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National Grid Viking Link

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Aconex Document Number: VKL-BB -COM-00--CD-PA-20432.

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This document has been submitted to fulfil the requirements of the following planning condition(s):

Local Planning Authority (LPA)	Planning Permission Reference	Condition Number	Requirement
East Lindsey District Council	N/110/01549/17 (APP/D2510/W/18/3208088)	11	Complaints Procedure
Boston Borough Council	B/17/0340	13	Complaints Procedure
North Kesteven District Council	17/1200/FUL	7	Complaints Procedure
South Holland District Council	H04-0823-17	18	Complaints Procedure

Planning condition(s) full requirement:

East Lindsey District Council (11)
No phase of the development (other than survey work) shall commence until a complaints procedure scheme has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The scheme shall include a point of contact for local residents and businesses, and a procedure for all complaints to be reported to the Local Planning Authority, together with details of any actions taken in response. The scheme as thus approved shall thereafter be adhered to throughout the implementation of the development.

Boston Borough Council (13)
A point of contact will be provided by the applicant to local residents and Local business for any queries or complaints relating to noise generated by the construction and/or operation of the Development. If a local resident or local business complains direct to the applicant or the applicant has been notified in writing by the Council of any complaint about noise generated by the construction and/or operation of the Development the applicant shall carry out investigations to establish the justification, or otherwise, of the complaint,

Boston Borough Council (13)
the likely cause and possible remedial measures. A written report to the complainant, copied to the Council, shall be made as soon as reasonably practicable following the investigation and/or remedial work. The applicant shall keep all such reports in an appropriate file and such file shall be made available to the Council on request.

North Kesteven District Council (7)
A point of contact will be provided by the applicant to local residents and Local business for any queries or complaints relating to noise generated by the construction and/or operation of the Development. If a local resident or local business complains direct to the applicant or the applicant has been notified in writing by the Council of any complaint about noise generated by the construction and/or operation of the Development the applicant shall carry out investigations to establish the justification, or otherwise, of the complaint, the likely cause and possible remedial measures. A written report to the complainant, copied to the Council, shall be made as soon as reasonably practicable following the investigation and/or remedial work. The applicant shall keep all such reports in an appropriate file and such file shall be made available to the Council on request.

South Holland District Council (18)
A point of contact will be provided by the applicant to local residents and Local business for any queries or complaints relating to noise generated by the construction and/or operation of the Development. If a local resident or local business complains direct to the applicant or the applicant has been notified in writing by the Council of any complaint about noise generated by the construction and/or operation of the Development the applicant shall carry out investigations to establish the justification, or otherwise, of the complaint, the likely cause and possible remedial measures. A written report to the complainant, copied to the Council, shall be made as soon as reasonably practicable following the investigation and/or remedial work. The applicant shall keep all such reports in an appropriate file and such file shall be made available to the Council on request.

Balfour Beatty

Viking Link UK Onshore Project

Communications, Enquiry and Complaints Procedure

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This document comprises the communications strategy and enquiry and complaints procedure as part of the Viking Link UK DC Onshore Project as required by East Lindsey District Council (ELDC), Boston Borough Council (BBC), North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and South Holland District Council (SHDC).

1.1.2 Each Local Authority have requested Planning Conditions for the complaints procedure; Please refer to the cover page.

1.1.3 This document will be submitted for approval to ELDC, BBC, NKDC and SHDC as the relevant local planning authorities for the discharge of the required planning conditions.

1.1.4 Channels and processes outlined in this document will be adhered to throughout the life of the project. It outlines escalation points and channels and details the process to be followed in the event of an enquiry or complaint being raised.

1.2 Overview of the Project

1.2.1 The Viking Link Interconnector is a proposed 1400 megawatt (MW) high voltage direct current (DC) electricity link between the British and Danish transmission systems connecting at Bicker Fen substation in Lincolnshire and Revsing substation in southern Jutland, Denmark. The project will involve the construction of a converter station in each country and the installation of submarine and underground cables between each converter station and underground cables between the converter station and substation in each country.

1.2.2 Viking Link will be approximately 765 km long and will allow electricity to be exchanged between Great Britain and Denmark.

1.2.3 It will be made up of the following components:

The North Sea

A pair of high voltage direct current (DC) submarine cables extending for approximately 621 km between Great Britain and Denmark crossing Dutch and German waters. The cables will be buried in the seabed.

