

The background image shows a person walking a dog on a paved path in a rural landscape. A large electricity pylon is visible in the background, and the sky is overcast. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

The Great Grid Upgrade

Grimsby to Walpole

Section 5 Consultation Feedback Report

November 2025

national**grid**

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Grimsby to Walpole

Document control

Document Properties			
Organisation	Arup AECOM		
Approved by	National Grid		
Title	Section 5 Consultation Feedback Report		
Document Register ID	GWNC-ARU-SS50-XXXXXX-RPT-CO-000001		
Data Classification	Public		
Version History			
Date	Version	Status	Description / Changes
November 2025	1.0	Final	First Issue

Executive summary

The Section 5 Consultation Feedback Report outlines the consultation undertaken by National Grid, summarises the feedback received and sets out the next steps, in relation to the proposals for Section 5 of the route.

The Project

The Grimsby to Walpole Project (referred to as the Project) is proposed by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (referred to as National Grid within this report) to reinforce the high-voltage power network in several regions across the East of England. It comprises approximately 140 kilometres (km) of new overhead line and up to six new 400 kilovolt (kV) substations. The Project will contribute to achieving the UK's commitment to connect 50 GW of offshore wind by 2030 and 70 GW of solar power by 2035. This will help meet government targets to reduce carbon emissions, increase our country's energy security, and carry cleaner and more affordable energy to where it is needed.

Due to its size, the Project is classified as a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' (NSIP), and National Grid is required to obtain 'development consent' under the Planning Act 2008. The Planning Act 2008 requires statutory consultation (Stage 2 consultation) for NSIPs, which provides all those with an interest in the Project including local authorities, statutory consultees, parties with land interests and the local community the opportunity to influence the design of the developing Project.

Section 5

The need for two substations in Section 5, was identified by National Grid through engaging with generators who are contracted to connect with the Project in the Weston Marsh area, as well as reviewing the technical specifications required, since Stage 1 Consultation. Two substations were found to provide resilience on the transmission network and would ensure the network's safety and reliability. The need for a 1 km clearance, and underground cable connection, between these two substations was identified to manage system-wide resilience.

The draft Order Limits for Section 5 are presented in **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.1 Draft Order Limits**.

Stage 2 consultation

In summer 2025, a Stage 2 consultation was held for a period of eight weeks, between 11 June and 6 August and provided a further opportunity for views to be shared about the updated proposals for the Project. The Stage 2 consultation was a statutory consultation, however, proposals for the Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone (Section 5) were then at an early stage, and feedback was sought to help shape the design. At the time of the Stage 2 consultation, the design and siting of up to two substations was still being considered. Since then, the requirement for two substations in the Weston Marsh area has been confirmed and a further consultation is currently being undertaken by National Grid on Section 5. The approach to consultation was set out in a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) prepared and consulted on in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008.

Information and materials made available at the Stage 2 consultation were produced for both technical and non-technical users. These included the Stage 2 consultation document, Updated Strategic Options Report, Design Development Report, Preliminary environmental information report and non-technical summary, Statement of Community Consultation, Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report, consultation newsletter, maps, the feedback form and consultation event banners.

A range of consultation activities were used to make information available and accessible, comprising a dedicated Project website with all consultation materials, 12 face-to-face consultation events at venues along the proposed route, 5 online consultation events, and 14 information deposit locations where consultation materials were available to view. There were also stakeholder briefings for MPs, local elected representatives, parish councils, local authorities, key prescribed consultees and persons with an Interest in Land.

The consultation and related activities were publicised through direct mailing of a newsletter to all properties with postcodes within 1 km of the draft Order Limits, and advertising in local and regional newspapers, statutory notices, social media, information to parish councils and press releases.

Analysis of feedback

A total of 98 submissions of consultation feedback relevant to Section 5 of the route, were received during and outside of the consultation period. This total is comprised of paper feedback forms, online feedback forms, emails and letters. Furthermore, 2 submissions of consultation feedback relevant to Section 5 of the Project consisting of design change requests have been carried over from the Stage 1 consultation. The feedback received was systematically reviewed to identify themes raised and, where appropriate, design change requests.

A full review of consultation feedback is set out in Chapter 3 of this report, which includes National Grid's response to each matter raised. In relation to Section 5, themes identified through feedback included the following points:

- i. Alternative strategic options for Section 5.
- ii. Objection to the proposals in Section 5, including number of substations.
- iii. Impacts of construction traffic and activities.
- iv. A need for more information regarding the proposals in Section 5 to enable meaningful feedback.
- v. Impacts on tourism and businesses.
- vi. Impacts on wildlife and habitats, including risks for bird collision and disruption of flight paths particularly in the context of the migratory routes in proximity to the substations.
- vii. Impacts on historic villages and heritage assets.
- viii. Concerns about the loss of agricultural land and associated food security.
- ix. Impacts on mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- x. Impacts on landscape and visual amenity.
- xi. Impacts of operational noise from the substations.
- xii. Concerns about flood risk.

xiii. Safety and security implications.

What happens next?

National Grid is holding a Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation to present and invite feedback on an updated design for Section 5. The consultation is running between 18 November and 16 December 2025, to provide the opportunity for the public and other stakeholders to see how the proposals for Section 5 have evolved since the Stage 1 and Stage 2 consultations, and to review and comment on how the proposals have developed. The feedback from the Stage 1 and 2 consultations, as well as the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation (as applicable) will be used to inform the final design that will be put forward in the application for development consent. National Grid expects to submit an application for consent for the Project in 2027. A consultation report will be produced following the 2025 Stage 2 consultation and Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation and submitted as part of the DCO application.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the feedback received during Stage 2 (statutory) consultation on the Grimsby to Walpole Project (the Project), specifically in relation to Section 5 of the Project, and to demonstrate how National Grid has had regard to this feedback.
- 1.1.2 During development of the Weston Marsh Substation, National Grid undertook engagement with generators contracted to connect in this area alongside reviewing technical specifications. This identified a need for further design work to be undertaken including consideration of whether there is a need for up to two new substations in the Weston Marsh area. As a result, for the purposes of Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) and Stage 2 consultation, less design information was presented for Weston Marsh Substation and proposed overhead line routes compared to other sections of the Project to enable further technical studies to be undertaken. Now that this stage of the design work has been completed and the requirement for two substations in the Weston Marsh area has been confirmed, a further consultation is currently being undertaken by National Grid on Section 5 (Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation).
- 1.1.3 This report details the approach to Stage 2 consultation and provides a summary of the feedback received in relation to Section 5 of the Project, as well as how it was taken into account. It also sets out the methods used to analyse the submitted feedback, as well as National Grid's responses.
- 1.1.4 This is in accordance with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (2024) publication 'Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects', which states that *"it is good practice that those who have contributed to the consultation are informed of the results"*.
- 1.1.5 This report will be used to inform the preparation of a Consultation Report which will be submitted as part of an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in accordance with Section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008.

1.2 Structure of the Report

- 1.2.1 The report is structured as follows:
 - i. Chapter 1: Introduction – outlines the purpose and structure of the report. It also provides background information and summarises the proposals;
 - ii. Chapter 2: Approach to Consultation – presents a summary of the consultation approach, process and methods employed;
 - iii. Chapter 3: Analysis of Feedback – outlines the approach to the analysis of feedback, provides summaries of the feedback received, relevant to Section 5 and how National Grid has responded. Design suggestions received through feedback are also included in this chapter;

- iv. Chapter 4: Next Steps – summarises the next steps for the Project in the DCO process.

1.3 Background

The Need for the Project

- 1.3.1 As the UK moves to cleaner, more affordable and more secure sources of energy, such as offshore wind, our infrastructure needs to be upgraded to connect this power to the homes and businesses that need it.
- 1.3.2 The existing transmission network was mostly built in the 1960s, to connect inland coal-fired power stations. Later, gas-fired power stations were connected in areas such as the Humber. However, the Lincolnshire coastal region currently has limited transmission infrastructure, restricting its ability to support new renewable energy connections.
- 1.3.3 Electricity generators such as solar and offshore wind farms apply to the National Energy System Operator to connect to the electricity network.
- 1.3.4 Once a connection is given these are contractually secured, and National Grid Electricity Transmission must provide the connection to the network, whilst also making sure the transmission system meets the performance and security standards outlined in NESO's Security and Quality of Supply Standard. For example, the network must be designed to handle existing and new connections in peak demand conditions and to have sufficient spare capacity to prevent widespread supply interruptions when there are certain faults on the network.
- 1.3.5 To understand current and future demands on the electricity network, the concept of network boundaries is used. A boundary splits the system into sections and shows where there are high power flows between parts of the network. When flows across a network boundary are higher than what the network can transport whilst meeting standards, National Grid Electricity Transmission must reinforce the network.
- 1.3.6 In this case, we must build new parts of the network to connect new generation and resolve capacity issues across network boundaries known as B8 and B9.
- 1.3.7 When looking at new electricity generation in the area, there are two clusters of new connections that are most relevant.
- 1.3.8 The first is the Creyke Beck generation group. This includes connections to existing substations and contracted new generation comprising offshore wind, interconnectors, energy storage, and combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power stations, with a total contracted capacity of approximately 18.88 gigawatts (GW)³ by 2035.
- 1.3.9 The second is the East Coast generation group. This area has around 14.15 GW⁴ of new contracted generation including offshore wind, energy storage, solar, and CCGT.
- 1.3.10 Both generation groups need about 7 GW of extra capacity in the electricity network to connect new generation and meet NESO's Security and Quality of Supply Standard.
- 1.3.11 Grimsby to Walpole is also needed to provide reinforcement across boundaries B8 and B9.

- 1.3.12 B8 needs around 7,899 megawatts (MW) of additional capacity by 2035, and B9 needs around 4,708 MW by 2030 in accommodating the two generation groups.
- 1.3.13 To fix these deficits, B8 needs two 400 kV alternating current (AC) double circuits or six high voltage direct current (HVDC) connections, and B9 needs one 400 kV AC double circuit or three HVDC connections.
- 1.3.14 Upgrading the existing network won't solve the problem, so reinforcements are essential.
- 1.3.15 Grimsby to Walpole will add one of the needed network reinforcements with new overhead line and substation infrastructure to connect new offshore wind, energy storage, solar, interconnectors and CCGT that are contracted to connect to homes and businesses.
- 1.3.16 The electricity industry in Great Britain is undergoing unprecedented change. The closure of fossil fuel-powered generation and ageing nuclear power stations means substantial investment in sustainable generation and interconnection capacity is required to maintain energy security and supply standards. Growth in onshore renewable technologies, offshore wind generation, and interconnectors with Europe has resulted in many planned connections, particularly in Scotland, England, and along the East Coast. The UK Government's legally binding "Net Zero" commitment to achieve a 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 under the Climate Change Act 2008 requires a decisive transition away from fossil fuels. This has driven and will continue to drive investment in low-carbon energy sources.
- 1.3.17 Historically, the transmission system relied on coal-powered generation, but the shift to low-carbon energy has resulted in the closure of these power stations, with more closures expected. New generation capacity is geographically distant from these historical hubs, requiring substantial updates to the transmission system to serve urban areas such as the M62 corridor, the Midlands, and the Southeast, which have the highest concentrations of electricity demand. As the UK decarbonises, national energy demand will increase, and fossil fuel generation will be replaced by low-carbon alternatives in new locations.
- 1.3.18 National Grid must be able to connect new generators and at the same time ensure the transmission system meets performance and security standards set out in the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS). This means that where the boundary capacity of the NETS is exceeded against the SQSS, National Grid must resolve the capacity shortfall. This is known as "boundary reinforcement" and relates to boundaries designated B8 and B9 – see further below.
- 1.3.19 Generators apply to the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to connect to the NETS. Once agreed, these connections are contractually secured, and National Grid is obliged to provide them. The NETS must be designed to handle existing and new connections in peak demand conditions and to have sufficient spare capacity to prevent widespread supply interruptions from defined fault conditions. Performance standards require the system to maintain frequency, avoid overloads, stay within voltage limits, and remain electrically stable during faults.
- 1.3.20 The NETS in the area of the Project was primarily constructed in the 1960s to connect inland coal-fired power stations. Later, gas-fired stations were connected in areas such as the Humber. However, the Lincolnshire coastal region currently has limited infrastructure, restricting its ability to support new renewable energy

connections. In respect of the Project, two clusters of new connections are particularly relevant.

- 1.3.21 The Creyke Beck generation group includes connections to existing substations and contracted new generation comprising offshore wind, interconnectors, energy storage, and combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power stations, with a total contracted capacity of approximately 18.7 GW by 2035. The East Coast generation group, spanning South Humber to North Wash, has a total contracted capacity of approximately 12.7 GW by 2035, including offshore wind, energy storage, solar, and CCGT. Both generation groups face significant transmission capacity shortfalls, requiring approximately 7 GW of reinforcements each to accommodate new connections and comply with the SQSS.
- 1.3.22 The Project is also needed to provide reinforcement across boundaries B8 and B9. Boundaries split the system into two parts, crossing critical circuit paths that carry power between areas and where power flow limitations may be encountered. Boundaries help identify regions where reinforcement is most needed by enabling analysis of power transfers between separated areas. The current document Future Energy Scenarios 2023, for which the National Energy System Operator is responsible, reveals substantial capability deficits across these boundaries, with B8 requiring 7,899 MW of additional capacity by 2035 and B9 4,708 MW by 2030 in accommodating the two generation groups. Addressing these deficits will require two 400kV AC double circuits or six HVDC connections for B8, and one 400kV AC double circuit or three HVDC connections for B9. Maximising current capacity under fault conditions will not resolve the deficits, making reinforcements essential. The Project will provide one of the necessary 400kV double circuit reinforcements.

