The Great Grid Upgrade

North Humber to High Marnham

NHHM-AEC-CNS-CPR-0002

North Humber to High Marnham

Volume 6: Environmental Statement

Document 6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 1 - Introduction

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nationalgrid

Contents

1. Introduction 1

1.1 Overview of the Project 1

1.2 Overview of the Need for the Project 3

1.3 Substations Update 4

1.4 Geographical Context 4

1.5 Purpose and Structure of the Environmental Statement 5

1.6 Transboundary Effects 10

1.7 Biodiversity Net Gain 11

2. References 12

Table 1.1 – Structure and content of the ES 8

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Project

1.1.1 National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (National Grid) owns and maintains the national high voltage electricity transmission network throughout England and Wales.

1.1.2 The transmission network connects the power from where it is generated to the regional distribution network operators who then supply businesses and homes.

1.1.3 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 (HM Government, 1989).

1.1.4 National Grid has developed plans for the North Humber to High Marnham Project (the Project). The Project would support the UK government's net zero target through the connection of new low carbon energy generation and by reinforcing the transmission network.

1.1.5 The Project would establish a new 400 kilovolt (kV) transmission connection approximately 90 kilometres (km) in length between a new substation to be built in the vicinity of Birkhill Wood, located to the north of Hull near Creyke Beck in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and a new substation at High Marnham in Nottinghamshire.

1.1.6 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 ten years and beyond. Completion of the Project, together with other new reinforcements across the country, will meet this future energy transmission demand across the UK.

1.1.7 The Project is a new 400 kV electricity transmission connection of approximately 90 km in overall length between two proposed new substations: the 400 kV Birkhill Wood Substation and 400 kV High Marnham Substation.

1.1.8 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**.

1.1.9 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).

1.1.10 A full description of the Project is provided in **Application Document 6.4 Chapter 4 Description of the Project**.

1.1.11 The Project is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), under s14(1)(b) and s16 of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008), and as amended by the Planning Act 2008 (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) (Electric Lines) Order 2013 (HM Government, 2013), as it involves the installation of a new electric line above ground of more than 2 km, which would operate at 400 kV in England.

1.1.12 National Grid has submitted an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate. The application is subject to an acceptance decision by the Planning Inspectorate under section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008). If the application is accepted, it will be examined by an Examining Authority (consisting of one or more examining inspectors). Following the examination, the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will decide whether development consent should be granted for the Project.

1.1.13 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations') (HM Government, 2017) require NSIPs that fall within specified descriptions of development to be subject to a process called environmental impact assessment (EIA), which then forms part of and informs the decision-making process. The Project is a type of development within Schedule 1, paragraph 20 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) because it involves the construction of a overhead electrical power line with a voltage of 220 kV or more and a length of more than 15 km. This means that the EIA process, as defined in regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) and described in **Application Document 6.5 Chapter 5 Environmental Impact Assessment Approach and Methodology**, must be followed. As part of that process, the Applicant has prepared this ES to provide information on the likely significant environmental effects of the Project.

1.1.14 This chapter is supported by the following figures and appendices:

- **Application Document 6.1.F1 Figure 1.1 Project Location and Route Sections**; and
- **Application Document 6.1.A1 Appendix 1.1 Statement of Competence**.

1.2 Overview of the Need for the Project

1.2.1 With growing renewables integration into the National Electricity Transmission System, such as offshore wind and interconnectors[1], an anticipated tripling of wind generation connected across the Scottish networks by 2030 and the government's increased ambition to connect 50 GW of offshore wind by 2030, north–south power flows are set to increase.

1.2.2 The existing electricity transmission network in the Yorkshire and Humber region was initially developed in the 1960s and has historically been able to meet demand. It was designed to connect the in-land large coal fired power stations in the region, with changes occurring in the later parts of the century in order to connect gas fired power stations and offshore wind.

1.2.3 However, due to the changes noted above in terms of delivering net zero emissions, the existing network in this area does not have the capability to reliably and securely transport all the energy that will be connected by 2030, whilst operating to the standards it is required to.

