

**Northern Gas Networks Limited (“NGN”) response to Highways England’s (“HE”) comments on NGN’s Relevant Representations, submitted at Deadline One.**

**Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme (the “Scheme”)**

**Your reference: TR010031**

- 1 We are providing this letter in response to HE’s comments submitted at Deadline One on NGN’s Relevant Representation.
- 2 NGN is grateful for the detailed response HE have given to the NGN’s Relevant Representation [RR-013]. However, NGN is concerned that the response given in relation to the retention of land at Plot 3/6c does not accurately reflect the current situation.
- 3 **HE have suggested at response 13.2 that negotiations have not advanced due NGN only recently instructing external solicitors.**
  - 3.1 NGN do not consider this to be an accurate reflection of the status of current negotiations. Both pre and post instruction of external solicitors, NGN has been forthcoming in responding to HE and providing additional information where necessary. However, NGN have had difficulty obtaining additional information from HE regarding the quantity and location of land required which would aid negotiations moving forwards. NGN anticipate elaborating on this matter within the Statement of Common Ground therefore will not go further at this time.
- 4 **At Response 13.3, HE state that NGN’s proposal for a CNG filing station at Plot 3/6c has not been submitted for consideration by the local planning authority (LPA) or HE itself.**
  - 4.1 While it is correct that the LPA have not yet been notified of the proposal, NGN and ENGIE’s focus has been on ensuring the viability of the project and ensuring that a strong business case can be put forward. It is unlikely that the CNG filing station would face any major issues at the Planning Stage, however this is not something which is material to the Examination at this time.
  - 4.2 NGN does not agree with the statements made in terms of the viability of the project itself and the status of discussions to date with HE. HE have been aware of the proposal for an extended period of time and have not raised any substantive objections, other than the issue of land take. It is our understanding that HE are fundamentally in agreement with NGN’s proposal for a CNG filing station and we are aware that the HE would in fact be happy to accommodate the station should additional land become available for use as a construction compound, indicating that the proposal could operate in tandem with the Scheme.
  - 4.3 The status of discussions between HE and NGN regarding the CNG filling station will be covered in the Statement of Common Ground.