

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

TRANSPORT AND WORKS (INQUIRIES PROCEDURES) RULES 2004

WRITTEN PROOF OF EVIDENCE BY TIFFANY BATE

REGARDING THE APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (STALYBRIDGE TO DIGGLE (SADDLEWORTH) ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER

REFERENCE TWA/25/APP/02

DATE 14th MAY 2026

Summary of Evidence

- 1.1 This Summary of Evidence is provided on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (“NGET”) in relation to the application for the proposed Network Rail (Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements) Order (“the Order”).
- 1.2 NGET does not object to the Order in principle. It recognises the importance of the proposed rail enhancement works, including the electrification of the railway between Stalybridge and Diggle (Saddleworth), and has engaged constructively with the Applicant with a view to enabling the project to proceed. NGET’s concerns relate not to the principle of the proposed development, but to the need for the Order to contain adequate and enforceable protections so that the exercise of the powers sought does not prejudice NGET’s statutory functions, interfere with its apparatus and land interests, or compromise its ability to access, operate, inspect, maintain, repair and renew its infrastructure.
- 1.3 The evidence explains that NGET has assets within, and in close proximity to, the Order limits, including Stalybridge Substation and associated transmission infrastructure. Those assets form part of the electricity transmission network in England and Wales and are critical to its operation. Stalybridge Substation is of particular importance because it serves existing and future generation projects and customers in the Greater Manchester area. It follows that any interference with the substation itself, with associated apparatus, or with the rights and means of access necessary to reach it, gives rise to matters of legitimate and substantial concern.
- 1.4 The witness, Tiffany Bate, is a Lead Development Liaison Officer employed by NGET. Her role is to provide strategic engagement with third-party developers, promoters and statutory bodies whose proposals interface with and affect NGET assets and interests. The purpose of that role is to ensure that external development can proceed in a manner compatible with NGET’s statutory duties, the safe and reliable operation of the transmission network, and the long-term requirements of the electricity system. Her evidence is therefore directed to protecting NGET’s legal and operational position while enabling appropriate development to proceed.

- 1.5 A central part of the evidence concerns NGET's statutory duties. As the holder of an electricity transmission licence under the Electricity Act 1989, NGET is required to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission and to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity. Those duties require NGET to ensure that its infrastructure remains safe, operable, accessible and capable of maintenance and renewal. They also require NGET to protect the assets, land interests and access rights necessary to maintain the integrity and resilience of the transmission network.
- 1.6 The evidence emphasises that access to operationally critical sites, including substations, is integral to the discharge of those duties. If access is restricted, delayed or made uncertain, NGET's ability to undertake inspections, maintenance and operational interventions may be materially impeded. That in turn creates risk to the safe and efficient operation of the network and to NGET's ability to comply with its statutory and licence obligations. The evidence also notes that those obligations are subject to regulatory oversight and enforcement. The protections sought are therefore not matters of preference or convenience; they are required in order that NGET may continue to fulfil legal duties imposed in the public interest.
- 1.7 The evidence records that NGET has been engaged in ongoing discussions with the Applicant regarding the protective provisions to be included in the draft Order. NGET's position is that the current protective provisions do not reflect NGET's standard form protections and are insufficient to safeguard its assets, land interests and operational requirements. NGET has therefore provided its proposed additional and amended protections and seeks their inclusion in the Order. Unless and until satisfactory agreement is reached, NGET maintains its objection and reserves the right to make further submissions to the Inquiry.
- 1.8 A significant issue concerns access to Stalybridge Substation. The evidence states that the Applicant seeks temporary and permanent rights over a number of plots of land owned by, containing, or otherwise affecting NGET assets or rights, and that the proposed works will directly affect NGET's access to the substation. Daily access is required to all three NGET substations at Stalybridge. Such access is undertaken by large vans, commercial vehicles and cars.
- 1.9 The evidence explains that there are three ways to access Stalybridge 275 kV substation. Under the bridge in question, along Printworks Road (from the south) is one access, the other end (from the north, over the railway) is very tight, steep and small and the last one from the east (which goes over the river and canal) is currently subject to a weight restriction by virtue of a traffic regulation order.
- 1.10 In practical terms, therefore, access via Printworks Road is of critical importance. NGET's evidence is that access along Printworks Road must remain unfettered at all times during the construction and operation of the scheme if NGET is to continue to operate the site safely and effectively.
- 1.11 The evidence further explains that Printworks Road is adopted highway but that NGET owns the freehold subsoil beneath it. NGET therefore seeks to be included in any discussions between the Applicant and the local highway authority and to be party to any traffic management or highways agreement relating to the management of Printworks Road for the duration of the scheme. In NGET's submission, that is necessary to ensure that any arrangements affecting the road are formulated with proper regard to NGET's operational requirements and legal interests.

- 1.12 In addition to access concerns, the evidence identifies the need for written confirmation from the Applicant that it does not intend to remove, relocate or interfere with existing NGET infrastructure within the Order limits. NGET seeks both that confirmation and legal protection to the same effect, because the continued presence and operation of existing apparatus is fundamental to the discharge of its statutory functions.
- 1.13 The evidence also addresses the position should relocation arise in future. NGET's case is that the Order must contain robust provisions ensuring that existing apparatus cannot be removed until suitable replacement apparatus has been constructed, commissioned and brought into operation to NGET's satisfaction, with all necessary land rights, access rights and other legal protections in place. The Applicant must provide advance written notice, plans and the proposed location of replacement apparatus, obtain all necessary permissions, and provide suitable land, access and legal rights for replacement works. Where replacement apparatus cannot be accommodated on land controlled by the Applicant, NGET may reasonably seek to secure the necessary rights, but should not be obliged to use compulsory purchase powers unless it elects to do so. The location and design of any replacement apparatus must be agreed between the parties. These protections are necessary to ensure continuity, safety and operability of the transmission network.
- 1.14 The evidence also summarises the additional legal protections sought by NGET in relation to the draft Order. These include provisions concerning apparatus in streets, so that the statutory street works regime continues to apply where appropriate; provisions for apparatus in streets subject to temporary stopping up, ensuring that NGET retains equivalent rights and access notwithstanding closure; and amendments relating to the removal of apparatus, so that existing infrastructure and rights remain protected until satisfactory replacement infrastructure is available and all necessary rights are secured. NGET also seeks protections relating to compliance with relevant standards and clearances for works proposed in close proximity to its apparatus, together with provisions dealing with costs and indemnity.
- 1.15 The overall effect of the evidence is clear. NGET's concerns do not arise from opposition to the railway enhancement project as such. Rather, they arise from the need to ensure that the Order is framed in a manner that preserves the integrity and operability of NGET's existing infrastructure and enables NGET to continue discharging its statutory and licence obligations. Those obligations are of significant public importance. NGET's transmission assets serve existing and future customers and generation and form part of the wider national electricity transmission system.
- 1.16 Accordingly, NGET's position is that the Order should not be made without adequate protective provisions securing: protection for retained apparatus; preservation of access rights, particularly via Printworks Road; confirmation that existing infrastructure will not be removed or interfered with; and robust legal safeguards in the event of any future relocation. Unless and until satisfactory protections are secured, NGET maintains its objection to the Order and reserves the right to make further submissions to the Inquiry.