



# Output Deliver Incentive

ODI Case Study

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nationalgrid

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# Introduction

We are always working to improve our stakeholder engagement – this is why we place community relations, and its importance, at the heart of our projects and engage and communicate with stakeholders and communities throughout the lifecycle of our vital infrastructure schemes.

This engagement helps us to develop and deliver effective consultation strategies and achieve planning consent for our projects from Local Authorities, or the Planning Inspectorate if a Development Consent Order (DCO) is required. Our approach also helps to keep various stakeholder groups informed about the essential work we need to do to maintain and enhance our networks and, it can help to increase public awareness and acceptance of the infrastructure we need to put in place. Through the learnings and improvements from our engagements, we can also continue to focus on delivering on longer term service level developments for our customers, stakeholders, and consumers.

During early project development, we engage proactively to ensure that the people impacted by our infrastructure have an opportunity to share their views and feed into our plans. On our larger projects, our proposals are shared at various stages of consultation with the public before our application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration. Our engagement then continues into construction where we work closely with local communities to make sure our activities have minimal impact on those who live and work in the area.

The case studies shared here are examples of how we have proactively engaged with local communities and stakeholders throughout the planning and delivery phase of our projects.

We have also included some high-level statistics from the construction phase of our projects below using data received between March 2022 and January 2023:

- We've engaged with stakeholders and communities across 24 separate projects.
- Our projects have been supported by six community relations agencies and we have sent over 15,000 communications to homes and businesses about our construction works.
- Our primary form of communication has been emails and letters, but we've handled over 120 phone calls (over 20% were incoming communications) and held multiple face to face meetings including public meeting / information events.
- We have dealt with 172 complaints, with the top reasons for complaints being 1) light/dust/noise/vibration and 2) traffic management.

# Yorkshire Green

## The Project

The Yorkshire Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) project is a proposal by National Grid Electricity Transmission to upgrade and reinforce the high-voltage power network, so that more low-carbon energy can get to homes and businesses in Yorkshire and further afield.

The project proposes new infrastructure including substations, overhead lines, underground cables, cable sealing and compounds (where underground cables meet overhead lines). It includes work to upgrade the existing transmission system, including the installation of new equipment at existing sites.

## Background

The Yorkshire GREEN project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and under the Planning Act 2008 needs to have a Development Consent Order (DCO) granted by the Secretary of State before it can be constructed. As part of this process, we are required to consult on our project proposals. On the Yorkshire GREEN project, we held non-statutory consultation in Spring 2021 and statutory consultation from October to December 2021. Following this, we completed a review of the design in response to feedback from residents and landowners.

## Update on engagement

We undertook three rounds of local, targeted consultation in 2022 following changes to the design as a result of feedback at statutory consultation and further project design work and environmental survey and assessment. This was to seek any additional feedback on the changes before finalising our proposal and submitting our DCO application.

Having submitted our development consent application on 15 November 2022, the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, now renamed the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, has accepted our application which has now progressed to examination.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders and communities as the project progresses.

# Bramford to Twinstead

## The Project

Bramford to Twinstead is a 29km network reinforcement, to the west of Ipswich and south of Sudbury on the Suffolk/Essex border. It is a key enabler to meeting the Government's ambition to connect 50GW of offshore wind by 2030. It will provide much needed network capability to transport increasing renewable and low carbon energy from proposed offshore wind, interconnectors, and new nuclear generation in East Anglia.

The proposals have been the subject of many rounds of public consultation since the requirement to reinforce the network was first identified around 2008. Work on the reinforcement paused in 2013 and resumed in 2020. Since then, the project has held three public consultations, including:

- a non-statutory consultation between March and May 2021
- a statutory consultation between January and March 2022
- an additional non-statutory consultation between September and October 2022.

The submission of an application for development consent is due to take place in April 2023. You can read more about the latest proposals [here](#).

Additionally, whilst the statutory consultation was due to be the final consultation on the reinforcement prior to the submission of an application for development consent, feedback from this consultation influenced changes in the design that were deemed significant enough for an additional round of public consultation to be held.

## Background

Before non-statutory consultation in Spring 2021, we consulted the host local authorities about our proposed Consultation Strategy. Similarly, the host authorities were provided with a draft Statement of Community Consultation and comments were taken on board in the final Statement of Community Consultation ahead of the statutory consultation in Spring 2022.

