The Great Grid Upgrade

North Humber to High Marnham

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North Humber to High Marnham

Volume 5: Reports and Statements

Document 5.8.3 Statement of Common Ground - Natural England

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nationalgrid

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1. Purpose of the Statement of Common Ground

1.1.1 This draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by National Grid Electricity Transmission (National Grid / 'the Applicant') and Natural England regarding the proposed North Humber to High Marnham Development Consent Order (DCO) application ('the Application').

1.1.2 Section 4 sets out the matters 'agreed' between the Parties, for which no further issues have been raised. It also identifies matters that remain 'under discussion', where agreement has not yet been reached and further negotiations are required to establish an agreed approach.

1.1.3 This SoCG is structured as follows:

- Section 1: An introduction to this SoCG and a description of its purpose
- Section 2: Gives a description of the project.
- Section 3: Summarises engagement between Parties to date
- Section 4: Summarises the key matters and captures the status of each issue / matter.
- Section 5: Sets out matters not agreed between the Parties.
- Section 6: Sets out the approvals and the signing off sheet between the Parties.

1.1.4 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 National Grid and Natural England.

1.1.5 This draft SoCG has been prepared at an early phase of the DCO process, ahead of submission. It is intended to be a live and working document which will be updated as the project progresses and shared with Natural England at key points for discussion. A final SoCG will be prepared ahead of the close of the DCO Examination. Unlike a final SoCG, this draft SoCG has not been officially signed by either party.

2. Project Description

2.1.1 The North Humber to High Marnham Project (the Project) is a new 400 kilovolt (kV) electricity transmission connection of approximately 90 kilometres (km) in overall length between two proposed new substations: the 400 kV Birkhill Wood Substation and 400 kV High Marnham Substation.

2.1.2 The proposed new substations are subject to separate planning applications. For more information, see Application **Document 5.4 Consents and Licences Required Under Other Legislation**.

2.1.3 The Project comprises:

- Approximately 90 km of new overhead line (Route Code 4AF) between the proposed new 400 kV Birkhill Wood Substation and 400 kV High Marnham Substation;
- Replacement and re-alignment of a section of the existing 400 kV overhead line (Route Code 4ZQ) between Brantingham and east of Broomfleet;
- Replacement and re-alignment of a section of the existing 400 kV overhead line (Route Code ZDA) between Ealand and west of Keadby;
- Line entry connections to a proposed new 400 kV Birkhill Wood Substation;
- Line entry connections to a proposed new 400 kV High Marnham Substation; and
- The Project would include other required works, for example, temporary diversions for works on existing overhead line routes, temporary access roads, highway works, temporary works compounds, work sites and ancillary works. The Project would also include utility diversions and drainage works. There would also be land required for environmental mitigation, offsetting, compensation and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

2.1.4 A full description of the Project is provided in Application **Document 6.4 Environmental Statement Chapter 4 - Description of the Project**.

3. Record of Engagement

3.1 Role of the Consultee in the process

3.1.1 Natural England (NE) is a prescribed consultee for the purpose of section 42(1)(a) of the Planning Act 2008 and is named as such in Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009. Natural England is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). NE is the Government's advisor to protect England's nature and landscape for people to enjoy and for the services they provide.

3.1.2 A period of non-statutory consultation was held for eight weeks, between 1 June 2023 and 27 July 2023. Natural England submitted a response to this consultation. Natural England then submitted a response dated 18 September 2023 to the Planning Inspectorate following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion in August 2023.

3.1.3 A localised non-statutory consultation was held for four weeks, between 9 July 2024 and 6 August 2024. That consultation introduced a potential alternative corridor for routeing and sought the views of the public and relevant stakeholders. Natural England submitted a response to this consultation on the 23 August 2024.

3.1.4 Statutory consultation was held for a period of eight weeks from 18 February 2025 to 15 April 2025. That consultation provided an opportunity to see how the proposals had developed, how previous feedback had been considered and sought the views of the public and stakeholders on the updated proposals. Natural England submitted a response to this consultation on the 14th April 2025.

