New converter station at Flintshire Bridge ready to start commissioning

Work to start shortly on commissioning the new Flintshire Bridge converter station which is part of the £1bn Western Link project to being renewable energy from Scotland to homes and businesses in England and Wales.

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- **Work is starting to commission the Flintshire Bridge converter station**
- **More than eighty per cent of the underground cable is laid**
- **The cable has been installed under the River Dee**

Work starts very shortly to commission the converter station – now named Flintshire Bridge converter station – built on Deeside Industrial Park as part of the Western Link project.

All the buildings are complete and all the electrical equipment needed to connect the Western Link cables to the existing national grid has been installed.

“Completing the construction is a major milestone,” said Senior Project Manager Mark Williams. “We start the main commissioning work, which is a lengthy, complex process, later this month. But although we still need to lay some underground cable on Deeside Industrial Park, most of the work that has affected people in the Deeside area, such as bringing the large transformers to site, is complete.

“The area is transformed from what it looked like in 2013, before we started work, and it will change again when we carry out landscaping around the site. We believe this will enhance the surrounding area considerably,” he added.

The alternating current cables needed to connect the converter station to National Grid’s substation in Connah’s Quay have been pulled through pipes installed under the River Dee, and laid underground along the banks of the river up to the substation. Work on this section is expected to be complete in the next couple of months.

The project has also involved laying around 30 kilometres of direct current underground cable from Leasowe on the northern tip of the Wirral to Flintshire Bridge converter station. The majority of this cable has been laid, including the two-kilometre stretch along the A540, the longest section being laid in a main road. It is expected that work will be completed here shortly.

Mark Williams added: “We appreciate that our work is affecting local residents, commuters and businesses on Deeside Industrial Park, and we’d like to say a big ‘thank you’ to everyone for their patience so far.

“The good news is that by the end of the year we expect to have laid all the cable and joined the sections together, and completed most of the reinstatement of the land where we’ve laid the cables. We may need a handful of road closures to complete the work and if we do, we’ll post these on our website www.westernhvdclink.co.uk.”

Most of the cable is laid in trenches. The cable is brought to the site on a special transporter around 26 metres long, and a powerful winch pulls the cable into the trench. The trench is then backfilled and the land reinstated according to the requirements of the landowners and to its previous condition, as a minimum.

Joining the cables together – known as ‘jointing’ – is highly specialised work and needs to be carried out in a controlled environment. Specialist teams work inside containers, where they create two joints, one for each cable, with each joint taking between seven to ten days. Once the work is complete the containers are removed and the land reinstated.

Out at sea, work is continuing to lay the subsea cable to connect to North Ayrshire, where work is continuing to construct a second converter station and install approximately four kilometres of underground cable.

If people have any queries on the project they can contact the Community Relations Team by emailing westernlink@communityrelations.co.uk or calling 0800 021 7878. They can also find more information on the website www.westernhvdclink.co.uk.

The £1 billion Western Link project is a joint venture between National Grid and ScottishPower Transmission. When complete, it will bring renewable energy from Scotland to homes and businesses in England and Wales and help the UK meet its carbon reduction targets.

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Notes for editors

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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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