

The Planning Act 2008

National Grid is committed to genuine and meaningful community engagement throughout the development of our major projects.

The Planning Act 2008 sets out how companies should consult the public about major projects, but we try to go beyond this wherever we can.

Infrastructure Planning Commission

The Planning Act 2008 covers the planning application and consent process for nationally significant infrastructure projects, which include power stations and overhead lines of 132,000 volts and above. The Act established the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) which came into being on 1 October 2009 and to which applications must be made from 1 March 2010.

The IPC is a Non Departmental Government Body sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Its role is to examine applications for the development of nationally significant infrastructure projects and, if the National Policy Statement (NPS) is in place, to decide whether to grant 'development consent' and if so, under what conditions.



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Further information on the IPC can be found on their website on their website at <http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk>.

Applications to the IPC must accord with NPSs, drafted by the Government, which cover different areas, such as transport and energy. Six NPSs are being produced for the energy sector, including for electricity networks and nuclear power.

National Grid must apply to the IPC for a Development Consent Order for new overhead lines and any associated development, such as new substations. We decide what associated development to include in the application for each project, based on guidance given by Government. We can also include in our application any rights over land that we need to obtain from landowners that we haven't already secured through voluntary means.

In most circumstances applications will be decided by the IPC within a year of the application being accepted. Where necessary, hearings into applications will be held.

Consultation

Pre-application consultation with statutory consultees and local communities is a key part of the Act. Developers must consult interested parties, including the public, local authorities and statutory bodies, such as Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency.

National Grid is committed to genuine and meaningful stakeholder and community

engagement throughout project development. We will meet and, where we can, exceed the statutory requirements for consultation or engagement. Our Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy sets out the principles we will adopt to help us meet our commitment. The policy is on our website (see below for link).

Thorough consultation takes place with the statutory bodies that have local and specific knowledge of archaeological sites and the local environment, which could influence the project. This ensures that vital information is shared and included in the planning of projects at an early stage.

Statement of Community Consultation

Before we consult the public, we set out how we will do it in a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC). We consult local authorities when we draft the SOCC, so they can comment on how, when and with whom we consult on projects to ensure that local concerns are addressed throughout the project.

As well as producing a SOCC, National Grid produces a consultation strategy which describes each stage in more detail.

After each stage of the consultation we will report on the feedback received and how it will influence the project development. We will also produce a report covering all of the pre-application consultation, which we will submit to the IPC as part of our Development Consent Order application.

Consultation on route corridors

The first stage of our consultation on new overhead power lines focuses on proposed route corridor options – the broad swathes of land within which an overhead line could be routed. We will also explain how we decided which route corridor options to consult on, for technical, environmental and cost reasons. This is an opportunity for local communities and statutory consultees to offer local knowledge and perspective, and influence the selection of the preferred route corridor.

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Consultation on route alignment

When we have a preferred route corridor, we will undertake further detailed studies to establish the precise route of the overhead line and the positions of the pylons. During this stage, we will consult local communities, statutory consultees and landowners so that they input directly into the development of an overhead line route alignment. We will establish community forums to exchange and discuss information and issues relevant to the project, and thematic groups to focus on the environmental and wider amenity impacts of the project, through the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process.

At the end of this stage of consultation we will have a detailed overhead line route alignment showing pylon positions and information such as pylon types to be used. We will have completed the EIA process and assembled all of the documentation so we can submit our application to the IPC.

Consultation on the Development Consent Order

Once it has accepted a Development Consent Order application, the IPC will carry out a statutory period of consultation during which local communities and statutory consultees can comment on the application direct to the IPC.

Infrastructure Planning Commission website:

<http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/>

Planning Act 2008:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyimplementation/reformplanningsystem/planningbill/>

National Policy Statements:

<http://www.nationalpolicystatements.org.uk/>

National Grid Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy:

<http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/LandandDevelopment/SC/Responsibilities/sched9/schedule+9.html>