3.2 Summary of pre-application discussions

3.2.1 Table 3.1 provides an overview of the engagement that has taken place between National Grid and Natural England.

Table 3.1 – Summary of Engagement between National Grid and Natural England

Date	Format	Topic	Description
21/09/2021	Meeting	**Yorkshire Wolds**	Meeting between National Grid and Natural England concerning the potential Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation of the Yorkshire Wolds.
28/02/2022	Email	**Initial Contact**	Initial email to officially inform Natural England of the Project.
01/03/2022	Meeting	**Yorkshire Wolds**	Meeting to update Natural England on the project and for Natural England to update

Date	Format	Topic	Description
			National Grid on the AONB designation process for the Yorkshire Wolds.
23/05/2022	Phone call	**Yorkshire Wolds**	Telephone conversation to discuss the progress of Natural England's project to designate the Yorkshire Wolds as an AONB.
08/06/2022	Meeting	**Initial Briefing**	Meeting to brief Natural England on the project, completed and ongoing work, communications, and key next steps.
03/07/2022	Meeting	**Ecology**	Overview of ecology surveys and data collated, of potential effects on Brantingham Dale SSSI and potential projects that National Grid could look into supporting.
22/08/2022	Meeting	**Ornithology**	Meeting with Natural England to discuss ornithological issues and EIA next steps.
31/05/2023	Letter	**Public Consultation**	Notification of the start of the non-Statutory Consultation as a prescribed consultee under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.
03/07/2023	Meeting	**Methodology**	Meeting to inform Natural England of National Grid's proposed EIA scoping methodology.
09/07/2024	Email	**Project Update**	Email from National Grid to arrange a project update meeting with Natural England.
19/08/2024	Meeting	**Ecological surveys and designations**	Meeting to discuss the potential impacts of Natural England's Ancient Woodlands Inventory (AWI) update on the Project, Ornithological surveys, SSSIs and BNG. Discussions on Project using DLL or other licence options.
23/08/2024	Letter	**Localised non-statutory consultation**	Letter from Natural England in response to localised non-statutory consultation.
18/10/2024	Email	**Ancient Woodland**	Email from Natural England outlining the status of the AWI, and proposed actions for National Grid.
25/11/2024	Meeting	**Ecology**	Meeting with Natural England on ecological surveys and findings to date, anticipated protected species licence requirements, approach to Letters of No Impediment and Statement of Common Ground (SoCG).

Date	Format	Topic	Description
18/11/2024	Meeting	**BNG**	Meeting to brief Natural England on National Grid's approach to BNG on the project.
03/12/2024	Email	**Ancient Woodland**	Email from National Grid to ask Natural England for information on relevant woodlands to the Project.
04/12/2024	Meeting	**Ornithology and HRA**	Meeting to brief Natural England on undertaken Ornithology and HRA surveys.
15/04/2025	Email	**Statutory Consultation Response**	Email from Natural England attaching a response to the statutory consultation.
28/05/2025	Meeting	**Ornithology and HRA**	Meeting to update Natural England on Ornithology and HRA surveys.
04/07/2025	Meeting	**Bat Surveys**	Meeting to provide Natural England with an overview of ongoing bat surveys and to discuss methodology.
15/06/2025	Email	**Bat Surveys**	Email from Natural England discussing the bat survey methodology discussed in previous meetings, and agreement to proposal to not climb PRF-I trees prior to application.
24/07/2025	Meeting	**Species Licencing**	Meeting to discuss need for licences for protected species other than bats. Agreement that District Level Licence was acceptable approach for Great Crested Newts for whole project.
17/09/2025	Meeting	**Ornithology and HRA**	Meeting to update Natural England on Ornithology and HRA surveys.
19/01/2026	Meeting	**Protected Species**	Meeting with Natural England to further discuss potential protected species licences, ghost licences, letters of no impediments and SoCGs.
22/01/2026	Meeting	**Ornithology and HRA**	Meeting to update Natural England on Ornithology and HRA surveys and outline potential construction and operational impacts.
27/07/2026	Meeting	**Project updates**	Meeting to discuss project updates and proposed mitigation
18/08/2026	Meeting	**Protected Species update meeting**	Meeting held to discuss survey results and licencing approaches for Badgers and Great Crested Newts.

Date	Format	Topic	Description
19/08/2026	Meeting	**Protected Species and designated sites update meeting**	Meeting held to discuss survey results and licencing approach for Otter, Water Vole, Badger, Great Crested Newt, Dormice and Bats. Discussion on internationally and nationally designated sites including proposed mitigation.
24/09/2026	Meeting	**HRA and Ornithology update meeting**	Meeting held to discuss National Grid's HRA assessment and outcomes and update on ornithological survey work.

