

AENC-NG-CNS-REP-0386

Norwich to Tilbury

Volume 8: Examination Documents

**Document: 8.28 Outline Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme
- Tracked Changes Version**

Final Issue B

August 2026

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN020027

nationalgrid

Revision History

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Submitted at</u>
<u>A</u>	<u>7 July 2026</u>	<u>Deadline 6</u>
<u>B</u>	<u>4 August 2026</u>	<u>Deadline 8</u>

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Overview of the proposed development	1
1.2	3:1 Replacement Tree Planting Commitment	2
1.3	How Offsite Provision will be Established	4
1.4	Compliance with National Policy Statements	4
1.5	Approval Process	5
2.	Aims and Objectives	7
2.1	Individual Tree Replacement Hierarchy	7
2.2	Replacement Required	7
2.3	Planting Principles	7
3.	Implementation and Maintenance	10
3.1	Offsite Delivery Mechanism	10
3.2	Management and Maintenance	10
Table 2.1 Recommended size of replacement tree for each tree feature type-		8
Abbreviations		42 <u>13</u>
Bibliography		43 <u>14</u>

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the proposed development

1.1.1 This Outline Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme (the 'Scheme') has been prepared in support of the application for development consent for the Norwich to Tilbury Project (the 'Project').

- 1.1.2 The Project is a proposal by National Grid to upgrade the electricity transmission system in East Anglia between Norwich and Tilbury, comprising:
- A new 400 kilovolt (kV) electricity transmission connection of approximately 180 km overall length from Norwich Main Substation to Tilbury Substation via Bramford Substation, a new East Anglia Connection Node (EACN) Substation and a new Tilbury North Substation, including:
 - Approximately 159 km of new overhead line supported on approximately 509 pylons, either standard steel lattice pylons (approximately 50 m in height) or low height steel lattice pylons (approximately 40 m in height) and some of which would be gantries (typically up to 15 m in height) within proposed Cable Sealing End (CSE) compounds or existing or proposed substations
 - Approximately 21 km of 400 kV underground cabling, some of which would be located through the Dedham Vale National Landscape (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB'))
 - Up to seven new CSE compounds (with permanent access) to connect the overhead lines to the underground cables
 - Modification works to connect into the existing Norwich Main Substation and a substation extension at the existing Bramford Substation
 - A new 400 kV substation on the Tendring Peninsula, referred to as the EACN Substation (with a new permanent access). This is proposed to be an Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation
 - A new 400 kV substation to the south of Orsett Golf Course in Essex, referred to as the Tilbury North Substation (with a new permanent access). This is proposed to be a Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation
 - Modifications to the existing National Grid Electricity Transmission overhead lines to facilitate the connection of the existing network into the new Tilbury North Substation to provide connection to the Tilbury Substation
 - Ancillary and/or temporary works associated with the construction of the Project.
- 1.1.3 In addition, third party utilities diversions and/or modifications would be required to facilitate the construction of the Project. There would also be land required for environmental mitigation and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

- 1.1.4 As well as the permanent infrastructure, land would also be required temporarily for construction activities including, for example, working areas for construction equipment and machinery, site offices, welfare, storage and temporary construction access.
- 1.1.5 The Project would be designed, constructed and operated in accordance with applicable health and safety legislation. The Project will need to comply with design safety standards including the Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS), which sets out the criteria and methodology for planning and operating the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS). This informs a suite of National Grid policies and processes, which contain details on design standards required to be met when designing, constructing and operating assets such as those proposed for the Project.
- 1.1.6 The construction and operation (and maintenance) elements of the Project are shown on **6.4.F1 Environmental Statement Figure 4.1 - Proposed Project Design [REP5-105]** and **6.4.F2 Environmental Statement Figure 4.2 - Proposed Project Design – Permanent Features [REP5-106]**.
- 1.1.7 The Project has been broken down into eight sections based largely on local authority boundaries. The eight sections are described below and presented within **6.1.F1 Environmental Statement Figure 1.1 - Site Location Plan and Project Sections [APP-125]**.
- Section A – South Norfolk Council
 - Section B – Mid-Suffolk District Council
 - Section C – Babergh District Council, Colchester City Council and Tendring District Council
 - Section D – Colchester City Council
 - Section E – Braintree District Council
 - Section F – Chelmsford City Council and Brentwood Borough Council
 - Section G – Basildon Borough Council and Brentwood Borough Council (and part of Chelmsford City Council)
 - Section H – Thurrock Council.

