

APPLICATION BY NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION PLC  
FOR  
A DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER  
PURSUANT TO SECTION 37 PLANNING ACT 2008  
FOR THE NORWICH TO TILBURY ELECTRIC LINE ABOVE GROUND

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE: EN020027

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SECOND WITNESS STATEMENT

STEPHEN BAKER

On behalf of :

Interested Party Reference Number [REDACTED]

Interested Party Reference Number [REDACTED]

Interested Party Reference Number [REDACTED]

Interested Party Reference Number [REDACTED]

Interested Party Reference Number [REDACTED]

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INTRODUCTION

[REDACTED] I attach to this Second Witness Statement three Exhibits that comprise a plans and minutes relating to the development of Thornbush Farm.

2. This witness statement describes the functioning of the farm at Thornbush Farm, and records the interactions and correspondence between National Grid Electricity Transmission ("NGET") and myself, Stephen Baker. I am a partner of "H&O Godbold Partnership" who farm and run Thornbush Farm, and I am also named as one of the Executors of the Estate of Herbert Earthy Godbold; the Trustees of the Godbold Discretionary Settlement Trust; and Thornbush Energy Limited who and in my own personal capacity own land interests across Thornbush Farm.
3. In this second witness statement I refer to myself, my family, the entities listed above and Thornbush Farm. Due to my name and involvement in all of these when I refer to "I" or "Us" in this witness statement for convenience I am speaking on behalf of all these entities, but it is my own personal opinion that I am stating (and do so on their behalf). As I act under all of the entities listed above, again

for convenience I refer to correspondence addressed to any one of the entities listed above myself in this Second Witness Statement.

4. As I have previously referred in my first Witness Statement, there has been a grave failure of NGET, over a period of 4 years (now 5 years) to provide Thornbush Farm with any or any real or viable offers or options to keep Thornbush Farm as a going concern and relocate any disrupted accesses. NGET has demonstrated a lack of genuine constructive engagement and the seeking of compulsory purchase powers as very much a "first resort" in contrast to the requirement they be sought only in the "last resort". This is a grossly heavy handed and disproportionate approach taken by NGET. It is also not necessary to have taken as the NPS EN-1 tells NGET to use compulsory purchase powers as a "last resort".
5. In this Second Witness Statement, I provide an update of the discussions that I have held with agents on behalf of National Grid ("NGET") and on behalf of "UKPN".

## **UPDATE**

### **Meetings with NGET**

6. My first meeting with NGET was on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and our Relevant Representations of the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 evidence what was said and the facts as at that date.
7. Since then, there have been two further meetings with NGET:
  - a) 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026;
  - b) 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026.
8. Our second meeting with Fisher German (representing National Grid) which was more constructive than the first on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025.
9. On behalf of NGET, its representatives accepted at the meeting that we required access across the proposed haul road and agreed at the meeting that this could actually occur at the Northern and central parts where the existing accessway crosses the same route of the proposed haul road.
10. On behalf of NGET, its representatives accepted at the meeting that the proposed haul road could be micro-sited to align with the pre-existing accessway along the Eastern edge of the Round Wood (and the pylons micro-sited along that same axis), instead of the haul road being situated in the middle of the field.
11. On behalf of NGET, its representatives accepted at the meeting that the soil bund was not required and nor was the compulsory acquisition of it. This was because they accepted our proposal that we reuse the soil they would remove and simply spread it over the whole of the pre-existing Farm area.

12. On behalf of NGET, its representatives accepted at the meeting that the use of the cable pulling area could be timed so as to ensure that we could crop the field and not have the crop ruined by pulling activity.