4. Matters Agreed or Under Discussion

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 This section details the matters relevant to Natural England which have been agreed or are under discussion between the parties. Matters are arranged by topic (using broad headings, or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) chapter headings where appropriate) and each matter is given a unique reference number to aid identification.

4.1.2 The red, amber, green status shows, at a glance, the level of agreement with Natural England, as seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Agreement Status

Status	Description
Not Agreed	Indicates a final position, where it has not been possible to resolve the issue to the agreement of both parties and there remains a difference of opinion.
Under Discussion	Indicates where issues are the subject of active on-going discussion.
Agreed	Indicates where an issue has been agreed or resolved satisfactorily to the agreement of both parties.

4.2 Landscape and Visual

Table 4.2 – Matters Agreed or Under Discussion in Relation to Landscape

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
4.2.1	Policy and Legislation	The policy context, legislation and guidance considered when undertaking the Landscape and Visual assessment is presented in **Application Document 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 2 Legislation and Policy Context**, **Application Document 6.6 Environmental Statement Chapter 6 Landscape** and **Application Document Environmental Statement 6.7 Chapter 7 Visual**. All relevant legislation, policy and guidance has been identified and appropriately considered to inform the assessment.	Matter agreed. Natural England have no further comments on this matter.	10/09/2026	Agreed
4.2.2	Study area	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.5.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report)** and Scoping Opinion (**Application Document 6.5.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion)** received from the Planning Inspectorate	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.5.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report)** Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.5.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion** received from the Planning Inspectorate in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Agreed

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
4.2.3	Mitigation Hierarchy	The mitigation hierarchy has been considered in **Application Document 6.6 Environmental Statement Chapter 6 Landscape** and **Application Document Environmental Statement 6.7 Chapter 7 Visual.** The use of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise effects to landscape receptors (where practicable) is considered appropriate and adequate.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.6 Environmental Statement Chapter 6 Landscape** and **Application Document 6.7 Environmental Statement Chapter 7 Visual** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.2.4	Potential AONB designation for the Yorkshire Wolds	Natural England issued a draft order designating land as a new area of land as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on 4 February 2026. The designated land is approximately 10km to the north of the draft order limits and is not affected by the proposed North Humber to High Marnham Project.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.6 Environmental Statement Chapter 6 Landscape** and **Application Document 6.7 Environmental Statement Chapter 7 Visual** in order to confirm their agreement.	19/08/2024	Under Discussion

4.3 Ecology

Table 4.3 – Matters Agreed or Under Discussion in Relation to Ecology

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
4.3.1	Policy and Legislation	The policy context, legislation and guidance considered when undertaking the Ecology assessment is presented in **Application Document 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 2 Legislation and Policy Context, Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** and **Application Document 6.8.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 8.1 Regional and Local Planning Policy.** All relevant legislation, policy and guidance have been identified and appropriately considered to inform the assessment.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 2 Legislation and Policy Context, Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** and **Application Document 6.8.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 8.1 Regional and Local Planning Policy** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.2	Baseline conditions and receptors	The baseline conditions and receptors for Ecology (non-ornithological) are presented in **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology**. The baseline data gathered and relevant important ecological features presented are considered appropriate to inform the ES.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement. Natural England noted in our S42 response that a 50m threshold was used for ecological receptors for dust as detailed in the referenced IAQM guidance. Despite this, Natural England always advise a 200m threshold is used for dust emissions to Nationally and Internationally designated sites	15/04/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
			which have potentially sensitive receptors. This is due to the large potential dispersion distances of PM2.5. We therefore advise that the ecological receptor threshold should be extended from 50m to 200m for these sites.		
4.3.3	Mitigation	Mitigation measures outlined in section 8.8 of **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology**, are considered appropriate and adequate, in terms of nature and scale, to address potential significant effects on relevant important ecological features.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.4	Assessment conclusions	The conclusions of the ecology assessment are presented in **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology**. The assessments presented are considered appropriate.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.5	Outline CoCP	**Application Document 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice** includes all relevant construction related mitigation measures specified in **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** and is appropriate for managing construction impacts from the Project.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice and Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.6	REAC	The measures and commitments contained in **Application Document 7.3 Register of**	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.3 Register of**	10/09/2026	

