

**PLANNING / CONSENTS**

**THE NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION PLC (SCOTLAND TO  
ENGLAND GREEN LINK 2) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2023**

**SUMMARY STATEMENT  
STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE**

**David Ritchie  
National Grid Electricity Transmission plc**

## **1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 1.1 My name is David Ritchie and I am a Technical Director with AECOM Limited. I have acted as a Consents Specialist on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET) through the optioneering and planning of SEGL2 since 2019. I hold a BA (Hons) degree in Environmental Management and Technology from Heriot Watt University.
- 1.2 I have 19 years' experience in environmental planning working within consultancy with a particular focus on the development of electricity transmission infrastructure including interconnectors.
- 1.3 Section 1 of my evidence provides an overview of my qualifications and experience.

## **2. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 My statement will explain the consenting position of the Project, including detail of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) consent and the proposed approach in respect of obtaining additional consents as the development transitions to delivery. My statement of evidence explains that planning and other consenting matters do not present any impediment to delivery of the Project in accordance with the CPO Guidance (CD B.6).

## **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCOTLAND TO ENGLAND GREEN LINK 2 PROJECT**

- 3.1 The primary objective of the Project is to reinforce the electricity network and increase transmission network capability between Scotland and northern England by 2029 in order to enable the efficient and economic transmission of electricity. The benefits of the Project are that it provides this reinforcement and provides resilience to the electricity network, addressing the current boundary constraints and transmitting renewable energy produced in Scotland further south to areas of demand in England.
- 3.2 Section 3 of my evidence gives an overview of the Project description.

## **4. PLANNING POLICY SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT**

- 4.1 Section 4 of my evidence sets out the planning policy support for the Project, and provides a detailed breakdown of the local policy considered as part of the planning process, alongside national policy.
- 4.2 National Policy Statements (NPS) set out the Government's policy for the delivery of major infrastructure and provide the legal framework for planning decisions. The most recent version of NPS EN-1 (November 2023) states in paragraph 3.3.65 that "*There is an urgent need for new electricity network infrastructure to be brought forward at pace to meet our energy objectives.*".
- 4.3 Paragraph 4.11.4 confirms that "*Transmission network infrastructure, and related network reinforcement and upgrade works, associated with nationally significant low carbon infrastructure is considered as Critical National Priority (CNP) Infrastructure.*"
- 4.4 The NPPF advises that there is a "*presumption in favour of sustainable development*" meaning that where new development is shown to be sustainable, it should be approved without delay.

## **5. OVERARCHING CONSENTS STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The overarching consents strategy for EGL2 was developed taking account of the different jurisdictional requirements onshore and offshore in Scotland and England. With regard to the English Onshore Scheme the consenting approach was informed by a combination of pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authorities and a formal screening opinion request under the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017 (the **EIA Regulations**).
- 5.2 Following identification of a preferred route corridor and converter station site, NGET requested screening opinions from East Riding of Yorkshire Council and North Yorkshire Council (then Selby District) in February 2021. Both Local Planning Authorities provided their screening opinions in March 2021 and April 2021.

## **6. PLANNING POSITION**

- 6.1 Section 6 of my evidence sets out an overview of the consents required for the Project.
- 6.2 Full planning permission was approved by East Riding of Yorkshire Council (**CD C.4**) for approximately 67km of underground HVDC cable from Mean Low Water Springs to the River Ouse.

Hybrid planning permission was approved by Selby District Council (now North Yorkshire Council) (**CD C.5**) comprising full planning permission for approximately 2km of underground HVDC cable from the River Ouse to the converter station and for 0.5km of underground HVAC cable from the converter station to Drax Substation and outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the converter station.

## **7. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES**

- 7.1 NGET has an established approach to the development of new electricity transmission infrastructure. This comprises multiple stages from strategic options to options identification to impact assessment and consent applications. At each stage consideration is given to a range of technical, environmental, socio-economic and cost factors in line with NGET's statutory duties under the Electricity Act 1989.
- 7.2 Full detail of the strategic options appraisal, site selection, approach to siting of the landfall and converter station, the approach to cable routing and an overview of the planning considerations are set out in section 7 of my evidence.

## **8. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- 8.1 Before submitting any planning applications or making the Order in respect of the English Onshore Scheme, NGET undertook pre-application consultation comprising a public consultation in March to April 2021 and public information events in February to March 2022.
- 8.2 The public consultation events held in 2021 set out the proposed English Onshore Scheme and formally sought feedback from landowners, residents and stakeholders on the preferred option including the landfall site at Fraithorpe, underground cable route and converter station site at Drax. It also outlined potential impacts on the environment and local communities and how these would be addressed through the EIA.

- 8.3 The public information events held in 2022 set out details of the anticipated planning application. This took into account comments made during the previous consultation and provided more detailed information regarding the design of the English Onshore Scheme and its potential impacts prior to planning applications being submitted to the Local Planning Authorities.
- 8.4 During the course of the Project NGET undertook targeted consultation with the Local Planning Authorities and statutory consultees to ensure that their feedback was incorporated into the design of the English Onshore Scheme as far as possible.

### ***Planning Objections***

- 8.5 No statutory consultees objected to the planning applications for the English Onshore Scheme.
- 8.6 Detail on the planning objections received from East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) North Yorkshire Council and the NFU are set out within section 8 of my evidence.

## **9. THE PLANNING PERMISSIONS**

- 9.1 The East Riding of Yorkshire Decision Notice (**CD C.4**) was issued on the 3rd of March 2023 with reference 22/01990/STPLFE. It provides full planning permission for the construction of sub-surface cable route from Drax Power Station (from the River Ouse) to Fraisthorpe Coastline with associated accesses and temporary construction compounds in association with the Project.
- 9.2 The North Yorkshire Council Decision Notice (**CD C.5**) was issued on the 11th of August 2023 with reference 2022/0711/EIA. It is a hybrid planning permission comprising two parts. Part 1 is an outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for the construction of a converter station at Drax, Selby. Part 2 is a full planning permission for the installation of HVDC underground cables from the River Ouse to the converter station and HVAC underground cables from the converter station to the existing Drax Substation as well as all associated temporary works including compounds, accesses and bell mouths as part of the construction of the Project.
- 9.3 The ERYC Decision Notice contains conditions which secure mitigation measures in respect of the matters raised in various CPO objections. Full detail is provided within section 9 of my evidence.
- 9.4 Since planning permission has been granted NGET has continued to develop the Project in response to feedback from stakeholders including landowners and its appointed contractors. In response to feedback NGET has made a small number of supplementary planning applications which provide flexibility and/or optionality with regard to how the Project is implemented and in some instances directly address objections to the Order. These supplementary applications are explained in section 9 of my evidence.

## **10. CPO OBJECTIONS**

- 10.1 A summary of the CPO objections which relate to planning issues is provided at section 10 of my evidence.

## **11. CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 As my statement of evidence has demonstrated, there is planning policy support for the Project.
- 11.2 As a critical component of the Project, the English Onshore Scheme will deliver nationally significant benefits.
- 11.3 The primary consents for the Project are in place following the grant of planning permissions by East Riding of Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Councils in England and by Aberdeenshire Council in Scotland, and by grant of marine licences in Scottish and English Waters by Marine Scotland Licensing Operations Teams and the Marine Management Organisation respectively.
- 11.4 In my view, there are no physical or legal impediments to the delivery of the Project.

David Ritchie

16<sup>th</sup> February 2024