1.2.4 The existing transmission infrastructure in this area requires reinforcement for the following main reasons:

- The existing transmission network was not designed to transport electricity from where it is increasingly being generated (largely offshore).
- The growth in offshore wind, interconnectors and onshore generation such as battery and solar means that more electricity will be generated in the years ahead than the current network is able to securely and reliably transport.
- In the UK, electricity demand is forecasted to at least double by 2050, increasing the amount of energy we need to transport to homes and businesses.
- Upgrading the existing network as it is today (such as through replacing cables to carry more power) will not be enough to carry the amount of future power whilst operating to required standards.
- Increase boundary transfer capability in order to reduce wider network generator constraint costs.

1.2.5 The Project would support the UK's net zero target by reinforcing the electricity transmission network between the North of England and the Midlands and facilitate the connection of planned renewable energy projects such as offshore wind generation and interconnectors and increase boundary transfer capability. The Project would help meet future energy requirements.

1.2.6 For further information please refer to the 'Needs Case' section contained within **Application Document 7.17 Strategic Options Report**.

[1] Interconnectors are high voltage cables that are often used to connect the electricity systems of neighbouring countries.

1.3 Substations Update

1.3.1 Following statutory consultation on the Project in 2025, a decision was taken to remove both the proposed 400 kV Birkhill Wood Substation and 400 kV High Marnham Substation and associated works from the Project.

1.3.2 Separate planning applications for the 400 kV Birkhill Wood Substation (25/01898/STPLF), and 400 kV High Marnham Substation (25/01302/FUL) were submitted by National Grid in July and November 2025 to the local planning authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Bassetlaw District Council, respectively. The planning applications have subsequently been approved in 2026. Alongside these planning applications, National Grid published a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for acquisition of the land, to enable the delivery of each of the substations. Negotiations with land owners to acquire by agreement are still ongoing, and the CPO is forecast to be confirmed in late 2026.

1.3.3 A full description of the design evolution of the Project is provided in **Application Document 5.9 Design Development Report**.

1.4 Geographical Context

1.4.1 The Project would be located in the east of England across the Humber and East Midlands regions, as illustrated on **Application Document 6.1.F1 Figure 1.1 Project Location and Route Sections**. The Order Limits[2] lie within three local planning authority areas: the northern part of the Project lies within the East Riding of Yorkshire; the central part of the Project lies in North Lincolnshire; and the southern part lies in Bassetlaw District in Nottinghamshire.

1.4.2 The Project would be located in an area that is predominantly rural, with large parts of the land under arable use. The city of Kingston-upon-Hull and the towns of Beverley, Crowle, Scunthorpe, Epworth, Gainsborough and Retford are located within 5 km of the Order Limits. There are multiple villages and individual properties within or near to the Project.

1.4.3 The topography of the wider geographical area is predominantly flat and low lying, comprising large-scale arable fields with clusters of rural settlements. The Order Limits between the proposed Birkhill Wood Substation and the A63 are located within an area of higher undulating topography associated with the Yorkshire Wolds. The majority of this section is also locally designated as the Yorkshire Wolds Important Landscape Area. The Order Limits are also located in areas of higher topography to the west of Owston Ferry and between the Chesterfield Canal and the proposed new High Marnham Substation.

1.4.4 The Order Limits cross the River Ouse, which is designated as a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), to the west of the settlement of Ousefleet and near where the existing 400 kV overhead line 4ZQ route crosses the River Ouse. Other ecological features in proximity to the Project include Thorne and Hatfield Moors SPA and Thorne Moor SAC which are located 2.5 km to the west of the Order Limits. The Order Limits cross part of Blacktoft Sands Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Reserve at the River Ouse crossing.

[2] The Order Limits comprise the likely extents of land required to construct, operate and maintain the Project.

1.4.5 Beckingham Marshes RSPB Reserve is located approximately 1.8 km to the east of the Order Limits, to the east of the settlement of Beckingham.

1.4.6 Protected heritage assets close to the Project include Risby Hall, which is a Grade II registered park and garden and scheduled monument (listed as Risby Jacobean gardens, hall and medieval settlement remains); Hall Garth moated site, which is a scheduled monument; and Axholme Carthusian Priory, which is also a scheduled monument. Other discrete scheduled monuments and listed buildings are also located close to the Project. The Order Limits also cross the Isle of Axholme Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest.

