



Stonestreet Green Solar

Grid Connection Statement

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APFP Regulation 5(2)(p) and 6(1)(a)(i)

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009



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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Grid Connection Statement (this 'Statement') has been prepared by EPL 001 Limited ('the Applicant') as part of an application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') for Stonestreet Green Solar ('the Project'). The grid connection ('Grid Connection') is required to allow the Project to export electricity generated to the electricity grid.
- 1.1.2 The Project comprises the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of solar photovoltaic ('PV') arrays and energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection to the existing National Grid Sellindge Substation.
- 1.1.3 The Project will include a generating station (incorporating solar arrays) with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts ('MW'). The agreed grid connection for the Project will allow the export and import of up to 99.9 MW of electricity to the grid. The Project will connect to the existing National Grid Sellindge Substation via a new 132 kilovolt ('kV') substation constructed as part of the Project and cable connection under the Network Rail and High Speed 1 ('HS1') railway.
- 1.1.4 The location of the Project is shown on **ES Volume 3, Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan (Doc Ref. 5.3)**. The Project will be located within the Order limits (the land shown on the **Works Plans (Doc Ref. 2.3)** within which the Project can be carried out). The Order limits plan is provided as **ES Volume 3, Figure 1.2: Order Limits (Doc Ref. 5.3)**. Land within the Order limits is known as the 'Site'.
- 1.1.5 A detailed description of the Project is included in **ES Volume 2, Chapter 3: Project Description (Doc Ref. 5.2)**.

1.2 Purpose and Structure of this Statement

- 1.2.1 This Statement is submitted under Regulation 6(1)(a)(i) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 ('the APFP Regulations'), which requires the Applicant for a generating station to state who will be responsible for designing and building the connection to the electricity grid from the Project.
- 1.2.2 This Statement provides confirmation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero of responsibilities for designing and building the connection from the ground mounted solar PV panel arrays and associated infrastructure to the National Grid Sellindge Substation.
- 1.2.3 This Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 1: Introduction;

- Section 2: Grid Connection Details;
- Section 3: Responsibilities;
- Section 4: Consents and Land Rights; and
- Section 5: Conclusion.

2 Grid Connection Details

2.1 Grid Offer

- 2.1.1 The Applicant has received and accepted a grid connection offer ('Grid Offer') from UK Power Networks Limited ('UKPN'). UKPN is the distribution network operator for the south east and east of England and is licensed by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets to distribute electricity from the transmission grid to regional homes and businesses, and to ensure that distributed generation on its network is able to connect and supply electricity.
- 2.1.2 The Grid Offer allows the export and import of up to 99.9 MW of electricity to the UKPN distribution network via a connection to the UKPN-operated side of the existing National Grid Sellindge Substation.
- 2.1.3 The Grid Offer was accepted by the Applicant in April 2020 but subsequent engagement with UKPN has resulted in an amendment to the point of connection from the original proposal (to an existing electrical tower on the south of the HS1 railway) to the updated proposal direct into Sellindge Substation.

2.2 Grid Connection

- 2.2.1 Work numbers or 'Work Nos.' are referred to throughout this Statement. These correspond to Schedule 1 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)** which lists out the authorised development for which development consent is being sought. The **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)** should be referred to for the precise terminology and full details of each Work No. The spatial extent and location of each Work No. is shown on the **Works Plans (Doc Ref. 2.3)**.
- 2.2.2 The Grid Connection is via a single 132kV cable circuit, itself consisting of three smaller cables which will run approximately 2 kilometres ('km') underground from the Project Substation to Sellindge Substation.
- 2.2.3 The Grid Connection comprises three main parts:
- Part 1 is the Project Substation. This is defined under Work No. 3. The Project Substation will receive electricity exported from the Project and convert the voltage from 33kV to 132kV. It will also allow the import of electricity from the electricity grid to charge the BESS Units.
 - Part 2 is the Cable Route Corridor. This is defined under Work No. 4. This Work No. includes the description of works required to facilitate the grid connection to the Sellindge Substation, including laying of cables, works to allow cables to cross existing features and infrastructure including watercourses, Public Rights of Way and the Network Rail/HS1 railway.
 - Part 3 is the Sellindge Substation Extension, also defined under Work No. 4. This is a limited extension of no more than 0.05ha within the secure

compound.

