

Necton Greener Grid Park – Project update 5 May 2023

Since our Public Exhibition in March we have been updating and revising our proposal, and taking on board feedback from our public consultation as well as statutory consultees. The below information provides an update on the current status of the project.

Design update

An important consideration is that we meet the requirements of the National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO). They have contracted our services to help stabilise the grid at Necton. The design process is complex and we have been exploring different ways in which we can deliver this service. This has included options to use only batteries or synchronous compensators, or a combination of both. A combined scheme was presented at our public exhibition.

The design has evolved to a point where the needs of NGESO's grid stabilisation requirements can be met with two synchronous compensators alone. **As a result, we are now progressing Necton Greener Grid Park without battery storage.** This is reflected in the revised layout attached to this update.

Responding to feedback

Site selection

This site was selected because NGESO identified that East Anglia needs grid stability services. Statkraft has been awarded contracts to deliver these services. This was further narrowed down to Necton substation based on the timescales allowed for connecting to the grid and the substations that had physical space for a new connection.

The specific location was identified through careful assessment of the area, along with consultation with technical specialists in areas such as landscape and ecology. In addition, there is a need to be located very close to the substation to maximise the grid stabilisation function.

Landscape

Our updated design includes a significant increase in the depth of the triangular landscape buffer. At its narrowest point the buffer depth has nearly doubled from 7m to 13m deep and at its deepest point it has more than trebled from 12m to 42m deep. The buffer will include an appropriate mix of over 500 trees and shrubs that will be up to 3m high when planted and are expected to be up to 11m high by year 15. You can see this on the attached illustrations.

This will help screen views from Necton and also deliver an important increase to the biodiversity benefits delivered from the project. Overall, we expect that the project will deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity net gain is a measurement which measures how the development will benefit local habitats and wildlife.

Drainage

We have improved the drainage design so there will be no increase in the runoff rate of surface water compared to the current situation. This includes use of a "attenuation basin" located to the south-east corner of the site which safely stores excess rain and storm water. The water will be released over time into an existing drainage channel at a controlled rate. This allows us to sustainably manage surface water. The risk of flooding is already regarded to be low, being a flood Zone 1 area, but this risk is reduced further as a result of the scheme.

Community benefit

We are grateful for suggestions received as to how the community benefit fund could be used. The purpose of this benefit scheme is to provide a regular stream of funding dedicated to projects that help accelerate the transition to a low carbon society. We appreciate the feedback received to date and we would welcome any further ideas.

Battery safety

Some residents requested further information on safety measures for the battery storage elements of the proposal, particularly to mitigate fire risk. Health and Safety is a top priority for Statkraft and we remain committed to ensuring our projects are safe. The design update has removed batteries from this proposal.

Next steps

Statkraft is grateful for the comments received from the community to date and are particularly pleased that a majority of the respondents throughout the consultation period stated a supportive view. Following the design updates, we are now preparing a planning application and will keep the community informed about the progress of the project.

About our Greener Grid Parks

Greener Grid Parks are a collection of buildings, containing zero carbon technology which stabilise the grid, allowing more renewable energy to be transmitted through the network. Find out more about how Greener Grid Parks work here: <https://www.statkraft.co.uk/newsroom/2023/grid-services-innovative-solutions-to-stabilise-the-power-grid/>

Get in Touch

If you would like to get in touch, you can do so by

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Illustration of Current Necton Greener Grid Park Plans May 2023