About the Project

- 1.3.23 The Project is a proposal by National Grid to build the following principal components:
- i. approximately 140 km of new 400 kV overhead transmission line.
 - ii. a new 400 kV substation to be built in the vicinity of the existing Grimsby West 400 kV Substation and the existing 132 kV Northern Powergrid Substation in North East Lincolnshire (to be referred to as the new Grimsby West Substation). The existing 400 kV substation would be decommissioned, in full, or part¹. The extent of decommissioning will be determined and reported in the Environmental Statement (ES).
 - iii. two new 400 kV Lincolnshire Connection substations located south west of Mablethorpe in East Lindsey (to be referred to as Lincolnshire Connection Substation A and Lincolnshire Connection Substation B).
 - iv. two new 400 kV substations in the vicinity of the Spalding Tee-Point in South Holland District (to be referred to as New Weston Marsh Substation A and New Weston Marsh Substation B, connected by an approximately 3.05 km long section of new 400 kV underground cable).

¹ The existing 400 kV Substation will be decommissioned, in full or in part, only. The existing 132 kV Northern Powergrid Substation will not be decommissioned.

- v. a new 400 kV substation in proximity to the existing Walpole Substation west of the village of Walpole St Andrew and north of the town of Wisbech, in King's Lynn and West Norfolk District (to be referred to as "Walpole B Substation").
- vi. replacement of short sections of existing 400 kV overhead line and local changes to the lower voltage distribution networks to facilitate the construction of the new overhead line and substations.

- 1.3.24 The Project would include other required works, for example, temporary and permanent diversions for works on existing overhead line routes, temporary access roads, highway works, temporary works compounds, work sites and ancillary works. The Project would also include utility diversions and drainage works. There would also be land required for mitigation, compensation and enhancement of the environment including biodiversity net gain (BNG).
- 1.3.25 The Project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. NSIPs are projects of certain types, over a certain size, which are considered by the Government to be of national importance, hence permission to build them needs to be given at a national level, by the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) (in this case the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero). Instead of applying to the local authority for Planning Permission, the developer must apply to the Planning Inspectorate for a different permission called a Development Consent Order (DCO).
- 1.3.26 National Grid will submit an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate. If accepted, the examining authority would be appointed (consisting of one or more examining inspectors) who, after a period of public examination, would make their recommendation to the SoS for Energy Security and Net Zero, who in turn would decide on whether development consent should be granted for the Project. The timescale between acceptance of the submission and a decision is approximately 18 months.
- 1.3.27 Further information on the background of the Grimsby to Walpole Project prior to the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation can be found in the Project Background Document published as part of the Stage 1 consultation (<https://www.nationalgrid.com/document/353611/download>) and the Stage 2 consultation document (<https://www.nationalgrid.com/sites/default/files/documents/2025-06/Stage%20%20consultation%20document.pdf>).

About Section 5

- 1.3.28 The need for two substations was identified by National Grid through engaging with generators who are contracted to connect in the Weston Marsh area, as well as reviewing the technical specifications required, since Stage 1 Consultation. Two substations were found to provide resilience on the transmission network and would ensure the network's safety and reliability. The need for a 1 km clearance, and underground cable connection, between these two substations was identified to manage system-wide resilience.
- 1.3.29 Building on the siting work already conducted in the CPRSS, no further constraints were identified within the appraisal in the vicinity of the New Weston Marsh Substation A and so the selection of this Siting Area was re-affirmed. Three Siting Areas ('Option 1 Siting Area', 'Option 2 Siting Area' and 'Option 3 Siting Area') were also identified and appraised with the aim of identifying a preferred option for the

additional substation identified as being required at Weston Marsh, the New Weston Marsh Substation B. Environmental topics scoped into the appraisal looked at the three Siting Areas in turn, and identified environmental constraints relevant to each option. Any technical constraints associated with each Siting Area were also considered. Based on the outcomes of these appraisals, the Option 1 Siting Area was selected as the preferred option to be taken forward for the New Weston Marsh Substation B.

- 1.3.30 The draft Order Limits for Section 5 are presented in **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.1 Draft Order Limits**.

2. Approach to Consultation

2.1 Our Approach

- 2.1.1 Listening to the views of local communities and stakeholders provides valuable feedback and insight as proposals are developed and provides opportunities to influence the design development process. National Grid will continue to carefully consider feedback received as the Project develops.
- 2.1.2 Stakeholder and public involvement are important components of the UK planning system. Legislation and Government guidance aim to ensure that the public, local communities, statutory and other consultees and interested parties have an opportunity to have their views considered throughout the planning process. Within the Development Consent Order (DCO) process, the emphasis is on engagement and consultation prior to the submission of the DCO application, through the non-statutory (Stage 1) consultation and statutory (Stage 2) consultation processes. National Grid want to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in the development of the Project and have the opportunity to comment at key decision-making points.
- 2.1.3 National Grid undertook the Stage 1 consultation for an 8-week period between 18 January and 13 March 2024. This was undertaken at an early stage of Project development and was followed by a Stage 2 consultation, which is required under the Planning Act 2008. The Stage 2 consultation ran for an 8-week period between 11 June and 6 August 2025 and provided a further opportunity for views to be shared about the updated proposals for the Project. The Stage 2 consultation was a statutory consultation, however, proposals for the Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone (Section 5) were then at an early stage, and feedback was sought to help shape the design. As part of the Stage 2 consultation, a refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone was presented, showing the proposed location for substation infrastructure. However, at the time of the Stage 2 consultation, the design and siting of up to two substations was still being considered. Since then, the requirement for two substations in the Weston Marsh area has been confirmed and a further consultation is currently being undertaken by National Grid on Section 5 (Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation).
- 2.1.4 As part of the Stage 2 consultation, Persons with an Interest in Land (PILs) and Parish Councils are required to be consulted on the application as statutory consultees. Through HM Land Registry, desktop research, site notices and Land Interest Questionnaires, National Grid identified the relevant PILs to contact regarding the proposals and consultation.
- 2.1.5 Through this ongoing due diligence, some additional consultees were identified following the launch of the Stage 2 consultation on 11 June 2025. In order to provide each of these consultees an opportunity to take part in the Stage 2 consultation, National Grid extended the consultation period for these consultees to allow a minimum of 28 days from receiving their consultation notice in the post to respond.
- 2.1.6 As such, despite the Stage 2 consultation closing on 6 August 2025, there were cases where certain individuals were contacted directly and informed of an extended period for them to provide feedback on the Stage 2 plans.

- 2.1.7 National Grid is committed to engaging those communities affected by its proposals in effective and meaningful consultation as reflected in the Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy (www.nationalgrid.com/document/81026/download) which incorporates National Grid's Schedule 9 Electricity Act 1989 Statement relating to the preservation of amenity. It makes the following commitments to consultation when undertaking electricity works:
- i. *"We will promote genuine and meaningful stakeholder and community engagement. We will meet and, where appropriate, exceed the statutory requirements for consultation or engagement. We will adopt the following principles to help us meet this commitment;*
 - ii. *We will seek to identify and understand the views and opinions of all the stakeholders and communities who may be affected by our works;*
 - iii. *We will provide opportunities for engagement from the early stages of the process, where options and alternatives are being considered and there is the greatest scope to influence the design of the works;*
 - iv. *We will endeavour to enable constructive debate to take place, creating open and two-way communication processes;*
 - v. *We will ensure that benefits, constraints and adverse impacts of proposed works are communicated openly for meaningful stakeholder and community comment and discussion. We will be clear about any aspects of the works that cannot be altered;*
 - vi. *We will utilise appropriate methods and effort in engaging stakeholders and communities, proportionate to the scale and impact of the works; and*
 - vii. *We will provide feedback on how views expressed have been considered and the outcomes of any engagement process or activity."*

2.2 Statement of Community Consultation

- 2.2.1 In accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act), a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was prepared for the Stage 2 consultation.
- 2.2.2 The objective of the SoCC was to explain how we planned to consult the community, including providing information for members of the public on how to get involved and submit feedback. We have worked with each of the local authorities (host and neighbouring) in the Project area to develop and agree the SoCC. A copy of the SoCC is contained in Appendix A.
- 2.2.3 In accordance with Section 47 (2) of the Act, the following host and neighbouring authorities were consulted on the SoCC for 28 days, between 27 February and 27 March 2025.
- 1. Lincolnshire County Council
 - 2. North East Lincolnshire Council
 - 3. East Lindsey District Council
 - 4. West Lindsey District Council
 - 5. Boston Borough Council

6. South Holland District Council
7. Norfolk County Council
8. Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
9. Cambridgeshire County Council
10. Fenland District Council
11. North Lincolnshire Council
12. North Kesteven District Council
13. South Kesteven District Council
14. North Norfolk District Council
15. Breckland District Council
16. West Suffolk District Council
17. Huntingdonshire District Council
18. Peterborough City Council
19. Nottinghamshire County Council
20. Suffolk County Council
21. Essex County Council
22. Hertfordshire County Council
23. Rutland County Council
24. Bedford Borough Council
25. Central Bedfordshire Council
26. North Northamptonshire Council

- 2.2.4 The SoCC consultation gave host and neighbouring authorities an opportunity to review and provide comments for consideration. Following this period, any comments provided were reviewed and incorporated into the final version of the SoCC, where practicable. Outcomes of the SoCC consultation will be discussed in further detail in a Consultation Report which will be submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application in due course.

2.3 Consultation and Engagement Methods

- 2.3.1 National Grid used a range of methods and materials to ensure that all consultees could take part in the Stage 2 consultation. Our consultation and engagement activities included a dedicated Project website, consultation materials, consultation events (face-to-face and online), information deposit locations, consultation promotion and stakeholder briefings. Each of these consultation and engagement activities is explained in more detail in the following sections of this report, as well as the SoCC.

Consultation materials

- 2.3.2 A range of technical and non-technical consultation materials were published as part of the Stage 2 consultation, which are set out in Table 2.1. All consultation materials were and remain available on the Project website (www.nationalgrid.com/g-w). The SoCC and feedback form are also available in Appendix A, respectively Appendix B.

Table 2.1 Consultation materials

Material	Description
Stage 2 consultation document	Provided an overview of the Project, summarised our technical documents and provided information on how to take part in the consultation.
Community newsletter	Provided a high-level overview of our proposals and details of how to get involved in the consultation.
Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	Set out how we carried out this consultation. The SoCC was developed in consultation with relevant local authorities.
Feedback Form	To gather consultation comments and feedback, this could be completed online or in paper copy.
Preliminary environmental information report (PEIR):	Set out the preliminary findings from the environmental studies and assessments we are carrying out to develop our proposals.
Non-technical summary of the PEIR	A summary of the PEIR in non-technical language.
Design Development Report (DDR)	Detailed the design work we have undertaken to date, focussing on the works since Stage 1 consultation.
Updated Strategic options report:	Provided an updated overview of the appraisal approach we have used to date to consider strategic options. .
2024 Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report	Summarised the feedback we received during the Stage 1 consultation in 2024 and how we have considered this feedback.
Maps of our proposals	Overview map and individual section maps showing the proposed alignment, sectioned by geographical area, with further maps to highlight features considered as part of the routing and siting process.
Consultation banners	A series of pull-up banners with information relating to the Project used at face-to-face events.
Interactive project map	Online map of the proposed route alignment. A postcode or address could be entered to view pylon locations.
Consultation notices	Provided details of the consultation to statutory consultees as required under Section 47, and 48 of the Act.
Guide to interacting with our consultation plans	A guide outlining the consultation maps and plans, and how to use them.

- 2.3.3 Paper copies of selected consultation documents (Community newsletter, Stage 2 consultation document, Feedback form, Non-technical summary of the PEIR and SoCC) were available by request, free of charge. Paper copies of other technical documents, including the PEIR could be provided on request, subject to a reasonable charge to cover printing and postage fees. Consultation documents in alternative formats (such as braille) and USB sticks containing the PEIR, were available by request as well.
- 2.3.4 In addition to the documents listed in Table 2.1, previously published documents from the earlier Stage 1 consultation remain accessible on the Project website.

Project website

- 2.3.5 National Grid updated the Project website at the launch of the Stage 2 consultation, on the 11 June 2025, with all consultation materials. These materials continue to be accessible on the Project website, available at: www.nationalgrid.com/g-w.
- 2.3.6 The website provided information on the dates and times of face-to-face and online events and provided a platform for people to submit their comments via an online version of the feedback form.
- 2.3.7 The website also provided details of the proposals via interactive maps, indicative fly through videos and photomontages, as well as, construction animations, and provided links to Project communication channels and timelines. The website was accessible at all times during the consultation period.
- 2.3.8 Following the close of the Stage 2 consultation period, the website remains live and maintains access to all consultation materials provided. During the consultation period, the Project website received 90,129 views from 32,441 users.

Consultation events – Face-to-face events

- 2.3.9 Face-to-face events provided the opportunity to find out more about the proposals, speak directly with members of the Project team (including technical experts), ask questions and provide feedback on the proposals. All planned face-to-face events went ahead as scheduled.
- 2.3.10 Twelve face-to-face events were held at suitable venues along the proposed route. Further information regarding the face-to-face events, including dates, times and locations are set out in Table 2.2.
- 2.3.11 In total 1,214 people attended the face-to-face events during the consultation period.

