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Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning  
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

01 February 2024

Ref: NGrid/EGL3/s35/DESNZ Let Jan-24

Dear Sir/Madam,

**REQUEST FOR A DIRECTION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 35 OF THE PLANNING ACT 2008 RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT FORMING PART OF THE EASTERN GREEN LINK 3 (EGL3) PROJECT**

## 1. Overview

This letter is a formal request by National Grid Electricity Transmission (“NGET”) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (“Secretary of State”) for a direction under Section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”) with respect to the Proposed Development set out in Section 3 below.

The Proposed Development forms part of NGET’s proposed Eastern Green Link 3 project (“EGL3” or “the Project”), a transmission and reinforcement project comprising a converter station in Norfolk, England (the ‘Proposed Development’ element), connecting to a converter station near Peterhead, Aberdeenshire via a high voltage direct current (“HVDC”) submarine and underground electricity cable link.

The Project is being jointly developed by NGET and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (“SSEN-T”) and is needed to significantly increase the capability of the existing National Electricity Transmission System (“NETS”) to enable the north-south flow of power between Scotland and England from new and future offshore windfarm generation projects. The Project is a key part of delivering the Government’s legally binding accelerated Net Zero and Energy Security ambitions.

The English onshore elements of EGL3 would be routed and sited through eight Authorities. The Project has been introduced to each Local Planning Authority (LPA) as well as Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk County Councils. NGET have also engaged with them on the proposed consenting approach and a summary of their responses and letters of support to the proposed consenting approach are attached at **Appendix 2**.

This request is being made in parallel with a separate request to the Secretary of State to direct those similar elements of the Eastern Green Link 4 (“EGL4”) project also be treated as development for which development consent is required.

Subject to the outcome of these Section 35 applications and the final designs of EGL3 and 4 it is anticipated that a single application for development consent will be made which fully encompasses the ‘Proposed Development’ as set out below in Section 3 of both letters (in other words, a single Development Consent Order for both EGL3 and 4).

## 2. The Project

The Project comprises Scottish onshore works, Scottish and English offshore works, and English onshore works including:

- A converter station and transmission grid connection apparatus in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, with HVDC and high voltage alternating current (“HVAC”) onshore underground cables measuring approximately 10km and 1km in length respectively;
- HVDC subsea cable approximately 575km in length to a landfall point in Lincolnshire, England;
- Underground onshore HVDC cable approximately 100km in length from the landfall point to the Walpole area of Norfolk;
- A converter station in the Walpole area of Norfolk;
- Underground HVAC cable up to 5km in length connecting the converter station to the NETS at a substation in the Walpole area of Norfolk
- Supplementary works to existing 400 kV overhead lines and local changes to the lower voltage distribution networks to facilitate the construction of the new terrestrial transmission connections in England.

A schematic layout of the project is included in **Appendix 1**.

### 3. Proposed Development in respect of which a Section 35 Direction is Requested

NGET requests that the onshore converter station in the Walpole area of Norfolk is directed as nationally significant for the reasons set out in Sections 4 and 5 below.

The converter station is the ‘Proposed Development’, which would constitute the ‘authorised development’ in a development consent order.

Of the remaining elements of the Project:

1. The Scottish onshore and offshore works are not located in England and as such will be consented through Scotland’s town and country planning and marine licensing legislation;
2. The English offshore works may be dealt with more efficiently under a separate marine licence, under the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009;
3. The other English onshore works are necessary to support both the operation of the Proposed Development and the Project and will include significant underground onshore HVDC and HVAC cables, supplementary works to existing 400kV overhead lines, transition joint bays where the HVDC cables make landfall, and a substation to enable a connection to the NETS, together with works necessary to provide environmental mitigation.

NGET does **not** consider that it is necessary or appropriate to treat items 2 and 3 above – or any other matter associated with the Project - as part of the Proposed Development, as these are elements which would ordinarily be considered as associated development under Section 115 of the PA 2008 and under current ‘Guidance on associated development applications for major infrastructure projects’ (DCLG 2013).