1.2 3:1 Replacement Tree Planting Commitment

- 1.2.1 The Applicant has committed to providing replacement tree planting at a ratio of three replacement trees for every individual tree removed, including individual trees within small groups. This commitment is secured through **7.4 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [Revision ~~F~~REP7-342]** and Requirement 9 in **3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [Revision ~~F~~H]**. This commitment is in addition to the embedded mitigation that has been proposed to minimise effects on the environment identified as a result of the Environmental Statement.
- 1.2.2 Prior to identifying the replacement tree planting ratio, the Applicant reviewed the specified replacement planting commitments identified within relevant local planning policy, wider local planning policy and other consented nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs).

- 1.2.3 Amongst the host Local Planning Authorities, Suffolk County Council referred to replacement planting ratios in their policies, Colchester City Council referred to a minimum increase of 10% canopy cover, while other Local Plans did not detail a ratio or percentage. When reviewing local planning policy more widely beyond the host authorities, there were other councils which recommended a similar 3:1 ratio. The commitment made in relation to this Project aligns with Suffolk County Council's recommended ratio of 3:1.
- 1.2.4 As a result, the Project has committed to a 3:1 replacement ratio for individual trees and individual trees within small groups. This commitment is considered appropriate and proportionate to ensure the long term environmental and landscape effects of tree loss are adequately addressed and provides an appropriate level of compensation. While this ratio is considered good practice, the Applicant states that this be understood as a recommendation reflecting consideration of a number of other projects and policies, not a prescriptive 3:1 ratio requirement imposed by legislation or statutory policy.
- 1.2.5 The commitment applies only to individual trees and individual trees within small groups. Individual trees have been identified within **6.13.A6 Environmental Statement Appendix 13.6 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP-236]**. They are single distinct trees that due to their growing position are separate entities rather than part of a woodland or group of trees. Individual trees within small groups are individual trees that do not form part of a broader habitat type, such as a woodland, as defined by UKHab methodology.
- 1.2.6 For the purposes of the Scheme, a tree is defined as having a distinct and definable canopy and in line with BS5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction) excludes woody plants with a stem diameter less than 75mm when measured at 1.5 m in height.
- 1.2.7 Large groups, woodland, scrub and other area-based habitats are ~~assessed~~mitigated separately through the BNG ~~process and are~~methodology, as addressed within **7.1 Biodiversity Net Gain Report [APP-299]**. This approach avoids double counting between the replacement tree planting commitment and the BNG requirements.
- 1.2.8 The Applicant will prioritise delivery of replacement tree planting within the Order Limits wherever practicable. Exceptions to this include areas which are unsuitable for planting of tall trees due to operational, engineering and safety constraints, (i.e. underneath overhead lines, above underground cables or where there are existing constraints). It is therefore anticipated that not all replacement tree planting required to fulfil the 3:1 commitment can be accommodated within the Order Limits.
- 1.2.9 Where trees as part of this commitment are provided within the Order Limits, these will be part of the mitigation delivered in accordance with the Development Consent Order (DCO) alongside reinstatement planting. The offsite provision of trees associated with this commitment is a compensatory measure. The trees associated with a commitment beyond reinstatement have not been taken into account in the impact assessments contained within the Environmental Statement.
- 1.2.10 The purpose of this Scheme is to establish a framework for the identification and delivery of any offsite replacement tree planting that may be required to fulfil the 3:1 commitment.
- 1.2.11 The final requirement for offsite replacement tree planting cannot be determined at this stage. The number of trees ultimately requiring removal will be confirmed following detailed design and discharge of Requirement 8 of **3.1 Draft Development**

Consent Order [Revision FH]. The quantum of replacement tree planting that can be accommodated within the Order Limits and then offsite will be confirmed through the discharge of Requirement 9, which is triggered prior to operation.

