

GWNC-NG-CNS-REP-0001

# Grimsby to Walpole

PINS Pre-Application Planning Services - Programme Document

Draft Issue 0

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nationalgrid



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# Grimsby to Walpole

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Programme Document has been prepared by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) as a requirement under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application prospectus in respect of the Grimsby to Walpole Project.

## 1.2 Purpose and Structure

- 1.2.1 This Programme Document sets out the timetables and describes the activities necessary for an effective pre-application process, including the level of pre-application service requested from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and consultation with various parties required under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) as per the requirements for a Programme Document set out in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application prospectus. It is expected that this document will be updated at key milestones throughout the pre-application process as the Project is further developed.
- 1.2.2 This Programme Document is structured as follows:
- Section 1: Introduction and purpose and structure of the document
  - Section 2: Background to Grimsby to Walpole ('the Project')
  - Section 3: PINS Pre-application Service
  - Section 4: Expected Submission Timeframe
  - Section 5: Timeframe of the pre-application process
  - Section 6: Main issues for resolution
  - Section 7: Engaging with statutory consultees and Local Planning Authorities
  - Section 8: Pre-application risks and how these are tracked and managed
  - Section 9: Approach to preparing Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI)

## 2. Background to the Project

### 2.1 Overview of the Project

- 2.1.1 The Project is an electricity network reinforcement located across the counties of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The Project is one of a number of network upgrades that need to be accelerated to help meet increased Government targets for offshore wind. The project needs to be operational as close as possible to 2030 to meet these Government targets.
- 2.1.2 The project proposed involves the construction and operation of approximately 140km of new 400,000 volt (400kV) overhead electricity transmission line and up to six new 400kV substations.
- 2.1.3 The project is expected to pass through the following local authority areas:
- North East Lincolnshire Council
  - Boston Borough Council\*
  - East Lindsey District Council\*
  - South Holland District Council\* (\*Collectively known as South East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership)
  - King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
  - Fenland District Council
  - Lincolnshire County Council
  - Cambridgeshire County Council
  - Norfolk County Council

### 2.2 Planning Act 2008

- 2.2.1 As an NSIP, the Project requires the grant of development consent by the making of a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008.
- 2.2.2 For the purpose of Section 115 of the Planning Act 2008, development consent may also be granted for associated development. At this stage of the Project the full extent of associated development has not yet been defined.

## 3. PINS Pre-application Service

### 3.1 Pre-application Service

- 3.1.1 The Project is requesting the 'Standard' level of pre-application service. It is considered the standard level of service will provide the Project with an appropriate and proportionate level of pre-application engagement with PINS, reflective of the scale and nature of the project and NGET's level of experience as an applicant.
- 3.1.2 The Project is similar to others within the Great Grid Upgrade that are further developed in their programme, and as such, lessons learnt and expertise in producing documentation are available to enable the application to be of a standard acceptable for examination.
- 3.1.3 The standard level of service will provide the Project with project update meetings, draft document review and risk review.

## 4. Expected Submission Timeframe

- 4.1.1 The anticipated DCO application submission is Q2 2027. The submission date timeframe will be refined as the period of submission draws closer. NGET will provide PINS with regular updates regarding the submission date as the project progresses.

## 5. Timeframe of the pre-application process

- 5.1.1 An anticipated timeline of the pre-application process is set out in Table 1 below. The pre-application timeframe will be refined, and further detail add as required following Statutory Consultation and as the period of submission draws closer.

Table 1 - Anticipated application submission timeframe

Activity	Timeframe (Status)
Future Project Update Meetings with Planning Inspectorate	<p>The following meetings have been scheduled with PINS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (2pm via Microsoft Teams)</li></ul> <p>It is anticipated that further meetings will be scheduled at the following timeframes ahead of DCO submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Q3 – Q4 2025</li><li>• Q1 2026</li><li>• Q3 2026</li><li>• Q4 2026</li><li>• Q1 – Q2 2027</li></ul> <p>Dates for the above meetings will be scheduled with PINS at the appropriate time.</p>
Non-statutory Consultation	Jan to March 2024 (Complete)
EIA Scoping Request	Q3 2024 (Complete)
EIA Scoping Opinion	Q3 2024 (Complete)
Consultation with host Local Authorities on Draft Statement of Community Consultation	Q1 2025 (Complete)
Statutory Consultation	Q2 - Q3 2025 (Planned)



Further targeted consultation (if required)	Q3 2025 – Q1 2026 (Targeted)
PINS review of Draft DCO Documentation	Q3 2026 (Planned)
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone	Q2 2026 – Q4 2026 (To be confirmed)
DCO Submission	Q2 2027 (Planned)

## 6. Main issues for resolution

- 6.1.1 The Project is still at an early stage of development and NGET has not yet completed its Statutory Consultation. NGET is therefore not able to capture at this stage a comprehensive list of issues for resolution. Visibility of issues will improve upon close of Statutory Consultation when NGET receives views of communities and stakeholders in relation to the emerging proposals.
- 6.1.2 However in developing the Project, NGET's approach is mindful of the issues identified generally in National Policy Statements EN-1 , EN-3 and EN-5 as being likely to be relevant to projects of this type, including: environmental issues, amenity issues, security issues, and cumulative impact issues. The table below identifies a number of issues that are currently under consideration by the project.