Table 2.2 **Schedule of face-to-face events**

Venue	Date and time	Attendees
Burgh le Marsh Village Hall Jacksons Lane, Burgh le Marsh, Skegness, PE24 5LA	18 June 2025 - 2-7pm	122
London Road Pavilion London Road, Louth, LN11 9QP	20 June 2025 - 1-7pm	55
Holton-le-Clay Village Hall Pinfold Lane, Holton-le-Clay, Grimsby, DN36 5DL	24 June 2025 - 1-7pm	67

Venue	Date and time	Attendees
Alvingham Village Community Hall 352 Yarburgh Road, Alvingham, Louth, LN11 0QG	25 June 2025 - 1-7pm	128
Huttoft Village Hall Sutton Road, Alford, LN13 9RG	27 June 2025 - 1-7pm	86
Alford Corn Exchange 9 Market Place, Alford, LN13 9EB	28 June 2025 - 11am-4pm	107
Eastville, Midville, and New Leake Village Hall Station Road, Boston, PE22 8LS	2 July 2025 - 1-7pm	85
Hubberts Bridge Community Centre Langrick Road, Boston, PE20 3SG	8 July 2025 - 1-7pm	114
Weston Village Hall (Joint event with National Grid's Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire) Small Drove, Weston, Spalding, PE12 6HU	10 July 2025 - 1-7pm	166
Humber Royal Hotel Little Coates Road, Grimsby, DN34 4LX	16 July 2025 - 1-7pm	122
Walpole Community Centre Summer Close, Wisbech, PE14 7JW	18 July 2025 - 1-7pm	76
Tydd St Giles Community Centre Broad Drove E, Wisbech, PE13 5LN	19 July 2025 - 11am-4pm	86

Consultation events – Online events

- 2.3.12 Online events were organised to present information about the Project to those wishing to attend via this platform. During online events, there was an opportunity for questions to be addressed to the Project team, and where a question could not be directly answered during the presentation, arrangements were made to provide a response at a later date. Further information on the schedule of online events is set out in Table 2.3.
- 2.3.13 Five online events, which were open to the general public, were held during the consultation period, two of the events provided a general overview of our proposals, whilst the remaining four webinars focused on specific Route Sections. A recording of the first 'General - overview of our proposals' online event was made available on the Project website. This was also available in British Sign Language (BSL).

Table 2.3 Schedule of online events

Online events	Date and time	Attendees
General – overview of proposals	23 June 2025 - 6:30pm	12
Route Sections 5,6 and 7	26 June 2025 - 6:30pm	8

Online events	Date and time	Attendees
Route Sections 1 and 2	30 June 2025 - 6:30pm	8
Route Sections 3 and 4	14 July 2025 - 6:30pm	12
General – overview of proposals	21 July 2025 - 2pm	9

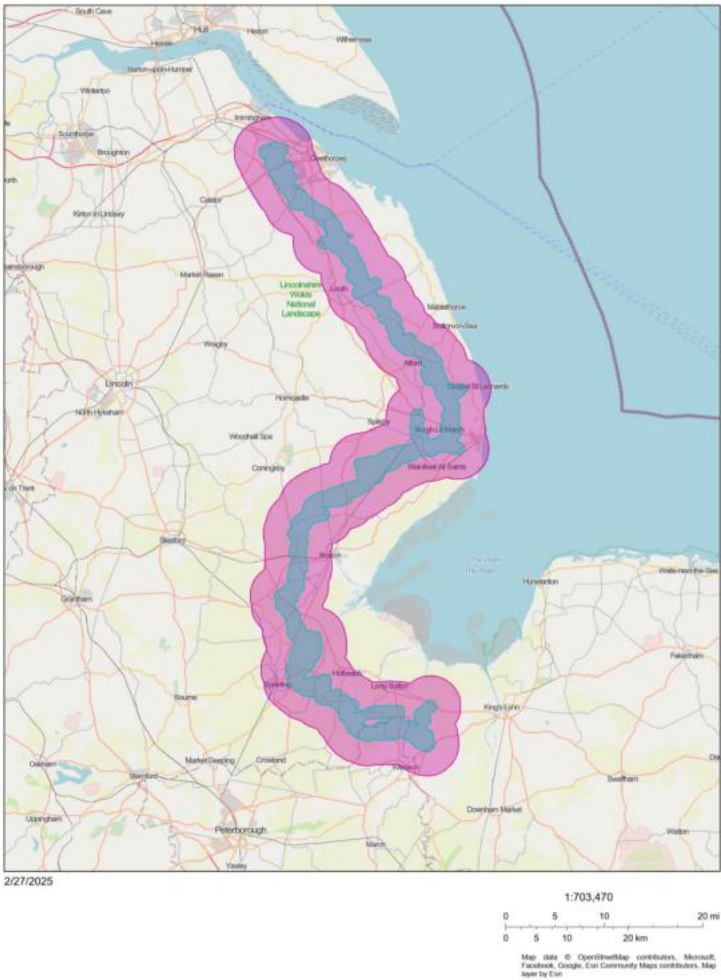
Information deposit locations

- 2.3.14 Consultation materials were available across fourteen suitable, publicly accessible locations in proximity to the proposals. The fourteenth location was added following requests from the public, on the 28 June 2025.
- 2.3.15 Paper copies of the Stage 2 consultation document, Community newsletter and Feedback form were available to take away from the information deposit locations throughout the consultation period. Reference copies of the Statement of community consultation, Strategic options report, Design Development Report and Non-technical summary of the PEIR were also available to view at the information deposit locations, as well as USB sticks containing the PEIR.
- 2.3.16 The information deposit points are set out, north to south, below:
- i. Cleethorpes Library, Alexandra Rd, Cleethorpes, DN35 8LG;
 - ii. Waltham Library, High Street, Waltham, Grimsby, DN37 0LL;
 - iii. Louth Library, Northgate, Louth, LN11 0LY;
 - iv. Burgh le Marsh Library and Community Hub, Tinkers Green, Jacksons Lane, Burgh le Marsh, Skegness, PE24 5LA;
 - v. Skegness Library, 23 Roman Bank, Skegness, PE25 2SA;
 - vi. Boston Library, County Hall (Bank Street entrance), Boston, PE21 6DY;
 - vii. Spalding Library, Victoria Street, Spalding, PE11 1EA;
 - viii. Holbeach Community Library, Co-Op Store, 5 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Spalding, PE12 7AX;
 - ix. Long Sutton Library, Trafalgar Square, Long Sutton, Spalding, PE12 9HB;
 - x. Sutton Bridge Community Library, Curlew Centre, Bridge Road, Sutton Bridge, Spalding, PE12 9SA;
 - xi. Wisbech Library, Ely Place, Wisbech, PE13 1EU;
 - xii. King's Lynn Library, London Road, King's Lynn, PE30 5EZ;
 - xiii. Walpole Community Centre, Summer Close, Wisbech, PE14 7JW; and
 - xiv. Alford Library, 6 South Market Place, Alford, Lincolnshire, LN13 9AF.

Promotion

2.3.17 The promotion undertaken for the Stage 2 consultation was based on an updated Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ) and Secondary Consultation Zone (SCZ). The PCZ included all residential properties, businesses and community organisations with property postcodes within 1 km of the draft Order Limits. The SCZ extended 5km from the draft Order Limits.

Figure 2.1 Primary and Secondary Consultation Zones



2.3.18 The methods used to promote the Stage 2 consultation are detailed in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 Promotion Methods

Method	Detail
Newsletter mailing	Community newsletter issued to approx. 19,500 addresses within the PCZ.
Emails and letters	Letters about the consultation and getting involved were sent via email to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Members of Parliament, where all or part of their constituencies lie within either consultation zone;Elected representatives within the PCZ; andParish councils within the PCZ.

Method	Detail
Press release	<p>A press release publicising the consultation and how the community can get involved was issued ahead of the consultation. The distribution list included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grimsby Telegraph • Skegness Standard • Boston Standard • Lincolnshire Echo • Local BBC news outlets • Local radio stations
Newspaper advertisements	<p>The Stage 2 consultation was advertised in locally circulated newspapers and online. Advertisements were placed in both print and digital publications to ensure wider coverage within and beyond the PCZ and SCZ.</p> <p>Print placements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston Standard – published on 11 June 2025 and 25 June 2025 • Fenland Citizen - published on 11 June 2025 and 26 June 2025 • Grimsby Telegraph - published on 13 June 2025 and 27 June 2025 • Lincolnshire Echo - published on 12 June 2025 and 26 June 2025 • Lynn News - published on 13 June 2025 and 27 June 2025 • South Holland and Spalding Voice - published on 12 June 2025 and 26 June 2025 <p>Digital advertisements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston Standard Digital Campaign – 16 June 2025 to 25 June 2025 • Lincolnshire Echo – 16 June 2025 to 22 June 2025 • Grimsby Telegraph – 16 June 2025 to 22 June 2025
Statutory notices	<p>The Section 47 statutory notice was published in locally circulating newspapers, and the Section 48 statutory notice was published once in a national newspaper and the Gazette and twice in locally circulating newspapers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston Standard – Boston, Horncastle, Louth, Skegness, Sleaford, Market Rasen – S47 and S48 Notices published on 11 June 2025 and S48 Notice published on 18 June 2025. • Eastern Daily Press – S47 and S48 Notices published on 11 June 2025 and S48 Notice published on 18 June 2025. • Fenland Citizen – S47 and S48 Notices published on 11 June 2025 and S48 Notice published on 18 June 2025. • Grimsby Telegraph - S47 and S48 Notices published on 11 June 2025 and S48 Notice published on 18 June 2025. • Guardian – S48 Notice published on 11 June 2025. • Lincolnshire Echo – S47 and S48 Notices published on 12 June 2025 and S48 Notice on 19 June 2025. • London Gazette – S48 Notice published on 11 June 2025

Method	Detail
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lynn News – S47 and S48 Notices published on 13 June 2025 and S48 Notice on 20 June 2025. South Holland and Spalding – S47 and S48 Notices published on 12 June 2025 and S48 Notice on 19 June.
Information posters	Posters that included details about the consultation, how to access Project information, and how to get involved were available online. Parish councils also received hard copies of the posters.
Social media	The consultation was publicised via social media on National Grid UK's TikTok and Meta accounts (Facebook and Instagram), @NationalGridUK. The social media campaign generated a total of 1,124,332 impressions.

Additional Engagement Methods

2.3.19 National Grid offered briefings and/or meetings with the following stakeholders prior or as part of the Stage 2 consultation:

- MPs, where all or part of their constituencies was within either consultation zone;
- Elected representatives of district, county and borough councils within the PCZ;
- Parish councils, where all or part of the parish was within the draft Order Limits, and neighbouring parish councils;
- Local authorities, including neighbouring authorities and the Combined Mayoral Authority for Lincolnshire;
- Key prescribed consultees, such as Natural England; and
- Persons with an Interest in Land (PILs) under Sections 42(1)(d) of the Act.

2.3.20 In addition to the stakeholder engagement outlined above, National Grid held online briefings with various disciplines within the project team to ensure understanding of the consultation approach with senior officers and elected members. These briefings supported the delivery of the consultation in accordance with the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). A detailed record of the briefings and/or meetings that took place is provided in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Briefings to stakeholders

Online briefings and/or meetings	Date and time
Parish Council Briefing 1 - West Walton Parish Council, Tydd St. Giles Parish Council, Walpole Cross Keys Parish Council, Walpole Parish Council	16 June 2025 - 1.45pm
Parish Council Briefing 2 - Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council; Bilsby and Farlethorpe Parish Council; Theddlethorpe and Great and Little Carlton Parish Councils; Coningsby Town Council; Bilsby Parish Council; Huttoft Parish Council; Tathwell and Haugham Parish Council; Maltby le Marsh Parish Council; Eastville, Midville and New	19 June 2025 - 1.15pm

Online briefings and/or meetings	Date and time
Leake Parish Council; Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea Town Council.	
Parish Council Briefing 3 - Tydd Parish Council; Gosberton Parish Council; Wyberton Parish Council.	23 June 2025 - 1.45pm
Parish Council Briefing 4 - Ashby cum Fenby Parish Council	1 July 2025 - 1.45pm
Parish Council Briefing 5 - Moulton Parish Council; Tydd St Mary Parish Council; Amber Hill Parish Council.	3 July 2025 - 1.45pm
Parish Council Briefing 6 - Eastville, Midville and New Leake Parish Council; Tathwell and Haugham Parish Council; Huttoft Parish Council; Toynton All Saints Parish Council; Bilsby and Farlesthorne Parish Council; Mablethorpe and Sutton Parish Council; Tathwell Parish Council; Partney and Dalby Parish Council; Burgh le Marsh Town Council.	7 July 2025 - 1.30pm
Parish Council Briefing 7 - Swaby Group Parish Council; Reston Parish Council; Willoughby Parish Council.	6 August 2025 - 9.15am
Boston Borough Council Briefing	11 June 2025 - 5.45pm
Cambridgeshire County Council Briefing	16 June 2025 - 9.45am
East Lindsey District Council Briefing	12 June 2025 - 5.15pm
Fenland District Council Briefing	17 June 2025 - 11.45am
King's Lynn and West Norfolk Briefing	12 June 2025 - 3.15pm
Lincolnshire County Council Briefing	12 June 2025 - 12.30pm
Norfolk County Council Briefing	11 June 2025 - 9.45am
North East Lincolnshire Council Briefing	10 June 2025 - 5.45pm
South Holland District Council Briefing	17 June 2025 - 5.45pm

Response Methods

2.3.21 National Grid provided several channels to submit feedback, which are summarised below:

- **Online feedback form** (via the Project website) - An electronic version of the feedback form was available on the Project website, at: www.nationalgrid.com/g-w. This could either be completed and submitted online or downloaded from the website and posted to the Freepost address.
- **Hard copy feedback form** (Appendix B) - Hard copies of the feedback form were available at consultation events, information deposit locations and upon request. They were also available as a PDF on the Project website, to be printed at home if preferred. They could be returned via the Freepost address.
- **Email** – An email address (contact@g-w.nationalgrid.com) was available for submitting feedback.

