

Local community invited to join study on reducing visual impact of existing power lines in part of the North Wessex Downs AONB

Local residents are being invited to help with a study into reducing the visual impact of pylons in part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

20 Feb 2015

In November 2014, National Grid identified a section of overhead power line near Pewsey, as having a significant visual impact on the landscape. The company is now working with the North Wessex Downs AONB to investigate whether it's possible to reduce the impact of this power line in the AONB.

As part of this initiative National Grid is inviting local people to share their knowledge of the area and help influence their assessments of these lines. A public event is planned for Tuesday 3 March in Pewsey, which will give local people chance to share their views and local knowledge.

Members of the project team will be on hand to answer questions and provide additional information about the project.

The event will take place from 2pm until 8pm at:

- **Pewsey Heritage Centre, Avonside Works, High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5AF**

The information gathered will be used by National Grid as it investigates whether the section of line in the AONB could be part of the final shortlist of projects to benefit from the Visual Impact Provision* project. This is a major initiative to reduce the visual impact of existing energy transmission lines in protected areas of Great Britain; it will make use of a £500 million allowance made available by energy regulator Ofgem until 2021.

Henry Oliver, Director of the North Wessex Downs AONB said: "We're delighted to have been shortlisted for this programme. It underlines the outstanding qualities of the landscapes of the North Wessex Downs right up there with the Peak District, Snowdonia and New Forest National Parks. The Pewsey Vale has it all: chalk downs rich in wildlife and beautiful flowers, tranquillity, magnificent views, a wealth of ancient monuments and villages full of character. However, the pylons that march across this landscape are undoubtedly an eyesore. We are looking forward to working with the National Grid and the local community to remove or reduce their impact."

Hector Pearson, National Grid VIP Project Manager said: "National Grid's electricity network is vital to our way of life, but this project provides a real opportunity to help reduce its impact on treasured landscapes like the North Wessex Downs AONB. These events are the first step in gathering essential information to help us to consider how we could potentially reduce the visual impact of these overhead lines and whether we could take this further forward."

The North Wessex Downs AONB is one of eight areas across England and Wales identified which could benefit from the Visual Impact Provision project. A Stakeholder Advisory Group made up of organisations dedicated to protecting precious landscapes across England and Wales will decide which locations from this final shortlist will be taken forward for feasibility work and potential engineering projects.

Residents who are unable to attend the drop-in session can still contribute to the research and register for project updates on the website www.nationalgrid.com/vip.

Contact for media information only

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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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