- 1.2.12 The overarching objective of this Scheme is to ensure that any offsite tree planting required to fulfil the Applicant's 3:1 commitment is identified, secured and delivered in a timely manner. This Scheme does not identify specific offsite planting locations or a single delivery mechanism. Instead, it establishes the principles, process and criteria by which any offsite replacement tree planting requirement will be identified and delivered.
- 1.2.13 The Applicant's commitment is to achieve the replacement planting outcome secured through **7.4 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [Revision FREP7-342]** and Requirement 9 in **3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [Revision FH]**. This Scheme provides flexibility as to how that outcome is delivered whilst ensuring the overall commitment is achieved.

1.3 How Offsite Provision will be Established

- 1.3.1 During detailed design the Applicant has committed to reducing the removal of trees as far as practicable in accordance with commitments (GG14, B08, B15, LV04) in **7.2 Outline Code of Construction Practice [Revision FH]**.
- 1.3.2 The final quantum of trees requiring removal will be confirmed through the discharge of Requirement 8 of **3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [Revision FH]**.
- 1.3.3 The extent of replacement tree planting that can be accommodated within the Order Limits will subsequently be confirmed through the discharge of Requirement 9(1) and associated Reinstatement Planting Plans prior to that stage of the Project being brought into operation. At the same time, the offsite tree replanting deficit will be known, and details of the offsite provision of tree planting will be identified through the Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme(s) submitted to the Local Planning Authorities [for approval](#) under Requirement 9(8).
- 1.3.4 The approach adopted by this Scheme is to establish a framework for delivery whilst retaining flexibility to identify the most appropriate offsite opportunities once the final offsite provision is known.

1.4 Compliance with National Policy Statements

- 1.4.1 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (2024) (EN-1) and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks (2024) (EN-5) provide the basis for decision-making on development consent applications for electricity networks infrastructure made under the Planning Act 2008.
- 1.4.2 Paragraph 4.6.13 of EN-1 (2024) identifies the '*enhancement, expansion or provision of trees and woodland*' as a wider environmental gain and benefit that developments may deliver in addition to delivering BNG.
- 1.4.3 EN-1 (2024) in section 5.11 on Land Use, including Open Space, Green Infrastructure and Green Belt, paragraph 5.11.27 provides general guidance on tree loss.

'Existing trees and woodlands should be retained wherever possible. In the EIP, the Government committed to increase the tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area of England by 2050. The applicant should assess the impacts on, and

loss of, all trees and woodlands within the project boundary and develop mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and any risk of net deforestation as a result of the scheme. Mitigation may include, but is not limited to, the use of buffers to enhance resilience, improvements to connectivity, and improved woodland management. Where woodland loss is unavoidable, compensation schemes will be required, and the long-term management and maintenance of newly planted trees should be secured.'

- 1.4.4 Paragraph 5.11.27 of EN-1 (2024) identifies potential mitigation measures, but importantly confirms that where woodland loss is unavoidable, compensation schemes will be required and then refers to securing the management of the newly planted trees.
- 1.4.5 EN-1 (2024) in paragraph 5.10.27 under the heading mitigation acknowledges that *'The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme, as will sympathetic landscaping and management of its immediate surroundings'*. Paragraph 5.10.28 then goes on to state *'Depending on the topography of the surrounding terrain and areas of population it may be appropriate to undertake landscaping off site. For example, filling in gaps in existing tree and hedge lines may mitigate the impact when viewed from a more distant vista'*.
- 1.4.6 Paragraph 2.10.6 of EN-5 (2024) highlights some additional measures which might be taken and which the Secretary of State could mandate through requirements, if appropriate. These measures include *'landscape schemes, comprising off-site tree and hedgerow planting'*.
- 1.4.7 This Scheme has been prepared having regard to the relevant National Policy Statements and aims to support the stated wider environmental benefits and softening effect that trees could have alongside new above ground pylon lines.
- 1.4.8 The Scheme will implement the offsite tree planting by voluntary agreement with relevant landowners rather than seek to compulsorily acquire land or land rights to deliver the offsite measures.
- 1.4.9 Advice will be sought from relevant local authorities to maximise opportunities for the offsite tree planting through the Ecology and Landscape Working Group which is secured within **7.4 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan** [**Revision** [FREP7-342](#)].

