

VISUAL IMPACT
PROVISION

nationalgrid

Third Annual Report
June 2016 – May 2017



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Foreword by Chris Baines

In the past twelve months we have made very good progress despite the enormous complexity of the task.

We are planning to remove pylons and bury cables in some of the most sensitive and much-loved landscapes in England and Wales. Inevitably the geology, ecology and archaeology are all extremely challenging, and we have worked hard to find creative ways to satisfy their competing requirements. Even tasks as relatively simple as the preliminary surveys and ground investigation require great skill and patience. They also place considerable demands on the various authorities and agencies that need to give their approval.

As chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Group I am impressed by the level of professionalism that is being applied to the task by all parties. We have built up an exceptional degree of cooperation and mutual respect which is delivering significant benefits. The knowledge and experience of landscape issues among the Group's members has been welcomed and respected by National Grid's various senior staff and specialist consultants. They in turn have combined their world-class expertise with real inventiveness and it is clear that they regard the Visual Impact Provision project as extremely important. All those involved now share a passion for solving the problems and achieving excellence as we move towards the next stage of the project.

In the past year National Grid's professional staff and members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group have made joint site visits to both Snowdonia and the New Forest and these have proved particularly valuable. The contrast between these two landscapes is striking and the technical challenges that they pose are very different. By sharing our respective skills, in both cases we have been able to agree adjustments to the initial proposals which should help to smooth progress towards completion and increase the long term visual improvement even further.

Bringing the public, private and voluntary sectors together to deliver the Visual Impact Provision project is proving to be a powerful innovation and the regulator Ofgem should be congratulated for encouraging this particular partnership. By playing to their respective strengths it seems clear that all the different stakeholders find the process enjoyable, creative and very productive. As a result, I believe we are achieving better outcomes in particularly complex environmental circumstances.

There is unsettling uncertainty about the post-Brexit prospects for Britain's natural heritage. For almost the past half-century, European funding has been a cornerstone of legislative and financial support for our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks. The energy regulator's support for the Visual Impact Provision project has revealed an additional mechanism by which public funding can deliver public benefits in the landscape. As this programme progresses, I hope that other regulators, most notably those for the water, transport and health industries, will see the project as a model that they can adopt. Financial and skills support for the nation's shared landscapes from their respective regulated industries would be timely and very welcome.

The Visual Impact Provision project is set to deliver some specific landscape improvements in the Peak District, the New Forest, Dorset and Snowdonia, but its long term impact deserves to be much more far-reaching.



Chris Baines

Chairman of the Stakeholder Advisory Group
Visual Impact Provision project

Foreword by Hector Pearson

This has been another year of significant progress for the Visual Impact Provision project.

Detailed engineering and design work is producing four projects that will deliver significant benefits in some of the country’s most precious landscapes. National Grid’s engineering, planning and environmental teams have been working to find ways of replacing sections of high voltage overhead power lines with underground solutions in Dorset, the New Forest, the Peak District and Snowdonia.

The Visual Impact Provision project is steered by committed stakeholders who know and care about our landscape. The Stakeholder Advisory Group under the chairmanship of Chris Baines has guided the project through a number of challenging decisions this year as we have worked to refine route options for maximum landscape benefit while keeping impacts on environment and heritage to a minimum.

The national Stakeholder Advisory Group has in turn been informed by our local Stakeholder Reference Groups, comprising local technical experts with in-depth knowledge of local issues. The projects that we are progressing today owe a great deal to their expert advice and it has been refreshing to work alongside them in an open, transparent and collaborative way.

The wider public too has had the opportunity to make its views known and I am enormously encouraged that in all four locations we have received widespread support for our proposals.

The past year has also seen the benefits of the Visual Impact Provision project starting to be felt beyond the four prioritised sections of line, with the first payments to support small-scale projects delivered through the Landscape Enhancement Initiative.

Interest in this initiative continues to grow, and we expect to see even more schemes coming forward in future application windows.

There is a great sense of excitement as we look ahead to the coming year for the Visual Impact Provision project. We are aiming to submit our planning application for the Dorset project before the end of 2017, with the other three projects following on sequentially.

Overall, it is very encouraging to see how much can be achieved when organisations from across the spectrum work collaboratively together. As we move forward, we will continue in the same spirit of openness and transparency, and I look forward to seeing the Visual Impact Provision project progress in this same collaborative vein as we strive to make a real difference in these precious landscapes.



Hector Pearson

Visual Impact Provision Project Manager
National Grid

01: Visual Impact Provision

National Grid’s Visual Impact Provision project is placing existing overhead transmission lines underground in four nationally important landscapes in England and Wales, with the aim of helping to reduce the visual impact of electricity transmission infrastructure. Our four projects are in Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), New Forest National Park, Peak District National Park and Snowdonia National Park.

