its development that do not fall neatly into the description of 'apparatus', for example access or maintenance rights for planting. The concerns set out by SSDE ProjCo Limited in JREP6-163] remain</u>	<u>03/08/26 - The Applicant has included protection for SSDEPL's land interests in respect of apparatus within bespoke protective provisions included in the DCO. In the updated version of the protective provisions included in 3,1 Draft Development Consent Order (Revision H) at Deadline 8, the Applicant has also added express references to cables and accesses to provide SSDEPL additional comfort.</u> <u>Given its current understanding about SSDEPL's existing and</u>	

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		<u>outstanding.</u>	<u>proposed land rights, the</u> <u>Applicant does not consider that it</u> <u>is able to provide further</u> <u>protections through the protective</u> <u>provisions. The Applicant's full</u> <u>position on this can be found in</u> <u>table 2.2 of 8.7 Statutory</u> <u>Undertaker Tracker and 8.29.13</u> <u>Application under Section 127</u> <u>Planning Act 2008 -</u> <u>Sheringham Shoal and</u> <u>Dudgeon Extensions Projco</u> <u>Limited.</u>	

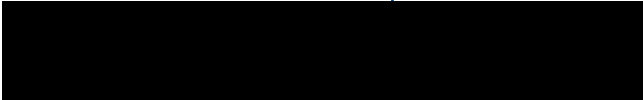
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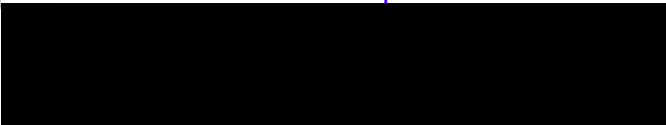
7. ~~8.~~ **Signatures**

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

For National Grid DocuSigned by:

Name

Position' Project Director

Date: 04/08/2026

For Equi Signed by:

Name:

Position' Commercial Agreements and Land Manager

Date: 04/08£2026

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Delete-	40
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Format changes	0
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