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
		Environmental Actions and Commitments are considered appropriate for managing construction impacts from the Project	**Environmental Actions and Commitments** in order to confirm their agreement.		
4.3.7	Outline LEMP	**Application Document 7.8 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan including an Outline Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan** includes all relevant operational related mitigation measures outlined in **Application Document 6.8 Chapter 8 Ecology** and is appropriate.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.8 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan** and **Application Document 6.8 Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.8	Biodiversity Net Gain – Calculation and approach	National Grid will deliver at least 10% BNG with wider environmental and societal benefits on its construction projects. **Application Document 7.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain Report** sets out the approach to BNG.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.1 The Biodiversity Net Gain Report** in order to confirm their agreement.	18/11/2024	Under Discussion
4.3.9	Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening	The Screening process undertaken in **Application Document 5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report** to determine and identify the effects of the Project on the conservation of European Sites is considered appropriate. All relevant Sites have been identified and appropriately screened.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 5.2 Habitats Regulation Assessment Report** in order to confirm their agreement.	24/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.10	Habitats Regulations	The Appropriate Assessment undertaken in **Application Document 5.2 Habitats**	Natural England awaits **Application Document 5.2 Habitats Regulation**	24/09/2026	Under discussion

ID		Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
		Assessment Appropriate Assessment	**Regulations Assessment Report** has considered all relevant impact pathways and potential impacts, and is considered appropriate.	**Assessment Report** in order to confirm their agreement.		
4.3.11	H	HRA – Humber Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar	**Application Document 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice** includes all relevant construction related mitigation measures specified in **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** and is appropriate for managing construction impacts from the Project on the Humber Estuary SPA, SAC and Ramsar. **Application Document 7.8 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan including an Outline Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan** includes all relevant operational related mitigation measures outlined in **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** and is appropriate. Noise impacts have also been considered and assessed in **Application Document 6.16 Environmental Statement Chapter 16 Noise and Vibration**.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice, Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology, the Application Document 7.8 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan including an Outline Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan and Application Document Environmental Statement 6.8 Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.12		Effects on SSSIs	**Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** presents all SSSIs located within the study area and provides appropriate	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.8 Environmental**	10/09/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
		justification for their inclusion in the ecology assessment or otherwise, where there is an absence of impact pathways.	**Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** in order to confirm their agreement.		
4.3.13	Woodland with Characteristics of Ancient Woodland	National Grid submitted a report on 'Potential Ancient Woodland' within the Project for review by Natural England. Based on available desk-study evidence, National Grid has identified 8 woodlands that are likely to have been continuously wooded since 1600. Further field survey work has been undertaken by National Grid where access permitted as set out in **Application Document 6.8 Environmental Statement Chapter 8 Ecology** and **6.8.A4 Appendix 8.4 Botanical Report.** Mitigation in relation to Woodland with Characteristics of Ancient Woodland if required, will be secured through the relevant commitment in **Application Document 7.3 Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments**.	Unfortunately, due to ongoing capacity issues, Natural England are unable to provide any further bespoke advice as previously agreed, with regard to Ancient Woodland Inventory Updates, or potential Ancient Woodland parcels (above that which has previously been given). Advise as previously that precautionary judgements with regard to potential Ancient Woodland are taken in view of the AWI update methodology. Natural England will provide further comment following review of the ES.	11/02/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.14	Protected Species Licences	National Grid will continue to engage with Natural England with regard to licencing solutions for protected species.	Natural England have engaged in discussions with National Grid and will provide further responses on this matter as discussions progress.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.15	Great Crested Newts	The Project is in discussion with Natural England as to the most appropriate licencing method for great crested newt	Natural England agree with this approach.	27/07/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