There is a £500m Ofgem allowance to carry out this work in English and Welsh AONBs, National Parks and Scottish National Scenic Areas. National Grid is making use of this allowance as the electricity transmission owner in England and Wales. The provision also includes our Landscape Enhancement Initiative, a grant scheme for smaller local improvement projects open to all 30 AONBs and National Parks which contain or are impacted by National Grid overhead transmission lines.

At National Grid we are passionate about playing our part in conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the landscape.

The most important task for us is to use this allowance to achieve the maximum enhancement to these landscapes, while avoiding unacceptable environmental impacts. To ensure that we get this right and bring the most benefit from the Visual

Impact Provision project, National Grid is working closely and collaboratively with stakeholders.

At the start of the project we set up the Stakeholder Advisory Group. It comprises national organisations dedicated to conserving the landscape and countryside throughout England and Wales. Together, we have had the difficult task of deciding which projects to select and how the allowance could be allocated. These decisions are made in accordance with the Guiding Principles set out in our Visual Impact Provision policy. By adopting this approach we aim to ensure fairness and balance in our decision making.

National Grid has a dedicated project team which has been supported in these activities by external specialist advisors, including Professor Carys Swanwick on landscape assessment, technical experts from Gillespies and Land Use Consultants as well as Camargue as communications advisors. Bruton Knowles has provided support on land access.

This third annual report records our progress and key activities between June 2016 and May 2017. This report builds on the progress detailed in our previous two annual reports. If you would like to read them, or find out more about how the four projects were prioritised, please take a look at our website, www.nationalgrid.com/VIP.

Project dimensions

- **571km** of National Grid electricity transmission line in **AONBs** and **National Parks**
- **30 AONBs** and **National Parks** in England and Wales included in the project
- **53.7km** of line in **12 sections** within eight protected areas = highest impact
- **Four sections** of overhead line prioritised for undergrounding
- Landscape Enhancement Initiative = funding of **up to £200,000** per local visual improvement project

£500M
ALLOWANCE
TO BENEFIT
NATIONAL PARKS,
AONBs
AND NATIONAL
SCENIC AREAS



02: Working with stakeholders

Stakeholders hold the key to the success of these projects. We believe that the views of our stakeholders and consumers are vital in making decisions on how we should use the Visual Impact Provision allowance to maximise enhancement to the landscape.

2.1 Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Stakeholder Advisory Group for the Visual Impact Provision project was established in April 2014. Chaired by leading environmentalist Chris Baines, the Group advises National Grid on the evaluation and ultimate selection of the projects proposed for delivery. The Stakeholder Advisory Group comprises senior representatives

from organisations dedicated to enhancing the landscape and countryside throughout England and Wales as well as Ofgem (the electricity and gas markets regulator) and National Grid itself. They advise the project not only on the key decisions but on the most effective ways to engage with local stakeholders outside the Group.

Stakeholder Advisory Group members:



2.2 Stakeholder Advisory Group activities

During 2016/17 the Stakeholder Advisory Group met three times. The minutes of these meetings are available on our website.

The tables that follow provide an overview of the key activities and issues considered by the group during the past year.

Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting	Main items of discussion
8th meeting 27-28 September 2016 Held in New Forest National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Updates on progress on the four projects, including an overview of technical work and engagement with the local Stakeholder Reference Groups, landowners, other local stakeholders and the community ■ Site visit to the New Forest National Park project area ■ Discussion of forward plans and contingency should one of the projects not be deliverable ■ Consideration of the future local communication and engagement plans, as well as the benefits of raising the project's national profile ■ Landscape Enhancement Initiative update, including the Approvals Panel's consideration of the first round applications

Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting	Main items of discussion
Additional meeting 12 December 2016 Held in Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Updates on progress on the four projects, including an overview of technical work and engagement with the local Stakeholder Reference Groups, landowners, other local stakeholders and the community ■ Endorsement of National Grid's ability to use all the statutory powers available to it, including compulsory acquisition of rights, in order to progress the projects ■ Landscape Enhancement Initiative update, including first window application funding decisions and second submission window expressions of interest
9th meeting 24-25 April 2017 Held in Snowdonia National Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Updates on progress on the four projects, including an overview of technical work and engagement with the local Stakeholder Reference Groups, landowners, other local stakeholders and the community ■ Site visit to the Snowdonia National Park project area ■ Landscape Enhancement Initiative update, including first window funding decisions, second window applications, lessons learned and encouragement of future applications