Great Britain

- A pair of onshore underground high voltage DC cables from a landfall site at Boygrift, East Lindsey, to a converter station at North Ing Drove, South Holland
- The converter station will convert the electricity from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC).
- High voltage alternating current (AC) underground cables from the converter station to the existing National Grid 400 kV substation at Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire
- New equipment within the existing National Grid substation

Denmark

- A pair of onshore underground high voltage DC cables from the west coast of Jutland to the existing 400 (kV) substation at Revsing near Vejen

- Converter station to convert electricity between DC and AC
- New equipment within the existing 400 kV substation at Revsing

1.2.4 The onshore cable route will, for the UK part of the project be approximately 68km long. The onshore DC and associated fibre optic cables will be buried in one cable trench (add in trench width)

1.2.5 **Converter stations**

The Viking Link Interconnector will involve the construction of two converter stations, sited in Great Britain and Denmark. The converter stations will occupy a footprint each of approximately 4 to 5 hectares. Additional land is required for access and environmental mitigation. There will also be some additional temporary land requirements during the construction period for laydown and contractor facilities. A typical converter station includes a range of technical equipment some of which must be located indoors in a series of large buildings, up to 24m tall. A typical converter station includes:

- Control room
- Converter power electronics and associated DC equipment
- Alternating Current (AC) switchgear
- Transformers and other associated AC equipment
- Ancillary equipment and spares buildings

1.2.6 **Underground cables**

The converter stations are connected by a pair of high voltage DC underground and submarine cables. Typically, the cables are around 150mm in diameter and will operate at a voltage of 525kV. Within Great Britain buried AC cables will connect the converter station to the existing high voltage electricity transmission system substation.

1.2.7 All UK onshore elements have been granted planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 from:

- East Lindsey District Council (ref: N/110/01549/17; Appeal ref: APP/D2510/W/18/3208088)
- North Kesteven District Council (ref: 17/1200/FUL)
- Boston Borough Council (ref: B/17/0340)
- South Holland District Council (ref: H04-0823-17)

