



National Grid's commitments when undertaking works in the UK

Our stakeholder, community and amenity policy

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This note sets out National Grid's ten commitments when undertaking electricity and gas works in the UK. It covers how we will meet our amenity responsibilities and our commitments to effectively involving stakeholders and communities.

Engaging stakeholders and communities

The development of gas and electricity networks, and their maintenance and refurbishment, can affect communities through which the networks pass. How we manage our relationships and work together with these communities and other affected stakeholders is important to us.

National Grid aspires to engage positively with stakeholders and communities. We are committed to involving stakeholders and communities effectively in our works and recognise the benefits of doing this. We will listen, take into account views and opinions expressed and respond to these when developing and undertaking works.

The principles contained in our Commitment 2 (Involving stakeholders and communities) provide the framework that will help us to promote genuine and meaningful stakeholder and community engagement and to develop and maintain a culture that delivers this.



Application

This document applies to National Grid's transmission activities in the UK, for both electricity and gas works. It also applies to all works on our gas distribution network operating above 7 bar (gauge) pressure. Gas works for networks of below 7 bar in pressure are excluded from these commitments because they are of much smaller scale, tend to be undertaken in the public highway and are controlled under the provisions of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and Traffic Management Act 2004. They are also planned and implemented in much shorter timescales resulting in short-term impacts which are generally less significant and restricted to the communities in the immediate vicinity of the works.

In this document, we interpret **amenity** to mean the natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. We also include within this interpretation the impact of our works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.

By **works** we mean constructing new transmission or distribution infrastructure such as overhead lines, underground cables, sealing end compounds and substations; pipelines, compressor stations, pressure reduction installations and other above ground gas installations (where all are part of networks operating above 7 bar (gauge) pressure); major refurbishment of any of these; and the dismantling and removal of any parts of the system.

By **stakeholders** we mean organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by our works. By **communities** we include those stakeholders (organisations and individuals including residents) with a particular remit or interest in the local area affected by the works.



Before
Construction of one of two new gas pipelines through the south west.



After
Careful reinstatement of the land upon completion of the groundwork.

Location: Gas pipeline reinforcement at Milford Haven to Aberdulais.



A reinstatement to a road crossing on the route of The South West Reinforcement Project. The breach was repaired using traditional Devon Banks methods.

Our Commitments

We, at National Grid, have made ten commitments to underpin our aspirations to engage positively with stakeholders and communities and to meet our amenity responsibilities when undertaking electricity and gas works.

1. Establishing need

We will only seek to build electricity lines or pipelines along new routes, or above ground installations in new locations, where our existing infrastructure cannot be technically or economically upgraded to meet system security standards and regulatory obligations, where forecasted increases in demand for electricity or gas will not be satisfied by other means, or where connections to customers are required.

2. Involving stakeholders and communities

We will promote genuine and meaningful stakeholder and community engagement. We will meet and, where appropriate, exceed the statutory requirements for consultation or engagement.

We will adopt the following principles to help us meet this commitment:

- ◆ we will seek to identify and understand the views and opinions of all the stakeholders and communities who may be affected by our works
- ◆ we will provide opportunities for engagement from the early stages of the process, where options and alternatives are being considered and there is the greatest scope to influence the design of the works
- ◆ we will endeavour to enable constructive debate to take place, creating open and two-way communication processes
- ◆ we will ensure that benefits, constraints and adverse impacts of proposed works are communicated openly for meaningful stakeholder and community comment and discussion. We will be clear about any aspects of the works that cannot be altered
- ◆ we will utilise appropriate methods and effort in engaging stakeholders and communities, proportionate to the scale and impact of the works
- ◆ we will provide feedback on how views expressed have been considered and the outcomes of any engagement process or activity

3. Routing of networks and site selection

If new infrastructure is required, we will seek to avoid the following areas which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, wildlife or cultural significance: National Parks; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; National Scenic Areas; Heritage Coasts; World Heritage Sites; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Special Protection Areas; Special Areas of Conservation; Ramsar sites; National Nature Reserves; Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and registered parks and gardens.

