

PLANNING

NATIONAL GRID VIKING LINK COMPULSARY PURCHASE ORDER

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

LIZ WELLS, CONSENTS MANAGER, NATIONAL GRID VENTURES

1. **QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

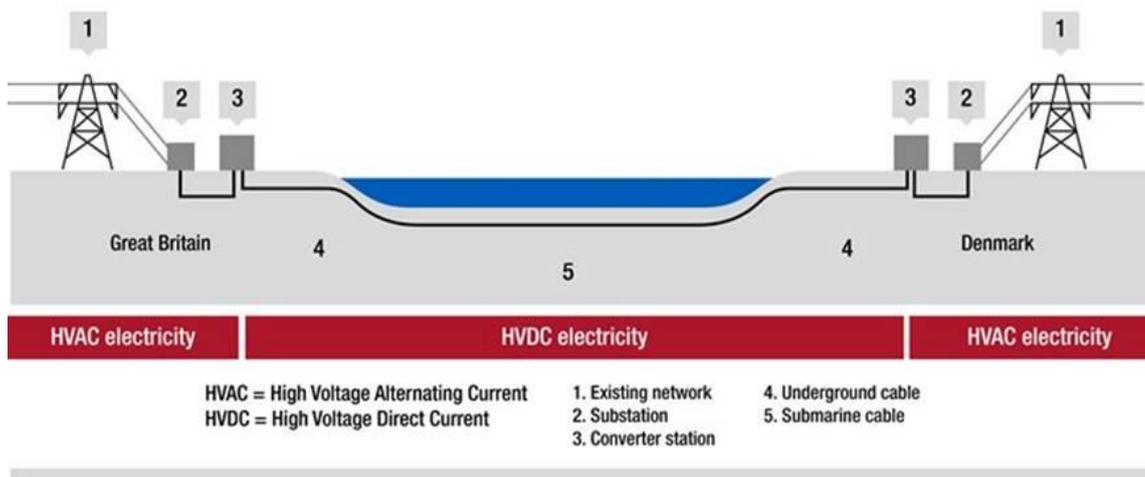
- 1.1 My name is Liz Wells and I am the Consents Manager at National Grid Ventures (NGV). I completed a Masters in Town and Country Planning (MTCP) in 2008, becoming a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI) in 2010. I am the stakeholder lead for the UK Onshore Scheme which forms part of the Viking Link Interconnector (described at paragraph 3.2), and I provided the planning evidence at the successful planning appeal inquiry for the circa 55km section of the UK Onshore Scheme routed through the East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) administrative area.
- 1.2 I provide further details of my relevant qualifications and experience in my proof of evidence.

2. PROJECT NEED

- 2.1 Electricity supports every aspect of our lives and our quality of life is very much dependent on having adequate supplies now and into the future.
- 2.2 The UK needs to ensure that there is sufficient electricity capacity to meet current and future demands at all times, including a 'margin' of spare capacity to accommodate unforeseen fluctuations in supply or demand and to mitigate against risks such as extreme weather events.
- 2.3 It is also the case that a growth in intermittent renewables, alongside a decline in the traditional energy generation (closure of coal, nuclear power stations and combined cycle gas turbines reaching the end of their working lives) will impact on the UK's energy supply and its future security.
- 2.4 The UK Government's vision is to ensure safe, secure and affordable supplies for the future and involves the construction of a new fleet of nuclear generation, rapid expansion of renewable energy (mainly through offshore wind) and the development of interconnector projects.
- 2.5 The UK Government recognises the importance and urgency of new energy developments and published a series of National Policy Statements (NPS). Those relevant for present purposes are:
 - 2.5.1 The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (CD Ref: A.27); and
 - 2.5.2 The National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (CD Ref: A.26).
- 2.6 EN-1 sets out at paragraph 2.2.20 that "*it is critical that the UK continues to have secure and reliable supplies of electricity as we make the transition to a low carbon economy.*"
- 2.7 EN-5 sets out at paragraph 1.1.1 that "*the new electricity generating infrastructure that the UK needs to move to a low carbon economy while maintaining security of supply will be heavily dependent on the availability of a fit for purpose and robust electricity network. That network will need to be able to support a more complex system of supply and demand than currently and cope with generation occurring in more diverse locations*".

