

The National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC (VIP Cotswolds) Compulsory Purchase Order 2025

Statement of Case: Mr Ivan Drake and Mrs Ann Drake

Background

1. We are the landowners of the land title GR240043 to which the Compulsory Purchase Order above relates. The land in question comprises woodland, some of which has been identified as ancient, on a steep slope and is potentially the most environmentally sensitive part of the proposed project. We are in favour of the aims of the Cotswolds Visual Improvement Project and are keen to agree detailed heads of terms with NGET in order to allow the work to be undertaken in the least environmentally damaging manner, both in terms of the initial construction phase and after completion.
2. We note that section 6 of NGET's "Statement of Reasons" document states that, "NGET's preference will always be to secure land rights on a voluntary basis." The same section of the document also states, "NGET will continue to seek to voluntarily acquire rights over plots where there are known landowners and will continue to negotiate heads of terms with all landowners that are yet to agree heads of terms."

Grounds for Objection

3. Regrettably, responses to a number of longstanding questions relating to construction methodology, specification of the proposed access track, plans for drainage, methods of land stabilisation prior to the establishment of newly planted vegetation and the depth and width of the cable runs remained to be answered as at 23rd May 2025.
4. As such, we reluctantly decided that we must write to lodge an objection to the Compulsory Purchase Order. The grounds of our objection were that insufficient detail had been provided by NGET to allow our professional advisers to assess the potential environmental impact of the proposed project.

NGET's Response to the Objection

5. NGET's response to our objection is set on in Section 6 of Appendix 2 of the "Statement of Case of the Acquiring Authority" document.

6. The response indicates the uncertainty that remains with regard to the concerns raised in our objection. In particular, NGET's response states:
 - 6.1. "Construction methodology: The final construction methodology will be confirmed by the principal contractor..."
 - 6.2. "Access track specification: ... Stone construction also provides operational flexibility for potential adjustments during construction if unforeseen circumstances arise."
 - 6.3. "Drainage plans: ... Pre and post drainage will form part of the principal contractor's scope and will include detailed investigation and survey of any existing drainage."
 - 6.4. "Cable depth and width: Cables will be installed at a minimum depth of 900 millimetres to the protective tile in accordance with industry guidelines. Depending on installation method, the width will be approximately 40 – 50 metres."
7. We welcome NGET's concluding comment in its response that, "NGET will continue working collaboratively with the landowners throughout the detailed design process and HoTs negotiations."

Update Regarding Ongoing Negotiations with NGET

8. As set out in paragraph 10.1 of the "Statement of Case of the Acquiring Authority" document, "NGET has a preferred bidder as main contractor further to its competitive tender in May 2025 and expect the contract to be awarded by April 2026 when preliminary surveys and works will commence, subject to securing necessary planning consents."
9. We appreciate the complexity of the project and the requirement for the main contractor's involvement in finalising the construction methodology and other areas of concern raised in our objection.
10. As such, ongoing negotiations with NGET are focused on agreeing a suitable escalation mechanism to allow for any comments and concerns regarding the main contractor's final construction methodology to be properly considered prior to the commencement of construction, along with any amendments that may be necessary as construction and subsequent reinstatement progresses.
11. We recognise that NGET must retain the right to make the final decision in relation to construction and reinstatement methodology.
12. We welcome the progress that is being made in these discussions, but agreement has not yet been reached.

Conclusion

13. We recognise that the concerns raised in our objection cannot be fully addressed until NGET's main contractor has had the opportunity to conduct preliminary surveys and works. NGET expects this to take place from April 2026 onwards.
14. As such, our ongoing negotiations with NGET are focused on agreeing a suitable escalation mechanism for addressing any comments or concerns once the construction methodology has been finalised. Although progress is being made in these discussions, we have not yet reached agreement.
15. We remain committed to working with NGET to reach an agreement to enable the project to proceed in the most environmentally sustainable manner.