Consultation feedback over many years has influenced the shape and evolution of our proposals. This includes decisions to take down 25km of existing UK Power Networks 132kV line to make way for the proposed reinforcement and put forward 10km of undergrounding where the new reinforcement would pass through Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Stour Valley. Additionally, the removal of a further 2.5km of existing transmission line was actioned.

## Building Relations and Solutions

In response to host authority feedback about the local demographics and the ability of some sections of the local community to access information online, printed copies of feedback forms were included in the mailout to all properties within the Primary Consultation Zone (1km either side of the proposed corridor). Included in the mailout was a newsletter and details about where to find more information, how to participate in the consultation, who to contact in the project team and how to request printed copies of consultation materials.

Discussions with host local authorities helped shape our approach to which social media platforms might work best in the local area for geo-targeted social media advertising. Linking to our project website from host local authority websites hopefully also helped raise our digital awareness profile and increase footfall to our project website and online consultation materials.

We deferred the start of statutory consultation from November 2021 to 25 January 2022 at the request of a local Member of Parliament and host local authorities, so that some information about other network reinforcements in the region could be available at the same time. Commencement of the statutory consultation has therefore been aligned with information being made publicly available about [East Anglia GREEN](#) and [Sea Link](#).

To ensure members of the local community have access to the project team to be able to ask questions, we increased the number of online webinars from two to ten. We also increased the number of days we are holding bookable ‘Ask the expert’ calls from five to ten days.

In response to host authorities and a local MP we are looking to schedule four additional face-to-face public exhibitions and two additional ‘ask the expert’ bookable session days in the local area during the statutory consultation period.

## Outcomes

Across the three consultations held on the reinforcement since work resumed, we have seen a significant response to all of our public consultations:

<b>Non-statutory consultation (Mar – May 2021)</b>	<b>Statutory consultation (Jan – Mar 2022)</b>	<b>Targeted consultation (Sept – Oct 2022)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>82</b> stakeholders and members of the public took part in webinar briefings or Ask the Experts sessions</li> <li>- Presentations were given to <b>five</b> district/county councils, <b>thirteen</b> parish councils and <b>two</b> MPs</li> <li>- <b>537 responses</b> were received from stakeholders and members of the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>72</b> stakeholders and members of the public took part in webinar briefings or Ask the Experts sessions</li> <li>- Presentations were given to <b>four</b> district/county councils, <b>five</b> parish councils and <b>two</b> MPs</li> <li>- <b>211</b> stakeholders and members of the public attended our public exhibitions</li> <li>- <b>577 responses</b> were received from stakeholders and members of the local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>18</b> stakeholders and members of the public took part in webinar briefings or Ask the Experts sessions</li> <li>- Presentations were given to <b>three</b> district/county councils, <b>four</b> parish councils and <b>one</b> MP</li> <li>- <b>19</b> stakeholders and members of the public attended our public exhibition</li> <li>- <b>358 responses</b> were received from stakeholders and members of the local community</li> </ul>

# Peak East VIP

## The Project

The Visual Impact Provision project in the Peak District National Park in South Yorkshire, aims to reduce the visual impact of National Grid's overhead line in the National Park, near the village of Dunford Bridge.

Following a review of the overhead electricity transmission lines in our nationally designated landscapes, our independent Stakeholder Advisory Group shortlisted this one. They agreed that the best way to address the impact of the overhead line was to remove a short section and replace it with an underground cable. The project represents a major opportunity to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and environmental heritage of this precious Peak District landscape.

The section of overhead line being removed runs from an existing sealing end compound, near the Woodhead Tunnel at Dunford Bridge, then heads eastwards along the River Don along the National Park boundary and out of the park.

It is part of the 400kV electricity route connecting Stalybridge, Stocksbridge and Thorpe Marsh 400kV substations. The line was constructed between 1966 and 1967 and serves as an integral connection point for the local distribution network for the Manchester area.

## Background

We expected the works at Dunford Bridge to be challenging, as the vast majority take place within an extremely sensitive environment, next to the river Don, in the Peak District National Park. We needed to build a temporary trail diversion, construction access and bridge crossings over the river, so that we could temporarily close a 1.5km section of the Trans Pennine Trail where the new cables would be installed.