- **Post** - Hard copy responses (including letters and hardcopy feedback forms) could be submitted in writing to the freepost address at 'Freepost G TO W'.

- 2.3.22 A freephone information line was available to request a paper copy of the feedback form, and a freepost envelope, enabling consultees to send their feedback to the Project team free of charge. This was also available for people to call if they had any queries or wanted to arrange a call back from a member of the Project team to discuss a specific topic. Lines were open Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.30pm, and an answerphone facility was available to take messages outside of these hours.
- 2.3.23 Consultees were encouraged to provide their feedback in writing, however feedback could be given over the phone where the other channels for responding were not suitable, for example to meet equality, diversity and accessibility needs.
- 2.3.24 Members of the public who wanted to provide their feedback at the in-person events were provided with a paper copy of the feedback form which they were able to hand in at the event or return via freepost.

3. Analysis of Feedback

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter details:

- i. Feedback received in response to the Stage 1 consultation, relevant to Section 5 of the Project which, as explained in the 2024 Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report could not be fully considered in that document due to the network requirements in the area being unknown at that stage; and
- ii. Feedback received in response to the Stage 2 consultation, relevant to Section 5 of the Project.

3.1.2 It includes a breakdown of how feedback was submitted, outlines the work undertaken to analyse this information, and provides a summary of the feedback received as well as National Grid's responses.

3.1.3 Chapter 3 is structured as follows:

- i. **Feedback channels/response mechanisms** - provides an overview of the channels feedback was received through;
- ii. **Overview of feedback relevant to Section 5** - provides an overview of feedback received based on submission types;
- iii. **Approach to analysis** - outlines the approach taken in analysing the responses; and
- iv. **Analysis of feedback** - summarises the feedback received, alongside National Grid's response to this feedback.

3.2 Feedback Channels/ Response Mechanisms

3.2.1 As outlined in section 2.3 of this report, to ensure that the Stage 2 consultation was inclusive and open to all, National Grid set up a number of methods by which feedback to the consultation could be provided.

3.2.2 Comments received on social media or discussions about the Project at public exhibitions or briefings were not captured as formal consultation feedback. Where appropriate, attendees to consultation events were encouraged to submit feedback via the channels which were included in various consultation materials (including the feedback form and banners), on the Project website and in promotional materials.

3.2.3 Emails and letters which clearly constituted a response to the consultation (i.e. provided comments on the proposals) were classified as consultation feedback. Emails and letters which only asked for copies of documents or where certain information could be found were not classified as consultation feedback.

3.3 Overview of feedback relevant to Section 5

- 3.3.1 A total of 98 submissions of consultation feedback relevant to Section 5 of the Project were received during and outside the Stage 2 consultation. Further information on feedback methods and the numbers of responses for each are set out below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Breakdown of responses received

Response Method	Number of Responses
Online feedback form (including partial responses)	48
Paper feedback form	15
Emails (including campaign group responses)	33
Letter	2

- 3.3.2 A total of 2 submissions of consultation feedback relevant to Section 5 of the Project consisting of design change requests have been carried over from the Stage 1 consultation.

3.4 Approach to Analysis

- 3.4.1 National Grid has considered and taken account of all feedback relevant to Section 5 of the Project. This is explained further in section 3.5 of this report.
- 3.4.2 National Grid's response to feedback at this stage is preliminary, and we have had regard to Government guidance regarding pre-application consultation². A Consultation Report covering all consultation undertaken on the Project will be submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application in due course.
- 3.4.3 All responses received as part of the Stage 2 consultation, relevant to Section 5 of the Project, have undergone a process of coding and analysis. The steps behind this process are explained below.
- 3.4.4 Sources of open responses included:
- Responses to open questions in the feedback form (hardcopy and online);
 - Email responses (which clearly constituted a consultation response); and
 - Letter responses (which clearly constituted a consultation response).

Checking feedback

- 3.4.5 Assigning a unique reference number to each response to create an audit trail throughout the analysis process. Quality assurance checks were undertaken to ensure that each response was reviewed.

² Planning Act 2008: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-pre-application-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects>

Identifying the themes

- 3.4.6 To analyse open responses, an initial coding framework was produced, which was informed by the content of the feedback form. The coding framework enabled the breakdown and assigning of responses into corresponding themes, as appropriate. If multiple themes were covered in feedback, each was coded appropriately to ensure all matters raised within the feedback were captured and reviewed by the appropriate specialists. The narrative presented in section 3.5 of this report is based on the themes identified. Where appropriate, themes have been grouped in the narrative.

Identifying the topics within a theme

- 3.4.7 As coding and analysis progressed, the coding framework was further informed and developed (using the analysis of consultation feedback) to identify 'themes' that were more detailed in nature, which were referred to as topics.
- 3.4.8 'Ecology' is an example of a theme, and 'impacts on wildlife associated with construction' is an example of a topic that relates to this theme. The process of identifying themes and topics informed the narrative of consultation feedback presented in section 3.5 of this report.

Identifying the Section of the route

- 3.4.9 Feedback relating to Section 5 of the route has been identified through the analysis process to inform the narrative presented in section 3.5 of this report.

Identifying design change requests

- 3.4.10 Where specific, locatable changes or amendments to the Project design were suggested through feedback, these were identified and considered through a separate process called Design Change Control (DCC). For more information on the DCC process, please refer to Chapter 3 of the Supplementary Design Development Report for Section 5. Design changes requested through feedback are set out under the 'Planning and Design' theme in section 3.5 of this report, alongside National Grid's response to them. Further information on the design development process is also available in Chapter 7 of the Supplementary Design Development Report for Section 5.

Responses from technical stakeholders

- 3.4.11 Feedback relevant to Section 5 of the Project received from statutory bodies, referred to as technical stakeholders, as listed in Appendix C, is also reported in section 3.5 of this report.

3.5 Analysis of Feedback relevant to Section 5

Stage 1 Consultation

- 3.5.1 The feedback from the Stage 1 consultation about Section 5 of the Project consisting of design change requests is detailed below alongside National Grid's response.
- i. Suggestion to upgrade pumping capacity at the George Hay sluice on Lords Drain, near the River Welland, to address concerns about flooding at Weston Marsh due to the new substation development.

National Grid's Response: The risk of flooding posed to the Project, from tidal, fluvial, surface water, groundwater and sewer sources, and the influence of the Project upon flood risk to third parties relating to these sources, require further assessment. This will be reported within the Environmental Statement (ES) and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted in support of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Project. National Grid must demonstrate that the presence of the Project would not increase flood risk to third parties, rather than deliver measures which would reduce risk the existing level of flood risk to third parties.

As identified within Supplementary **PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 6 Water Environment and Flood Risk**, the construction and operation of infrastructure within the flood zone within Section 5 has the potential, in the absence of appropriate mitigation, to reduce or displace floodplain storage, which could adversely impact flood risk. However, a full assessment of potential changes in flood risk to external third-party receptors has not yet been completed. There are several factors which require further assessment to inform the final FRA and ES, informed by engagement with relevant stakeholders, including the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards. Specifically, these include confirmation of the standard of defence provided by the existing system of flood risk management assets; confirmation of any required mitigation; review of existing flood models and baseline hydrological modelling.

It is not currently expected that any upgrade to pumping capacity at George Hay Sluice will be required as a result of the Project, given embedded design measures. Substation surface water drainage systems will provide attenuation of runoff from impermeable surfaces to greenfield rates and incorporate appropriate pollution prevention measures and the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) as far as practicable. Additionally, if watercourse diversions are required to provide sufficient space for the substation platforms, then these will be designed to provide an equivalent conveyance capacity to the existing watercourses and will incorporate morphological features to promote aquatic biodiversity to a level that is consistent with maintaining effective land drainage.

The full assessment reported within the ES will be informed by the FRA and further detailed hydrological modelling of flood risk within Section 5. The ES will include the details of any mitigation required in order to meet the Exception Test. As such, National Grid will be required to demonstrate to the Planning Inspectorate, that the Project would not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that experienced to local receptors within the Section 5 Study Area.

- ii. Suggestion to expand and make use of the Spalding Power Station in place of new substations.

National Grid's response: During the routeing and siting phase of Project development, 4 potential siting areas were considered for the location of a proposed Weston Marsh substation, WM1, WM2, WM3 and WM4 as described in the Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS). However, none of these were located at the existing Spalding Power Station, because proximity to the 'Spalding Tee Point' (the point at which the existing 4ZM and 2WS 400 kV overhead lines meet) was identified as a key engineering requirement for the substation location. This is because diversions of the existing overhead lines into and out of the proposed Weston Marsh substation would be required, therefore siting zones in proximity to the Spalding Tee-Point were considered to reduce the extent of potential diversions.

The need for two substations was identified by National Grid through engaging with generators who are contracted to connect in the Weston Marsh area, as well as reviewing the technical specifications required, since Stage 1 Consultation. Two substations were found to provide resilience on the transmission network and would ensure the network's safety and reliability. The need for a 1 km clearance, and underground cable connection, between these two substations was identified to manage system-wide resilience.

Building on the siting work already conducted in the CPRSS, no further constraints were identified within the appraisal in the vicinity of the New Weston Marsh Substation A and so the selection of this Siting Area was re-affirmed. Three Siting Areas ('Option 1 Siting Area', 'Option 2 Siting Area' and 'Option 3 Siting Area') were also identified and appraised with the aim of identifying a preferred option for the additional substation identified as being required at Weston Marsh, the New Weston Marsh Substation B. Environmental topics scoped into the appraisal looked at the three Siting Areas in turn, and identified environmental constraints relevant to each option. Any technical constraints associated with each Siting Area were also considered. Based on the outcomes of these appraisals, the Option 1 Siting Area was selected as the preferred option to be taken forward for the New Weston Marsh Substation B.

Stage 2 Consultation

- 3.5.2 The feedback about Section 5 of the Project covered themes including alternative strategic options; objection; support; construction; consultation; historic environment; planning and design; ecology, biodiversity and environment; socio-economics; agricultural land; health and wellbeing; landscape and visual; noise and vibration; flood risk and drainage; land and property; safety and security; and communities and quality of life.
- 3.5.3 The following sections provide a summary of the comments made in relation to these themes and National Grid's response to those.

Alternative strategic options

- 3.5.4 A large proportion of the community members' responses commented on the inadequacy of the assessment of alternative options, suggesting alternative options such as siting the substations underground, offshore or on brownfield.
- 3.5.5 **National Grid's response:** In developing the proposals presented at the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation, the feedback received at the Stage 2 consultation in relation to Section 5 of the Project has been taken into account, alongside further assessments and design work.
- 3.5.6 **Offshore option** - During the strategic optioneering phase of Project development, three strategic options were considered for the Project, including two onshore options and one offshore option. Having considered value to bill-paying consumers, environmental and socio-economics factors and cost, the offshore option was not progressed. While offshore options may be justifiable for other projects, environmental and socio-economics factors were not considered to differentiate between the onshore and offshore options for the Project. However, the offshore option was identified as significantly more expensive to both build and maintain over a 40- year period. As a result, an onshore option was progressed. Further information is presented in the Strategic Options Report (SOR).

- 3.5.7 **Underground** - National Grid is not considering undergrounding of substations across the entirety of the proposals. Undergrounding a substation bears significant constraints, including maintenance, flood risk, construction challenges, the volume of earth works required and associated adverse environmental impacts and cost. Undergrounding a large 400 kV substation is therefore not considered technically feasible or justified in the Weston Marsh area, or across the Project route. This is not being further considered as a mitigation strategy.
- 3.5.8 **Use of brownfield land** - Given the length and linear nature of the Project, it would not be feasible to locate all new infrastructure on brownfield land. However, as identified at section 4.5 of the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS), National Grid acknowledges that using available brownfield land will generally be of benefit/advantage compared with utilising greenfield land and considered the availability of brownfield land in the site selection process. In line with that approach, National Grid has investigated potentially suitable land in the region, designated as brownfield sites, for placement of compounds required for the construction phase and for the siting of substations. No suitable brownfield sites were identified for proposed permanent or temporary infrastructure.

Objection

- 3.5.9 Several community members' responses raised objections to the proposals in Section 5, suggesting that two substations would be too many or not in the right place (no further details provided).
- 3.5.10 **National Grid's response:** The need for two substations was identified by National Grid through engaging with generators who are contracted to connect in the Weston Marsh area, as well as reviewing the technical specifications required, since Stage 1 Consultation. Two substations were found to provide resilience on the transmission network and would ensure the network's safety and reliability. The need for a 1 km clearance and underground cable connection between these two substations was identified to manage system-wide resilience.
- 3.5.11 Building on the siting work already conducted in the CPRSS, no further constraints were identified within the appraisal in the vicinity of the New Weston Marsh Substation A and so the selection of this Siting Area was re-affirmed. Three Siting Areas ('Option 1 Siting Area', 'Option 2 Siting Area' and 'Option 3 Siting Area') were also identified and appraised with the aim of identifying a preferred option for the additional substation identified as being required at Weston Marsh, the New Weston Marsh Substation B. Environmental topics scoped into the appraisal looked at the three Siting Areas in turn, and identified environmental constraints relevant to each option. Any technical constraints associated with each Siting Area were also considered. Based on the outcomes of these appraisals, the Option 1 Siting Area was selected as the preferred option to be taken forward for the New Weston Marsh Substation B.