#### **Meetings with "UKPN"**

13. The entity of "UKPN" that is licensed to distribute electricity by Ofgem has not approached us at all in relation to the development of our land until 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026.
14. The development envisaged by the NGET for the licensed entity of "UKPN" would be the removal of the overhead local distribution cables to the East of Round Wood extending South Eastwards, and their replacement with below-ground level distribution cables connected back to the South East corner of the Bramford Substation.
15. The NGET Works Plans previously submitted with our Relevant Representations of the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 show the shape of the envisaged "UKPN" underground cable routes as comprising an inverted right-angled triangle whose upper line would be about parallel with the East/West access route from Thornbush Hall towards the Bramford Substation, and whose lower side would follow the current overhead line route Southeastwards to a location South of the Hall, as well as a further diagonal route running parallel to the lower side of the triangle. The impact of the location and size of the triangle area on the Farm land extent would result in very significant area of land for cable development (with the NGET works) extending about 2/3rds of the way Eastwards across the whole Farm.
16. The initial meeting with the agent of UKPN - Dalcour MacClaren - appeared refreshing in that entity's constructive approach and attitude. On behalf of UKPN, the Dalcour McClaren representative explained that its client wanted a "long term relationship" with us as the landowner.
17. I refer to **Exhibit 1** to this Second Witness Statement which is a plan dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 sent to me on the Sunday night before the Monday meeting by Dalcour MacClaren and that shows in red the proposed UKPN below ground cable line routes and the existing green coloured above ground cable line routes that the red routes would replace. The red routes adhere to the red outlined area of the NGET Works Plans and result in a large area of the Farm being sterilised as I have referred to above. On behalf of UKPN, the Dalcour McClaren representative explained to us, by reference to the proposed NGET plans sent to him and that he showed to us, that UKPN could not bend cables by the 90 degrees shown by the NGET proposed plans and so that cable arrangement was not actually feasible.
18. On behalf of UKPN, the Dalcour MacClaren representative asked if we had any alternative routes for the undergrounded cables which we have submitted for their consideration. I refer to **Exhibit 2** to this

Second Witness Statement which is an indicative sketch plan produced by my agents in relation to the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 meeting that shows the proposed two parallel lines of below-ground cables by UKPN could follow the route of, and be buried below the surface of, the pre-existing farm accessway track that runs from East to West and then Northwards along the Eastern edge of Round Wood.

19. Our own agent at the meeting suggested simply running the two separate cables routes (forming the right-angled triangle) in parallel to the South of that triangle and along the route of the existing farm track accessway and inside the pre-existing red line area of the application Works Plans. The UKPN representative was amenable to that alternative route and, by reference to the plan we all had of the Works Plans outlining the DCO application extent in red, could see no reason why in fact UKPN could not route its distribution cables below ground along the existing accessway as we suggested. He did not suggest that that route was not feasible or practical or could not be done. He also explained that the route we proposed meant that UKPN did not have to develop the cable down a rolling hillside (North/South) and could situate it beneath the current accessway that is relatively flat and running East/West.
20. We also proposed use of the existing North/South accessway to the East of the Round Wood as the route along which to run the proposed UKPN cable below (instead of it running through the middle of the field), and along the line of the edge of the NGET haul road. In that way, the cable routes would be rationalised into locations where the subsoil is not farmed for crops. The representative advised that routing was feasible and practical.
21. I refer to **Exhibit 3** to this Second Witness Statement which is the Minutes of the Meeting sent to us by the UKPN representative. Section 1 refers to a “connections agreement” (and this may or may not be the “development agreement” referred to in the meeting with NGET on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025). Section 2 refers to UKPN being “expected to progress the voluntary easements as soon as possible”. Section 5 describes the follow up confirmation to use the existing access routes on the Farm as the UKPN cable corridors for its envisaged below ground cable routes.

#### **FURTHER MEETINGS**

22. Further meetings are envisaged by both NGET and UKPN.
23. Both NGET and UKPN have indicated they would each like to reach written agreement sooner rather than later. But only time will tell if either is genuine.

I believe the facts stated in this Witness Statement to be true to the best of my knowledge and belief

S



Dated: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026

**EXHIBITS**

**EXHIBIT 1**



- Key:
- Proposed UG Cable - Parcel Intersects
  - OHL Removal
  - Freehold Interest

**TITLE BOUNDARIES BASED ON THE NATIONAL POLYGON DATASET**

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere  
 Datum: World Geodetic System 1984  
 Units: Meter

**PROJECT:**  
 OLIVE GOOBOLD and ANN GOOBOLD

**Location:**  
 S4 Land North East of Burstall

**Coords:** 115289, 6812217

**Balance Name:**  
 UKPN - 25007350 - 132kv Cable

**Project Drawing Name:**  
 Information Plan

**Rev:** 1  
**Date:** 22.02.2026  
**Description:** First Issue

Please note this map has been created and plotted using an ESRI ArcGIS Enterprise Web Mapping Application.