1.4.7 The Order Limits are located within several areas of flood risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3), particularly around the River Ouse and close to the River Trent.

1.4.8 The Order Limits are located on land that is categorised on Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for England as Grade 2 and Grade 3 land, with a few small areas mapped as Grade 1.

1.4.9 The Project has been sub-divided into six geographical sections for reader accessibility, (referenced throughout this ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application)). It should be noted that these differ to the 11 Project sections that were presented in during non-statutory and statutory consultations, which were based on a wider Route Corridor and presented to aid consultees to provide feedback.

1.4.10 The Route Sections are illustrated on **Application Document 6.1.F1 Figure 1.1 Project Location and Route Sections** and comprise:

- Route Section A – between the proposed Birkhill Wood Substation and the River Ouse;
- Route Section B – between the River Ouse and Crowle;
- Route Section C – between Crowle and North Moor (M180);
- Route Section D – between North Moor (M180) and the River Idle;
- Route Section E – between the River Idle and Darlton; and
- Route Section F – between Darlton and the proposed High Marnham Substation

1.5 Purpose and Structure of the Environmental Statement

The Need for an Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement

1.5.1 Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) states that "*The environmental impact assessment ("the EIA") is a process consisting of —*

(a) the preparation of an environmental statement or updated environmental statement, as appropriate, by the applicant;

(b) the carrying out of any consultation, publication and notification as required under these Regulations or, as necessary, any other enactment in respect of EIA development; and

(c) the steps that are required to be undertaken by the Secretary of State under regulation 21…".

1.5.2 Regulation 21 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) sets out the duties of the Secretary of State when considering whether to make an order granting development consent for EIA development: "…*the Secretary of State must —*

(a) examine the environmental information;

(b) reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account the examination referred to in sub-paragraph (a) and, where appropriate, any supplementary examination considered necessary;

(c) integrate that conclusion into the decision as to whether an order is to be granted; and

(d) if an order is to be made, consider whether it is appropriate to impose monitoring measures."

1.5.3 Environmental information to be considered by the Secretary of State comprises the ES, including any further information provided under the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017), together with any representations made by consultation bodies invited to make representations under the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017), and any representations duly made by any other person regarding the likely significant environmental effects of the Project and any associated development.

1.5.4 The ES submitted by the Applicant must contain the information specified in regulation 14 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017).

1.5.5 The early identification of potential significant adverse environmental effects enables appropriate mitigation measures (i.e. following the mitigation hierarchy – avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment (HM Government, 2017)) to be incorporated into the design of a project, or commitments to be made to environmentally sensitive construction methods and practices where considered appropriate. The approach is iterative and involves close working between those preparing the ES and the engineering design.

1.5.6 An application for development consent for energy projects must be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for determination by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. In accordance with Regulation 5(2)(a) of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (HM Government, 2009), where a development is EIA development, the application for development consent must be accompanied by an ES reporting the findings of the EIA process, as required by the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008).

1.5.7 As part of the EIA process, an EIA Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.5.A1 Appendix 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report**) and Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)[3] (National Grid, 2025) were prepared. These are discussed further below.

[3] Preliminary environmental information comprises information prepared under the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) to describe the likely significant environmental effects of the Project for the purposes of informing statutory pre-application consultation.

Scoping

1.5.8 National Grid identified that the Project had the potential for likely significant effects under the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017). The Planning Inspectorate was notified on 21 August 2023 that National Grid intended to provide an ES in accordance with Regulations 6(1), 6(2)(a) and 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017).

1.5.9 An EIA Scoping Report (**Application Document 6.5.A1 Appendix 5.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report**) for the Project was prepared and submitted by National Grid to the Planning Inspectorate on 21 August 2023. This set out the parameters of the Project, the proposed methodology for undertaking the environmental assessment and the proposed scope of the ES. It also identified potentially significant environmental effects, as identified at the time of scoping, requiring assessment in more detail (i.e. scoped into the assessment), as well as those that were unlikely to be significant and could therefore be discounted from consideration (i.e. scoped out of the assessment).

