



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) project
<b>File reference</b>	EN020027
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	30 January 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

### Project overview

The Applicant briefly summarised the project. The Proposed Development would seek to reinforce the power network in East Anglia with circa 180km 400kV high-voltage new transmission line, including a new 400kV connection substation. The Applicant explained that the development would also meet the need of proposed offshore wind farms and new energy needs in the Essex area. It was stated that the development would be undergrounded through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and would run through 13 host local authorities and approximately 117 parish councils. The Applicant noted that the project development is still in the early stages and that any decisions taken to date are preliminary and subject to further consultation and periodic back-check and review.

### Consultation update

The Applicant advised that it had carried out initial non-statutory consultation in 2022, comprising mail-outs to 50,000 homes with an estimated reach of 100,000 people, and around 200 briefings. The Applicant stated that this had yielded a good response rate, comprising circa 3,500 pieces of feedback. An additional non-statutory consultation is planned for late spring 2023 to share detailed information regarding the scheme alignment, and would illustrate where the Applicant was proposing undergrounding work. The Applicant had also been running workshops with local authorities regarding project design, as well as meeting with them every two months to consider more general matters. It had also been speaking to potentially affected technical stakeholders, including housing developers.



The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider also providing detailed justification for the parts of the scheme that would not be undergrounded as part of its next consultation. The Inspectorate queried how long the Applicant would be running the next non-statutory consultation for, to which the Applicant responded that it estimated two months, but it would take guidance from the local authorities. The Inspectorate also queried whether the Applicant had narrowed down the search area for the location of the new substation. The Applicant confirmed that it had established a preferred site, and was in the process of preparing information on this to present the proposal in the next round of consultation.

The Applicant advised that its statutory consultation is expected to take place in early 2024 and to run for approximately eight weeks. The Applicant advised that it intends to produce a Project Development Report for the non-statutory consultation, which would outline the project design progression and include engineering designs; alongside a Consultation Feedback Report. The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant was aware of any potential clashes with consultations on other projects. The Applicant advised that it is in discussion with the North Falls and Five Estuaries offshore wind farm project teams, and is working to co-ordinate the consultations where possible.

## **Surveys and land access**

The Applicant provided an overview of surveys and land access matters to date. It confirmed that wintering bird surveys were underway, and that the Applicant is currently agreeing viewpoints for the landscape and visual assessment with local authorities. The Applicant is also in the process of seeking voluntary access to private land to undertake further survey work, and is communicating with land agents in this regard. The Applicant indicated that there had been a degree of reluctance to grant access to some private land, and that as a last resort it may consider seeking access through section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

## **Scoping Opinion**

The Applicant had received the Scoping Opinion from the Inspectorate and is in the process of reviewing it in detail. The Applicant has identified some minor issues which it needs to discuss with stakeholders, but agreed that it would follow the Inspectorate's suggestion that Health and Wellbeing should be dealt with as a separate chapter in the Environmental Statement. It was agreed that if required by the Applicant, a meeting could be arranged to discuss any points of clarification regarding the Scoping Opinion. The intention of this meeting would be for the Applicant to set out any such issues identified in the Scoping Opinion and how it intends to address these points.

## **National Grid organisational change**

The Applicant stated that National Grid had been awarded the development and delivery of 17 major projects by Ofgem including the East Anglia GREEN project, with a focus on delivering the Net Zero agenda. The Applicant stated that National Grid is creating a new business unit in order to deliver the projects, and is also looking at an enterprise model for their construction with a focus on supply chain collaboration.

## **Any other business**

The Applicant explained that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is continuing its early opportunities work to enable better co-ordination of wind farm



projects, working to reduce impacts on communities. The Applicant ventured that it was possible that the North Falls and/ or Five Estuaries projects could apply for funding under the initiative, which could result in the projects grid connections relocating; though this would not be confirmed until May 2023. The Applicant stated that if this occurred then a review of the East Anglia GREEN project would need to be undertaken, but the project is currently being progressed as it is.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider and track the issue of design principles throughout the pre-application stage, particularly regarding the design of the substations. The Applicant was advised to take on board comments and guidance within the National Infrastructure Commission Report, including regarding design champions and design panels. The Applicant explained that its team has a well-integrated design process, noting the relationship between the engineers and environment team and how this optimised the design from an environmental perspective.

### **Summary of actions/ follow-up required**

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate requested that the Applicant prepare a summary of key topics resulting from the upcoming consultation for the next project update meeting.
- The Inspectorate requested that the Applicant provide an overview of its approach to scheme design at the next project update meeting.