- 2.2.4 The Applicant will be primarily responsible for delivery of Part 1 (the Project Substation), save for any works that UKPN are required to complete in order to connect the Project to its network. As outlined in Section 3, UKPN will be responsible for delivery of Part 2 (the Cable Route Corridor) and Part 3 (the Sellindge Substation Extension).

2.3 Cable Route Corridor

- 2.3.1 The Cable Route Corridor indicated as part of Work No. 4 on the **Works Plans (Doc Ref. 2.3)** shows the maximum extent of the cable route. UKPN has been consulted on the proposed route and have confirmed that sufficient space is available to allow construction of the cable.
- 2.3.2 The cables between the Project Substation and Sellindge Substation will be installed below ground via excavated trenching or HDD construction methods.
- 2.3.3 The Grid Connection Cable will be laid at a maximum depth of 2m below ground level ('BGL') except where crossing the East Stour River (where a minimum depth of 2m from the bed of the East Stour River will be maintained) or third-party infrastructure (where cables will be laid at an appropriate separation distance from the infrastructure).
- 2.3.4 The Cable Route Corridor will cross under Network Rail / High Speed 1 via existing ducts or new ducts.
- 2.3.5 The Applicant has continued to engage with UKPN, which confirmed on 1 September 2023 that the Project would connect directly into Sellindge Substation using existing ducts, subject to confirming that the ducts have not collapsed. If the ducts are available, then the cable will be pulled through an existing duct such that no new works will be required in the vicinity of the Network Rail / High Speed 1 infrastructure.
- 2.3.6 UKPN will confirm the existing ducts are available as soon as this is possible. However, at the current time National Grid has established a temporary access restriction in this area following an incident with their infrastructure located near to the duct location. UKPN is engaging with National Grid to gain access to allow UKPN to confirm the position; this is expected prior to commencement of the Examination.
- 2.3.7 If the existing ducts are not available then new ducts will be required, installed using HDD construction methods. If required, further discussions would be undertaken with Network Rail / High Speed 1.
- 2.3.8 UKPN will be responsible for all works associated with the Cable Route Corridor, including any new cable ducts under Network Rail / High Speed 1, in the event these are required.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Distribution Network Connection Works

- 3.1.1 Connection works for connection to the distribution network are split into non-contestable and contestable works.
- 3.1.2 Non-contestable works are those which can only be carried out by the transmission network operator (National Grid) or the distribution network operator, in this case UKPN. Contestable works are those which can be undertaken by the distribution network operator or by an Independent Connection Provider appointed by the project developer.
- 3.1.3 The Grid Offer included an option for UKPN to complete the non-contestable works only, or both the non-contestable and contestable works, otherwise known as an all-works package.
- 3.1.4 The Applicant accepted the all-works package offer from UKPN. This means that UKPN will be responsible for delivery of all works required to connect the Project Substation (which the Applicant will be primarily responsible for delivering) to the Sellindge Substation, including the design and build of the Grid Connection.
- 3.1.5 UKPN's design work completed to date has been used to inform the location and size of the Cable Route Corridor and the Sellindge Substation Extension. UKPN will continue to refine the design as the detailed design, development and implementation process continue.
- 3.1.6 The non-contestable works, which can only be delivered by UKPN and/or National Grid, primarily relate to the extension of the Sellindge Substation and include:
- installation of new or amended structures, including outdoor air insulated switchgear or indoor gas insulated switchgear, circuit breakers, disconnectors, earth switches, bus-bars, steel supports and ancillary electrical infrastructure;
 - laying down of access tracks, ramps, means of access, footpaths and roads;
 - construction of a retaining wall, landscaping and vegetation management, signage, information boards and temporary construction laydown areas;
 - fencing, gates, boundary treatment and other means of enclosure;
 - provision of security and monitoring measures such as CCTV columns, lighting columns and lighting, cameras, and communication infrastructure; and
 - drainage works.
- 3.1.7 The contestable works, which will also be delivered by UKPN, include:
- laying of 132 kilovolt electrical cable and associated fibre optic cable to

connect Work No. 3 to Sellindge Substation, including tunnelling, boring, open cut trenching and horizontal directional drilling works for trenchless crossings;

- works to allow electrical cable crossings of non-navigable rivers, other watercourses and drains, permissive paths, public rights of way and other highways;
- works to allow installation of bridge crossings over non-navigable rivers and other watercourses and drains;
- crossing of Network Rail infrastructure either-
 - using existing electrical ducts; or
 - through the installation of new cable ducts; and
- laying down of internal access tracks, ramps, means of access, footpaths, roads, landscaping and vegetation management, signage, information boards and temporary secured construction laydown areas.