Issue	Description of Issue
Air Quality	Including, for example, consideration of construction traffic emissions.
Aviation and Defence	Consideration of possible interaction with aerodromes, aviation (civil and military) and defence infrastructure.
Alternatives & Good Design	Site and route selection and alternatives, including the application of the Holford and Horlock Rules.
Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	Progressing and refining the project taking account of ecological sites and habitats. Including (but not limited to) Humber Estuary Ramsar Site, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Area of Protection (SPA) and Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes & Gibraltar Point SAC, Gibraltar Point Ramsar Site, SPA and SSI, The Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC, The Wash Ramsar Site, SPA and SSSI, Nene Washes Ramsar Site and SPA, and Ouse Washes Ramsar Site and SPA.

Issue	Description of Issue
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Strategy for delivery and provision of least 10% BNG.
Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience	Considering how project design responds to climate change and embeds resilience.
Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)	Compliance with guidelines and regulations.
Flood Risk	A large proportion of the current proposed project is located with various levels of flood zones. The necessary assessments will identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the project and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions	Assessing the GHG impact of the project including construction and operation and considering opportunities to mitigate or offset emissions.
Hazardous Substances	Should this be relevant (e.g. during construction), ensuring appropriate measures are in place and consents are sought.
Health	Ensuring the project deals with the latest guidance and advice particularly in the context of EMF.
Historic Environment	Considering impacts of the project on the historic environment/assets above, at and below the surface of the ground. Several historic environment considerations are within or adjacent to the preferred corridor, including Historic Assets such as Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings.

Issue	Description of Issue
Inter-relationship with other infrastructure projects	NGET is aware of a number of infrastructure projects in the Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk area. Inter-relationships and cumulative impacts with these projects will need to be considered.
Land rights and land interests	NGET is and will continue to engage with affected parties to secure the necessary land rights to deliver the project.
Landscape and Visual	Consideration of project design and routeing in accordance with the Holford and Horlock Rules, technology type and provision of appropriate landscape mitigation. The Lincolnshire Wolds AONB (National Landscape) is a particular consideration.
Noise and Vibration	Considering routeing and design as well as mitigation to reduce noise impact including construction and operational noise and vibration.
Land use	Application of Holford and Horlock Rules for the project. Identifying existing or proposed uses and consulting with the community on potential impacts, including consideration of agriculture and soils.
Resource and Waste Management	Most relevant for the construction phase, assessing waste management and how this will be managed, using the waste hierarchy.
Safety	Compliance with health and safety legislation and guidance. Consulting with the Health and Safety Executive as required.
Security	Ensuring contractor and public safety during construction and operation in particular in relation to the number of new substation sites proposed. Compliance with legislation and guidance.

Issue	Description of Issue
Socio-economic	Assessing at local and regional level socio-economic effects, including tourism.
Traffic and transport	Assessing associated impacts including, for example, construction traffic and HGV routeing and consideration of public rights of way.
Water Quality and Resources	Considering whether the project is likely to have effect on the water environment and undertaking relevant quality assessment, surface water management.



## 7. Engaging with statutory consultees and Local Planning Authorities

- 7.1.1 NGET began early engagement with the host Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in 2022. Engagement has continued throughout the early stages of the Project including Non-statutory Consultation. In 2023 NGET consulted each host LPA on a draft consultation strategy ahead of the Non-statutory Consultation. Feedback was sought from the LPAs during Non-statutory Consultation.
- 7.1.2 NGET are seeking to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with the host LPAs and continuing to engage with LPAs in line with the approach agreed in the PPAs. In a number of instances these agreements are well advance and close to being signed. A Host Authority Engagement Plan has been developed to explain likely levels of engagement required on the project, the key timeframes and dates which will allow authorities to provide cost estimates for PPA and charging purposes.
- 7.1.3 NGET currently engages with all host LPAs on a monthly basis, to discuss project updates and provide a look-ahead of forthcoming workstreams.
- 7.1.4 NGET has set up the following technical working groups with the objective of engaging with technical officers at the LPAs:
- Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain;
  - Cultural Heritage;
  - Landscape and Visual;
  - Water, Drainage and Flood Risk;
  - Traffic and Transport;
  - Health and Wellbeing.
- 7.1.5 NGET intend to continue engagement on the technical working groups throughout the pre-submission phase. It is anticipated that technical working group meetings may become more regular following receipt of responses from the statutory consultation.
- 7.1.6 NGET has a detailed plan of future engagement with all statutory and non-statutory consultees which includes (where not already in place) agreement on funding for those that are now able to charge for pre application engagement.
- 7.1.7 Further information on engagement activities will be shared as required in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which will be developed ahead of Statutory Consultation. The SoCC was issued for formal consultation with the LPAs between 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and feedback is currently being incorporated ahead of formal publication at the Statutory Consultation.

