

## National Grid Snowdonia VIP project FAQ

### Overview

**Q What is the Snowdonia VIP project?**

A National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project in Snowdonia is a landscape enhancement project. It will significantly improve views of the Snowdonia National Park by removing 10 pylons and the overhead line that currently crosses the Dwyryd Estuary and replacing them with a connection in a tunnel deep underground.

**Q What are the objectives of the VIP project?**

A The VIP project aims to significantly enhance the landscape in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks in England and Wales. It seeks to achieve the maximum enhancement to the view and landscape from the available funds whilst ensuring that no significant adverse impacts arise as a result.

It represents a major opportunity to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and environmental heritage within our most protected landscapes. The project is being driven by stakeholders and communities and was chosen from hundreds of potential alternatives.

**Q How long will the project take? When will it start?**

A From the start of construction on the ground through to completion – including the removal of the existing overhead line will take around six years.

Should we be successful in securing planning permission in July and securing all the necessary consents and funding approval, we aim to begin the work in early 2021 and aim to have the tunnel complete and new connection made in 2025 / 2026.

**Q Wouldn't the money be better spent on something else?**

A The provision of £500m has been made available to the Transmission Operators in England, Scotland and Wales specifically for this purpose. The money is not available to be spent on anything else.

**Q Why was this section chosen (there are worse sections elsewhere)?**

A The section was identified from hundreds of alternatives following a comprehensive, independent survey across AONBs and National Parks in England and Wales. It is one of only four in England and Wales along with line sections in the Dorset AONB, the North Wessex Downs AONB and Peak District National Park.

**Q What is the Stakeholder Advisory Group?**

A The independent Stakeholder Advisory Group was established at the start of 2014 and has advised National Grid on the VIP project throughout.

It is chaired by environmentalist and broadcaster, Chris Baines and includes senior representatives of 16 organisations including Natural Resources Wales, Cadw, Visit Wales (and their English Counterparts), Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales, Campaign to Protect Rural England, the National Trust, the Campaign for National Parks, the Ramblers and the Landscape Institute.

**Q Have local people been consulted?**

A National Grid has consulted widely with local people over the five-year development of the project. It has been advised throughout by a local Stakeholder Reference Group which comprises specialists from the National Park Authority, Gwynedd Council, Natural Resources Wales, Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service, Cadw and the National Trust. Gwynedd Councillors for the wards affected by the project have also represented the Town and Community Councils on this Group.

We have also held a number of well-attended public events locally since 2015 including statutory consultation in 2018 and 2019.

**Q How will you restore surroundings?**

Once the tunnel and replacement connection are fully installed, then we can begin the process of removing the overhead line including the 10 pylons and restoring the land (and estuary). As part of the VIP project, National Grid will continue to work with the National Park Authority, Gwynedd Council, Natural Resources Wales and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the removal of the overhead line and the restoration of the landscape is carefully managed to ensure its success.

**Q Will you be working across the whole site for the duration of the project?**

A It is likely that most of our work will be undertaken in the tunnel headhouse construction compounds, with additional areas being accessed for the pylon removal work. Construction would take place in a phased programme and levels of activity will vary at different stages. Work is likely to start at Garth first where we will need to sink the shaft to get the tunnel boring machine going – it will bore the tunnel running west to east. Once this is complete, the digging equipment will move to Cilfor to dig the shaft there. All of the arisings from the tunnel will be brought up at Garth so it is likely that most consistent activity will take place there.

**Q Construction work is noisy and creates dust. What will you do to keep this down?**

A As part of our planning application, we will demonstrate to the local authority that we will do everything possible to minimise noise and dust created as a result of our activity. There is industry best practice which National Grid is fully signed up to. National Grid's appointed main contractor will also be a part of the Considerate Constructor scheme which sets out a series of measures which contractors must abide by to safeguard the public.

There will also be a 24-hour helpline in operation during construction which members of the public can call immediately an issue arises.

**Q How will you take the pylons down?**

A There are number of ways in which the pylons can be taken down. The chosen method depends on the location but can include lowering them to the ground intact and taking them away on a lorry or taking them down piece by piece from the inside of the tower. We will use different removal techniques to suit specific locations and agree these techniques with the relevant authorities.

**Q What happens to the pylons when they are taken down?**

A The metal is largely recycled. The concrete bases are usually dug out to about 1m – 1.5m in depth and covered over with an appropriate material (usually a soil typical of the area) which is agreed with the landowner and ecologists.