The location too for the new cable sealing end, whilst identified with input from local stakeholders, is within a local wildlife reserve that is managed by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. The Trust had significant concerns and was a key objector to the project, speaking against the proposals at the planning stage.

## Building Relations and Solutions

Since 2015, while developing our plans, we have engaged local stakeholders and the local community in how those plans have been shaped. Technical workshops with stakeholders and public 'drop-in' events in and around the National Park have been key to that and a Stakeholder Reference Group for the project was formed involving representatives from the Peak District National Park Authority, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, the Trans Pennine Trail, Natural England, the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and Dunford Parish Council.

Burying a section of the line below ground along the route of the Trans Pennine Trail was the preferred option with stakeholders and members of the public. We continued to work extensively with those groups to identify and develop our preferred route and the details behind our proposals, taking account of a wide range of environmental, archaeological and land issues.

Following public consultation in late 2018 / early 2019, we applied for planning permission in 2019 and in summer 2020, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and the Peak District National Park Authority both gave their approval. Construction started in spring 2021 and is now nearing completion.

We expanded the Stakeholder Reference Group to include other interested stakeholders that were focused on rights of way, such as the local access forum members, local councilors, and various environmental groups. This became the Community Liaison Group for the project which met regularly through the construction phase. We also included a Project information Centre as part of our construction site set up, where we could hold meetings and other stakeholder events including school visits and visits by key stakeholders.

A dedicated project website was developed and kept fully updated with any news or developments to the project. A newsletter was also published to keep the wider community aware of works and progress.

Additionally, we formed a working partnership with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust where we built an education program for local school children. This had the additional benefit of building relationships and trust with the main objector to the project.

The project team also embraced an “open door policy”, where any stakeholder or other party could visit the project and see the work being carried out. With our contractors, we instilled the need to attach the same importance, care and thought to the environment as they do to safety when planning work, carrying out risk assessment and before setting to work.

Being able to host visits to the construction site and show key stakeholders and interested groups the care, diligence, and respect for the environment that the project team were taking, paid great dividends – building trust, collaboration, respect and receiving high praise from key stakeholders.

Our contractors and project team too, took enormous pride and satisfaction at their environmental achievements – saving 40% of woodland trees that otherwise would have been cleared to make way for construction; creating and enhancing habitat for wildlife including the rare Willow Tit which were observed during construction; and delivering 18% biodiversity net gain, smashing the project’s 10% target.

### Stakeholder quotes

Following a visit to see work in progress, **Rachael Bice, CEO Yorkshire Wildlife Trust** commented:

*“It was heartening to hear and see about the work being done at Wogden Foot to minimise the damage to natural areas and to provide enhancements where-ever possible. The scheme focused on reducing the landscape impact of huge powerlines, was a cause for concern to YWT during the planning process particularly because of the willow tits which live in the area, whose habitat was at risk.*

*“It was clear from our visit the contract team are doing their best to work sensitively and do what they can for wildlife while also delivering this challenging infrastructure project. The original footprint of the scheme has been reduced leaving more scrubland and trees intact, so important for the species which rely on these undervalued habitats, bats roosts have been carefully worked around, more decaying wood is being left on site for willow tits.*

*“Additionally, the water, soil and thus seed bank of the site is being incredibly carefully managed. There are good signs for this project to result in a win-win for people and wildlife.”*

Similar comments were received from the **National Trust Advisory Board members** when they visited:

**Adrian Olivier** commented, *“A few years ago, David and I sat down and wrote a ten-point plan on how to carry out development properly in sensitive settings. It is as though, at Dunford Bridge, you have not only read and followed our plan, but have actually improved on it. It’s fantastic to see major infrastructure development being implemented so sensitively. It will show others that it can be done.”*

**David Parker** added *“It was tremendous to see the obvious commitment of the local team to “doing the right thing” for the environment on the project, making the most of opportunities and working with the utmost care with soil handling and the conservation of natural features on-site. Apart from the major landscape repair benefit of undergrounding the power cables, the project holds out the prospect of lasting additional environmental benefit both for nature and people, with biodiversity net gain and improved access.”*

And now that work is finally complete, the environmental achievements on the project have been recognised by none other than **Sir David Attenborough**, who sent a handwritten note to the project’s Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) chair Chris Baines to specifically praise the environmental work carried out to protect the willow tit’s habitat.



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