1.5 Approval Process

Onsite and offsite tree replanting

- 1.5.1 Once detailed design has been completed for the relevant stage, Requirement 8 (Retention and removal of trees, woodland and hedgerows) of **3.1 Draft Development Consent Order** [**Revision** [FH](#)] requires the Applicant to provide a plan showing the trees, groups of trees, woodlands and hedgerows to be retained and/or removed during that stage of the work to be approved by the relevant Local Planning Authority, prior to work commencing on that stage. Works then must be carried out in accordance with the approved plans unless otherwise agreed by the relevant Local Planning Authority. Prior to the commencement of work on any stage of the Project, details of the retention and removal of trees will be identified.

- 1.5.2 Details of the onsite and offsite tree planting will then be provided in accordance with Requirement 9 of **3.1 Draft Development Consent Order [Revision FH]**. Details must be discharged prior to that stage of the authorised development being brought into operational use.
- 1.5.3 Details of the onsite tree planting will be provided in accordance with the Reinstatement Planting Plan(s) secured under Requirement 9(1). 9(2) requires the Reinstatement Planting Plan(s) to include a schedule of trees, hedgerows, or other plants or seedlings to be planting, noting numbers, species, sizes and planting densities. These details must be in general accordance with the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan or Final Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (if approved). The total quantum of trees to be provided on site will therefore be known once the Reinstatement Planting Plan(s) have been approved under Requirement 9(1).
- 1.5.4 The offsite provision (onsite deficit) can then be finalised; it is at this stage the final quantum of offsite tree planting required will be known. This will be calculated by the formula:
- $$(A \times 3) - B = \text{number of trees allocated for offsite planting}$$
- Where, A = number of individual trees and individual trees within small groups removed following detailed design and B = number of trees allocated to be replanted within the Order Limits (excluding any for BNG purposes)
- 1.5.5 Requirement 9(8) requires the Applicant to provide an Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme to the relevant Local Planning Authority [for approval](#) prior to that stage of the Project being brought into operational use. The Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme is to be prepared substantially in accordance with this Scheme.
- 1.5.6 The Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme shall:
- Establish the requirement for offsite tree planting in relation to individual trees and individual trees in small groups, in line with the details submitted pursuant to Requirements 8 and 9(1) of the Order;
 - Identify the approach to offsite tree planting and confirm site selection criteria;
 - Identify (where appropriate) the location of the offsite replacement tree planting or, alternatively, details of the organisation which shall deliver the offsite trees, such delivery to be funded by National Grid₁ and
 - Identify the proposed timings for the delivery of the offsite tree planting.
- 1.5.7 The Applicant shall use reasonable endeavours to deliver the Scheme in accordance with the proposed timings detailed in the relevant Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme.
- 1.5.8 Within two months of completion of delivery of the Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme for each stage of the Project, the Applicant will provide a completion Report to the relevant Local Planning Authorities.
- 1.5.9 For the purposes of this Scheme, replacement planting shall be considered delivered when the trees have been planted or where a third-party delivery mechanism is used, and arrangements secured to enable planting to take place in accordance with the approved Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme.
- 1.5.10 The Applicant will seek to provide five years aftercare for the tree replanting and replace any failed trees that it becomes aware of within this period.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Individual Tree Replacement Hierarchy

- 2.1.1 The Applicant will seek to deliver replacement tree planting in accordance with the following hierarchy:
- a) Avoid tree loss through detailed design and seek to retain trees, as far as practicable
 - b) Deliver replacement tree planting within the Order Limits
 - c) Deliver replacement tree planting outside the Order Limits through voluntary agreements, support delivery through grants or funding mechanisms or support delivery through established wider landscape-scale tree planting initiatives.

2.2 Replacement Required

- 2.2.1 The Applicant will ensure that the replacement tree planting is delivered at a ratio of three replacement trees for every one individual tree removed, or individual tree within a small group removed.