Attendance at the Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings	
Organisation	Meeting attendance 2016/17
Chairman	3 out of 3
Cadw	3 out of 3
Campaign for National Parks	3 out of 3
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	2 out of 3
The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW)	3 out of 3
Historic England	3 out of 3
Landscape Institute	2 out of 3
National Association for AONBs	3 out of 3
National Grid	3 out of 3
National Parks England	3 out of 3
National Parks Wales	3 out of 3
National Trust	3 out of 3
Natural England	2 out of 3
Natural Resources Wales	1 out of 3
Ofgem	1 out of 3
The Ramblers	3 out of 3
Visit England	1 out of 3
Visit Wales	2 out of 3

2.3 Wider stakeholder engagement and empowerment

We have continued our work with Stakeholder Reference Groups in each of the project areas. These groups, established at the beginning of the Visual Impact Provision project, are attended by representatives of the relevant AONB Partnership or National Park Authority and other local technical stakeholders. They have provided vital information and advice which has informed project development.


We held drop-in events for members of the public in each area to involve local people in project development. The events showed people how plans for the projects are developing and provided an opportunity to share their views. Members of National Grid's team were on hand at the events to answer questions and discuss the projects in more detail.

Throughout the year project information, updates and documentation has been shared on our website, www.nationalgrid.com/VIP and local stakeholders and the public have been kept up-to-date through media releases, letters and publications such as summary documents and infographics.

Our team has also liaised with the two companies that own the Scottish transmission network, who are developing their own projects to use the Ofgem allowance, in order to ensure that the benefits of the allowance are maximised across England, Scotland and Wales.

PRIORITISED PROJECTS STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2016/17

Different local characteristics mean that there is variation in the nature of engagement for each project



DORSET AONB

- 22 June 2016 Public drop-in event, Martinstown: 65 people attended
- 25 June 2016 Public drop-in event, Winterbourne Abbas: 41 people attended
- 6 September 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 7 stakeholders attended
- 5 October 2016 Presentation at Dorset AONB Annual Forum
- 21 November 2016 Presentation to Winterbourne Group of Parish Councils: 6 stakeholders attended
- 24 November 2016 Presentation to Dorset AONB Partnership board: 25 stakeholders attended
- 22 March 2017 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 6 stakeholders attended
- **Total stakeholders and members of the public engaged – 150**

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

- 1 July 2016 Public drop-in event, Hale: 70 people attended
- 2 July 2016 Public drop-in event, Hale: 76 people attended
- 24 August 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 13 stakeholders attended
- 8 December 2016 Community Liaison Group meeting: 13 stakeholders attended
- Site visits with Natural England, National Trust, New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest Verderers and Commoners grazing livestock on Hale Purlieu
- **Total stakeholders and members of the public engaged – 172**

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

- 9 June 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting, Barnsley: 4 stakeholders attended
- 9 June 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting, Bakewell: 4 stakeholders attended
- 7 July 2016 Public drop-in event, Penistone: 24 people attended
- 7 July 2016 Public drop-in event, Dunford Bridge: 23 people attended
- 8 July 2016 Public drop-in event, National Grid mobile unit, Trans Pennine Trail car park at Dunford Bridge: 25 stakeholders attended
- 17 August 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 12 stakeholders attended
- 10 September 2016 Stand at Penistone Show: 118 people attended
- 24 October 2016 Presentation to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council: 4 stakeholders attended
- 28 November 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 9 stakeholders attended
- 9 December 2016 Meeting with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council: 5 stakeholders attended
- 24 January 2017 Technical workshop on Trans Pennine Trail: 11 stakeholders attended
- 24 January 2017 Technical workshop on Wogden Foot: 15 stakeholders attended
- 8 February 2017 Meeting with ecology stakeholders: 6 stakeholders attended
- 2 March 2017 Site visit with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council/Peak District National Park Authority: 4 stakeholders attended
- 5 April 2017 Meeting with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust: 2 stakeholders attended
- 27 April 2017 Technical meeting with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council: 3 stakeholders attended
- **Total stakeholders and members of the public engaged – 269**

SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

- 14 July 2016 Public drop-in event, Snowdonia National Park Authority Offices, Penrhyndeudraeth: 67 people attended
- 16 July 2016 Public drop-in event, Penrhyndeudraeth: 33 people attended
- 8 September 2016 Stakeholder Reference Group meeting: 9 stakeholders attended
- **Total stakeholders and members of the public engaged – 109**

Total number of stakeholders and members of the public engaged with 2016/17

700

International engagement

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

In February 2017, National Grid's Visual Impact Provision project manager Hector Pearson was invited to give a webinar presentation to European experts in protected landscapes.