		(GCN). This may require the preparation of a draft protected species mitigation licence application (often termed a 'ghost licence') for the part of the route not subject to the District Level Licence (DLL) scheme (Nottinghamshire), unless a bespoke DLL project licence is agreed on. If required, the ghost licence will be based on eDNA and HSI data as population surveys have not been conducted. If Natural England are in agreement with the ghost licence, a Letter of No Impediment will be issued.	An enquiry has been submitted regarding the use of DLL for the section of the route within Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire. Natural England are working with the applicant to provide a cost estimate and Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate prior to the close of examination. A traditional licencing approach for the section of the scheme in Nottinghamshire is proposed, as there is no active DLL scheme in this county; Natural England hope to be in a position to issue a Letter of No Impediment (LoNI) prior to the close of examination.		
4.3.16	Badgers	A draft "ghost" licence for badger will be prepared and issued to Natural England. If Natural England are in agreement with the licence, a Letter of No Impediment will be issued.	Natural England agree with this approach and will review and provide a response on this matter following receipt of the draft ghost licence. Natural England hope to be in a position to issue a LoNI prior to the close of examination.	19/01/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.17	Otters	A draft "ghost" licence for otter will be prepared and issued to Natural England. If Natural England are in agreement with the licence, a Letter of No Impediment will be issued. Natural England recommended closure of a holt if would be impacted by the Project as simpler to consider it	Natural England agree with this approach and will review and provide a response on this matter following receipt of the draft ghost licence. Natural England hope to be in a position to issue a LoNI prior to the close of examination.	27/07/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
		functionally lost and discussed importance of monitoring in case it is a natal holt.			
4.3.18	Water Vole	The water vole licence strategy for the Project was presented to Natural England in a meeting held on 19 January 2026. Where clear span bridges cannot be used, a licence will be sought and mitigation areas identified for habitat enhancement. Natural England encouraged the use of a water vole CL31 licence and general support for this approach, as long as any new water vole mitigation locations are at a suitable distance from the existing identified locations. Natural England reaffirmed advice to continue works to check water vole populations and any changes and that an A11 licence application could be required if changes occur. Natural England confirmed that a CL31 licence would not need a Letter of No Impediment, but standard text can be provided in support of a CL 31 licence.	Natural England agree with this approach and will review and provide a response on this matter following review of the ES.	27/07/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.19	Dormouse	A draft "ghost" licence for hazel dormouse will be prepared and issued to Natural England. If Natural England is in agreement with the licence, a Letter of No Impediment will be issued.	Natural England agree with this approach and will review and provide a response on this matter following receipt of the draft ghost licence. Natural England hope to be in a position to issue a LoNI prior to the close of examination.	27/07/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
4.3.20	Bats	Currently, no bat roosts have been confirmed through the ongoing bat surveys that are being carried out for the Project. During a meeting held on 19 January 2026, Natural England confirmed that they can undertake a review of a draft bat licence (for anticipated roosts if none found at the time) but it would be difficult to provide a Letter of No Impediment, although comments could be provided.	Natural England agree with this approach and will review and provide a response on this matter following review of the ES. Where no licence need is identified, a ghost licence application (and subsequently a LoNI) is not necessary. It should be noted that where further survey post consent indicates a licence need, a licence application must be made as normal.	27/07/2026	Under Discussion
4.3.21	Additional survey updates	National Grid will submit the following updates to existing ecological surveys during Examination: • Bat aerial tree inspections and/or dusk emergence survey • Phase 1 survey • Water Vole and Otter • Hedgerow Assessment National Grid consider that the baseline field survey information and desk based assessments used to inform the Environmental Statement and submitted with the application are robust. The need for additional survey information has been identified for reasons including survey access or design updates. This will build upon the previous survey work and desk based assessments	Natural England has been engaged in discussions with National Grid regarding licensing requirements for each relevant species. It is considered that sufficient survey data will be available during the Examination to support the submission of draft licence applications to Natural England. Where additional survey work is required post-consent, this will be addressed accordingly, with any limitations, assumptions, or further survey requirements clearly set out within the relevant Letters of No Impediment (LoNIs).	10/09/2026	Under discussion