2.3 Planting Principles

- 2.3.1 The tree planting to be provided as a result of the 3:1 commitment could comprise any or all of the following:
- Individual native tree planting
 - Additional tree planting within existing hedgerows
 - Native woodland planting.
- 2.3.2 Transplants and feathered trees comprise an important part of the proposed planting works that would improve habitat qualities and reinforce landscape character. Feathered trees will be planted as part of new hedgerows or to complement existing hedgerows where appropriate to the surrounding landscape character (gap up tree planting).
- 2.3.3 The use of transplants with some feathered trees mixed in, is likely to achieve a greater success rate in comparison to planting larger standard trees which are likely to suffer greater 'shock' when relocated. Smaller stock typically establishes more successfully; experiences less transplant shock and achieves higher survival rates due to more favourable root to shoot ratio. The use of smaller trees also enables a greater number and diversity of specimens to be planted within the available area, supporting the delivery of long-term canopy cover, landscape integration and biodiversity benefits. Although larger trees provide an immediate visual impact, smaller stock often catches up quite quickly. Smaller trees are also generally more resilient to drought, less vulnerable to windthrow and provide a more natural addition to the landscape.

- 2.3.4 Alternatively, if existing hedgerow trees are suitable, new planting will be combined or replaced with tagging of existing hedgerow tree species to be managed and established into mature hedgerow trees.
- 2.3.5 Table 2.1 identifies the tree feature types which have been identified in [the 6.13.A6 Environmental Statement Appendix 13.6 – Arboricultural Impact Assessment \(AIA\) \[APP-236\]](#) and the size of the tree replacement recommended.

Table 2.1 Recommended size of replacement tree for each tree feature type.

Feature Type	Tree Replacement
Tree (high/moderate quality features)	Feathered trees with minimum height of 150cm
Canopy cover (high/moderate quality features)	Feathered trees with minimum height of 150cm
Tree (low quality features)	Transplant minimum 60cm in height
Canopy cover (low quality features)	Transplant minimum 60cm in height

- 2.3.6 Planting will consist of native species of local provenance appropriate to the local landscape character and site conditions. Planting will be undertaken on a like-for-like basis, or with a locally appropriate species in accordance with the recommendations of a suitably qualified arboriculturist, ecologist or landscape architect who has determined that like-for-like replacement would be inappropriate in that specific case.
- 2.3.7 New or infill planting will aim to support or improve species diversity and resilience (where appropriate) of existing vegetation patterns and gap up existing vegetation patterns such as hedgerows or shelterbelts that have not been recently maintained.
- 2.3.8 The Applicant will incorporate reasonable protection measures such as tree guards where necessary.
- 2.3.9 Site selection criteria and opportunities for offsite tree planting will be assessed against a consistent framework and considered having regard to:
- Proximity to Order Limits and seeking to achieve a distribution across the areas affected by the Project
 - Alignment with the Local Nature Recovery Strategies relevant to the area as well as relevant green infrastructure networks and strategies
 - Positive contribution to local landscape character
 - Seeking to avoid conflict with or cause potential damage to known archaeology or the setting of heritage assets
 - Opportunities to increase canopy cover and strengthen habitat connectivity
 - Site conditions to facilitate better establishment and long-term sustainability considering climate resilience
 - Compatibility with existing land use
 - Public and visual amenity benefits

- Deliverability and value for money.

2.3.10 If the tree planting is delivered by a third party or through a grant-based mechanism the Project will provide a copy of the Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme to support their decision-making.