Consistent with the approach of the Secretary of State in the Xlinks and Continental Link Section 35 Directions (26 September 2023 and 18 August 2021, respectively), NGET will refine and define the associated development as the Project progresses, and if necessary seek confirmation from the Secretary of State at a later date that the authorised development which is the subject of the DCO application is consistent with that for which any Direction is given.

### 4. Reasons to Issue the Direction

The tests that the Secretary of State must apply in considering whether to make a direction in this case are that the:

- Proposed Development is or forms part of a project (or proposed project) in the field of energy (PA 2008 S.35(2)(a)(i));
- Proposed Development will be wholly in England or waters adjacent to England up to the seaward limits of the territorial sea, and/or is within a Renewable Energy Zone (PA 2008 S.35(2)(b), with reference to S.35(3)(a) and S.35(3)(b)); and
- Secretary of State thinks the Project is a project of national significance (PA 2008 S.35(2)(c)) either by itself or when considered with one or more other projects (or proposed projects) in the same field.

Neither the Proposed Development nor the Project fall within the existing definition of a 'nationally significant infrastructure project' (S.14 to S.30 PA 2008). This request is therefore a qualifying request within the meaning of S.35ZA of the PA 2008. NGET can also confirm that no application for a consent or authorisation mentioned in S.33(1) or (2) has been made in relation to the Proposed Development.

### Field of Energy (PA 2008 S.35(2)(a)(i))

The proposed Project is in the field of energy as it is for the purpose of electricity conversion and transmission. The Proposed Development forms an essential part of the Project, being the infrastructure that will convert the transmitted electricity for onward transmission and distribution in England.

### Wholly in England (PA 2008 S.35(2)(b))

The Proposed Development would be located in Walpole, Norfolk, England.

Although not part of this request, any associated development would also be located in England or waters adjacent to England up to the seaward limits of the territorial sea, and/or within a Renewable Energy Zone (but not in any part of a Renewable Energy Zone in relation to which the Scottish Ministers have functions). As noted above, the offshore English elements may be consented separately, and the Scottish onshore and offshore elements would be consented separately.

### National significance (PA 2008 S.35(2)(c))

NGET considers the Proposed Development, and the proposed Project of which it forms part, to be of national significance for the reasons set out below:

- 1) The Proposed Development is necessary to deliver the proposed Project, which is critical for providing an additional 2GW of transmission capability between Scotland and England required as part of NGET's Great Grid Upgrade programme. The Great Grid Upgrade is the largest overhaul of the electricity transmission grid in generations and is required to meet the legally binding Net Zero 2050 target under the Climate Change Act 2008, and British Energy Security ambitions.
- 2) A critical component of the strategy for meeting the 2050 target is the plan to connect 50 GW of new offshore wind generation to the UK electricity grid by 2030, as set out in the British Energy Security Strategy (2022). Due to the growth in the volume of renewable energy, in particular offshore wind, connecting to the electricity transmission network in Scotland and on the east coast of England, there is a requirement to significantly and urgently upgrade this network.
- 3) This requirement is addressed in the Electricity System Operator's Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND) which sets out a single, integrated design that supports the large-scale delivery of electricity generated from offshore wind, taking power to where it is needed across Great Britain. The HND facilitates the connection of 23GW of wind, helping to deliver the Government's ambition for 50GW connected offshore wind by 2030.
- 4) Projects that are critical to delivering that consumer benefit, such as the proposed Project, are recognised in the HND as "Essential", and have been identified as requiring accelerated delivery timescales by their designation by Ofgem as Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) (December 2022) projects. ASTI designation means that the Project will benefit from a streamlined regulatory approval and funding process, in recognition of the urgency of the national need that it helps to address.