3. **ALTERNATIVES TO THE SCHEME**

3.1 The Viking Link Interconnector is a proposed 1400 megawatt (MW) High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) electricity interconnector which will enable electricity to be exchanged between Great Britain and Denmark and to be traded as a commodity in the British and Danish energy markets.



3.2 The UK Onshore Scheme comprises all works onshore (above Mean Low Water Springs) in the UK including approximately 67.16 km of onshore HVDC cables (crossing approximately 9 km of Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Natural Beauty), converter station and approximately 2.34 km of onshore High Voltage

Alternating Current (HVAC) cables connecting to the existing National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET) Bicker Fen 400 Kilovolt (kV) Substation.

- 3.3 The development of the UK Onshore Scheme comprised two main steps; firstly, the identification and assessment of alternative landfall and converter station sites (Siting); secondly, the identification and assessment of alternative cable routes (Routeing).
- 3.4 The overall objective of the routeing assessment was the identification of a route corridor within which the detailed alignment of the HVDC (from the landfall to the converter station) and HVAC cables (from the converter station to the connection point) would be finalised. The approach to cable routeing comprised three main steps/stages:
 - 3.4.1 Stage 1- Identification of the Cable Route Search Area based on shortlisted landfall and converter station sites;
 - 3.4.2 Stage 2- Development and Assessment of Cable Route Corridors; and
 - 3.4.3 Stage 3- Development of Route Alignment with the identification of a cable route corridor.
- 3.5 The development of the proposed HVDC route is explained in detail in the following documents: (1) Route Corridor Selection Report (CD Ref: C.14) (2) Preferred Route Report (CD Ref: C.12) and (3) Environmental Statement in chapters 2 and 5 (CD Ref: C.8).
- 3.6 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken on the UK Onshore Scheme. The results of this are reported in the Environmental Statement (**CD x**) which accompanied the application for planning permission which was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. The scope of the EIA was agreed in consultation with a range of consultees and stakeholders including the relevant Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency.
- 3.7 Routeing and siting alternatives were addressed by each of the affected LPAs when considering and consenting their applications, as well as by the Planning Inspector in relation to the ELDC appeal (see section 3 below).

No party, be it the determining local planning authorities, or the Planning Inspector who determined the ELDC appeal, challenged the process or consideration of alternatives undertaken by National Grid Viking Link Limited (NGVL) in arriving at the scheme that was granted planning permission.

4. **PLANNING POSITION**

4.1 NGVL sought full planning permission, under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA), for the UK Onshore Scheme from the four affected LPAs of East Lindsey District Council (ELDC), Boston Borough Council (BBC), North Kesteven Council (NKDC) and South Holland District Council (SHDC). Applications to all four were submitted in August 2017.

4.2 The description of development for which consent was sought was as follows:

'Works to facilitate the Viking Link electrical interconnector with an approximate capacity of 1400 megawatts (MW) extending from Revsing, Jutland, (Denmark) to Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire (UK) comprising:

- Installation of two (2) subsea high voltage direct current (HVDC) cables between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey;
- Installation of two (2) onshore HVDC cables between the landfall at Boygrift and the converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland;
- Construction of associated Temporary Construction Compounds (TCC) and Temporary Works Areas (TWA) and temporary vehicle access arrangements required for HVDC and HVAC cable installation;
- Erection of converter station buildings together with the formation of internal roads, permanent access road from the A52, erection of security fencing, formation of landscaping with associated temporary construction compounds;
- Installation of up to six (6) onshore high voltage alternating current (AC) cables between the converter station at North Ing Drove and the existing Bicker Fen 400 kilovolt (400kV) Substation owned and operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET);
- Installation of link pillars along the AC cable route for inspection and maintenance purposes, these will be contained within fenced areas;
- Installation of two substation bays at Bicker Fen Substation to allow Viking Link to be connected to the National Grid electricity transmission system;
- Installation of all associated drainage mitigation works; and