3.1.8 The above works are described within Work No. 4 in Schedule 1 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)**.

4 Consents and Land Rights

4.1 Consents

- 4.1.1 The Grid Connection connects the Project Substation to Sellindge Substation.
- 4.1.2 All parts of the Grid Connection are within the Order limits, are included in the DCO and are assessed in the Environmental Statement.
- 4.1.3 The **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)** at Article 6 (Benefits of the Order) allows the provisions of the DCO to have effect for the benefit of both UKPN and National Grid (in addition to the Applicant) in respect of the delivery of Work Nos. 3 and 4 to ensure that these parties have the powers necessary in order to complete the proposed Grid Connection works.
- 4.1.4 As a result, the relevant undertaker will not be required to use its statutory rights to deliver the Grid Connection.
- 4.1.5 The **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)** does not seek to disapply water legislation in relation to watercourse crossings as the detailed design required in relation to these crossings is not available at this stage. A number of Flood Risk Activity Permits will be required from the Environment Agency prior to construction of the Grid Connection, as set out in the **Schedule of Other Consents and Licences (Doc Ref. 3.4)**. The Applicant has discussed the scope of the DCO application with the Environment Agency, including the proposed crossings. The Environment Agency has not raised any objection to the proposal subject to further detail being provided in the application for these permits.

4.2 Land Rights

- 4.2.1 The Cable Route Corridor will require easements to be agreed with a number of owners of the land between the Project Substation and Sellindge Substation over which the Grid Connection would be laid.
- 4.2.2 The Applicant has progressed discussions with each of the parties, including a private landowner that holds title to the majority of the Cable Route Corridor where Heads of Terms were signed in April 2024.
- 4.2.3 The Applicant remains committed to obtaining necessary land and rights by negotiation where possible and discussions with landowners remain ongoing. The status of negotiations at the time of the DCO application submission is reported in the **Schedule of Negotiations and Powers Sought (Doc Ref. 4.4)**.
- 4.2.4 In relation to the cable crossing of Network Rail/HS1, UKPN has confirmed it has an agreed easement in place with HS1 and has a master agreement with Network Rail that allows it to secure similar land easement rights if required.

- 4.2.5 Negotiations for the purchase of land, rights and interests are ongoing in respect of any new rights required for the Project, where voluntary agreement has not yet been reached. It is necessary for the Applicant to seek compulsory acquisition powers to secure such land, rights and interests and to ensure that any third-party interests or encumbrances affecting such land, rights and interests may be acquired, overridden or extinguished pursuant to the DCO, thereby ensuring that the Project can be constructed, operated, maintained and decommissioned.
- 4.2.6 In the event that voluntary agreements cannot be reached in respect of the land, rights and interests required for the Grid Connection, Part 6 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)** includes compulsory acquisition powers to secure such land, rights and interests in order to enable the Grid Connection to be delivered without impediment.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 Regulation 6(1)(a)(i) of the APFP Regulations requires an Applicant to confirm *“who will be responsible for designing and building the connection to the electricity grid”*.
- 5.1.2 The Applicant confirms it has received a Grid Offer from UKPN to connect the Project to the distribution network at the National Grid Sellindge Substation and that it has accepted an all-works package offer. This means that UKPN is responsible for delivery of all works required to connect the Project Substation (which the Applicant will be primarily responsible for delivering) to the electricity grid at Sellindge Substation, including the design and build of the Grid Connection.
- 5.1.3 All parts of the Grid Connection are within the Order limits, the works required for the Grid Connection are included in the works describing the authorised development set out in Schedule 1 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Doc Ref. 3.1)** and are assessed in the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the DCO application for the Project. As a result, the consents required to deliver the Grid Connection (with the limited exception of flood risk activity permits as agreed with the Environment Agency) are included as part of the DCO application.
- 5.1.4 The Applicant has, or will have, the ability to procure the necessary land and rights in order to accommodate the Grid Connection Corridor.