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Chesterfield to Willington

PINS Pre-Application Planning Services – Programme Document

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nationalgrid

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Programme Document has been prepared by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) as a requirement under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus in respect of the Chesterfield to Willington Project.

1.2 Purpose and Structure

1.2.1 This Programme Document sets out the timetables and describes the activities necessary for an effective pre-application process, including the level of pre-application service requested from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and consultation with various parties required under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) as per the requirements for a Programme Document set out in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application prospectus. It is expected that this document will be updated at key milestones throughout the pre-application process as the Project is further developed.

1.2.2 This Programme Document is structured as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction and purpose and structure of the document
- Section 2: Background to Chesterfield and Willington ('the Project')
- Section 3: PINS Pre-application Service
- Section 4: Expected Submission Timeframe
- Section 5: Timeframe of the pre-application process
- Section 6: Main issues for resolution
- Section 7: Engaging with statutory consultees and Local Planning Authorities
- Section 8: Pre-application risks and how these are tracked and managed
- Section 9: Approach to preparing Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI).

2. Background to the Project

2.1 Overview of the Project

- 2.1.1 The Project is a scheme to reinforce the electricity network by building and operating approximately 60 kilometres (km) of new 400,000 volt (400kV) overhead electricity line. The overhead line would connect a new 400kV substation at Chesterfield in North-East Derbyshire (which will extend to the south of an existing 275kV substation in that location) and the existing Willington Substation in South Derbyshire. It is proposed that the Chesterfield Substation will be consented and constructed as a separate project.
- 2.1.2 The Project is wholly within the County of Derbyshire, and the local authorities that are presently anticipated to be affected by the Project's proposals are as follows:
- Derbyshire County Council
 - North-East Derbyshire District Council
 - Amber Valley Borough Council
 - Erewash Borough Council
 - South Derbyshire District Council
 - Bolsover District Council
 - Derby City Council

2.2 Planning Act 2008

- 2.2.1 The Project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), as defined by the Planning Act and the Planning Act 2008 (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) (Electricity Lines) Order 2013, as it involves the installation of an electric line above ground of more than 2km, which will operate at in excess of 132kV in England.
- 2.2.2 As an NSIP, the Project requires the grant of development consent by the making of a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008.
- 2.2.3 For the purpose of Section 115 of the Planning Act 2008, development consent may also be granted for associated development. At this stage of the project the full extent of associated development has not yet been defined.

3. PINS Pre-application Service

3.1 Pre-application Service

- 3.1.1 The Project requested the 'Standard' level of pre-application service, which has since been confirmed by PINS. This is an appropriate and proportionate level of pre-application and is reflective of the scale and nature of the project and NGET's level of experience as an applicant.
- 3.1.2 The Project is similar to others within the Great Grid Upgrade that are further developed in their programme, and as such, lessons learnt and expertise in producing documentation are available to enable the application to be of a standard acceptable for examination.
- 3.1.3 The standard level of service will provide the Project with project update meetings, draft document review and risk review.

4. Expected Submission Timeframe

- 4.1.1 Non-Statutory Consultation on the Project has concluded, held between 14th May and 17th September 2024.
- 4.1.2 Due to the early stage of the Project the exact timeframes for submission are not yet known. However, the anticipated DCO application submission is Q1 2027. The submission date timeframe will be refined as the period of submission draws closer. NGET will provide PINS with regular updates regarding the submission date as the project progresses.

5. Timeframe of the pre-application process

5.1.1 An anticipated timeline of the pre-application process is set out in Table 1 below. The pre application timeframe will be refined, and further detail added as required following Non-statutory and Statutory Consultation and as the period of submission draws closer.

Table 1: Anticipated submission timeframe

Activity	Expected Timeframe (Status)
Non-Statutory Consultation	14 th May 2024 to 17 th September 2024 (extended due to General Election)(Concluded)
Introductory meetings with Statutory Consultees	March to September 2024 (Concluded)
EIA Scoping	Submitted 31 st October 2024, Scoping Opinion received 10 th December 2024 (Concluded)
Secondary engagement with Statutory Consultees	November 2024 to April 2025 (Ongoing)
Second meeting with PINS	6 th March 2025
Third meeting with PINS	Q2 2025 (TBC)
Fourth meeting with PINS	Q3 2025 (TBC)
Consultation on the SoCC	Q4 2025 (Planned)
Statutory Consultation	Q1 2026 (Planned)
Targeted Consultation	Q2 2026 (if required)
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone	Q3 2026 (Planned)
PINS review of draft DCO documentation	Q3 2026 (Planned)
DCO Submission	Q1 2027 (Planned)

6. Main issues for resolution

6.1.1 The Project is still at an early stage of development and NGET has now completed its first round of Non-statutory Consultation with the key themes currently being reviewed. Therefore, NGET is still gaining an understanding of the main issues on the project. Visibility and understanding of these will improve when the review of all feedback from Non-statutory Consultation has been completed.