4.4 Ornithology

Table 4.4 – Matters Agreed or Under Discussion in Relation to Ornithology

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
4.4.1	Policy and legislation	The policy context, legislation and guidance considered when undertaking the ornithology assessment is presented in **Application Document 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 2 Legislation and Policy Context** and **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology**. All relevant legislation, policy and guidance have been identified and appropriately considered to inform the assessment.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.2 Environmental Statement Chapter 2 Legislation and Policy Context** and **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.4.2	Assessment methodology	The outline methodology for assessing effects on Ornithology was agreed through **the EIA Scoping Report and Application Document 6.5.A2 Scoping Opinion** received from the Planning Inspectorate. The assessment methodology is adequate to assess the impact of the proposed Project on SPA/RAMSAR birds.	The general assessment methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and **Application Document 6.5.A2 Scoping Opinion** received from the Planning Inspectorate. Natural England will provide further comment on more specific assessment methodologies following review of the ES.	15/04/2025	Under Discussion
4.4.3	Mitigation	Mitigation measures outlined in section 9.8 of **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** are considered appropriate and adequate, in	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** in order to confirm their agreement.	24/09/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		terms of nature and scale to address potential significant effects on relevant ornithological features. This includes mitigation for the potential effects of operational collision risk and losses of potential Functionally Linked Land that might affect Humber Estuary SPA/RAMSAR/SSSI birds.			
4.4.4	Mitigation hierarchy	In line with the mitigation hierarchy, the Project has been designed to avoid important ecological features (designated ecological sites and other notable habitats and protected and notable species) through embedded measures, as far as practicable. **Application Document 5.9 Design Development Report** describes how the Project has been developed taking into account biodiversity conservation interests and **Application Document 6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered** sets out the alternatives considered and the main reasons for the option chosen, considering the effects of the Project on the environment. The use of the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise effects to ornithological receptors is considered appropriate and adequate. The Project has considered opportunities to enhance the condition of existing habitats within the design. Where effects on important ornithological features are unavoidable,	Natural England awaits **Application Document 5.9 Design Development Report, Application Document 6.3 Environmental Statement Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered,** and **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures will be implemented, as outlined in section 9.8 of **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology**. The Project assesses effects on the ornithological receptors within the ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application) and includes justification of any residual effects.			
4.4.5	Effects on SSSIs	Only those SSSIs with qualifying features of ornithology interest within the stated search area were considered in the ornithology chapter. Impacts and effects on all relevant SSSIs are set out in section 9.9 of **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology**.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.4.6	Pre-works checks	The **Application Document 7.4 Outline Code of Construction Practice** includes pre-construction checks of reedbed habitats where these will be affected by construction works.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.4 Outline Code of Construction Practice** to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.4.7	Habitat Removal	Wherever possible in the Project design and construction programme there has been a presumption against habitat removal during the breeding bird season for the reasons stated by the Natural England, however this is not achievable across the entire Project. **Application Document 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)** reflects this,	Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)** in order to confirm their agreement	10/09/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		with clearer wording on the measures in place to protect nesting birds where vegetation removal during the breeding season is required. The commitments register has also been updated to reflect the presumption against vegetation clearance during the breeding season where possible.			
4.4.8	Assessment findings	The findings of the ornithology assessment in **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** are acceptable.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.4.9	Flight Activity Assessment	There is no reliable way to model the numbers of birds that would collide with the proposed Overhead Line such that bird mortality can be quantified. An assessment of relative collision risk has been undertaken within **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology**, supported by a flight activity assessment presented in supporting **Appendix 9.3 Flight Activity Assessment**, which provides detailed information regarding the flight activity of relevant species and the relative levels of risk posed to them along the route of the proposed Overhead Line. This is sufficient to provide a robust assessment of collision risk and to inform the mitigation measures presented in **Application**	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** and **Application Document 6.9.A3 Environmental Statement Appendix 9.3 Flight Activity Assessment** in order to confirm their agreement.	24/09/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology.			
4.4.10	Wintering / breeding birds	The breeding and non-breeding birds present within the Study and Survey areas have been adequately described in the baseline presented within **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** and supporting **Application Document 6.9.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 9.2 Ornithology Baseline Report** and **Application Document 6.9.A4 Environmental Statement Appendix 9.4 Confidential Ornithology Baseline Report**. Survey effort and desk study have been targeted appropriately for the purposes of assessing effects on potential receptors.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** and supporting **Application Document 6.9.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 9.2 Ornithology Baseline Report** and **Application Document 6.9.A4 Environmental Statement Appendix 9.4 Confidential Ornithology Report** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.4.11	Functionally Linked Land	The assessment and provision of Functionally Linked Land set out in **Application Document 5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report** and **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** is considered appropriate.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report** and **Application Document 6.9 Environmental Statement Chapter 9 Ornithology** in order to confirm their agreement.	24/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.4.12	Defining potential Functionally Linked Land and the exclusion of	The Proposed Development crosses land that is potentially functionally linked to the Humber Estuary SPA between Ellerker and Luddington. Large numbers of pink-footed geese were recorded close to the River Idle and on	Natural England broadly agree that there is no strong functional link between the Humber SPA and Misterton and Gringley Carrs for pink-footed goose, based on the outline data presented to them, however the matter remains open	22/01/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
	functional linkages to the Humber Estuary SPA related to PFG occurring in the landscape south of Thorne & Hatfield Moors SPA.	Misterton Carrs. Surveys and additional desk study to address this matter have identified that the pink-footed geese forage south of Hatfield Moor as far as the River Idle Valley and Misterton and Gringley Carrs and roosting at Hatfield Moor. Due to this further survey work there is not considered to be a functional link between the Humber Estuary SPA and Misterton and Gringley Carrs. National Grid has discussed this topic with Natural England who agree that there is no strong functional link for pink-footed goose moving between the Humber Estuary SPA and Misterton Carrs, based on the outline data presented. The matter remains open for further discussion pending presentation of the full baseline regarding this matter.	for further discussion pending presentation of the full baseline regarding this matter.		

