

Undergrounding policy: Approach to existing overhead lines

Our approach is always to seek to retain our existing overhead lines in situ. To promote the successful development of sites crossed by existing overhead lines, and the creation of well-designed places, National Grid has developed '[a sense of place, design guidelines for development near high voltage overhead lines](#)'.*

There are significant technical, cost and environmental challenges associated with relocation or undergrounding of high voltage overhead lines. Any proposals to alter existing overhead lines crossing or on the edge of development sites will therefore require special justification. It will be for the promoter of the site to demonstrate to National Grid why the development cannot take place with the existing overhead line in situ. National Grid strongly believes in the need to run its transmission operations in a way that is as supportive as possible of the broader needs of society. Therefore, National Grid will support proposals for the relocation or undergrounding of existing high voltage overhead lines across sites where the developer can demonstrate that the development could not take place with the overhead line in situ and where such proposals satisfy both the two following sets of criteria:

1. Where it can be clearly demonstrated by the promoter that such proposals will

- ◆ directly facilitate a major development or infrastructure project of national importance which has been identified as such by central government; and
- ◆ provide a beneficial step change in the environmental character and quality of the associated area; whilst at the same time not resulting in any unreasonable detriment to the environmental character and quality of the area to which the overhead line is relocated or undergrounded;

and

2. Where National Grid is satisfied that such proposals for relocation or undergrounding will

- ◆ not compromise the security of supply, the reliability and the maximum capability of the high voltage transmission system now or in the foreseeable future; and
- ◆ be technically feasible, fully compliant with National Grid's current design specifications and achievable in terms of system outages and resources within a timescale that does not adversely affect National Grid's wider investment programme; and
- ◆ be fully funded by the promoter, who will also be responsible for securing all agreements in principle to allow National Grid to site its equipment on land and acquire any necessary land without the need to resort to compulsory powers.

* These comprehensive site layout, design and landscaping guidelines provide advice and pragmatic solutions to demonstrate how a creative design approach can minimise the impact of overhead lines. They promote design initiatives which help to retain land values; ensure that new good quality environments are built; that residential densities can be retained; and that the environmental impacts of overhead lines are minimised. They demonstrate that for many developments, overhead lines can be retained in situ without adversely affecting sites' development potential. For further information visit the Sense of Place website at: <http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/senseofplace>