1.5.10 The Planning Inspectorate provided an EIA Scoping Opinion on behalf of the Secretary of State on 29 September 2023 (**Application Document 6.5.A2 Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion**). This included a number of items that National Grid should have regard to when producing the ES. This ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application) is based on **Application Document 6.5.A2 Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion**. National Grid has responded to the points raised in **Application Document 6.5.A2 Appendix 5.2 Scoping Opinion** and detailed how each point is addressed in the relevant chapters of this ES. **Application Document 6.5.A3 Appendix 5.3 Scoping Response Tables** provides responses to the comments made by the prescribed consultees at the EIA scoping stage, and how each comment has been considered.

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

1.5.11 National Grid prepared a PEIR (National Grid, 2025) as part of the statutory consultation process required under s42 and s47 of the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008). The PEIR was published in February 2025 to enable consultees and interested parties to develop an informed view of the environmental effects of the Project and provide comments. The PEIR adopted a similar reporting structure to an ES and, where possible, detailed the significance criteria and methodologies used (or to be used) in each of the environmental topic chapters. Professional judgement was then applied to determine if effects were likely to be significant, based on the preliminary and emerging findings of the assessments.

1.5.12 Responses to representations received during the statutory consultation in 2025 and subsequent consultations in 2026 are provided in Chapter 8 and 9, with responses to Statutory and Prescribed Consultees in Appendix K of **Application Document 5.1 Consultation Report**.

Environmental Statement

1.5.13 This ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application) provides information on the likely significant effects of the Project in accordance with the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017). Further details on the EIA process and methodology can be found in **Application Document 6.5 Chapter 5 Environmental Impact Assessment Approach and Methodology.**

1.5.14 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) sets out the information to be included in the ES. Table 2.1 in **Application Document 6.2 Chapter 2 Legislation and Policy Context** identifies where the information defined by Schedule 4 can be found within this ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application).

1.5.15 Regulation 14(4) of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) requires that an ES be prepared by 'competent experts' and that the ES be accompanied by a statement outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts. The EIA has been undertaken by competent experts with the relevant and appropriate experience in their respective environmental topics. The EIA technical leads responsible for the environmental topic chapters are listed in **Application Document 6.1.A1 Appendix 1.1 Statement of Competence**.

1.5.16 The ES forms part of the DCO application (Volume 6) for the Project under the Planning Act 2008 (HM Government, 2008) and has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017).

1.5.17 The structure of the ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application), along with the associated documents in Volume 6, is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 – Structure and content of the ES

ES volume	Application reference	ES chapter number	Document name	Description of contents
Volume 6	6.1	1	Introduction	An introduction to the Project and the purpose and structure of the ES.
Volume 6	6.2	2	Legislation and Policy Context	A review of the key legislation and policy relevant to the Project.
Volume 6	6.3	3	Main Alternatives Considered	A summary of the main reasonable alternatives that have been considered on the Project, including the strategic options and route corridors.
Volume 6	6.4	4	Description of the Project	A description of the Project including permanent features and associated temporary works. It also describes the general characteristics of the Project and outlines areas of flexibility in relation to design parameters.
Volume 6	6.5	5	Environmental Impact Assessment Approach and Methodology	A description of the overall EIA methodology that has been used, including temporal durations and the approach to mitigation.
Volume 6	6.6	6	Landscape	Each of the 16 environmental topic chapters is structured as follows: Introduction
Volume 6	6.7	7	Visual	
Volume 6	6.8	8	Ecology	