- 5) This need is also reflected in the newly designated National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5), which identifies a policy imperative in support of offshore-onshore transmission. NPS EN-3 states that there is a 'critical national priority' for nationally significant offshore wind development, including supporting onshore and offshore network infrastructure, and related network reinforcements.
- 6) NPS EN-5 goes on to clarify that this includes infrastructure identified in the HND. As noted above, the Project is identified in the HND, and will support transmission of electricity from offshore wind infrastructure and other developments, therefore if designated in the current form would be supported as a project of 'critical national priority'.
- 7) Further, EN-1 sets out the challenge of the substantial volume of onshore reinforcement works needed to meet decarbonisation targets. It states that "National Grid ESO forecasts that over the next decade the onshore and offshore transmission network, some of which is located offshore will require a doubling of north-south power transfer capacity due to increased wind generation in Scotland". The Project will play a key role in increasing north-south transfer capacity between England and Scotland and therefore meeting targets.
- 8) The Project is predominantly located in Lincolnshire, a critical region for a number of proposed strategic improvements to the NETS under the HND – for example NGET's North Humber to High Marnham and Grimsby to Walpole overhead line upgrade projects (both NSIPs); and Total Energy's Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Generating Station (also an NSIP).
- 9) The Proposed Development is an important part of the overall HND strategy to ensure there is sufficient capacity to safely and efficiently transport and convert the new generation of electricity and connect the developers whose projects will generate it.
- 10) The Project's capacity of 2GW is nationally significant both in terms of its contribution to the overall target required but also when compared with the threshold for a generating station under S.15 PA 2008 (50MW and 100MW for onshore and offshore generating stations, respectively).
- 11) Physically, the Proposed Development would comprise a large warehouse-type structure, and would occupy an area of approximately 10ha, with buildings attaining a maximum height of up to 30m. The converter station would comprise one of the most substantial elements of the Project, in terms of its physical scale and dimensions, the complexity of plant, equipment and process, and its purpose in converting 2GW of power from HVDC to HVAC.
- 12) Converter stations require multiple complex pieces of technology to convert the HVDC from the generating station into HVAC electricity that can be transmitted and distributed onshore. These components typically include a converter hall, converter transformers, switchgear and busbars, lightning towers, ancillary plant such as cooling bank and stand-by back-up emergency generators, and a control centre.
- 13) Potentially, for the purposes of reducing environmental and community impact, the Proposed Development may be co-located with the converter station proposed for the EGL4 Project, also an ASTI project relayed in the ESO's HND, and in respect of which a separate Section 35 request is being made.

In summary, the Proposed Development is the key component of a Project, which has been determined to be an HND 'Essential' project for achieving legally binding Net Zero targets, has been granted ASTI 'accelerated' status by Ofgem for that reason and by facilitating the transmission of low carbon energy is supported as a 'critical national priority' by the newly designated NPSs.

Clearly, the need for the Proposed Development and the Project, and the national benefits they deliver in conjunction with the above projects, is such that either by itself or when considered with these "one or more other projects (or proposed projects) in the same field" - the Proposed Development forms part of a project that is of national significance.

## 5. Additional Reasons to Issue the Direction

In addition to the above, NGET notes that consideration of the Proposed Development through an application under the PA 2008 would bring numerous benefits for both the Project and stakeholders. It would provide the

certainty of a single consenting and land rights acquisition process and a fixed timescale for determination as well as remove the need to apply for separate consents from multiple Local Planning Authorities.

An application under the PA 2008 would also enable consideration of the Project via the same consenting regime as energy NSIPs in the vicinity including NGET's proposed Grimsby to Walpole Upgrade project, enabling the applications to be determined by the same decision maker. This would also avoid the potential for confusion amongst the LPAs and stakeholders, that could result from different projects of a similar scale in close proximity to each another, being considered concurrently but under different consenting regimes with different processes.

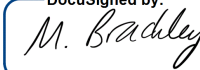
Further, the consideration of both EGL3 and EGL4 via the same DCO application will ensure a co-ordinated strategic approach to the consenting and delivery of these projects, with holistic assessment of matters such as cumulative impacts and co-location of associated development (as encouraged by Section 2.13 of NPS EN-5).

## 6. Conclusion

As such, NGET respectfully invites the Secretary of State to direct that the Proposed Development, that is, the converter station in the Walpole area of Norfolk, should be treated as development for which a development consent order is required.