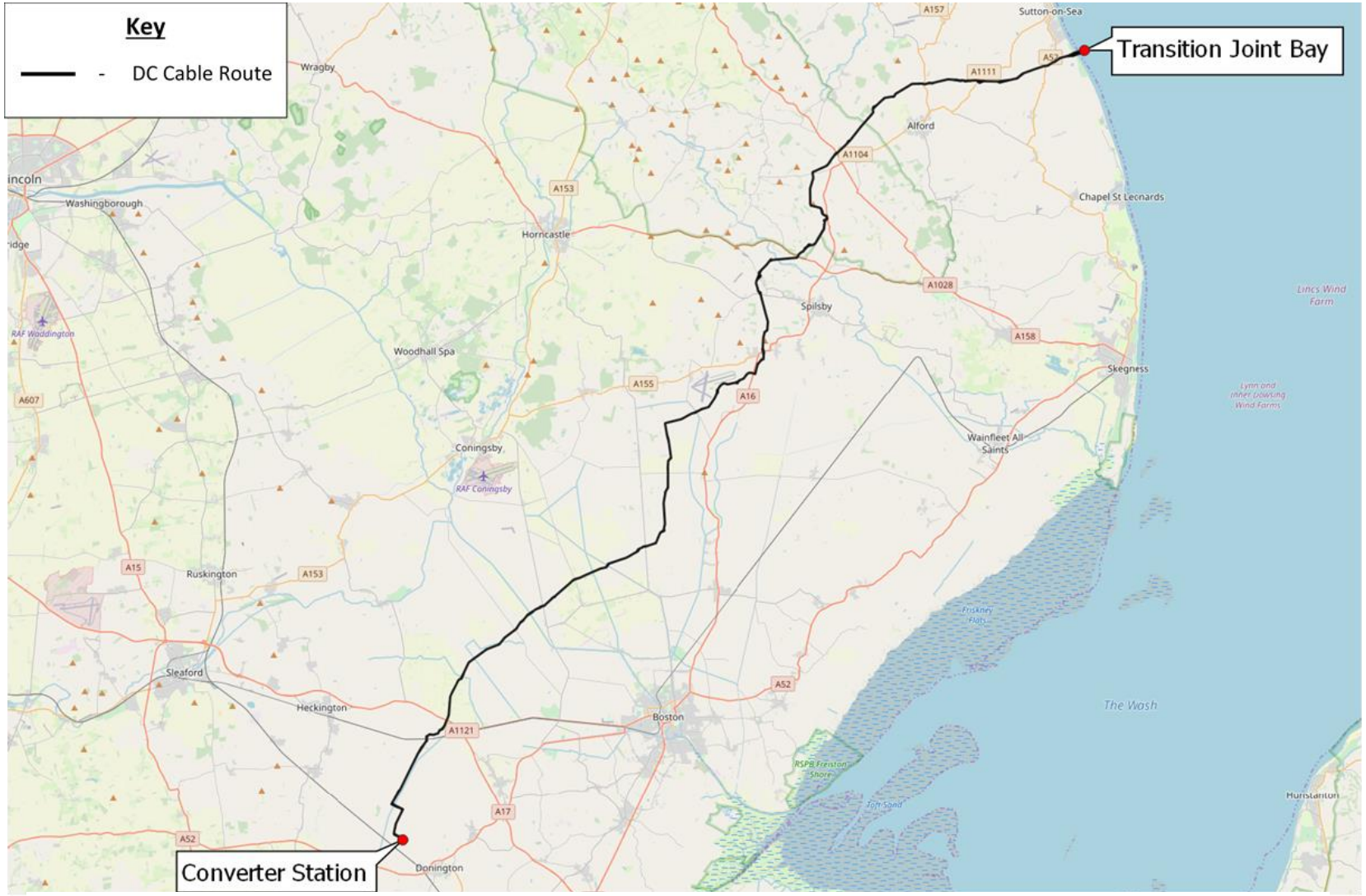


Diagram 1: Image showing the route of the 68km Cable

2 DOCUMENT AND PROJECT CONTEXT

2.1 Purpose of this document

2.1.1 This document outlines and explains Balfour Beatty's strategy for communications to identified stakeholders who will be impacted or require information relating to the Viking Link project.

2.1.2 It details the formal process for handling general enquiries and complaints about the Viking Link project.

2.2 Communications context

2.2.1 From the outset of the project, a Viking Link website was produced which has served as a primary source of information on the project. www.viking-link.com

2.2.2 It will take approximately three years for the Viking Link project to be constructed, commencing from August 2020 through to October 2023.

2.2.3 Most external project communications will be managed by National Grid Viking Link (NGVL). However, NGVL, BECG and Balfour Beatty will work in parallel on the creation and sign-off of external communications.

2.2.4 All external communications will be branded as 'Viking Link'.

2.2.5 If Balfour Beatty need to communicate independently this will be branded as Balfour Beatty with the sub text 'working with Viking Link'. An example of when this might happen is if Balfour Beatty needed to advise village residents of heavy construction traffic passing through.

3 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 A community relations agency, Built Environment Communications Group (BECG), has been appointed to provide dedicated community relations and external communications support for the project.

3.1.2 In July 2019, a Viking Link newsletter was distributed to approximately 8000 residents, businesses and other parties who may be affected by or interested in the project.

3.1.3 From January 2020, following the hiatus on the project caused by the planning appeal and an extensive procurement process, a reengagement of all key stakeholder commenced along with outreach to several local schools along the route.

3.1.4 As the project enters the construction phase, NGVL and Balfour Beatty are committed to two-way dialogue with local communities in relation to the staging and carrying out of works and more specifically in relation to any activities that may cause a disturbance.

3.1.5 In this time, Balfour Beatty and associated sub-contractors will not always be working in one location for the duration of the construction process. Consequently, the approach to community communications will be influenced by the scale and impact of the project in any location.

3.1.6 To ensure the dissemination of information is meaningful, relevant and timely, a targeted approach to communications will be undertaken.

3.2 Communication objectives

3.2.1 To ensure that all residents, businesses and stakeholders that will be affected by the construction work are aware of the planned work and likely impact.

3.2.2 To minimise the number of complaints that are received about construction works through a proactive approach to communication and liaison activity.

3.2.3 To ensure that employees, subcontractors and key internal stakeholders are briefed to encourage the promotion of positive messages about the work that Balfour Beatty is undertaking on behalf of NGVL.

3.2.4 To develop positive relations with the local community and wider stakeholders.

3.2.5 To support the work of NGVL in promoting the wider benefits of the project to all stakeholders.

3.2.6 To ensure that all employees and subcontractors are provided with adequate training, coaching and guidance to support a customer focussed approach.