ES volume	Application reference	ES chapter number	Document name	Description of contents
Volume 6	6.9	9	Ornithology	Regulatory and Planning Policy Context Scoping Opinion and Consultation Assessment Approach and Methods Basis of Assessment Baseline Conditions and Future Baseline (where applicable) Potential Effects Mitigation Residual Effect
Volume 6	6.10	10	Cultural Heritage	
Volume 6	6.11	11	Water Environment	
Volume 6	6.12	12	Geology and Hydrogeology	
Volume 6	6.13	13	Agriculture and Soils	
Volume 6	6.14	14	Traffic and Transport	
Volume 6	6.15	15	Air Quality	
Volume 6	6.16	16	Noise and Vibration	
Volume 6	6.17	17	Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism	
Volume 6	6.18	18	Health and Wellbeing	
Volume 6	6.19	19	Climate Change	
Volume 6	6.20	20	Intra-project Cumulative Effects	A description of the approach to the cumulative effects assessment, including the combined likely significant effects arising from interactions between different environmental topics on the same receptor or group of receptors, and those arising from the Project in combination with other developments.
Volume 6	6.21	21	Inter-project Cumulative Effects	
Volume 6		N/A	ES Figures	Each figure is given a number which is based on the applicable ES chapter that the figure supports and then the next number in sequence. For example, Figure 4.1 is the first figure supporting Chapter 4.
Volume 6		N/A	ES Appendices	Each appendix is given a number which is based on the applicable ES chapter that the appendix supports and then the next

ES volume	Application reference	ES chapter number	Document name	Description of contents
				number in sequence. For example, Appendix 4.1 is the first appendix supporting Chapter 4.
Volume 6	6.5.A1	N/A	EIA Scoping Report	The EIA Scoping Report submitted by National Grid to the Planning Inspectorate.
Volume 6	6.5.A2	N/A	EIA Scoping Opinion	The EIA Scoping Opinion produced by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State.
Volume 6	6.22	N/A	Non-Technical Summary	Summarises in non-technical language the contents of the ES, including the key features of the baseline, mitigation measures and residual significant effects.

1.5.18 In addition to the EIA, the Project is subject to other regulatory regimes including, for example, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the Habitats Regulations') (HM Government, 2017). The following documents have been prepared in parallel to the ES and where relevant are referenced within the ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application):

- **Application Document 5.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment Report**;
- **Application Document 5.3 Statement of Statutory Nuisance**;
- **Application Document 7.12 Water Framework Directive Assessment**;
- **Application Document 7.13 Flood Risk Assessment**; and
- **Application Document 7.15 Transport Assessment**.

1.6 Transboundary Effects

1.6.1 There is a requirement under Regulation 32(1) of the EIA Regulations (HM Government, 2017) to consider transboundary effects; that is, those effects that could affect receptors in other countries.

1.6.2 A screening exercise was undertaken using the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Transboundary Impacts and Process (Planning Inspectorate, 2026). No transboundary effects were predicted in relation to the Project, as there is no pathway for effects to occur outside the UK. This conclusion was confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate in June 2024. Accordingly, no further consideration of transboundary effects is provided within the ES (Volume 6 of the DCO application).

1.7 Biodiversity Net Gain

1.7.1 In recent years, the UK Government has introduced legislation and policy that puts biodiversity at the heart of the planning system. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), describes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as an approach to development that makes sure habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before development (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2026). The statutory requirement for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) to achieve a specified biodiversity gain objective (as set out in a biodiversity gain statement) will be mandatory for applications made from 2 November 2026. The biodiversity gain objective for energy NSIPs, as set out in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Biodiversity Gain Statement for Energy (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2026), will require that the biodiversity value attributable to a development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat by at least 10%. This is referred to as 10% BNG.

1.7.2 The Project application for development consent is being submitted prior to 2 November 2026 and therefore the provision of 10% BNG is not mandatory. Notwithstanding, the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2025) states that NSIPs should seek opportunities to provide BNG, including wider environmental gains and benefits to local communities and national policy priorities, where possible, and the Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to environmental net gain and BNG during decision making. However,10% BNG is not a legal requirement for this application for development consent.

1.7.3 National Grid's environmental and social commitments in its Social and Environmental Action Plan (National Grid, 2026) include a commitment to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG with potential for wider environmental and societal benefits for all developments for which planning permission or development consent is required. Therefore, the Project proposes to deliver 10% BNG with potential for wider environmental and societal benefits on a voluntary basis, and substantively follows the guidance set out in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Biodiversity Gain Statement for Energy (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 2026).

1.7.4 Detail on the Project's approach to voluntary BNG is provided in **Application Document 7.20 Design Development Report - 2025** and **Application Document 7.1 Biodiversity Net Gain Report**.

2. References

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