We note that the revised versions of Overarching National Policy Statement 1 (NPS EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) and the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) designated on 17 January 2024 will apply and have effect in respect of development in your direction.

Yours sincerely

DocuSigned by:  
  
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**Mark Brackley**

Project Director – Eastern Green Link 3

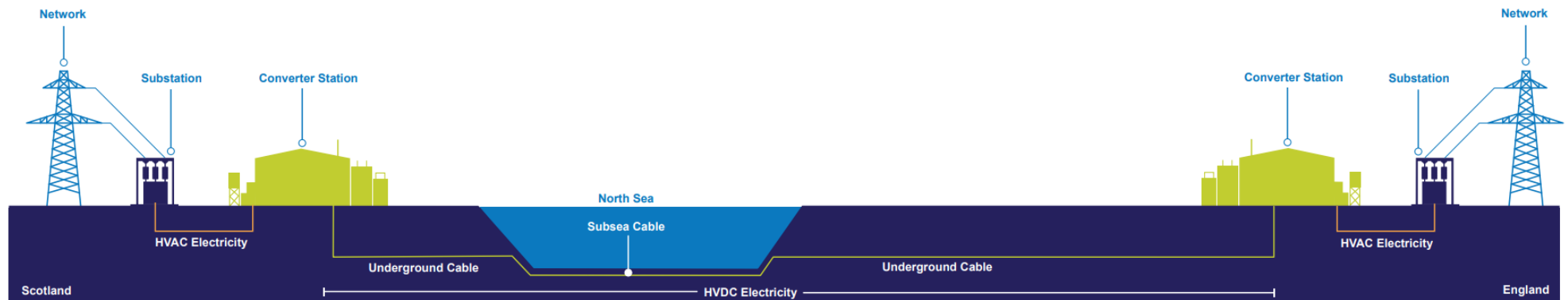
Appendix 1 – Schematic Layout of Project

Appendix 2 – Summary Host Authority Responses and Copies of Letters Received

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## APPENDIX 1 – Schematic Layout of Project



National Grid, National  
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Gallows Hill, Warwick,  
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## APPENDIX 2: Summary of Host Authority Responses and Copies of Letters Received

Host Authorities	Key Contacts	Section 35 Response to request for support
Lincolnshire County Council	Neil McBride- Head of Planning  Justine Proudler Infrastructure Manager	Letter in support
South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council, South Holland District Council) - Boston Borough Council rep	Mike Gildersleeves - Assistant Director – Planning & Strategic Infrastructure	Letter in support
Cambridgeshire County Council	Alice Tithecott - Planning and Growth Manager	No comment
Fenland District Council	Nick Harding - Head of Planning	Letter in support
Norfolk County Council	Stephen Faulkner - Principal Planner – National Infrastructure Planning Lead Officer	No comment
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council	Stuart Ashworth - Assistant Director – Environment and Planning  Hannah Wood-Handy, Planning Control Manager	No comment





Sarah Davies  
National Grid Electricity Transmission  
National Grid House  
Warwick Technology Park  
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6 November 2023

Neil McBride  
Head of Planning  
Planning Services  
Lincolnshire County Council  
County Offices  
Newland  
Lincoln LN1 1YL  
Tel: 01522 782070  
E-Mail: [neil.mcbride@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:neil.mcbride@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

Dear Sarah

**REQUEST FOR A DIRECTION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 35 OF PLANNING ACT (PA) 2008 RELATING TO THE EASTERN GREEN LINK PROJECTS (EGL3 & 4) REINFORCEMENT OF THE NATIONAL TRANSMISSION SYSTEM**

The Council understands that National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) is requesting a direction from the Secretary of State under Section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 for Eastern Green Link Projects (EGL3 & 4) to be treated as development for which development consent is required.

There are a number of energy related schemes in this locality already in the public domain and others will emerge shortly which are all being promoted as Development Consent Order projects. It would enable these projects to be looked at in a holistic way if they are all to be examined as Development Consent Order projects. This would also help the public and local public to engage if they are all determined under the same process as it will be confusing if some are dealt with as Development Consent Order(DCO) projects and others using the Town and Country Planning Act route.