6.1.2 However in developing the Project, NGET's approach is mindful of the issues identified generally in National Policy Statements EN-1 and EN-5 as being likely to be relevant to projects of this type, including:

- Air Quality
- Aviation and defence
- Alternatives
- Biodiversity and geological conservation
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Climate Adaptation and Resilience
- Electric and Magnetic Fields
- Flood risk
- Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Good design
- Hazardous Substances
- Health
- Historic environment
- Land rights and land interests
- Landscape and visual effects
- Noise and vibration
- Land use including open space, green infrastructure, green belt
- Resource and Waste Management
- Safety
- Security
- Socio economic impacts
- Strategic planning and co-ordination
- Traffic and Transport
- Water Quality and Resources

7. Engaging with statutory consultees and Local Planning Authorities

7.1.1 Early engagement has commenced with the affected Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), and engagement will continue throughout the pre-application stage. To date, contact has been made with and/or introductory meetings have been held with the following LPAs:

- Derbyshire County Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- South Derbyshire District Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Derby City Council
- Amber Valley Borough Council

7.1.2 To date, the above LPAs have been met with throughout the Non-Statutory Consultation period. NGET has discussed the potential to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with the affected LPAs to assist LPAs with resourcing required to adequately engage with the project. Draft Engagement Plans will be shared and implemented at the earliest opportunity.

The Engagement Plans will:

- Provide host authorities with a look ahead to when key planning and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) activities are programmed to take place;
- Set out an overarching protocol for engaging with the host authorities on planning and EIA matters;
- Assist host authorities with their resource planning for the project;
- Assist all parties in agreeing Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs); and
- Provide guidelines to assist all parties in the development of Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) and Principal Areas of Disagreement (PADs) (if required).

7.1.3 Feedback has been sought from stakeholders as part of the Non-Statutory Consultation. A programme of engagement is currently in development to be discussed with stakeholders, including methods for cost recovery. Contact has been made with all prescribed consultees and other stakeholders relevant to the project. To date, meetings have been held with the following bodies:

- Environment Agency

- Natural England
- Canal and River Trust
- Coal Authority
- National Trust
- Historic England
- National Highways
- The Wildlife Trust
- Network Rail
- CPRE

7.1.4 Further meetings are being held with the relevant stakeholders to enact a plan of engagement and discuss any comments that have been raised. This is anticipated to be ongoing throughout the pre-application process. The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be developed and provided to stakeholders for comment ahead of Statutory Consultation.

7.1.5 Further engagement with PINS will continue at relevant milestones and confirmed as the Project develops.

8. Pre-application risks and how these are tracked and managed

Risk	Description of Risk	Tracking and managing risk
Limited local authority resources which could limit their ability to engage with the proposals.	LPAs may have limited resources to have effective communication throughout the pre-application process for the DCO.	PPAs are to be entered into with the relevant LPAs to ensure that resource allocation is managed to have effective dialogue. Meetings have commenced with the LPAs.
Limited statutory consultee resources which could limit their ability to engage with the proposals.	Statutory consultees may have limited resources to have effective communication throughout the pre-application process for the DCO.	At present an SLA is in place between National Grid and prescribed bodies including Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Cost recovery agreements will be put in place where appropriate for relevant stakeholders to help enable effective dialogue. The introduction of cost recovery will be engaged with positively, and engagement strategies are being mapped out with stakeholders.
Local authority or statutory resource/ability to respond to scoping	Resourcing and capacity issues may see difficulty for stakeholders and LPAs to respond within specified timeframes.	Effective communication is currently being held with the LPAs with introductory

Risk	Description of Risk	Tracking and managing risk
consultation in the required timescales.		meetings and updates following Non-Statutory Consultation. Stakeholders were advised of the anticipated timescales for submission of the scoping report to allow for their review. Continued dialogue will ensure that adequate notice is given for stakeholders to respond to any new information.
Challenges accessing land for surveys in a timely manner.	With some ecological surveys having seasonality constraints, there are time constraints in conducting these.	Effective communication between the relevant disciplines and land agents, in order to plan a survey schedule and timeframe to ensure land access is achieved.

9. Approach to Preliminary Environmental Information

- 9.1.1 A Scoping Report was submitted in support of a request by NGET, under Regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, for a written Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Energy Security and Net Zero, administered by PINS on behalf of the SoS, to inform the EIA for the Project. Subsequently a Scoping Opinion was issued by PINS in December 2024.
- 9.1.2 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) will be prepared in accordance with the Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion. Further information on the approach to PEIR and EIA can be found in the Scoping Report 2024.

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