Support

- 3.5.12 A few community members' responses expressed support or understanding of the need for the Project, as well as the benefits it would bring to the reinforcement of the transmission system.
- 3.5.13 **National Grid's response:** National Grid welcomes these comments.

Construction

- 3.5.14 Several community members' responses raised concerns about construction traffic in general and specifically in Weston and along the Weston bypass (A151), causing disruption, rat-runs, noise and air pollution and impacting commuters, deliveries and day-to-day life. The roads in the area were identified as unsuitable and unable to support the forecasted construction traffic regardless of mitigation proposed.
- 3.5.15 A few community members' responses raised concerns with the working days and hours proposed for construction, as well as the need for closures and diversions. Concerns were also raised about the disruption caused by construction activities generally, the positioning of construction compounds in the area and the lack of information given about leasing or payment.
- 3.5.16 A few community members' responses raised concerns with impacts on the use of the River Welland and navigation due to construction.
- 3.5.17 **National Grid's response:** We recognise that construction of the Project would result in impacts to local areas, including the temporary use of land for construction activities, including working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, welfare, storage and vehicular access routes. The Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS), published at the stage 1 consultation, explains that our approach to the appraisal of design options considers a range of topics with various technical considerations including construction and delivery issues.
- 3.5.18 The **PEI Report** published as part of the Stage 2 consultation, and the **Supplementary PEI Report** for Section 5 are based upon an initial appraisal of the suitability of local roads to accommodate the forecast volume of construction traffic movements. This includes consideration of road geometry, congestion, accidents and sensitive receptors that include local amenities, schools and non-motorised user activity. The most sensitive routes will be avoided where practicable and use of suitable major and strategic roads will be optimised. Where construction traffic will utilise the local highway network, measures will be in place to ensure that only designated routes are used by construction traffic.
- 3.5.19 Our initial appraisal included in the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Figure 9.5 Preliminary Impact Analysis** shows predicted impacts on the highway network that could potentially result in a significant effect. These routes are identified as part of the Primary Access Route network to the substations and will require further discussion with the local highway authority and possibly further assessment to determine the effects, if any, on users of the highway. This process will consider operation of roads and junctions during commuter peak periods if required. As set out in Table 9.10 of the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 9 Traffic and Movement**, identified highway links include sections of the A151 near Holbeach and north of Weston (identified as W42 and LK87 respectively on **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Figure 9.5 Preliminary Impact Analysis**).
- 3.5.20 A full assessment of likely impacts and effects upon the local highway network will be reported within the Transport Assessment (TA) and Environmental Statement (ES) submitted in support of the DCO application. This will be informed by ongoing discussions with the appropriate highway authorities regarding construction traffic routes and any specific mitigation required to reduce potential effects upon highway users.

- 3.5.21 Whilst the use of dedicated on-site haul roads will require temporary use of land, their use will also reduce potential movements of construction traffic on the existing road network. Proposed haul roads, and the construction compounds which they are linked to, have been sited based upon input from environmental specialists, to reduce the risk of associated adverse impacts as far as practicable. For example, this includes seeking to maximise separation from sensitive receptor locations, whilst ensuring they are able to facilitate efficient construction of the Project.
- 3.5.22 Construction access routes to the Weston Marsh substations are not confirmed at this stage. Within the **Supplementary PEI Report**, Marsh Road is considered as a possible route for construction vehicles and identified for further assessment. The suitability of the road will be considered in more detail and if improvement works are required, such as localised widening, this will be discussed with the local highway authority. Alternative access options are still under consideration.
- 3.5.23 A review of the available accident data has been considered in assessing the sensitivity of the A16, a summary of which is provided in the **Supplementary PEI Report** with the location of recorded accidents shown on the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Figure 9.4 Route Sensitivity**. The initial findings set out in the **Supplementary PEI Report**, i.e. the suitability of the A16 for construction access, is subject to further discussion with the local highway authority and will consider the estimated number of construction vehicle movements, existing baseline conditions and if any mitigation works are required to accommodate the estimated increase in construction traffic.
- 3.5.24 As stated within the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 9 Traffic and Movement**, a new overhead line crossing of the River Welland is proposed. Temporary closure of the waterway will be required during the overhead line stringing works. National Grid will seek agreement with the relevant stakeholders prior to implementing any temporary closures, which are anticipated to be short-term and undertaken during overnight periods to reduce temporary disruption of the waterway. The planned works are unlikely to result in significant effects upon waterway users during either construction or operation of the Project.
- 3.5.1 As reported within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 10 Noise and Vibration** no likely significant effects from construction traffic noise within the Section 5 Study Area are predicted, noting that the preliminary assessment is based upon provisional construction traffic projections. The assessment of construction traffic noise will be updated and reported within the ES based upon updated construction traffic projections and routes confirmed following further consultation with the relevant highway authorities.
- 3.5.2 The potential air quality effects associated with construction traffic movements are discussed within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 12 Air Quality**. Predicted changes in traffic volumes on several routes within the Section 5 Study Area exceed the detailed assessment thresholds set out in best practice guidance. Therefore, dispersion modelling will be undertaken to confirm likely changes in air quality during construction and whether any significant effects are likely. As set out in Table 12.7 of the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 12 Air Quality**, this modelling is planned to include sections of the A151 near Weston (identified as LK87, LK79 and LK86 on **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Figure 9.5 Preliminary Impact Analysis**). The outcomes of this assessment, and any further mitigation measures, will be reported within the ES.

- 3.5.3 A Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared and submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. These documents will include commitments to reduce construction impacts together with a framework for detailed management plans to be prepared at detailed design stage to reduce and mitigate potential impacts and/or disruptions that may arise during the construction phase. Road conditions will be monitored and remediated, as required, to safely accommodate construction traffic. A Preliminary CoCP was available as part of the Stage 2 consultation and is available as part of the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation.

Consultation

- 3.5.4 Several community members' responses, alongside technical stakeholders' feedback (Boston Borough Council, South Holland District Council and South Holland Internal Drainage Board), noted that more detail and information is required for Section 5 in order to provide meaningful comments, due to the lack of clarity regarding number of substations required. Further information was requested regarding the substations (scale, location and connections), haul roads, watercourse crossings and diversions, new impermeable areas, surface water discharge, as well as assessment of likely effects and appropriate mitigation. Lincolnshire County Council's feedback acknowledged that further information on Section 5 would be provided as part of targeted consultation.
- 3.5.5 **National Grid's response:** During the Stage 2 consultation, we presented a Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone (RWMSSZ), showing the proposed location for substation infrastructure. The design and siting of up to two substations was still being considered, and we stated that we would come back to consult on the details of these substations in a further consultation. This is the purpose of the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation and the associated documentation, including the **Supplementary PEI Report**.
- 3.5.6 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.2 Temporary and Construction Features** illustrates the proposed location of substations and their associated connections and permanent access roads. **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.4** provides a more detailed illustration of the proposed location and layout of the New Weston Marsh Substation A and New Weston Marsh Substation B, including indicative dimensions. **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.2 Temporary and Construction Features** illustrates the proposed location of elements of temporary works, including haul roads and construction compounds.
- 3.5.7 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5** reports an updated preliminary assessment of the likely environmental effects of those elements of the Project which are located within Section 5.

Historic environment

- 3.5.8 Historic England's feedback made reference to the undated former watercourses assessed as having low value and suggested these should be investigated further. The response also noted that tidal flat deposits present across this Section of the route could be hiding archaeological remains and peaty, organic-rich materials and therefore further investigation should be considered.

- 3.5.9 Weston Parish Council's feedback noted potential impacts on the historic villages in the parish, and designated heritage sites such as the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.
- 3.5.10 **National Grid's response:** The comments regarding the potential significance of the undated former watercourses are noted and will be considered further during the development of archaeological and geoarchaeological surveys to support the Project and when undertaking further assessment for the Environmental Statement (ES). Until an asset has been evaluated, a precautionary approach will be undertaken to assessing their value (heritage significance).
- 3.5.11 The potential for the tidal flat deposits to mask earlier archaeological remains is noted. The current programme of archaeological surveys has included geoarchaeological/archaeological monitoring of ground investigations (boreholes and trial pits) with the Weston Marsh area. An initial geoarchaeological desk-based assessment has also been undertaken to characterise the deposit sequence present. The results of both the geoarchaeological monitoring and the geoarchaeological desk-based assessment have been used to inform the preliminary assessment presented the Historic Environment Chapter of the **Supplementary PEI Report** and will be used to inform the future survey programme, impact assessment to be undertaken for the ES and the future development of possible mitigation measures.
- 3.5.12 The likely significant and non-significant effects of the Project in the Section 5 Study Area are reported within the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 5 Historic Environment**. This includes consideration of impacts upon historic villages and associated assets, including the Pinchbeck Conservation Area and designated heritage assets within Weston, including the grade I Church of St Mary. As set out within the **Supplementary PEI Report**, no significant effects upon historic environment assets within Weston are predicted, given the setting is already influenced by the presence of the A151 road and the distance of the nearest permanent elements of the Project from the Church (approximately 890m).

Planning and Design

- 3.5.13 A few community members' responses made design suggestions in relation to the Weston Marsh substations, which are summarised as follows:
- i. Suggestion of an alternative location for one of the Weston Marsh substations in the south of the siting zone.

National Grid's response: The preferred locations for the New Weston Marsh Substation A and New Weston Marsh Substation B are in the northern and central regions of the Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone (RWMSSZ) respectively. These locations are detailed in the Weston Marsh Siting Study Report. Following completion of the initial siting study, further appraisals considered an alternative location for the New Weston Marsh Substation B. The alternative location was to the south of the siting zone and to the west of Wiseman's Gate. This location was proposed via Stage 2 Consultation feedback.

The appraisal identified that the primary benefit of the alternative location would be the potential avoidance of significant adverse effects upon two high-value heritage assets: the medieval Wykeham Chapel moated monastic grange and retreat house scheduled monument and the Grade I listed Wykeham Chapel of St Nicholas; and two medium-value heritage assets: the Grade II listed Chapel Farmhouse and the Grade II listed Gate Piers to Chapel Farmhouse. The alternative location would have

increased the distance between the assets and the New Weston Marsh Substation B by approximately 150 m when compared with the preferred location. There would also be additional screening from existing vegetation that would help to mitigate views from the heritage assets towards the substation when compared with the preferred location. As with the preferred location, the setting of the assets would still be adversely impacted by the substation in this alternative location, due to the presence of the substation and associated overhead lines, but the risk of potential impacts would be reduced.

However, the alternative location would introduce a range of environmental disbenefits. These are primarily due to the increase in the expected lengths of overhead line and underground cable routes that would result from moving the New Weston Marsh Substation B further south. The increased lengths of overhead line and underground cable connections to New Weston Marsh Substation B would lead to additional temporary and permanent loss of agricultural land. They would also cause a risk of additional impacts on the water environment due to the greater number of watercourse crossings required, and additional risks to protected species and habitats, for instance water voles, from the greater length of overhead lines and underground cables and the additional watercourse crossings.

In addition to the environmental disbenefits, the increased lengths of overhead lines and underground cables would result in additional Project cost. Furthermore, additional construction complexity would result from the increased congestion of the connections to the Weston Marsh substations and the additional crossings of the Intergen high pressure gas pipeline (which routes across the Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone from south west to north east) by both overhead lines and underground cable routes.

The alternative location for the New Weston Marsh Substation B would also increase the expected length of overhead line connection for the Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire Project.

A comparative assessment of the identified benefits and disbenefits determined that the reduction in impacts and effects upon the historic environment was not sufficient for the alternative location in the south of the siting zone to be preferred overall.

While environmental, technical and cost considerations are primary factors for appraisal in National Grid's decision-making process, programme implications were also considered. A decision to change the preferred location of the New Weston Marsh Substation B would have resulted in delay to the critical path of the Project, due to the additional design and environmental survey and assessment work that would be required following a change. National Grid considered it important to take into account programme impact, as the Project will be delivered under the Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) framework, and plays a vital part in the UK Government's Net Zero ambitions. Furthermore, National Grid is obliged, through its licence conditions, to provide timely access to the transmission system for customers with whom it has connection agreements. Considerations in relation to programme therefore represent an additional, confirmatory factor in the decision not to re-locate the New Weston Marsh Substation B in the south of the siting zone.

- ii. Substations should be sited away from residential areas and buildings, in an industrial area such as Spalding.

National Grid's response: It is not possible to avoid all potential impacts to all properties in proximity to the proposed route, though in accordance with the routeing and siting methodology set out in the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS) (including Horlock Rules for substation siting) we seek to maximise distance from residential receptors as far as practicable whilst having consideration to technical and environmental constraints. Spalding has not been considered as a potentially suitable siting location for substation infrastructure at Weston Marsh. For more information on siting considerations at Weston Marsh, please refer to the CPRSS and Weston Marsh Siting Study Report.

- iii. Weston Parish Council's feedback noted that the substations would be too close to Weston.

National Grid's response: The proposed substation locations for the New Weston Marsh Substation A and New Weston Marsh Substation B are located in the northern and central regions of the Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone (RWMSSZ) that was presented at Stage 2 consultation. The approximate distances between the substations and Weston are 3.3km and 2.3km respectively. As such, it is not believed the substations would be sited in too close a proximity to Weston.

- iv. The location for the substations prioritises engineering convenience over community and environmental considerations.

National Grid's response: As set out in the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS) routeing and siting methodology, both engineering (or technical) and environmental considerations are taken into account when identifying potentially suitable substation siting locations. The proposed siting locations for the New Weston Marsh Substations A and B are considered to offer the best balance between technical considerations associated with existing 400 kV overhead line diversions (and proximity to one another) whilst mitigating potential impacts on nearby environmental receptors as far as practicable. For further information on the siting considerations at Weston Marsh, please refer to the Weston Marsh Siting Study Report and Supplementary Design Development Report for Section 5.

