GCRP Action 4094: Check whether Ofgem considered Grid Code impacts when making its decision on approving use of 220kV equipment

Question
Ofgem approved the go-ahead for the new Kintyre-Hunterston subsea AC link in SHETL's network. This included approving the use of 220kV subsea cables and some 220kV onshore assets. 220kV is not a standard voltage in GB – this project is the first use of 220kV in GB's transmission network. There are therefore no technical, charging or governance requirements for connecting to and making use of 220kV network.

This raises two questions:

1. When Ofgem assessed the project, what consideration was given to the various impacts of introducing a new voltage to the GB onshore transmission system for which there were no technical requirements, charging rules, contractual arrangements etc?
2. What contact did Ofgem make with the code governance panels that govern technical, charging and governance requirements during the assessment and decision process to discuss the introduction of a new voltage that wouldn't be covered by existing codes?

Answer
In terms of our consideration of approving a new voltage being introduced to the GB onshore transmission system through this project and engaging the code governance panels on this - we consulted twice, including on the technical design, as part of our assessment and all responses can be viewed on our website. Our consultations included consideration of whether the proposed reinforcement was an appropriate solution to the network need. We also commissioned technical experts to review the proposal, and their reports can also be viewed on our website. The proposed new voltage was not flagged as an issue by any of the respondents or by our consultants. Under the Electricity Transmission Licence the relevant licensees are required to ensure that the CUSC and Grid Code are kept up to date and reflect developments on the network.

Given this 220kV circuit is a subsea cable it is covered under CMP213 and a circuit specific expansion factor will be applied, with no need to amend the CUSC. National Grid are working with SHE Transmission to update the TNUoS forecast to take account of this circuit, and although it won't be included in the July forecast it will be updated going forward.

For more information on the project, our consultations, responses, and our decision please point the panel to the Kintyre Hunterston project page on our website. Key documents are:

- Our Needs Case consultation
- Our consultant's Needs Case report
- Our consultant's Project Assessment report (technical report)
- Our decision

If you have any further queries about the Hunterston-Kintyre project then please don't hesitate to contact Peter Russell (Peter.Russell@ofgem.gov.uk).

Julian Wayne
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