3. Implementation and Maintenance

3.1 Offsite Delivery Mechanism

- 3.1.1 Where the replacement tree planting cannot be fully accommodated within the Order Limits the Applicant will seek to secure planting outside the Order Limits.
- 3.1.2 At this stage, the precise delivery mechanism for offsite tree planting has not been determined and may comprise one or more of the following:
- Direct delivery by the Applicant or a contractor on land secured through voluntary agreement with landowners
 - Provision of grants or financial contributions to landowners to facilitate tree planting
 - Funding of tree planting delivered by third-party organisations, charities, environmental bodies or public sector organisations
 - Participation in existing tree planting initiatives or programmes
 - Any other mechanism capable of delivering the required replacement tree planting.
- 3.1.3 The Applicant currently seeks to retain flexibility to determine the most appropriate delivery mechanisms having regard to the site selection criteria set out in paragraph 2.3.9 of this Scheme. The details will then be identified within the Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme(s), [including timings for the implementation of the planting](#).
- 3.1.4 The Applicant considers that it would be disproportionate to identify specific offsite planting locations or commit to a single delivery mechanism at this stage, given that any offsite provision would be dependent on detailed design and future voluntary agreements with third parties. [The one exception to this is Dunton Hills Garden Village, where discussions have already taken place and provisional agreement has been reached with LIH as the landowner, and the councils \(Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Council\) regarding additional offsite tree planting. Details to be agreed in the final OPDS.](#)
- 3.1.5 **7.4 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan** [~~Revision~~ [FREP7-342](#)] establishes the commitment to achieve the 3:1 tree planting outcome in addition to the Requirement 9 of the draft DCO securing the Offsite Planting Delivery Scheme(s). The Scheme seeks to retain flexibility as to the means by which the outcome is delivered.
- 3.1.6 The Applicant's obligation is to secure delivery of the replacement planting required to satisfy the 3:1 commitment. The Applicant may fulfil this obligation through direct delivery, funding arrangements, grant schemes, third party delivery organisations or other appropriate mechanisms capable of delivering the required planting outcome.

3.2 Management and Maintenance

- 3.2.1 The Applicant will use reasonable endeavours to secure appropriate establishment, management and maintenance arrangements for replacement tree planting delivered pursuant to this Scheme. Such arrangements will reflect the delivery mechanism adopted and may be secured through landowner agreements, grant conditions, funding agreements or arrangements with third-party delivery organisations. The Applicant will use reasonable endeavours to secure a proportionate five-year aftercare period.
- 3.2.2 The Applicant considers five years is a sufficient period for tree maintenance to ensure successful establishment and early growth of new planting. The first five years is the most important for the establishment of newly planted trees.
- 3.2.3 The Project follows good practice as set out within Section 11.2 of British Standard (BS) 8545:2014+A1:2026¹ which states: *‘Post-planting management and maintenance is important if longevity in the landscape is to be achieved. A full young tree management programme with budgetary provision should be in place for all planting schemes. This management programme should be in place for at least 5 years.’*
- 3.2.4 The Applicant’s commitment to a five-year aftercare period adheres to the recommendation set out in the British Standard to achieve independence in the landscape. Five years is also the suggested length of time for a landscape maintenance contract as recommended in the Landscape Institute’s JCLI Landscape Maintenance Works Contract²
- 3.2.5 The following guidance also supports the Project’s approach:
- The most recent Tree Council guidance *‘Caring for newly planted trees’*³ which has been produced with National Highways refers to a five-year establishment phase
 - Government guidance *‘Maintain new trees after restocking’*⁴ provides advice regarding looking after newly planting trees in areas where restocking due to pests and disease is required within the first five-years.
- 3.2.6 The failure rate for native tree planting tends to fall off rapidly after the first c. two–three years, at which point most plants tend to be becoming well established, following recovery from the disturbance associated with their movement from the nursery and replanting at the site. The five-year period captures this initial establishment risk and by year five, the success rates which have been achieved provide a realistic picture of long-term success.
- 3.2.7 It is important to note that there is a difference between the aftercare period required for successful establishment of planting,

¹ BS 8545:2014+A1:2026 | 27 Jan 2026 | BSI Knowledge

² Landscape Maintenance Works Contract – The Landscape Institute

³ Caring-for-newly-planted-trees-2025.pdf

⁴ Maintain new trees after restocking - GOV.UK

and the longer-term maintenance period, which is likely to be ongoing beyond this point, by the relevant landowner.

- 3.2.8 The five-year aftercare period represents a proportionate and established approach to securing successful establishment of replacement planting. It provides sufficient time for trees to become established and resilient to normal environmental conditions, while recognising that planting is located on third-party land and is intended to become self-sustaining thereafter.
- 3.2.9 The inclusion of monitoring and the replacement of failures during this period ensures that the compensatory planting objective is achieved without imposing unnecessary long-term management obligations.

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Reference
AIA	Arboricultural Impact Assessment
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
DCO	Development Consent Order
EACN	East Anglia Connection Node
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
GIS	Gas Insulated Switchgear
kV	Kilovolt
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
NETS	National Electricity Transmission System
NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission

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