

Going underground: Local people invited to help develop plans which could see section of New Forest overhead power line buried

Two public information events to be held on New Forest National Park plans

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- Local people invited to help develop proposals which could see section of overhead electricity line taken down and replaced with underground cable
- National Grid working closely with the New Forest National Park Authority and others on the project
- Public information events are due to be held in the village of Hale

Local residents are being invited to help develop plans which could see a section of overhead line in the New Forest National Park removed and replaced with electric power lines buried underground.

The work is part of National Grid's Visual Impact Provision project* a major initiative to reduce the visual impact of existing high voltage power lines in protected areas across England and Wales.

In November 2014, a section of power lines near the village of Hale were first identified by an independent study as having a major landscape and visual impact.

National Grid has since been working with local organisations including the

New Forest National Park Authority, the National Trust, the Verderers of the New Forest, the Forestry Commission and Natural England to investigate burying the cables.

Local people can come and find out how the plans are shaping up and give feedback at two events being held as follows:

Date: Friday 1 July

Time: 4.00pm-8.00pm

Venue: Hale Village Hall, Hatchett Green, Hale, Fordingbridge, SP6 2NE

Date: Saturday 2 July

Time: 10am – 4pm

Venue: Hale Village Hall, Hatchett Green, Hale, Fordingbridge, SP6 2NE

Members of National Grid's project team will be available to answer questions and discuss the project in more detail.

Sarah Kelly, Landscape Officer, New Forest National Park Authority, said: "The overhead high voltage electricity line that crosses Hale Purlieu cuts across one of the most beautiful parts of the New Forest National Park. National Grid has been investigating the possibility of undergrounding this line and the events at Hale Village Hall are a great opportunity to find out more about these feasibility studies. We would urge people to take this opportunity to find out more and also give your feedback to National Grid."

Hector Pearson, National Grid VIP Project Manager said: "We're considering potential route corridor options where we feel we could bury the power cables, enabling us to take down some existing pylons.

"We are looking at a range of options and listening to the advice from local experts. While undoubtedly there would be some local disturbance and inconvenience while dismantling the pylons and laying the cables, we feel that removing the pylons from this key part of the New Forest would have long term benefits."

He added: "We're keen to share these plans with the local community and to find out what they think about them."

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Notes for editors

*About Visual Impact Provision

All electricity transmission owners are funded by a price control mechanism which is agreed with and set by Ofgem, the electricity and gas markets regulator. Ofgem has agreed a set of price controls and incentives for the period from April 2013 to March 2021. The new price controls and incentives include a provision of £500 million to mitigate the visual impact of existing electricity infrastructure in nationally protected landscapes in Great Britain.

For National Grid, which is the electricity transmission owner in England and Wales, this means considering the visual amenity of our existing infrastructure in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.

- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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