



Meeting note

Project name	Eastern Green Link 3 (EGL3) and Eastern Green Link 4 (EGL4)
File reference	EN0210003
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	16 September 2024
Meeting with	National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Programme Update

The Applicant updated that it had completed its non-statutory consultation on 15 July 2024. It is currently working on design development and will move towards its first design freeze ready to inform a PEIR and statutory consultation in Q2-Q3 2025. The Applicant currently intends on consulting and publishing its Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) in Q1 2025, ahead of statutory consultation for Q2-Q3 2025. The anticipated submission of the DCO application is Q2-Q3 2026. The Applicant intends to start the construction in 2028, with the aim to be fully operational in 2033.

Consenting Strategy Update

The Applicant mentioned that since the last meeting, it has updated its consenting strategy. Previously, it was intending that the marine elements would be consented by two separate marine licences in English waters. Following various meetings with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), it has now decided to include two deemed marine licenses into the DCO application for EGL3 and EGL4. A single DCO application will be made to include both marine and terrestrial elements in English waters. This was also reflected in the submitted Scoping Report. Within Scotland, there will be separate Scottish marine licence applications.

Consultation Update

The Applicant updated that it had received 280 responses to its non-statutory consultation. The responses had recurring themes such as questions around the needs case, project financing, costs, construction impact, concerns around traffic levels, impact on agricultural land, tourism, as well as cumulative impacts of other projects. The Applicant is reflecting on the feedback. The Applicant confirmed that it has started drafting the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and is working closely with the local authorities on this. The Applicant is also working with the Grimbsy to Walpole (G2W) project to share details of the draft SoCCs for the projects respectively.

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Update

The Applicant updated that it had requested a Scoping opinion from the Inspectorate on 26 July 2024 and it was received on 5 September 2024. The Applicant queried the expected changes to the advice notes. The Inspectorate confirmed that the updated advice notes would be published over the next few months and to monitor for updates. The Applicant also queried the preferred approach to provide details in each chapter of the worst-case parameters relevant to specific chapters. The Inspectorate confirmed that where optionality still exists with regards to the design, or indeed where uncertainty surrounds a particular design parameter, the Applicant needs to provide the details of the worst-case within each chapter, to be clear on what it has assessed. The Inspectorate agreed to take this matter away in considering how previous applications have addressed this. The Inspectorate, having reviewed some past examples does not suggest any single approach is preferred but that the information can be provided as a discussion per chapter or tabulated either per chapter or across the whole ES as a summary for clarity. Justification for as to why that option has been identified as the worst case is important. Furthermore, where this can be agreed with relevant consultation, this should be demonstrated in the ES. The Inspectorate reflecting on the scale of the Scoping Report, suggested to the Applicant that the naming and splitting of document content between volumes and the inclusion of hyperlinks in contents pages would assist those working with the documentation.

The Applicant provided an update on various surveys it has carried out for ecology, landscape, and engineering walkover surveys. Further surveys will be undertaken from September to December 2024 to include ecology surveys (habitats, species suitability and, where possible, targeted species surveys), ornithological surveys, flood risk surveys, geology/contamination walkover surveys, landscape and visual surveys, as well as heritage walkover surveys. It is also sharing its survey data with the G2W project to minimise landowner disruption. The Applicant is also preparing for a ground investigation (GI) campaign later this year.

The Applicant has carried out meetings with various technical stakeholders since June 2024 including Norfolk County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Harbour Energy, Natural England (NE) and the Environment Agency (EA). It is also planning further meetings in October with local planning authorities, NE, EA, Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and others.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant is aware of various projects in the Theddlethorpe area and how the public are responding to these. The Applicant confirmed that cumulative effects of various projects has been raised in the consultation feedback and concerns have been raised in terms of construction disruption and traffic level concerns.

Engagement with G2W Update

The Applicant explained that it continues to work closely with the G2W Project Team, including through regular meetings to align stakeholder engagement, where appropriate, as well as joint meetings with relevant stakeholders. The Applicant updated that it would engage with the Traffic and Transport Working Group and local authority highways officers, alongside G2W. It is also having multi-disciplinary workshops to collaborate on design where relevant, e.g. the preferred substation siting at Walpole. The Applicant added that the Lincolnshire Energy Forum is due to start in October. A number of projects will be part of the forum. The Applicant will keep the Inspectorate updated on this.

Planning Policy Assessment

The Applicant provided an overview of the planning policies relevant to the project and mentioned that it will produce and submit a Planning Statement which will include a planning policy compliance table. The Applicant currently does not intend to submit a separate Policy Compliance Document, unless requested by the Inspectorate. The Applicant also queried whether the Inspectorate would like this in a specific format. The Inspectorate confirmed that it will get back to the Applicant on this.

AOB

The Applicant proposes to prepare Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with relevant stakeholders and questioned whether it needs to prepare Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statements (PADSS) and / or a Statement of Commonality in addition to SoCGs. The Inspectorate confirmed that it will get back to the Applicant on this.

The Applicant queried if the Inspectorate requires LSE Screening Matrices and AEOI matrices (previously forming template appendices to PINS Advice Note 10) to be provided as separate word files with HRA Reports. The Inspectorate confirmed that these are no longer required.

The Applicant mentioned that it considers that a Safety Assessment (5.11) and National Security Issues Document (5.12) is not required. The Inspectorate confirmed that they would check whether this is correct and would update the Applicant as soon as possible.

The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant that the new Pre-application service, in line with the updated prospectus, will commence on 1 October 2024. The Applicant has opted for the 'standard' service; charging for this service will start from 1 October 2024. The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant to send over their invoicing details as soon as possible. The Inspectorate and Applicant discussed that it would be useful to arrange a project update meeting before statutory consultation commences, so are intending to meet in January 2025. The Applicant will confirm this. The Inspectorate also reminded the Applicant that meeting notes will be replaced by an advice log, in line with the new Pre-application prospectus, from 1 October 2024.