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Draft National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

This draft National Policy Statement (NPS), together with the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy EN-1, is the primary decision-making guidance document for the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) when considering development consent applications for the construction of new electricity networks infrastructure in England and Wales. It is part of a suite of NPS issued in draft by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on 2nd November 2009. Consultation on the documents will run until 22 February 2010.

The NPS highlights 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 and cope with generation occurring in locations of greater diversity.

The NPS covers the following types of nationally significant infrastructure:

- above ground electricity lines of 132kV and above;
- other infrastructure for electricity networks that is associated with a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) such as substations and converter stations.
- It only applies to lines below 132kV if they are associated with a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project which will be determined by the IPC.

The NPS does not seek to direct applicants to particular sites or routes for electricity networks infrastructure. It notes that the general location of electricity network projects is often determined by

the location, or anticipated location, of a particular generating station in relation to the existing network. In other cases the requirement for a line may be the result of the need for more strategic reinforcement of the network. The NPS accepts that the most direct route for a new connection may not be the most appropriate given engineering and environmental considerations. It recognises that while the siting of infrastructure may be influenced by agreements over land and rights, companies may include for compulsory purchase or wayleaves in their development consent application.

The Government envisages that, wherever reasonably possible, applications for new generating stations and related infrastructure should be contained in a single application to the IPC. However, it recognises that this may not be possible for a number of reasons. Applications for generating stations and transmission connections may take different lengths of time to prepare, a network application may relate to multiple generation projects, or the works involved may represent a strategic reinforcement required for a number of reasons. The networks application and a related generating station application are also likely to come from two different legal entities subject to different commercial and regulatory frameworks.

A single application may contain works in different geographical locations where it can be demonstrated that a series of works will reinforce the network as a whole and meet the overall requirement for efficient energy transmission.

In establishing the need for a project, the IPC will need to be confident that :

- it is wholly or substantially supported by connection agreements or contractual arrangements to provide connection; or
- it is based on reasonably anticipated future requirements - the need to connect Round 3 offshore windfarms is cited as an example of this.

It may also wish to consider whether the project would make a significant contribution to the promotion of renewable energy, the achievement of climate change objectives, the maintenance of an