3.3 Communication channels

3.3.1 Balfour Beatty will use several communication channels during the construction phase of the project. Those used will be proportionate and appropriate, i.e. dependent upon the impact of construction or the type of information to be conveyed.

3.3.2 General communication channels include:

- Digital Media (i.e. Twitter and NGVL website)
- Press releases
- Project presentations (to community groups, parish councils, planning authorities) and
- Site visits

3.3.3 All project communications will be as open and transparent as possible. Local communities, including businesses, who will be directly impacted by construction activities, will be communicated to via:

- Telephone
- Targeted mailings
- Face-to-face briefings
- Community liaison groups
- Door-to-door drop-ins.

3.4 General communication

Digital

3.4.1 The project website, www.viking-link.com, contains detailed information about the project. Balfour Beatty will feed into NGVL and BECG with appropriate updates so the website can be up to date throughout the construction period.

The website address will be included on communication materials and visible on boards placed around the perimeter of sites visible to the public.

Both NGVL and Balfour Beatty will use Twitter as a channel to promote project progress, milestones and celebrate successes.

Media

3.4.2 The media will be kept up to date on developments with the project with key milestones and positive good news stories shared as appropriate. All external media communications will be sent to NGVL for approval before issue.

Presentations

3.4.3 Consideration will be given to the delivery of presentations to local interested groups or existing community forums. Requests for these types of events should be made via the Viking Link helpline.

Site Visits

3.4.4 Site visits for local interested groups and schools will be arranged. For schools this will enhance the existing school's engagement programme which will run throughout the duration of the project.

3.5 Site specific communication

Telephone

Targeted mailing

3.5.1 Balfour Beatty will focus on targeted communications with the aim of informing local communities and businesses/occupiers about construction work in their area, particularly if a planned activity such as Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) take place.

3.5.2 Targeted communications will outline the schedule of works; times, nature of the activity and potential impact.

3.5.3 All mailings will include the contact details for the Viking Link helpline.

3.5.4 Mailings could take the form of a letter, leaflet, letter or postcard.

Community Liaison Groups

3.5.5 The cable route has been broken down into four areas in order to identify sensible geographic splits for community liaison groups (CLG's).

3.5.6 It is proposed that the first of these CLG's will be held in May 2020 however this is currently under review in line with the Governments Covid-19 advice.

3.5.7 These events will provide further, detailed information about the planned work and help alleviate public concerns.

3.5.8 NGVL will lead on the planning of CLG's.

Land Owners

3.5.9 Balfour Beatty representatives will work alongside NGVL's land's team and land agent having regular contact with landowners that are directly affected by the project.

3.5.10 This interaction could be written, text, email or in person.

4 GENERAL ENQUIRIES

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section of the document outlines Viking Link's procedure for managing general enquiries from individuals, groups or businesses relating to the project.

4.1.2 A general enquiry in this context is a request for information/meeting or site visit or clarification of an issue.

4.2 Enquiry mechanisms

4.2.1 NGVL's community relations team, BECG, will operate a Viking Link helpline and deal with general enquiries. The helpline can be contacted in the following ways:

- Freephone: +44(0) 800 731 0661*
- Email: vikinglink@communityrelations.co.uk
- Post: FREEPOST VIKING LINK – no further address or stamp required

*Phone line is operational between 9.00 am and 5.30 pm, Mondays to Fridays (excluding bank holidays). An answer phone is available outside of these times to leave a message. Any messages left will be picked up on the next available working day.

4.2.2 Balfour Beatty is committed to be a good neighbour and operating in the community with honesty, respect and transparency. The Viking Link contact details will be included on all communication materials and notice boards placed around the perimeter of sites in locations visible to the public (such as site accesses with public road and public footpaths).

4.2.3 The Viking Link info-card with all points of contact on will be used and handed out to members of the public in the event of questions, information required.

4.2.4 Balfour Beatty operates its own free 24hr helpline which some individuals, groups or businesses may contact if they see a Balfour Beatty vehicle or member of staff in branded PPE and do not make an association to the Viking Link project. The Balfour Beatty number is **0800 121 444.** Details of the Balfour Beatty helpline will not be advertised so that where possible, all enquiries are channelled via the Viking Link helpline.

4.2.5 General enquiries to other National Grid or Balfour Beatty freephone numbers will be channelled back to the project community relations team i.e. Viking Link helpline.

4.3 Responses

4.3.1 When an enquiry is received it will be:

- acknowledged
- recorded
- information collated/investigated, and
- responded to within 7 business days.