**Drawn:** ZN  
**Sheet No:** 1 of 1  
**Sheet Size:** A3



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Scale 1:16056  
 Site Plan

**EXHIBIT 2**



**EXHIBIT 3**

<b>Norwich to Tilbury DCO examination consultation UKPN introductory meeting</b>	
<b>Location:</b> Landbridge agent office, Rivers Court, High Street, Ipswich, IP8 3AP	<b>Date and time:</b> Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026 @ 11:00am
<b>Meeting synopsis:</b> Meeting hosted at Land Bridge agent offices to introduce UKPN works with their client, S Baker, as part of the diversion works requested by National Grid as part of their Norwich to Tilbury DCO project.	
<b>Item</b> <b>Description</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introductions</b>
	<p>Following general introductions, discussions were had regarding Development Consent Order (DCO) where both National Grid (NG) and UK Power Networks (UKPN) are named as applicants for the works within the working order limits submitted. JC explained that UKPN were facilitating a customer connection request received from National Grid and due to the scale of the diversions required they are named as joint applicant on the DCO.</p> <p>Confirmation provided by JC regarding connections agreement signed off between NG and UKPN to facilitate the progression of the associated diversions.</p> <p>Discussion over the sequence of events for the existing overhead line spans being dismantled prior to installation of UKPNs underground cabling and NGs overhead pylons.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Finalisation of underground route – deadline</b>
	<p>JC outlined that we are expected to progress the voluntary easements as soon as possible, noting the DCO project is currently within the examination period.</p> <p>Discussions undertaken regarding the terminal pylon required to be installed as part of UKPN overhead line diversion work.</p> <p>Discussions undertaken regarding DCO anticipated timescales, confirming earliest construction dates to be March 2027.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Costs associated with UKPN Consent</b>
	<p>Confirmation of easement agreements being required to consent to UKPN cabling. 10-meter easements with 20 meters required for working width to accommodate for machinery and necessary storage to undertake works.</p> <p>Outline of costs for obtaining the easement agreements with SB to be at 80% market value of the area with additional 20% through consenting to HOTS agreement and completing the Deed of Easement within a specified timeframe, in line with the NG Land Consents Strategy.</p>

	<p>Discussion over the Land Compensation Act 1961 being the backdrop legislation outlining fair and reasonable costs for creating the easement agreement.</p> <p>Discussions over the market value estimation of £12,000 per acre to be used for the easement agreements across the route. JC outlined red book valuation would be the fall-back option if the acquisition of rights were deferred to after the grant of the DCO however this isn't the preference of UKPN.</p> <p>Discussion of three different land titles to be impacted, therefore requiring three separate easement agreements. Confirmation of the left-hand title holding the battery development. Once contact provided, DM to ensure follow up communications will be provided to them directly.</p> <p>JC outlined wider compensation costs, including landowner and agent time. Due diligence will be undertaken to ensure all works and time incurred by landowners/agents will be invoiced referencing UKPN or NG depending on task undertaken.</p> <p>Discussions undertaken regarding both parties' solicitors to be instructed. SB outlined appointment yet to be made. JC outlined UKPN may instruct in house, but due to the vast number of consents to obtain, likely to be externally instructed.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Reasoning for the objection submitted to the Examining Authority</b></p> <p>SB outlined reasoning for objection due to lack of communication provided by NG and agents following initial outreach. Discussions undertaken confirming role Dalcour Maclaren will undertake on UKPNs behalf moving forwards on this project to ensure easement consent will be a clear and succinct process.</p> <p>SB outlined as long as clear communications is provided moving forwards, there are no issues with arranging survey access and discuss the voluntary easement consents with UKPN.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Next Actions</b></p> <p>Land Bridge agents to provide follow up communication and annotated plan outlining a preferred route for installing dual cabling, in line with discussions relating to the arable land's topography. This will subsequently be reviewed by UKPN to review the feasibility of revised routing requested.</p> <p>Existing Land Drainage and cropping plans also to be provided back to Dalcour Maclaren to aid awareness for future planning.</p> <p>Dalcour Maclaren to follow up with confirmation over the working order limits due to several variations being reviewed on the printed plans at the site meeting. DM to also follow up to confirm any access tracks being requested (if Thornbush Lane is required) and the use of the proposed Haul Road.</p> <p>DM to confirm the processes for OHL dismantling and installation works for undergrounding and overhead apparatus.</p> <p>Once outstanding on site surveys are confirmed, follow up communication will be provided regarding access and any necessary agreement or licence required.</p> <p>DM to confirm the depth of cabling proposed to be used for UKPNs undergrounding works.</p>

	FINISH