- v. Preference expressed for a tee connection with the Meridian Solar project.

National Grid's response: The Project would provide a bay connection with the Meridian Solar project, and a tee connection does not form part of the proposals. Any change to the current connection solution would be subject to a separate regulatory process administered by the National Energy System Operator.

- vi. Suggestion that a new access road for the substations should be built either from the A17 main road or the A151

National Grid's response: Given the distance between the A-roads and the substations, this would result in a minimum length of 4km of new road construction (based on straight line distance from the A151 to the New Weston Marsh Substation B then on to the New Weston Marsh Substation A), at a width of minimum 6m, with the actual length likely to be greater for any feasible road alignment routed around any local constraints. A road of this nature would almost certainly introduce additional

adverse environmental effects and would result in the loss of a minimum of 3 hectares (based on the minimum 4km length) of Grade 1 agricultural land, as well as the likely sterilisation of land parcels impacted by the new road alignment.

For the above reasons, the approach is to use existing roads for access wherever safe and appropriate to do so. Work has been carried out to understand the suitability of local roads and to put forward appropriate mitigations (widening, passing places, etc.) where required.

- vii. Preference expressed for the New Weston Marsh Substation A to be located further back and closer to the 'Spalding tee Point'

National Grid's response: The position of the New Weston Marsh Substation A has been developed taking into consideration the existing overhead lines (OHLs) (the 4ZM and the 2WS routes) and the existing Inter-gen gas pipeline that crosses the siting zone, routing roughly parallel to the 2WS in the vicinity of the New Weston Marsh Substation A. The New Weston Marsh Substation A has been positioned as close to the tee-point as practicable while providing adequate space for the substation and terminal towers as an offline build that avoids the constraint of the high-pressure gas pipeline.

To divert the high-pressure gas pipeline would introduce significant additional cost, disruption (including outages to Spalding North Power Station during diversion works), environmental and land impacts, programme risk to the Project, and therefore options that would require such a diversion have not been taken forward.

The space between the high-pressure gas pipeline and the existing 2WS OHL is insufficient for the construction of the substation and line entries without introducing construction activities under or close to the live circuits; this would require outages which would introduce significant delay and risk to the programme. A substation at this location would also require the diversion of the existing road which provides access to several farms and properties.

To the south of the 2WS OHL, the potential area for siting of a substation is constrained by the 2WS itself to the north west, the Lords Drain to the east and existing property (St Lambert's Cottage) to the south. To fit in this area, the orientation of the New Weston Marsh Substation A would need to change to a more north south orientation, which is less preferable given the directions from which OHLs are proposed to approach the substation, and which would position one side of the substation alongside the Lords Drain which would act to constrain line entries, potentially sterilising one side of the substation. It would be challenging to route OHLs to the substation around the constraints of existing properties and the watercourse.

For the above reasons, solutions which place the New Weston Marsh Substation A closer to the tee-point than the current design have not been taken forward, primarily due to technical complexity and programme risk.

The substation is positioned as close to equidistant between properties (Crowtree Farm and Crowtree Cottages to the north; St Lambert's Cottage to the south) as practicable considering the gas main constraint. As the design progresses, mitigation planting can be developed to screen views of the substation from Crowtree Farm and Crowtree Cottages.

- viii. Suggestion for alternative routeing to avoid Section 5 and route west of Spalding due to impact on Grade 1 agricultural land.

National Grid's response: As set out in the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS), several potential overhead line corridors were considered before an overall preferred corridor was identified and presented at the Stage 1 consultation. However, none of the potential corridors considered opted to route to the west of Spalding because this would significantly increase the length (and numbers of pylons required) of the overhead line, taking the routeing on a less direct path to the proposed New Walpole B substation. Due to its prevalence within the wider study area, impacts to Grade 1 agricultural land is not considered to be a differentiating factor in routeing considerations for an overhead line.

- ix. South Holland District Council's feedback suggested that consideration should be given to adjusting pylon positions to suit agricultural operations, in the vicinity of the A14 towards the Weston Marsh substations.

National Grid's response: Any and all requests for changes to pylon positioning to better suit agricultural operations will be considered as the design evolves. The outcomes of these design change requests will be set out in the Consultation Report that will be produced and submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

- 3.5.14 Concerns were raised about the two substations attracting more solar farm developments, leading to a need to assess cumulative impacts from all renewable energy infrastructure. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Project should not interfere with other projects or developments in the area (for example Outer Dowsing) and it should link with Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire.
- 3.5.15 Technical stakeholders' feedback (Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council) noted the accumulation of three overhead lines in the area of Weston Marsh.
- 3.5.16 Lincolnshire County Council's feedback raised the need for cumulative impacts assessment in this area, as well as a need for a masterplan that considers the requirements of this project and those that are expected in the future.

National Grid's response: Throughout the design development process National Grid will be undertaking regular and continuous monitoring of live planning applications. We will also engage with stakeholders including local planning authorities to understand the other relevant proposed developments in the Project area (which have adequate information in the public domain) that should be included in the long/short-list for assessment, such as solar farms, housing developments and major roads. We will work closely with other developers where there may be a cumulative impact to ensure that we understand their proposals so that these can be considered in our own assessment.

National Grid, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the Project, is undertaking a cumulative effects assessment, including cumulative effects of existing and proposed overhead lines, in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's advice page on Cumulative Effects Assessment. This, in summary, is a four-step process and involves the production of a long-list (Stage 1) generated from existing and/or approved development(s) taking into consideration defined Zones of Influence for each environmental topic to be assessed through the EIA

process. This long-list will be refined into a short-list based upon a range of factors including the potential for interactions between the projects to occur, the level of environmental information/assessment already undertaken by that development that is within the public domain, and the certainty (i.e. planning status) of that development occurring (Stages 2 to 3). Upon completion of the short-list a cumulative impact assessment (Stage 4) will be undertaken for the Project and those short-listed developments. Identified effects and any subsequent mitigation measures (if necessary) will be presented within the Environmental Statement (ES) which will form part of the eventual Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

Other electricity generation, storage, and transmission projects are being progressed by National Grid and other developers in the vicinity of the Project. In some cases, the construction of these developments will result in connections to the Project. National Grid will seek to ensure collaboration across the design team of these developments, both internally and externally, to minimise the potential for significant cumulative environmental effects where practicable. This will include the appropriate integration of both temporary and permanent elements of these developments.

The Project will interact with Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire, which is a new onshore network reinforcement. National Grid will seek to ensure collaboration across developments to minimise the potential for significant cumulative environmental effects where practicable.

We have been and continue to work closely with relevant third-party developers in the region, including Outer Dowsing, who are proposed to connect into the New Weston Marsh Substation A.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Environment

- 3.5.17 A large proportion of the community members' responses made comments relating to the proposed Weston Marsh substations having potentially adverse impacts upon wildlife and the natural environment, which are summarised as follows:
- i. General concerns about the environment, local wildlife and habitats;
 - ii. Concern about potential adverse impacts on buzzards, roe deer, barn, tawny and little owls, muntjacs, foxes, rabbits, hares, pheasant, English partridges, fieldfares, bats, badgers, water voles and insects; and
 - iii. Concerns about migrating birds and collision risks with infrastructure.
- 3.5.18 It was suggested that BNG should be implemented in close proximity to the proposals.
- 3.5.19 **National Grid's response:** The Project has been designed to avoid direct impacts upon Designated Sites and international and national importance, including Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 3.5.20 The option appraisal process has included input from technical specialists, to ensure that through the routing and siting of the proposed infrastructure and temporary construction works, the potential impacts of the Project on biodiversity have been reduced as far as practicable. This approach is in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy and has included, where practicable, the avoidance of sensitive ecological habitats (e.g. woodland, grazing meadow, wetlands) when determining the preferred locations of components including pylons, substations, haul roads and construction

compounds. Where it has not been feasible to avoid direct impacts upon sensitive habitats and the protected species which they support, potential effects will be mitigated, through for example the provision of replacement and compensatory habitats.

- 3.5.21 An extensive suite of habitat and species surveys is being undertaken to ensure a robust understanding of the ecological baseline and inform options appraisal and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. This data is still being collected and will be provided at the Environmental Statement (ES) stage per Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance. The surveys include bats, badgers, great crested newts, otter, fish, aquatic macroinvertebrates, aquatic macrophytes, water vole, reptiles, and breeding and non-breeding birds.
- 3.5.22 The EIA for the Project will assess the effects on important ecological features using the collected baseline information. Some species, such as deer (roe deer, muntjac deer), foxes, rabbits, pheasants and bees (kept by beekeepers), are not protected or notable³ and therefore will not be assessed within the ES. However, the overall impact on ecology is taken into account as part of the EIA process for the Project and impacts upon a range of habitats likely to be utilised by these species will be considered. Those species which are considered within the scope of the ecology and biodiversity assessment are set out within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 4 Ecology and Biodiversity, at paragraph 4.3.3.**
- 3.5.23 The risk of bird species colliding with the overhead lines and potential impacts due to electromagnetic radiation (EMR) will be specifically considered within the ES and wider ecological assessment deliverables, including the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Extensive bird data has been collected to inform these assessments. Where/if required, design changes and/or appropriate mitigation measures to reduce collision risk as far as practicable will be proposed.
- 3.5.24 The initial assessment of likely impacts and effects within the Section 5 Study Area, including a summary of the surveys undertaken to date, is reported in the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 4 Ecology and Biodiversity**. The initial assessment identifies that at this stage significant effects cannot be excluded, and further survey work (ongoing) will be used to confirm the status of affected species, inform the design of appropriate mitigation and a full assessment of effects that will be reported in the ES.
- 3.5.25 National Grid note the suggestion that additional planting could encourage wildlife to the area. Locations for ecological mitigation and landscape screening will be identified as the Project design evolves as are illustrated on **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.3 Permanent and Operational Features**.
- 3.5.26 The Project is committed to delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and it is anticipated that BNG delivery will become mandatory under the Environment Act 2021 (which requires a 10% increase from the baseline) for Development Consent Order (DCO) applications from May 2026.
- 3.5.27 UKHab surveys and BNG unit calculations are ongoing following a staged approach to assessment, in order to inform the design and discussions on ecological compensation in line with the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity and contribute to the Project's BNG commitments will be sought both within the draft Order Limits and through delivery with partners in the wider area.

³ As designated as such by legal statutes such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Engagement is being undertaken with landowners and stakeholders to identify local opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation. Additionally, through engagement with local nature conservation stakeholders, National Grid is also seeking to identify opportunities to collaborate with existing landscape-scale conservation projects and habitat banking projects that are located within the same Local Planning Authority areas or Natural England National Character Areas as the Project. This follows the geographic preference within the BNG guidance, to ensure that gains are relatively local to the impacts where possible, whilst maximising the value of BNG habitat measures. When designing habitat creation and enhancement measures as part of the environmental mitigation requirements for the Project, these will be designed with appropriate planting and management strategies to maximise their contribution to BNG along the route of the Project.

Socio-economics

- 3.5.28 Several community members' responses commented that any infrastructure would have adverse impacts on tourism and businesses in the area, specifically local caravan sites (not specified), and Crowtree Wigwams.
- 3.5.29 **National Grid's response:** Through the routeing and siting exercise National Grid has sought to reduce impacts to businesses and the local economy, as evidenced in the Strategic Options Report (SOR) and the Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS) published at the Stage 1 consultation. In doing so, we have identified businesses and their primary function, including caravan sites and other enterprises that are likely to generate or are associated with tourism. These have been and will continue to be considered during the iterative design process.
- 3.5.30 From a socioeconomic perspective, the likely effects of National Grid's proposals on local businesses including those operating in connection with tourism (e.g. holiday parks and caravan sites, including Crowtree Wigwams) are considered in the **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 11 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism**. In summary, no significant adverse effects are anticipated for socio-economics, recreation and tourism receptors located within the Section 5 Study Area as a result of the construction, operation and maintenance of the Project the Project, noting this excludes consideration of effects upon above ground renewable energy generation infrastructure. An assessment of the direct effects of the Project on above ground renewable energy generation infrastructure (solar and onshore wind farms) as socio-economics receptors will be presented in the Environmental Statement (ES).
- 3.5.31 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 11 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism** identifies that at this stage minor adverse effects socio-economic effects upon Wigwam Holidays (referred to as Crowtree Wigwams in the feedback) are anticipated during construction due to the disturbance associated with the construction works. Additionally, north during operation, the most southeastern point of this receptor, closest to the proposed visibility splay, will be screened by proposed environmental mitigation. The identified effects are not anticipated to be significant during construction or operation.
- 3.5.32 The caravan sites referenced in community members' responses may not be considered within the socio-economics, recreation and tourism assessment because they may be situated outside of the 500m Study Area for this discipline (within 500m of the development Order Limits). Due to this it is considered unlikely that the caravan sites would experience any significant effects as a result of construction,

operation or maintenance of the Project due to the distance between the Project and the sites.