The event was delivered in partnership with Stakeholder Advisory Group member Peter Ogden from CPRW and hosted by EUROPARC Atlantic Isles, part of the EUROPARC federation which brings together representatives of more than 400 nationally protected areas in 36

European countries. A Q&A with participants followed the presentation, which helped to raise the profile of the project and bring awareness of its aims to a European audience.

CIGRE

Presentations on the Visual Impact Provision project have also been delivered to international experts and decision-makers from the electrical power industry at events held in Paris and Dublin by the International Council on Large Electric Systems (CIGRE).

03: Our four VIP projects

Our four Visual Impact Provision projects aim to enhance some of the most beautiful landscapes in England and Wales by replacing National Grid overhead transmission lines with underground solutions, while avoiding unacceptable environmental impacts and balancing technical deliverability and cost. We are doing this through a transparent process which is led by the Stakeholder Advisory Group, drawing on input from technical experts, local stakeholders and communities.

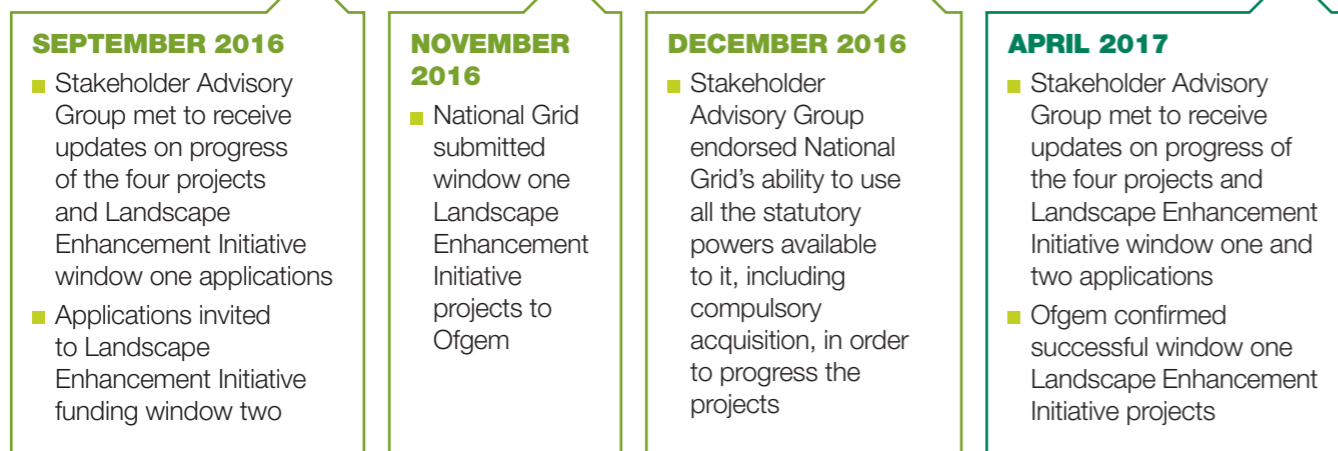
During 2016/17 good progress has been made on designing the four projects. This has been informed by the significant amount of technical work that has been undertaken this year including environmental, ecological, geotechnical, archaeological and engineering studies as well as discussions with stakeholders, landowners and communities. In designing the projects we aim to ensure that we avoid or minimise any adverse environmental impacts.

The following pages provide a progress update on each of the projects as well as a look forward to activities planned for 2017/18.

