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ESO Response to Hackney Waltham Cross Upgrade North London reinforcement project (North London project) - Consultation on the project's Final Needs Case

Dear Keren,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation on the National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) North London project's Final Needs Case.

Who we are

As the Electricity System Operator (ESO) for Great Britain, we are in a privileged position at the heart of the energy system, balancing electricity supply and demand second by second.

As the UK moves towards its 2050 net zero target, our mission is to drive the transformation to a fully decarbonised electricity system by 2035, one which is reliable, affordable, and fair for all. We play a central role in driving Great Britain's path to net zero and use our unique perspective and independent position to facilitate market-based solutions to the challenges posed by the trilemma.

Our transformation to a Future System Operator (FSO) is set to build on the ESO's position at the heart of the energy industry, acting as an enabler for greater industry collaboration and alignment. This will unlock value for current and future consumers through more effective strategic planning, management, and coordination across the whole energy system.

Our key points

We believe that given the complexity of reinforcement works needed to achieve net zero and system access across the South East and East Anglia, proceeding with the North London project is crucial.

We have responded to your questions in the attached appendix 1.

We look forward to engaging with you further. Should you require further information on any of the points raised in our response please contact Griffin John, Technical Economics Assessment Manager (griffin.john@nationalgrideso.com). Our response is not confidential.

Yours sincerely

Dr Paul Wakeley

Head of Strategic Network Development

Appendix 1 – Consultation Question Responses

Question 1: Do you agree with the technical need for investment on the transmission network?

Yes, the North London project supports the greatly increasing volumes of generation connecting in Scotland, North England and East Anglia by allowing it to export to London and the south coast interconnectors. Asset health condition works would be needed anyway for the Waltham Cross to Tottenham portion (as the consultation's para 2.17 states) and NGET has combined the works into the proposed North London project. Outages coordination is a key factor in the timing of the North London project's works and the ESO and NGET are coordinating this through further ongoing discussions.

Question 2: Do you agree with our conclusions on the technical options considered?

We agree with the conclusions on the technical options considered. NGET considered several options representing combinations of projects. Para 2.20 highlights the options considered but rejected as not providing necessary requirements. It is worth noting that this is a complicated part of the network that's heavily loaded with complicated interactions especially from requiring outages for system access. This project makes use of existing assets by uprating their operating voltage from 275 kV to 400 kV.

Question 3: Do you agree with our conclusions on the CBA and the appropriateness of the proposed option taken forward?

Our economic analysis covered in NOAs 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the LOTI CBA which this consultation refers to, supported proceeding with the North London project. Taking into account outages coordination, our analysis showed that the optimum outcome is to complete the North London project as soon as possible and so it is on its earliest in-service date of 2027. Furthermore, we've identified the North London project as essential to meet offshore wind development ambitions and so it's been categorised as an Accelerating Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) project.