- 3.5.33 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part C Route-wide Chapter 7 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism** identifies that effects upon communities (local communities, including populations of towns and villages) due to construction activities are likely to be minor adverse and temporary. Predicted effects are likely to be felt most by those communities in closest proximity to the Project. We will report on any indirect amenity effects for affected communities as part of the socio-economics, recreation and tourism assessment reported within the ES. These indirect effects might occur through in-combination effects across the Project (such as noise and vibration, visual, and transport and movement effects).
- 3.5.34 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part C Route-wide Chapter 10 Cumulative Effects** presents a preliminary assessment of cumulative effects upon common receptors across environmental topics identified within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B** (intra-project) and identifies a shortlist of other Committed Developments with which there may be potential for cumulative effects and the relevant environmental topics for such effects (inter-project). The full cumulative effects assessment will be reported within the ES.
- 3.5.35 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part C Route-wide Chapter 7 Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism** identifies that at this stage it is anticipated that likely non-significant effects associated with construction activities would generally be minor adverse and temporary with effects felt most by communities in closest proximity to the Project. The **PEI Report** also assesses that non-local workers would require accommodation in the local area, which is likely to be serviced from hotels and similar establishments such as B&Bs, and non-serviced accommodation including holiday lets, caravan parks and tourist campsites, and other collective accommodation. Overall, both temporary positive benefits to tourist accommodation businesses and temporary adverse effects through a reduction in tourist accommodation bed spaces are anticipated in relation to the labour market during construction. Given the preliminary number of construction workers anticipated to be employed on the Project, and the level of likely spare capacity for bedspace, the effects are not likely to be significant.
- 3.5.36 It should be noted that this is an ongoing assessment and is subject to changes due to the ongoing development of the Project. A full detailed assessment will be included within the ES submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

Agricultural Land

- 3.5.37 Several community members' responses, alongside technical stakeholders' feedback (Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council) expressed concern about the impacts of the substations on high quality agricultural land, farming and food security. This included both loss of arable land and reduced quality of land.
- 3.5.38 **National Grid's response:** National Grid recognises that the Project will result in both temporary and permanent impacts on agricultural land. We look to limit the impact on agricultural land through careful and considered routeing and siting of infrastructure and through consultation with affected landowners. We are and will continue to work with all landowners who may be affected by the proposals to understand the impacts as the Project is developed and seek to reduce the effects upon their agricultural operations.

- 3.5.39 The draft Order Limits shown include areas of land required for temporary construction activities, including temporary construction compounds, and access etc, as well as permanent infrastructure including substations. Attempts have been made to avoid Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land as part of the design evolution. Where BMV agricultural land is to be developed, if possible, this will be directed at land of the lowest possible grade.
- 3.5.40 **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 8 Agriculture and Soils** provides a preliminary assessment on the impact of the Project on agricultural land, soil resources, and agricultural landholdings within the Section 5 Study Area, using publicly available and purchased data relating to land grades (according to the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system), soil profiles, and land use. However, a detailed ALC survey will be conducted to inform a full assessment of the extent of land grades and soil types affected and will be reported in the Environmental Statement (ES).
- 3.5.41 The agricultural land within the draft Order Limits for Section 5 is provisionally mapped as ALC Grades 1 agricultural land. Grades 1, 2, and 3 are classified as being of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land, as such much of the Section 5 Study Area is considered likely to comprise BMV land. **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 8 Agriculture and Soils** subsequently reports a likely significant effect due to the temporary and permanent loss of agricultural land and soil function.
- 3.5.42 A preliminary overview of landowner/occupier information has been used to inform the assessment reported within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 8 Agriculture and Soils**. This does not, for the **Supplementary PEI Report**, include an assessment of individual landholdings in terms of viability (such as disruption or proportion of landholding taken temporarily or permanently). An assessment will be presented in the ES based on the level of further information gained and with a focus on the permanent impacts and on any land uses which may be considered more sensitive (such as orchards, high value cropping systems or livery stables). The assessment in relation to landholdings takes account of the framework associated with financial compensation for disruption and temporary/permanent loss of land (in accordance with the compensation code) which would include consideration of any active agri-environment and/or forestry/woodland schemes.
- 3.5.43 National Grid are committed to the implementation of effective soil handling, storage, and reinstatement measures, which will be detailed in an Outline Soil Management Plan ('Outline SMP', submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application), and would be critical in ensuring the minimisation of the effects and ensuring successful reinstatement of soils and agricultural land grade, where practicable.

Health and Wellbeing

- 3.5.44 A few community members' responses expressed general concerns about health and wellbeing impacts, resulting from the construction and operation of the Weston Marsh substations. Comments were raised about the electric and magnetic fields.
- 3.5.45 **National Grid's response:** National Grid recognises people may have concerns about the potential impacts of living close to an overhead line and associated infrastructure and that the uncertainty whilst the proposals are developed may cause anxiety. Through the routeing and siting exercise National Grid has sought and will

continue to reduce as far as practicable impacts on sensitive receptors, such as residential areas, education facilities and areas for recreation. A considerable amount of assessment work has been undertaken to allow preliminary judgements to be made about the design and routing of the Project. This has been set out in various publications including the Corridor and Preliminary Routing and Siting Study (CPRSS) and Strategic Options Report (SOR) as part of the Stage 1 consultation.

- 3.5.46 Further detailed assessment work has been undertaken since the Stage 1 consultation as reported in **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part C Route-wide Chapter 7 Health and Wellbeing**. A health and wellbeing baseline has been established for each Section to understand how the Project may specifically impact the health and wellbeing of different communities. This includes the community of Weston.
- 3.5.47 Policies and procedures are in place to make sure all equipment will comply with public electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure limits, including the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection guidelines for electric and magnetic fields. As such, physical health effects associated with the generation of EMFs is scoped out of the assessment on the basis that EMF levels would be low such that significant adverse effects are not expected. An EMF report, separate to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, will be prepared as part of the Project.
- 3.5.48 The UK has a carefully thought-out set of policies for protecting us all against EMFs, the main component of which is exposure guidelines. Those exposure guidelines are set by independent scientific bodies and are based on decades-long studies into the effects of EMFs and ill health. After those decades of research, the weight of evidence is against there being any health risks of EMFs below the guideline limits. These policies are incorporated into the decision-making process for Development Consent in NPS EN-5. It is National Grid's policy to ensure that all of its equipment complies fully with those exposure limits. Our approach is to ensure that all our equipment complies with the policies, which are set by Government on the advice of their independent advisors. The proposed infrastructure will be designed to ensure full compliance with these policies and guidelines. This ensures that health concerns relating to EMFs are properly and adequately addressed.
- 3.5.49 No mental health impacts as a result of EMFs are expected as a result of the Project as described within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part C Route-wide Chapter 7 Health and Wellbeing**. Furthermore, no significant impact on health and wellbeing as a result of changes in access to promoted recreational routes and open space; or changes to employment were identified.
- 3.5.50 The Health and Wellbeing assessment assesses the impact of changes to landscape and visual on health and wellbeing in conjunction with air quality, noise, and traffic and transport. This combination effect is assessed as 'Neighbourhood Quality'. For a neighbourhood quality effect to be identified, at least two significant residual effects must combine at the same location. There is evidence to suggest links between neighbourhood quality and health and wellbeing, as health and wellbeing can be adversely impacted by changes to air quality, noise, visual amenity, increased traffic. This will be assessed within the Environmental Statement (ES) and if required, mitigation put in place to address these impacts.
- 3.5.51 The health and wellbeing assessment will continue to be updated to ensure health and wellbeing concerns and impacts of local communities are taken into account.

Landscape and Visual

- 3.5.52 Several community members' responses, alongside technical stakeholders' feedback (Weston Parish Council and South Holland District Council) raised concerns about the potential impacts of the proposed Weston Marsh substations on the landscape and visual amenity. These concerns included the potential for permanent effects on the landscape character of the area and sense of tranquillity, particularly given the size of the infrastructure and the predominantly flat nature of the surrounding land. It was also noted that standard landscaping may not adequately mitigate the visual impacts due to the industrial scale and operational requirements of the infrastructure, with tree planting considered unrealistic as a sufficient means of screening. Concerns were also raised about the industrial lighting that would be generated from the substation(s) at Weston Marsh.
- 3.5.53 Additionally technical stakeholders' feedback (Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council) noted that screening the substations would take time and might not be able to achieve full visual mitigation. Lincolnshire County Council's feedback noted that Section 5 of the PEIR contained limited information, with some receptors listed in tables but not discussed in accompanying text.
- 3.5.54 **National Grid's response:** National Grid develops its Projects in line with national policy and our statutory duties to develop an efficient, economic and co-ordinated network, and have regard to preserving amenity and mitigating impacts. We recognise that overhead lines can give rise to adverse landscape and visual effects, and we carefully consider these along with other environmental and socio-economics considerations, technical requirements and cost when developing our Projects.
- 3.5.55 National Grid has carefully considered the potential impacts of the Project at an early stage, and the findings and justifications for the selection of the emerging preferred corridor in which the new overhead line is proposed to be routed and substation sites located, can be found in the Corridor and Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS), which is available on our Project website. Through the routeing and siting exercise we have sought to reduce the impact on landscape character and visual amenity. We will continue to consider both landscape character and amenity value as we develop our proposals and seek to reduce effects. Further details of the alternative options considered for the siting of the New Weston Marsh Substation A and New Weston Marsh Substation B and associated connections are provided within the Weston Marsh Siting Study Report, published in support of this Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation.
- 3.5.56 The likely landscape and visual effects of National Grid's proposals within the Section 5 Study Area are considered in **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 2 Landscape** and **Chapter 3 Visual**. The East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Type (RLCT) 2A Settled Fens and Marshes would be directly impacted by construction activities associated with the New Weston Marsh Substations A and B and the associated overhead line and underground cable connections, and the permanent presence of the substations and overhead line. The scale of these impacts is such that significant effects on RLCT 2A are considered likely. Similarly, visual receptors within the community area of Weston Parish are also predicted to experience significant adverse effects due to both temporary and permanent changes to views.
- 3.5.57 Mitigation planting is proposed around the New Weston Marsh Substations A and B as illustrated on **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Figure 1.3 Permanent and Operational Features**. This is standard practice for new substation

locations to further reduce visual impacts by screening and filtering views from surrounding visual receptors and provide landscape integration. Due to the flat landform, once established, screening planting will be effective for the substations, but it is acknowledged that the overhead line will remain visible for communities.

- 3.5.58 There is not anticipated to be any significant effects on visual receptors due to lighting from the Project. The assumption at this stage is that lighting for substations would be designed to be environmentally sensitive and, would be event activated and therefore would not be continuous. Further information regarding lighting design will be provided as part of the Environmental Statement (ES).
- 3.5.59 National Grid will be producing a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that will, in addition to other topic specific assessments, form the latter part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Project. This will include an assessment of the effects on the landscape character of the area. Where likely significant effects are anticipated the LVIA will consider and identify areas where it may be necessary and appropriate to put forward potential mitigation as part of an iterative design and assessment process.

Noise and Vibration

- 3.5.60 A few community members' responses raised concerns regarding the impact of operational noise from the proposed substation and associated pylons and overhead line, mentioning specifically the 'buzzing' noise and continuous low-frequency noise.
- 3.5.61 **National Grid's response:** A preliminary assessment of the noise and vibration effects of the Project within the Section 5 Study Area is presented in **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 10 Noise and Vibration**. The assessment considers the potential effects from construction noise and vibration, construction traffic noise, and operational noise due to substantial maintenance activities, such as conductor replacement. As described within this chapter, noise associated with the operation of permanent infrastructure is scoped out of the assessment of noise and vibration effects, in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion provided by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 3.5.62 Equipment which would generate noise (including low-frequency noise) under normal operation, such as transformers, is not proposed within the New Weston Marsh Substation A or New Weston Marsh Substation B in Section 5. Where plant such as transformers are proposed at substations in other Sections, mitigation measures will be incorporated into the design to reduce levels of noise (including low-frequency noise) to acceptable levels. Similarly, auxiliary equipment within the substation would not generate significant levels of noise and based upon the low noise conductor system proposed, noise associated with the operation of permanent infrastructure is not likely to result in significant effects at noise sensitive receptors.
- 3.5.63 The proposed overhead line system is a 'Triple Araucaria' conductor bundle on standard lattice pylons. Noise from high voltage overhead lines is primarily due to a phenomenon called corona discharge. Overhead line noise is generated when the conductor surface voltage gradient (electric stress, or E_{max} expressed in kilovolts per centimetre (kV/cm)) exceeds the inception level for corona discharge activity which is released as acoustic energy and radiates into the air as sound. In UK conditions the corona inception level is regarded to occur when electric stress is in the range 17 to 20kV/cm. Whilst most high voltage overhead lines are designed to operate below this level, those that operate close to this may produce audible noise when enhancement of conductor surface electric stress occurs due to rainfall (wet

noise) or the presence of conductor surface contamination (dry noise). Overhead lines that operate significantly below the corona inception level are much less likely to produce audible noise. 'Triple Araucaria' is regarded as practically quiet during both dry and wet weather conditions as it typically operates with an electrical stress below the inception level for corona discharge. Operational noise from the proposed overhead line would therefore not lead to significant adverse effects at nearby NSR, even if directly underneath the line. This supports the rationale for scoping operational noise out of the assessment.

