

Electricity Act 198

Inquiry into:

**THE NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION PLC (GRAIN
TO TILBURY) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2024**

**Summary of Evidence of Statement of Evidence of
Lee Driscoll
Senior Project Manager
Strategic Infrastructure
National Grid**

Specialist Field: Project

On behalf of: National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc

13.05.2025

1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 1.1 I was appointed by NGET as Senior Project Manager for the of the Grain to Tilbury project and am giving evidence on behalf of NGET in respect of the project management matters relevant to the Order. I have had particular regard to the key aspects of the CPO Guidance that are relevant to my evidence.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Project is to enable the construction of a replacement tunnel under the River Thames to accommodate the Tilbury to Grain and Tilbury to Kingsnorth 400kv circuits. This comprises the boring of a new tunnel under the River Thames approximately 2.2km long to house and carry 12 new cross-linked polyethylene cables.
- 1.3 There is a compelling need for the Project in assisting the Government to tackle climate change to meet their legally binding targets to become net-zero in all greenhouse gases by 2050 for England and Wales and the various other energy and electricity policy requirements as set out in this evidence
- 1.4 The Scheme benefits include
- 1.5 the need to upgrade 400 kV circuits in the River Thames tunnel due to increased renewable and low carbon energy generation in the east coast of England.
- 1.6 Enhancement of the resilience of the distribution system, ensuring reliable energy supply and security, particularly in the Tilbury area, by constructing additional substations.
- 1.7 The Project will:
- 1.8 Replace and modernize outdated infrastructure.
- 1.9 Increase capacity to meet energy demand and customer connection needs.
- 1.10 Assist in the transition to a net-zero/low carbon economy.

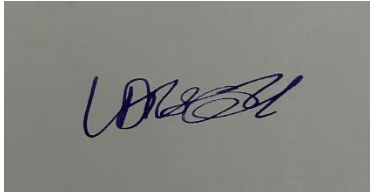
- 1.11 Contribute to energy security and reliability of supply.
- 1.12 These benefits depend on NGET securing the necessary land and rights for the Project's construction and operation.
- 1.13 My evidence discusses the alternatives of the Project that were considered and sets out why the various alternatives were disqualified and the new tunnel option was necessary.
- 1.14 NGET is negotiating to acquire the necessary land and rights for the Project, but to ensure timely delivery, it began the compulsory purchase order process alongside these negotiations
- 1.15 NGET is part of the National Grid group of companies with an excellent track record in delivering infrastructure projects. NGET has extensive experience of acquiring rights and land needed for its infrastructure projects, including allowing for unforeseen matters. Given the above, and NGET's strong credit rating, and the fact that the Project is an ASTI project, the requisite funding will be available to meet the implementation and land acquisition/compulsory purchase compensation costs associated with the Project as and when required. I have explained the national importance of ASTI projects.
- 1.16 NGET holds an Electricity Transmission Licence granted by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority and has the powers under section 10 and schedule 3 of the 1989 Act to make the Order.
- 1.17 I have explained that a developer has now been procured for the Project, which shows how committed NGET is to the Project. Planning permission is now in place for the Project, and progress on the other consents is underway. NGET secured a voluntary set of agreements for acquisition of the relevant land and rights from the largest land owner (by number of plots) in the Order land, which was a significant achievement by the NGET Lands team.
- 1.18 I do not consider the Project will give rise to any adverse impacts on the rights of objectors but to the extent that it does, those impact

are clearly outweighed by the public interest benefits in delivering the Project.

- 1.19 NGET has given consideration to human rights and equalities matters, which as set out NGET does not consider that the Project will give rise to any impacts or differential impacts on persons who share a relevant protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act, or upon persons who do not share such relevant protected characteristic and this position is being continually monitored by NGET. The Order is being promoted in the public interest. NGET considers that the Order will strike the right balance between the public interest in the implementation of the Project and those private rights that will be affected by the Order.
- 1.20 As set out in the evidence of Darren Kempson and Kate McGregor, NGET has engaged considerably and has nearly reached voluntary agreement on a range of agreements for the acquisition of the land and rights needed. Where statutory undertakers are affected, the acquiring authority does not consider that any of them would suffer serious detriment as a result of the Project or the acquisition of the relevant land or rights. If the Order is confirmed, relevant parties will be compensated in accordance with the Compensation Code as applicable.
- 1.21 Accordingly, I consider that the criteria in the CPO Guidance is satisfied and that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the confirmation of the Order so that the land and rights can be obtained to ensure this important Project goes ahead.

2. **DECLARATION**

- 2.1 I confirm that the evidence prepared for this Inquiry and contained within this statement of evidence are my true and professional opinions. I confirm that I have understood and complied with my duty to the Inquiry as an Expert Witness and have provided my evidence impartially and objectively. I confirm that I have no conflicts of interest

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a grey rectangular background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Lee Driscoll'.

Lee Driscoll

13 May 2025