Consequently Lincolnshire County Council is supportive of the proposal being considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, as per the Planning Act 2008 .The County Council considers that the proposal would be best considered through the DCO process, noting that similar projects have been considered under such legislation.



The County Council looks forward to assisting you with the DCO process where possible, to build on our existing knowledge base in relation to other energy projects which will enable us to respond comprehensively to the EGL3 & 4 proposals.

Yours sincerely

*N McBride*

**Neil McBride**  
**Head of Planning**



served by One Team

South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

Mike Gildersleeves  
Assistant Director – Planning and Strategic Infrastructure  
South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership  
(by email)

[www.selcp.co.uk](http://www.selcp.co.uk)

Sarah Davies  
National Grid Electricity Transmission  
National Grid House  
Warwick Technology Park  
Gallows Hill  
Warwick  
CV34 6DA  
(by email)

Email:  
mike.gildersleeves@boston.gov.uk

Date: 07.11.2023

Dear Sarah

**Re: Request for a Direction by the Secretary of State under Section 35 of Planning Act(PA) 2008 relating to the Eastern Green Link Projects (EGL3 & 4) reinforcement of the National Transmission System**

The Council understands that National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) is requesting a direction from the Secretary of State under Section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 for Eastern Green Link Projects (EGL3 & 4) to be treated as development for which development consent is required.

The advice and response offered below is provided in my role as Assistant Director: Planning & Strategic Infrastructure for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership ("The Partnership"). The Partnership is comprised of the 3 sovereign Councils, Boston Borough, South Holland District and East Lindsey District – each of which fulfil their own duty as Local Planning Authority.

We note the request that has been made, and appreciate the reasons being presented by NGET for taking this approach.

Having come in at the back end of the Viking Link project, which was dealt with locally, I understand that having multiple (cross boundary) applications did cause added complexity both for the Councils and National Grid.

In principle therefore, we have no objection to the proposed use of the NSIP regime as a mechanism to simplify the process.

However, in order for us to fully support and resource engagement with these projects, as there will be no planning fees coming to the Council's, we would expect that a PPA will be put in place that enables the project costs to be off-set so that our engagement is at no risk to our tax payers. We would be happy to discuss this with you, and look to put in place a PPA across the Partnership, as we have with Outer Dowsing.

To that end, as a matter of general principle, I would have no objection to your approach and I am happy to confirm this position on behalf of the Partnership (please note we are still separate sovereign authorities).

To conclude:

The South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership is supportive of the proposal being considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, as per the Planning Act 2008. The South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership considers that the proposal would be best considered through the DCO process, noting that similar projects have been considered under such legislation.

The South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership looks forward to assisting you with the DCO process where possible, to build on our existing knowledge base in relation to other energy projects which will enable us to respond comprehensively to the EGL3 & 4 proposals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.G.', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mike Gildersleeves  
Assistant Director – Planning and Strategic Infrastructure



Sarah Davies  
National Grid Electricity Transmission  
National Grid House  
Warwick Technology Park  
Gallows Hill  
Warwick  
CV34 6DA

Nick Harding  
Tel 07593 101090  
[nharding@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:nharding@fenland.gov.uk)

7 November 2023

Dear Sarah,

**Request for a Direction by the Secretary of State under Section 35 of Planning Act (PA) 2008 relating to the Eastern Green Link Projects (EGL3 & 4) reinforcement of the National Transmission System**

The Council understands that National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) is requesting a direction from the Secretary of State under Section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 for Eastern Green Link Projects (EGL3 & 4) to be treated as development for which development consent is required.

[Additional text/specific reasons for support can be added]

**Fenland District Council** does not object to the proposal being considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, as per the Planning Act 2008 as it notes that similar projects have been considered under such legislation.

**Fenland District Council** looks forward to assisting you with the DCO process where possible, to build on our existing knowledge base in relation to other energy projects which will enable us to respond comprehensively to the EGL3 & 4 proposals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N Harding", on a light-colored background.

**Nick Harding**  
**Head of Planning**  
**Fenland District Council**