4.5 Agriculture and Soils

Table 4.5 – Matters Agreed or Under Discussion in Relation to Agriculture and Soil

ID	Matter	Agreed Position (working towards)	Natural England's Position (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	Date (last discussed / date agreed)	Status
4.5.1	Study Area	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.5.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment**	The study area was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and **Application Document 6.5.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.2 Scoping**	09/09/2026	Agreed

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		Scoping Report) and Scoping Opinion (**Application Document 6.5.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion)** received from the Planning Inspectorate.	**Opinion** received from the Planning Inspectorate.		
4.5.2	Assessment Methodology	The assessment methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.5.A1 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report)** and Scoping Opinion (**Application Document 6.5.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion)** received from the Planning Inspectorate. This methodology adequately assesses the impact of the proposal on the Best and Most Valuable land resource.	The assessment methodology was agreed through the EIA Scoping Report and **Application Document 6.5.A2 Environmental Statement Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion** received from the Planning Inspectorate.	09/09/2026	Agreed
4.5.3	ALC Survey Methods	Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys have been undertaken in line with the ALC Guidelines such that the survey has been undertaken at a minimum survey density of one auger point per hectare. Along the overhead line route this has been undertaken as one auger point per 100 m line along the central alignment, and a one per 1 ha density within the wider areas, e.g. mitigation planting areas, construction compounds.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.13 Environmental Statement Chapter 13 Soils and Agriculture** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion
4.5.4	Avoidance of BMV	**Application Document 6.13 Environmental Statement Chapter 13 Soils and Agriculture** sets out the baseline ALC grades	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.13 Environmental Statement Chapter 13 Soils and**	10/09/2026	Under Discussion

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		based on detailed ALC surveys that have been undertaken by National Grid. The assessment reports on the extent of each grade affected both temporarily and permanently by the Project and the findings of the assessment are acceptable. The data collated from the surveys has been used to map boundaries between different ALC grades which has then been used to inform micro siting opportunities to minimise the overlap between infrastructure and BMV land where practicable. Land required temporarily will be reinstated to their original ALC grade. **Application Document 7.5 Outline Soil Management Plan** details management measures to ensure that soils disturbed by the Project remain suitable for their determined end use.	**Agriculture** in order to confirm their agreement.		
4.5.5	Outline Soil Management Plan	An Outline SMP (**Application Document 7.5 Outline Soil Management Plan**) has been submitted with the application for development consent and provides details of the approaches to soil handling, based on published good practice (specifically the Defra code along with other relevant guidance. It sets out a re-use hierarchy (to focus on maximising, where practicable, within-project re-use) and broad acceptance criteria for soil resources to be re-used within the Project. These requirements will be detailed further in	Natural England welcome the commitment to deliver a Soil Management Plan. Natural England awaits **Application Document 7.5 Outline Soil Management Plan** to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Agreed

ID	Matter	**Agreed Position** (working towards)	**Natural England's Position** (including actions to be taken by National Grid)	**Date** (last discussed / date agreed)	**Status**
		the final SMP to be produced prior to construction commencing where the final design and thus final soil volumes will be known.			
4.5.6	Assessment of BMV	The assessment of effects on BMV land in **Application Document 6.13 Environmental Statement Chapter 13 Soils and Agriculture** is considered appropriate.	Natural England awaits **Application Document 6.13 Environmental Statement Chapter 13 Soils and Agriculture** in order to confirm their agreement.	10/09/2026	Under Discussion

5. Matters Not Agreed

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 This section details the matters relevant to Natural England which have not been agreed between the parties.

[TABLE TO BE INSERTED AT EXAMINATION TO INCLUDE MATTERS NOT AGREED. THERE ARE NO MATTERS NOT AGREED AT THIS STAGE]

6. Confirmation of Agreement

The above SoCG is agreed between National Grid and Natural England on the date specified below.

Signed for and on behalf of National Grid:

……

Date:

……

Signed for and on behalf of Natural England:

……

Date:

……

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