## 8. Pre-application risks and how these are tracked and managed

Risk	Description of Risk	Tracking and managing risk
Limited local authority resources which could limit their ability to engage with the proposals.	LPAs may have limited resources to have effective communication throughout the pre-application process for the DCO.	PPAs are to be entered into with the relevant LPAs to ensure that resource allocation is managed to have effective dialogue. Meetings have commenced with the LPAs to discuss their feedback.
Limited statutory consultee resources which could limit their ability to engage with the proposals.	Statutory consultees may have limited resources to have effective communication throughout the pre-application process for the DCO.	At present a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is in place between Natural England and National Grid. Cost recovery agreements will be put in place for relevant stakeholders to help enable effective dialogue. The introduction of cost recovery will be engaged with positively, and engagement strategies will be mapped out on an ongoing nature.

Risk	Description of Risk	Tracking and managing risk
Local authority or statutory consultee resource/ability to respond to scoping consultation in the required timescales.	Resourcing and capacity issues may see difficulty for stakeholders and LPAs to respond within specified timeframes.	NGET is proactively engaging LPAs with introductory meetings and updates on Non-statutory Consultation. The anticipated timescales for submission of the scoping report will be communicated to these stakeholders to allow for their review.
Multiple overlapping DCOs and Town Planning applications in project placing stress on resources of Local Authorities.	Capacity issues may occur as a result of multiple DCOs and Town Planning applications and prevent effective dialogue throughout pre-application.	A clear programme with anticipated timescales to be provided and communication of any amendments. This will allow for stakeholders to plan effectively. In addition, PPAs will be proposed in those areas to manage resourcing and agree an engagement strategy.
Unavailability of district licensing could mean extensive additional species surveys requested or extension to programme.	Natural England have confirmed that District Level Licensing (DLL) is not available for much of the project	Alternative strategies for key species will be discussed with stakeholders to ensure a reasonable level of survey effort is agreed in lieu of DLL

## 9. Approach to Preliminary Environmental Information

- 9.1.1 The Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report has been prepared in accordance with PINS Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: process, preliminary environmental information and environmental statements, and is intended to give consultees an understanding of the potential likely significant effects of the Project (positive or negative), to enable them to prepare well-informed responses to the statutory consultation. All data, conclusions and assessments are by their nature preliminary and are based on the current early Project design as described within this PEI Report. All assessment work has applied (and any ongoing work continues to apply) a precautionary principle, in that where limited information is available (in terms of the proposals for the Project and baseline information), a realistic worst-case is assessed. The final assessment will be presented within the ES submitted with the DCO application. This will consider and take into account the representations made during the statutory consultation and ongoing engineering design informed by the EIA process.
- 9.1.2 The PEI Report has been informed by the EIA Scoping Opinion published by the Secretary of State on 10 September 2024 insofar as is appropriate.
- 9.1.3 Any significant effects identified within the PEI Report are identified on a preliminary basis and may be subject to change as environmental assessments progress. Therefore, likely significant effects provisionally identified within this PEI Report may later be found to not be significant following further design development and identification of further mitigation measures reported in the ES.
- 9.1.4 This PEI Report consists of three volumes containing chapters, appendices and figures. These are:
- **PEI Report Volume 1** contains the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which presents the findings of the preliminary environmental assessment in a manner that is easily understood by the general public;
  - **PEI Report Volume 2 Part A** presents the introduction and overview of this PEI Report, as well as the supporting figures;
  - **PEI Report Volume 2 Part B** contains the environmental assessment for the seven Sections, as well as the supporting figures;
  - **PEI Report Volume 2 Part C** contains route wide assessments for some of the environmental topics, as well as the supporting figures; and
  - **PEI Report Volume 3** contains the technical appendices in support of **PEI Report Volume 2**.
- 9.1.5 Section-specific assessments, contained within PEI Report Volume 2 Part B, have been undertaken for the majority of environmental topics within this PEI Report to allow information to be accessible on a local level by stakeholders, and to enable understanding of the Project's impacts at a local level.

- 9.1.6 A route-wide assessment approach, contained within PEI Report Volume 2 Part C, has also been implemented for some of the environmental topics to enable certain effects to be assessed at a geographical scale greater than that presented within PEI Report Volume 2 Part B.
- 9.1.7 Together, the section-specific assessments and the route-wide assessment provide information reasonably required to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Project, as well as associated development.