- Installation of fibre-optic cable(s) with the high voltage HVAC and HVDC cables”

- 4.3 BBC issued a decision notice on 12th September 2018 (CD Ref: C.4), with further correspondence on the 28th September relating to approved plans, and NKDC (CD Ref: C.5) issued a decision notice on 18th September 2018. The SHDC Decision Notice was issued on the 8th October 2018 (CD Ref: C.6).
- 4.4 The ELDC planning application was considered by Planning Committee on 3rd May 2018 with an officer recommendation for approval. However, the Committee determined that they were minded to refuse planning permission and wished to refer their concerns to the Secretary of State. Planning permission was subsequently refused on the 8th June 2018.
- 4.5 NGVL submitted an appeal against the refusal by ELDC on 27th July 2018.
- 4.6 Council Officers and NGVL continued dialogue to explore any opportunities to address the refusal reasons and NGVL submitted further clarifying information to ELDC specifically in relation to impacts of the proposal on farming practice.
- 4.7 ELDC subsequently informed NGVL that the position in relation to the appeal would require further formal consideration by the ELDC Planning Committee. At planning committee on the 6th September Members confirmed that they would not be contesting the grounds for refusal and would not present evidence at the planning inquiry.
- 4.8 The planning inquiry was held from the 6th – 9th November 2018 at ELDC’s offices in Louth.
- 4.9 The key findings from the Planning Inspector are set out in his report, principally paragraphs 71 through to 75. In respect of Viking Link Interconnector need he concluded that *‘I find that the proposed development would help to meet an essential national need for additional electricity supply capacity.*
- 4.10 The appeal was allowed on the 12th December 2018 (CD Ref: C.7).
- 4.11 There is no planning impediment to delivery of the UK Onshore Scheme.

5. **OTHER CONSENTS**

- 5.1 End to end, the Viking Link Interconnector crosses UK, Netherland, German and Danish territorial waters by virtue of its submarine HVDC cables as well as comprising terrestrial components in the UK and Denmark with a converter station and HVAC cables required in either country.
- 5.2 The primary consents required to deliver the Viking Link Interconnector in marine and terrestrial environments have been obtained by NGVL and our project partner Energinet in all the territories in 5.1 above.
- 5.3 The Viking Link Interconnector was included in the EU List of 'Projects of Common Interest' (PCI) under the TEN-E Regulation PCIs on 18th November 2015 and it remains listed.
- 5.4 Under the TEN-E Regulation, Member States are required to designate a National Competent Authority who are responsible for co-ordinating the permitting process for PCIs. For the Viking Link Interconnector, the United Kingdom (UK) role has been delegated by the Secretary of State to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) whose role was to coordinate the decision making process with the four affected local planning authorities, and the other relevant jurisdictions in order to reach a 'Comprehensive Decision'.
- 5.5 NGVL received the TEN-E Comprehensive Decision in respect of the consenting of the Viking Link Interconnector from the MMO on the 6th of February 2019.

6. **OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The Viking Link Interconnector is a nationally important project which meets the policy objectives of the Government contained in, amongst other policy documents, EN-1 and EN-5. The project has been endorsed by Government because of its capacity to make a material contribution to the reduction in energy costs to the public, to improve the decarbonisation of UK energy generation and to improve the resilience and security of the UK energy system. This need, and the project's contribution to it, has also been recognised by all affected LPAs of the UK Onshore Scheme.
- 6.2 In those circumstances, I am satisfied that the requisite consents are in place such that there are no impediments to the delivery of the UK Onshore Scheme or the Viking Link Interconnector as a whole. The benefits of the Viking Link Interconnector will be lost if the Order is not confirmed given there are no reasonable alternatives.

Date: 4 June 2019