- 3.5.64 In addition, pylon fittings, such as insulators, dampers, spacers, and clamps, are designed and procured in accordance with a series of National Grid Technical Specifications and must be type registered (rigorously tested) to ensure the fitting conforms to National Grid standards. These design, testing, and procurement processes reduce the potential for audible noise and tones to occur from all types of fittings, including insulators. Where noise does occur, it is likely to be localised and of short duration. If this is due to a fault, action can be taken to rectify it. Where noise from fittings does occur which results in a complaint, appropriate action can be taken to seek to remedy the cause of the noise where practicable, usually through cleaning or replacing the relevant fitting
- 3.5.65 The preliminary assessment reporting within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Section 5 Chapter 10 Noise and Vibration** will be supplemented and updated as required within the Environmental Statement (ES), which will form part of the eventual Development Consent Order (DCO) application. Noise levels and the effect on residential properties as well as other sensitive receptors, such as hospitals and schools will be carefully considered during completion of the EIA process, and all assessments will be completed according to the appropriate UK standards and best practice guidance.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 3.5.66 A few community members' responses raised concerns around the Weston Marsh substations being in a flood-prone area and the potential for new infrastructure and construction activities to contribute to further flooding. It was noted that the siting area is in Flood Zone 3 and mitigation is necessary.
- 3.5.67 The Environment Agency's feedback noted that not all hydraulic modelling information for watercourses in the vicinity of Section 5 of the route was included in the assessments. The feedback suggested to revisit hydraulic modelling information available for River Welland and River Glen.
- 3.5.68 South Holland Internal Drainage Board's feedback acknowledged that the proposed Weston Marsh substations would fall entirely within their district. The feedback requested details about the preliminary work regarding runoff treatment and attenuation requirements for temporary works undertaken in this area, as well as drainage strategies. It was also noted that consultation should be undertaken on strategies (outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy and surface water strategies) submitted as part of the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Management Plan (DrMP). The Board's feedback also provided advice on land drainage consent and charges and noted a continuation of engagement with the Project on the evolving proposals.
- 3.5.69 **National Grid's response:** It is acknowledged that the proposed infrastructure within Section 5 is located within areas at risk of flooding, largely classified as Flood Zone

3. This area is within protected flood plain, given the presence of existing flood defences (embankments) along the River Welland.

- 3.5.70 Routing and siting of proposed infrastructure has sought to avoid areas at the greatest risk of flooding via adherence with the 'Sequential Test' (which requires the location of development in areas with a lower risk of flooding). Where this has not been practicable, National Grid must ensure that the 'Exception Test is met', which in summary requires the following to be demonstrated:
- the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and
 - the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
- 3.5.71 Both the Sequential Test and the Exception Test are explained in further detail within Supplementary **PEI Report Volume 3 Part C Appendix 5A Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment**.
- 3.5.72 As identified within **Supplementary PEI Report Volume 2 Part B Chapter 6 Water Environment and Flood Risk**, the construction and operation of infrastructure within the flood zone within Section 5 has the potential, in the absence of appropriate mitigation, to reduce or displace floodplain storage, which could adversely impact flood risk. However, a full assessment of potential changes in flood risk to external third-party receptors has not yet been completed. There are several factors which require further assessment to inform the final Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Environmental Statement (ES), informed by engagement with the Environment Agency. Specifically, these include confirmation of the standard of defence provided by the existing system of flood risk management assets; confirmation of compensatory storage requirements; review of existing flood models and baseline hydrological modelling.
- 3.5.73 The full assessment reported within the ES will therefore be informed by the FRA and further detailed hydrological modelling of flood risk within Section 5, which will be informed by ongoing engagement with the Environment Agency. The ES will include the details of any mitigation required in order to meet the Exception Test set out above. As such, National Grid will be required to demonstrate to the Planning Inspectorate, that the Project would not increase flood risk elsewhere, including that experienced to local receptors within the Section 5 Study Area.
- 3.5.74 With respect to those points raised by South Holland Internal Drainage Board, further consultation will be undertaken during the completion of the EIA and development of the ES. This is anticipated to include technical discussions regarding runoff treatment, drainage and attenuation arrangements for temporary works and drainage strategies.

Land and property

- 3.5.75 Several community members' responses raised concerns about the land required and the impacts on property prices due to the proposals in this area, rendering properties unsellable and the impacts this would have on mental health. Concerns were also raised that the compensation offered will not be adequate and consideration needs to be given to appropriate compensation. Suggestions were made that further engagement with landowners is needed.

- 3.5.76 **National Grid's response:** National Grid acknowledges that its proposals and the associated visual impacts of new overhead infrastructure may cause concern to communities, home and property owners. While UK law does not prescribe any minimum distance between overhead lines and properties, as part of the routing and siting exercise, National Grid has sought and will continue to reduce as far as practicable impacts on sensitive receptors, such as residential areas.
- 3.5.77 Please take appropriate advice if you think your property has been affected, including by diminishment of its value. Compensation claims will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with current legislation. Where compensation is due, it will be assessed in accordance with the Compensation Code.
- 3.5.78 National Grid will pursue voluntary agreements with impacted property owners to acquire the rights required to construct and operate the Project. The National Grid Land Rights Strategy and Payment Schedule for Assets explains the approach to acquisition of rights and compensation associated with that. Details are available at: www.nationalgrid.com/document/353131/download.
- 3.5.79 The Landowner and Surveys page on the Project website (www.nationalgrid.com/g-w) provides details for landowners and occupiers, including contact details for the Project Lands team. National Grid's land agents continue to identify those with an interest in land that the Project may require for surveys, construction and/or operation. Relevant land parcels are identified through the process of land referencing, which uses the Land Registry and other methods to verify the ownership and all relevant land interests. All those identified with an interest in land (as per Section 44 of the Planning Act 2008) are consulted as part of the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation process by letter and further engagement may also take place.

Safety and Security

- 3.5.80 A few community members' responses raised concerns about the potential threat of terrorism, suggesting the safety aspect of the substations needs consideration. Furthermore, concerns were raised about the substations being at risk of catching fire.
- 3.5.81 **National Grid's response:** Overall responsibility for security of the energy sector lies with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero who work closely with Government security agencies including the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure to reduce the vulnerability of the most 'critical' infrastructure assets in the sector to terrorism and other national security threats. National Grid is a provider of critical infrastructure across the UK. In this role, National Grid maintains regular dialogue with a range of organisations with responsibility for both local and national crime prevention and security. As such, all sites and infrastructure will be designed and operated to the relevant security standards.
- 3.5.82 The risk of fire at substations can be mitigated by either the use of synthetic esters within the transformers, which are less flammable than traditional mineral oil, or by installing a Fire Deluge System. In addition, the design of the substation includes fire damage zones which reduce the risk of a transformer fire spreading in the event that fire does occur. Other parts of new substations, including any buildings and structural steelwork, must also be designed to extensive fire resistance and protection standards.

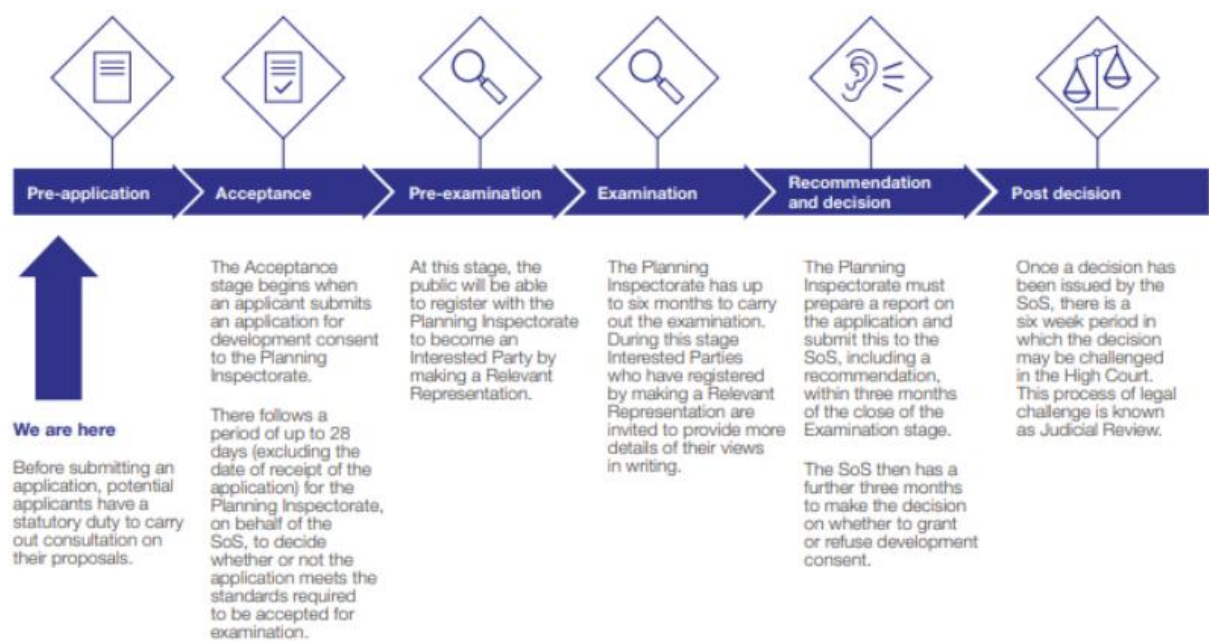
Communities and quality of life

- 3.5.83 A few community members' responses shared concerns about impacts of the Weston Marsh substations on communities and the quality of life.
- 3.5.84 **National Grid's response:** As part of the design process, National Grid seek to avoid impacts on residents where possible, through careful routeing and siting. As part of this process, we take into account the most appropriate engineering solution alongside environmental, cost and socio-economics factors. Our priorities, from a socioeconomic perspective, is to where possible avoid siting of the Project in proximity to towns, villages and businesses, where there are likely to be people who live and work in the area. We are undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), to ensure that matters relating to the environment and socio-economics are considered in developing the proposals for the Project. An EIA is a legal requirement for this development and is strictly regulated, and a wide range of environmental subjects will be taken into consideration as part of this process. Should any significant impacts be identified, that cannot be avoided, National Grid will seek to minimise these impacts where possible, through the implementation of mitigation strategies. This assessment will consider any socio-economics effects associated with routes proximity to properties and residents. This will be considered in terms of size of the impact (magnitude) and the vulnerability of residents (sensitivity) to impacts in the construction and operational phase. The results of the initial assessments are set out in the **PEI Report** as part of our Stage 2 consultation and the **Supplementary PEI Report** as part of the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation, before being refined and submitted in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will form part of the eventual Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1.1 The information presented at the Stage 2 consultation is published on the Project's website and is available in the online document library.
- 4.1.2 This report summarises feedback received during the Stage 2 consultation in relation to Section 5 of the Project and explains how this feedback has informed the development of the design now presented as part of the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation.
- 4.1.3 The Project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) and requires a Development Consent Order (DCO). As part of the DCO process, a Stage 2 (statutory) consultation was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the PA2008, which requires that the applicant consults on the proposed application and that feedback received to the consultation is taken into account. In addition, feedback from the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation will also be taken into account.
- 4.1.4 National Grid has adopted a structured approach to Project development and consenting and consultation and engagement are a key part of this approach. To date National Grid has identified a Strategic Proposal and has undertaken 'Options Identification and Selection' as reported and published in the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS), the Strategic Options Report (SOR), as well as the Addendum to Strategic Options Report and the Design Development Report (DDR). An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Project is underway, in accordance with the Scoping Opinion published in September 2024. Initial findings from the EIA were presented in the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report at the Stage 2 consultation. Further PEI relevant to Section 5 is available as part of the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation. A list of all the documents produced for the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation, including this report, is available on the Project website.
- 4.1.5 National Grid will continue to undertake ongoing stakeholder engagement in addition to the formal periods of consultation and will take all feedback received into account.
- 4.1.6 The DCO process is shown in Figure 4.1. Following the Weston Marsh Targeted Consultation, we will prepare the DCO application, which we intend to submit to the Planning Inspectorate in 2027. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero will make a decision on whether to grant or refuse the DCO application. This will follow an examination managed by the Planning Inspectorate and a recommendation made by an appointed examining authority. This process typically takes around 18 months. For more information, visit the Planning Inspectorate's website.

Figure 4.1 The DCO Process



Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
AC	Alternating current
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
ASTI	Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment
BMV	Best and Most Versatile
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CCGT	Combined Cycle Gas Turbine
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
CPRSS	Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Sitting Study
CoCP	Code of Construction Practice
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DC	Direct Current
DCO	Development Consent Order
DCC	Design Change Control
DCR	Design Change Request
DDR	Design Development Report
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DrMP	Drainage Management Plan
EA	Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMF	Electric and Magnetic Fields
EMR	Electromagnetic radiation
ES	Environmental Statement
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GW	Gigawatt
Haul roads	Separate roads to the public highway which allow construction traffic to rely on the public roads less
HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current
IDB	Internal Drainage Board

Abbreviation	Description
ICNIRP	International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation
kV	Kilovolt
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSE	Likely Significant Effects
LVIA	Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
MW	Megawatt
NESO	National Energy System Operator
NETS	National Electricity Transmission System
NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission
NPS	National Policy Statement
NPS EN-5	National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure
NSIP	National Significant Infrastructure Project
OHL	Overhead Transmission Line
PA 2008	Planning Act 2008
PCZ	Primary Consultation Zone
PEI	Preliminary Environmental Information
RLCT	Regional Landscape Character Type
RWMSSZ	Refined Weston Marsh Substation Siting Zone
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCZ	Secondary Consultation Zone
SMP	Soil Management Plan
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
SOR	Strategic Options Report
SoS	Secretary of State
SPA	Special Protection Areas
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
Stage 1 consultation	Non-statutory consultation
Stage 2 consultation	Statutory consultation

Abbreviation	Description
Substation Siting Areas	Term used for areas where new substations would be located
SuDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage System
SQSS	Security and Quality Supply Standards
TA	Transport Assessment
Technical stakeholders	Prescribed consultees under section 42(1)(a) and local authorities under section 42(1)(b) of the Planning Act 2008 and listed within Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedures) Regulations 2009 (as amended).
The community or members of the community	Includes organisations that would not be classified as prescribed consultees under section 42, land interests, interest/ campaign groups and members of the public.

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