

National Grid survey sheds lights on 300 million year history of Morecambe Bay

First survey in decades carried out in Morecambe Bay as National Grid prepares for tunnel construction

15 Jul 2016

- Samples dating back 300 million years being analysed following first major survey work in Morecambe Bay for five decades
- Findings will give a new insight into the geological make-up of the bay through the ages
- Information and samples will be shared with British Geological Survey
- The surveys were carried out as part of investigations for the North West Coast Connections Project

National Grid is currently analysing the results of surveys which will give geologists and historians an insight into the history of Morecambe Bay dating back 300 million years.

Over the past two months, engineering firm Fugro has been drilling boreholes in Morecambe Bay as part of information gathering for National Grid's North West Coast Connections project.

The results have given an insight into the conditions which make the bay hospitable to wildlife, showing how habitats renew to allow small crustaceans to survive.

They have also produced layers from different eras – ranging from the last Ice Age to as far back as 300 million years ago.

These were the first major surveys carried out in Morecambe Bay since 1968 and the first to ever be carried out in this area of the bay.

Some of the samples have been sent for microscopic analysis and carbon dating and National Grid has offered to share the samples and information with the British Geological Survey.

Robert Powell, National Grid project manager, said: "As well as providing valuable analysis for the NWCC project, these surveys have given us the opportunity to uncover fascinating information about Morecambe Bay.

"We're also delighted to be able to share our findings with the British Geological Survey. We hope that they provide an interesting and valuable insight into the bay."

The surveys were carried out to help determine the route of a proposed tunnel to carry electricity cables under Morecambe Bay as part of the North West Coast Connections project.

The project is being carried out to connect the proposed nuclear power station at Moorside, West Cumbria, to the electricity network.

Details of the latest proposals will be made publicly available throughout a consultation later this year.

The proposals National Grid will be consulting on will provide details on where and how to build a new connection going:

- north from Moorside to a point on the existing network at Harker, near Carlisle; and
- south from Moorside across the Barrow Peninsula, through a tunnel which goes under Morecambe Bay and surfaces at an existing substation in Middleton, near Heysham in Lancashire, where it can connect into the existing network.

In advance of this people wishing to receive information about the consultation and the proposed connection design are encouraged to register their details on the North West Coast Connections project website: www.northwestcoastconnections.com.

People can also register for text alerts by texting 'NWCC' to 80800 to receive notification when information about the project becomes available.

For any other enquiries, please contact the project team direct using any of the following methods:

- Freephone: 0800 876 6990
- Email: nationalgrid@northwestcoastconnections.com
- Freepost: Freepost NG NWCC

End

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Notes to Editors:

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- 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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