



DIRECTION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO (“THE SECRETARY OF STATE”) UNDER SECTION 35 OF THE PLANNING ACT 2008 RELATING TO PROJECT UNION: EAST COAST

1. By letter to the Secretary of State received on 2 April 2026 (“the Direction request”), National Gas Transmission plc (“the Applicant”) formally requested that the Secretary of State exercise the power under section 35(1) of the Planning Act 2008 to direct that Project Union: East Coast (“the Proposed Project”) which comprises the elements set out in the Direction request and in paragraph 2 below be treated as development for which development consent under the Planning Act 2008 is required.
2. The following elements of the Proposed Project constitute the “Principal Development” for the purposes of this Direction:
 - The construction, operation and maintenance of up to 420km of new mainline pipeline to form a network for the carriage of hydrogen gas in and around the Humber, Teesside and the East Midlands.
 - In key locations on the mainline pipeline route, a number of new terminal points from which a spur pipeline network will allow for connections to customers known as Hub Above-Ground Infrastructure sites (“AGIs”). The Hub AGIs are anticipated to be situated in proximity to the following areas; however, the precise locations will be determined as the project advances:
 - Bishop Auckland;
 - Wilton Green;
 - Towton;
 - Asselby;
 - Newbald;
 - Catwick;
 - Keadby;
 - West Butterwick;
 - Brigg;
 - Goxhill;
 - Kirmington;
 - Hatton; and

- Staythorpe.

3. The direction request relates to the Principal Development.
4. The Secretary of State is satisfied that
 - The Principal Development is or forms part of a Proposed Project in the field of energy;
 - The Principal Development will (when completed) be wholly within England;
 - the Proposed Project is of itself of national significance;
 - the Principal Development does not fall within the existing definition of a “nationally significant infrastructure project” at the time of determination and therefore it is appropriate to consider use of the power in section 35(1) of the Planning Act 2008; and
 - the Direction request constitutes a “qualifying request” in accordance with section 35ZA and thus, the requirements for making a section 35 direction under sections 35 and 35ZA in relation to the Principal Development are satisfied.
5. Having considered the details of the Direction request, the Secretary of State concludes that the Principal Development is nationally significant, for the reasons set out in the Annex below.
6. The Secretary of State considers that if the details of the Proposed Project materially change, before the Applicant submits any application to the Planning Inspectorate, the Applicant may wish to seek confirmation from the Secretary of State that the Principal Development that is the subject of the proposed application is the same as that for which the Direction is hereby given.
7. The Secretary of State has taken this decision having regard to the requirements of sections 35A(2) and (5) of the Planning Act 2008 and issues this Direction accordingly under sections 35(1) and 35ZA of the Planning Act 2008.
8. The Secretary of State notes the Applicant included associated development as part of the Proposed Project; however, the Secretary of State considers the question of whether works are associated development is one that should be decided on its own merits once a development consent application has been submitted and the parameters of every aspect of the project are known.

9. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HEREBY DIRECTS that the Principal Development is to be treated as development for which development consent is required.

10. This Direction is given without prejudice to the Secretary of State's consideration of any application for development consent which is made in relation to the Principal Development.

Signed by



David Wagstaff OBE
Deputy Director, Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery
For and on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

19th May 2026

ANNEX A

REASONS FOR THE DECISION TO ISSUE THE DIRECTION

The Secretary of State is of the opinion that the Direction should be issued because—

- The Proposed Project is of national significance, comprising a large-scale hydrogen pipeline project of approximately 2500km in length that would convey low carbon hydrogen and connect hydrogen production facilities with industrial users across the east of England.
- The Proposed Project would play an important role in enabling an energy system that meets the UK's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and the Government's objectives to create a secure, reliable and affordable energy supply for consumers.
- Progressing the Proposed Project through the Planning Act 2008 development consent process would provide a fixed timescale for determining any application for development consent. It would also allow the Applicant to rely on a single assessment process and single decision-maker, offering the certainty of one unified consenting process.