4. Minimising the effects of new infrastructure

We will seek to minimise the effects of works and new infrastructure on communities by having particular regard to safety, noise and construction traffic. We will also seek to minimise the effects of new infrastructure on areas which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, wildlife or cultural significance and other sites valued for their amenity such as listed buildings, conservation areas, areas of archaeological interest, local wildlife sites, historic parks and gardens and historic battlefields. We will take into account the significance of these and other areas through consultation with local authorities and other stakeholders with particular interests in such sites.

5. Mitigating adverse effects of works

We will undertake relevant environmental investigations and report on these in any applications for consent for new works. We will use best practice environmental impact assessment techniques to assess possible effects of our works and identify opportunities for mitigation measures. In the course of this we will consult with relevant stakeholders and affected landowners. Where works are likely to have an adverse effect on amenity, we will carry out mitigation measures to reduce those effects as far as reasonably practicable.

6. Offsetting where mitigation is not practicable

Where mitigation measures cannot adequately mitigate against loss of amenity, or where mitigation is not practicable, we will offer to undertake practical offsetting measures. These measures, which will be developed in discussion with relevant stakeholders, could include landscaping and planting works or other benefits to affected communities.

7. Enhancing the environment around our works

When undertaking works, we will consider what practicable measures can be taken to enhance areas in the vicinity of the works for the benefit of local communities and the natural environment.

8. Monitoring and learning for the future

We will monitor, evaluate and review our engagement processes so that we can learn from our experiences and continue to improve engagement programmes in the future. We will carry out periodic reviews of the environmental impact of our works and consider the effectiveness of our assessment and any mitigation we have undertaken. The results of these reviews will be used to foster continuous improvement in the environmental assessment and management of works. In undertaking all reviews of our processes and procedures we will take into account stakeholder and community feedback.

9. Reviewing these commitments

We intend to review these commitments at least every five years. Additional revisions will be made as necessary in response to new legislation, policy and guidance. As a responsible company practising good corporate governance, we will review the relevance of these commitments and report on our web site case studies illustrating our stakeholder and community engagement and our performance in preserving amenity.

10. Working with others

We require others undertaking works on our behalf to demonstrate these same commitments and we will create an environment where best practice can be shared and delivered.

Background

Meeting our duties under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act

Electricity Act 1989

Extracts from Schedule 9

Preservation of amenity: England and Wales

Paragraph 1(1)

1.-(1) In formulating any relevant proposals, a licence holder or a person authorised by exemption to generate or supply electricity-

- (a) shall have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and
- (b) shall do what he reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.

Paragraph 2(1)

A licence holder shall within twelve months from the grant of his licence prepare, and from time to time modify, a statement setting out the manner in which he proposes to perform his duty under paragraph 1(1) above, including in particular the consultation procedures.

This document sets out how National Grid, as an electricity transmission system licence holder, will meet the duty placed on it under Section 38 and Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 (see above). This duty relates to the preservation of amenity and forms only part of National Grid's wider environmental responsibilities. Information on those environmental issues not formally covered by Schedule 9, such as our role in countering climate change, in connecting new and renewable sources of electricity generation, in pollution control, and in electric and magnetic fields is available in other publications.

There is no equivalent to a Schedule 9 statement requirement in the provisions of the Gas Act 1986. However, National Grid believes that the principles in this document should apply equally to both our electricity and gas transmission and gas distribution works above 7 bar in pressure.



History

The first significant revision to our Schedule 9 Statement was prepared following a stakeholder workshop facilitated by the Environment Council in 2001. The statement and our performance in meeting the commitments were reviewed in 2006 and our statement was modified slightly as a result. In preparing that revision we consulted the bodies referred to in Schedule 9 of the Act which have statutory responsibilities for amenity, namely: Natural England; Countryside Council for Wales; CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments; and English Heritage. In addition, we consulted other non-government organisations concerned with amenity such as: Civic Trust; Council for National Parks (now the Campaign for National Parks); Tree Council; Wildlife Trusts; RSPB; CPRE; and representatives of other stakeholder groups together with our staff.

Preparing this policy

With the advent of the Planning Act 2008, we have incorporated our Schedule 9 statement duty into this wider policy, which incorporates gas works (above 7 bar in pressure), and new commitments to stakeholder and community engagement. In preparing our stakeholder and community engagement commitments we commissioned work from the consultancies, Corven and Entec UK, utilised best practice from 3G Communications Ltd., and met with a number of non-government organisations.

We are keen to hear your views on this policy comments should be sent to:
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