4.3.2 BECG will acknowledge all queries within 24 hours of being received with a full response being supplied within a week and sooner for more straightforward queries.

4.3.3 The acknowledgement and response will be given via the original method of enquiry.

5 COMPLAINTS HANDLING

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section of the document confirms the procedure for managing and handling complaints received relating to the project.

5.1.2 In this context, a complaint is a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable, and in some circumstances requires action relating to the project works as opposed to any wider complaint or grievance.

5.1.3 The process set out below does not supersede any other National Grid or Balfour Beatty statutory requirements or guidelines across their businesses concerning complaints handling.

5.2 Complaint mechanisms

5.2.1 NGVL's community relations team, BECG, will operate a Viking Link helpline and be the central point of contact for dealing with complaints. The Viking Link helpline can be contacted in the following ways:

- Freephone: +44(0) 800 731 0661*
- Email: vikinglink@communityrelations.co.uk
- Post: FREEPOST VIKING LINK – no further address or stamp required

*Phone line is operational between 9.00 am and 5.30 pm, Mondays to Fridays (excluding bank holidays). An answer phone is available outside of these times to leave a message. Any messages left will be picked up on the next available working day.

5.2.2 The contact details will be displayed on all communication materials and notice boards placed around the perimeter of sites in locations visible to the public (such as site accesses with public road and public footpaths).

5.2.3 Complaints brought directly to the project site team, including security staff, will be channelled back to the project community relations team.

5.2.4 Complaints to other National Grid or Balfour Beatty freephone numbers will be channelled back to the project community relations team.

5.3 Response process

5.3.1 When a complaint is received it will be:

- acknowledged
- recorded
- information collated/investigated, and
- responded to within 10 business days.

5.3.2 BECG will acknowledge all complaints within 24 hours of being received with a full response being supplied within a week and sooner for more straightforward queries.

5.3.3 The acknowledgement and response will be given via the original method of the complaint.

5.3.4 This document sets out a minimum standard for acknowledgement and response to complaints, the project team will endeavour to exceed these standards.

5.3.5 In the event of a complaint where the activity poses an immediate or direct risk to security, the environment or health and safety, immediate and appropriate action will be taken by NGVL or Balfour Beatty to remedy the issue, including considering the suspension of activities.

5.3.6 During the induction process, Balfour Beatty will brief all employees on how to handle enquiries and complaints.

5.3.7 A response to a complaint will, as a minimum, comprise a written response detailing:

- summary of the complaint,
- a statement as to what action has been taken to resolve the complaint, or
- if no action has been taken an explanation as to why not, and
- what the complainant can do if they are not satisfied with the action taken.

5.3.8 If a complainant does not consider their complaint to have been satisfactorily resolved, the complainant can escalate their complaint to the Senior Project Manager. This would involve the complaint being re-investigated, contacting the complainant and deciding on what, if any, additional action is required.

5.3.9 Should a complainant not be satisfied with the response received from the Senior Project Manager, they can escalate their complaint to the Project Director who is responsible for the overall project delivery. They would re-investigate the complaint and provide a response to the complainant.

5.3.10 All lessons learnt from a complaint will be fed directly back into the project team, including sub-contractors if appropriate, with necessary measures put in place to mitigate the possibility of such a complaint arising in the future.

5.3.11 The process for handling a complaint is outlined in **Appendix A**.

6 LOCAL AUTHORITY LIAISON

6.1 Enquiries and complaints

6.1.1 NGVL's community relations team will be responsible for handling all complaints and enquiries about the project and, where appropriate will resolve them directly with the complainant.

6.1.2 Complainants may also opt to contact the relevant local authority or other statutory bodies. These organisations may respond where they have overall responsibility for an area e.g. local road network. In this instance they would liaise with NGVL to obtain further information so they can respond promptly and accurately.

6.1.3 Where a complaint has been generated to a local authority, a written report to the complainant, copied to the local authority, will be issued as soon as reasonably practicable following the investigation and/or remedial work.

6.1.4 If a complaint relating to construction/operation noise is received from a member of the public/local business or via a Council this will be investigated as outlined in section 5.3 above with the addition of a copy of the response shared with the Council.

6.1.5 On a quarterly basis, a summary of complaints and the actions taken to resolve will be shared with the relevant planning authorities. The summary of complaints will be broken down into geography and theme to help identify trends.

Appendix A: Enquiry/complaints procedure

