

Marine Licensing Decision

The Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009)

Applicant: **National Grid Electricity Transmission
PLC**

Application reference no: **RML2571v2**

**Geotechnical surveys along the potential route
of a HVDC transmission link in the Irish Sea**

27 August 2026

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OUR DECISION

Based on all the information available, and having regard to all relevant considerations NRW has decided to grant the variation to the Existing Marine Licence (see Annex 1) sought by the Variation Application.

- explains how the Application has been determined, having regard to the relevant legal framework outlined in section 4;
- explains how relevant considerations have been taken into account and how each of the legal requirements have been considered in determining the Application;
- provides a record of the decision-making process; and
- sets out the reasons for any conditions imposed in connection with any marine licence granted pursuant to the Application.

1. APPLICATION DETAILS

1.1. The Variation Application

Applicant Name and Address	The Applicant is the company set out below: Company name: National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC Address: 1 – 3, The Strand, London, England, WC2N 5EH Company Number: 02366977
Variation Application reference number	RML2571v2
Existing Marine Licence reference number	RML2571v1
Date Variation Application was duly made	31 July 2026
Description of variation	Increase in the number of samples to be collected and the locations of CPT and vibrocore sampling within the boundary of the existing Marine Licence.
Proposal[s] covered by the Variation Application	Geotechnical surveys to gather baseline data on potential route options to inform the development of the Western Link 2 project in the Irish Sea. (the Project)
Licensable marine activities	The survey activity will comprise of: - sediment grab sampling

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	- vibrocore sampling - borehole sampling - Cone Penetration Testing (CPT) (the Proposed Activities)
Marine Plan Area	Welsh inshore region and Welsh offshore region
Variation Application documents:	RML2571v2 - Application Form RML2571v2 - RML2571v1 Application Form Amendments RML2571v2 - 81535 NRW Geotechnical Survey Technical Note_LF2 Licence Amendment

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2. VARIATION APPLICATION PROCEDURE

2.1. The Application

The Variation Application was accepted by Natural Resources Wales (**NRW**) considered duly made on **31 July 2026**. This means we considered it was in the correct form and contained sufficient information for us to begin our determination, but not that it necessarily contained all the information we needed to complete that determination, and the documents considered may therefore include documents provided after the Application was first made.

2.2. Documents considered

In reaching its decision, NRW has considered the documents listed in section 1 of this decision document along with such other information provided by the Applicant or received by consultees as NRW considered relevant.

2.3. Commercial Confidentiality

The Applicant made no claim that any information forming part of the Application was subject to commercial confidentiality and we have not received any information in relation to the Application that appears to be commercially confidential.

2.4. Publicity and advertising

The application sought a change to the methodology to include additional samples. The licensable area and licence period remain the same as within the existing consent therefore no notice was given to Local Authorities and no Public Notice was advertised for this Marine Licence variation.

2.5. Environmental impact Assessment

Council Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment aims to protect the environment and the quality of life by ensuring that projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects by virtue of their nature, size or location are subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA) before permission is granted.

The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 ("the Regulations") transpose the EIA Directive in Wales and England for marine licence applications.

Having considered the Application NRW has determined that it does not constitute a development requiring EIA under the Regulations.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1. Consultees

As the change related to the methodology NRW considered it appropriate to consult with bodies listed below due to their particular expertise and the responses received from them during the original consultation.

Consultee	Response received (Y/N)	Date(s) of receipt
NRW Advisory (NRW A)	Y	24 August 2026

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Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)	Y	12 August 2026
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW)	Y	13 August 2026

All consultees were content with the proposal to update the methodology to include collection of additional samples and boreholes. NRW (A) highlighted that the Licence Holder should follow the relevant JNCC guidelines, use reduced vessel speeds and adhere to the Wild Seas Wales (2025) Marine Code to minimise the potential for noise and visual disturbance associated with vessel presence. These measures are incorporated within the document *Geotechnical Survey Technical Note* dated July 2026 submitted with the variation application.

A HRA was completed and concluded that the project including the proposed changes would not adversely affect the integrity of any European site either alone or in-combination. NRW A as the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body agreed with this conclusion.

A WFD was completed and concluded that the project including the proposed changes would not cause deterioration of any water body or prevent a water body of WFD Protected Area from meeting its objectives.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on all the information available, and having regard to all relevant considerations including consultation responses, NRW's decision is to grant the variation to the existing Marine Licence sought by the Variation Application. RML2571v2 is a minor change to the methodology and as such we refer to section 4 of the decision document for RML2571 regarding the relevant legal framework and how each of the legal requirements have been considered. The decision document can be found here: [Public register - Customer Portal](#) by searching for RML2571.

NRW has determined that a Marine Licence for the Proposed Activities should be granted.

AUTHORISATION

Report by: Vicky Fisk Position: Marine Licencing Officer	Date: 25 August 2026	Signed: Vicky Fisk
Authorised by: Peter Morrison Position: Lead Specialist Officer	Date: 27 August 2026	Signed: Peter Morrison

ANNEX 1 - Variation to the Marine Licence

The description of the licenced activities has been changed in Table 1 of Section 2 of the marine licence. The description now includes text clarifying the location of the vibrocore and CPT sampling at the landfall area, as well as the following changes to the samples:

- Increase from 9 to 18 jack-up barge deployments (nearshore, <10 m water depth)
- Increase from 9 to 18 boreholes (nearshore, <10 m water depth)
- Increase from 9 to 18 cone penetration tests (nearshore, <10 m water depth)
- Increase from 2 to 18 vibrocores (nearshore, <10 m water depth)
- Increase from 174 to 200 vibrocores (offshore, >10 m water depth)
- Increase from 174 to 200 cone penetration/T-bar tests (offshore, >10 m water depth)
- Increase from 110 to 122 Dual Van Veen Grab samples (across licence area)
- Increase from 220 to 226 Hamon Grabs/Day Grab samples (across licence area)