Timeline of key activities during 2016/17



MILESTONES



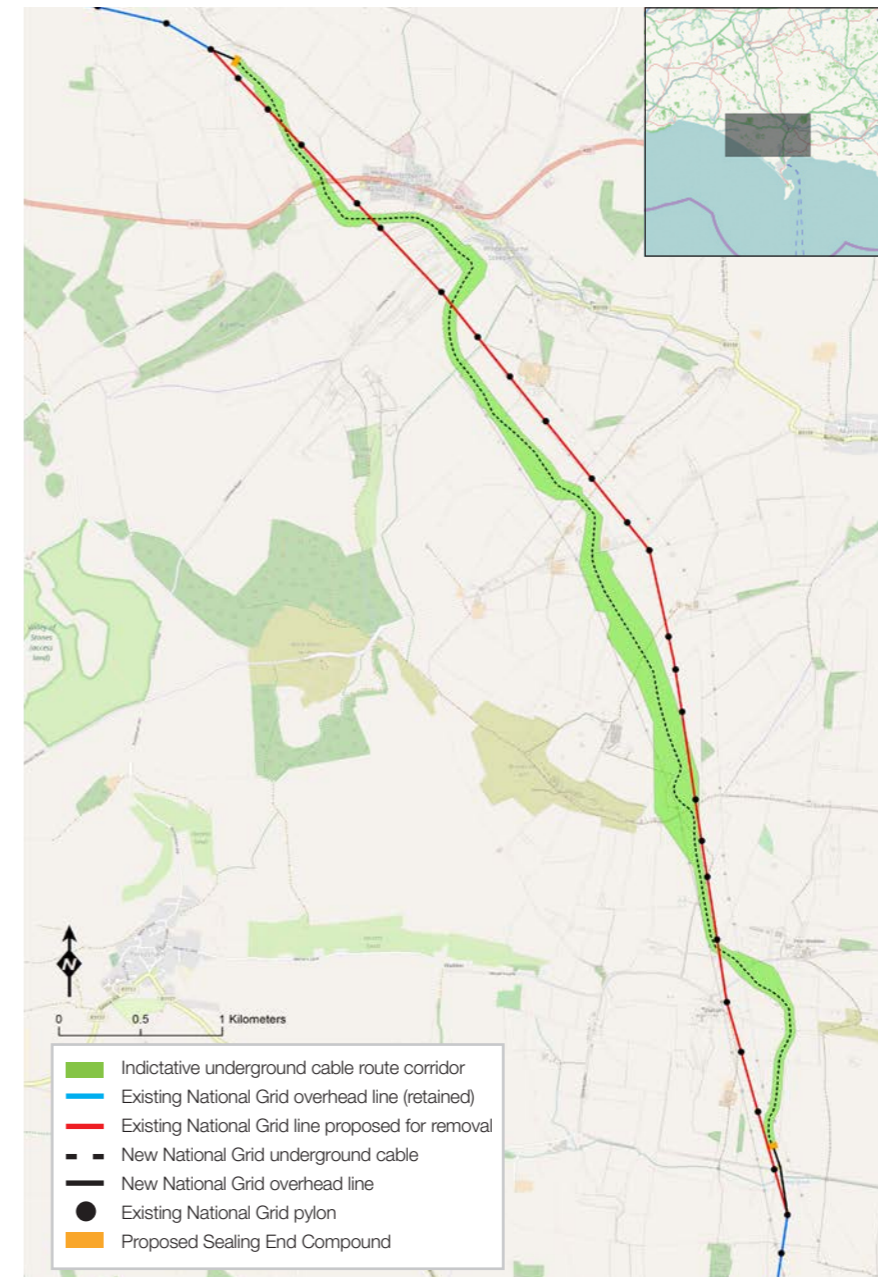
OUR FOUR VIP PROJECTS





Dorset AONB

Current route option as of May 2017



The Dorset AONB project will replace approximately 8km of overhead line near Winterbourne Abbas with an underground cable, permanently removing 22 pylons from the landscape. The preferred route for the new cable is shown on the map above. Construction of two sealing end compounds and an associated replacement terminal pylon is required to connect the cable to the remaining existing overhead line.



Dorset AONB

Progress to date

In June 2016, two drop-in events were held in Winterbourne Abbas and Martinstown for members of the public. Over 100 local people attended and the overall feedback suggested strong local support of the project. The project team also attended the Dorset AONB Annual Forum in October 2016 with an exhibition explaining the project.

Following these events, further discussions with stakeholders and detailed technical work, the preferred route for the new cable was agreed with the Stakeholder Reference Group in principle.

Technical work during 2016/17 has included ground investigations and a range of environmental studies including those for landscape and visual, ecology, archaeology, hydrology, geology, land use, noise, traffic and socio-economic. This work informed the project design and identified any environmental impacts associated with the development and proposed appropriate mitigation.

This information will be included in the Environmental Statement accompanying the planning applications.

We continued to work closely with technical stakeholders, including West Dorset District Council, Historic England, Natural England, Dorset County Council and the AONB Partnership to discuss assessments and develop appropriate mitigation.

Locations for the two new sealing end compounds have been identified, one to the north of the A35 and Winterbourne Abbas and the other south of Friar Waddon Edge. In identifying these locations, we investigated options and undertook environmental and engineering studies. We held discussions with landowners and stakeholders and are developing potential landscaping and planting schemes to reduce the visual impact of these structures.

A dedicated website for the Dorset project was launched in February 2017, with details of the route and progress updates: <http://dorset.nationalgrid.co.uk>.



Dorset AONB

Looking forward

In summer and autumn 2017, we will be completing the survey work and a full environmental assessment of the project to ensure that we avoid or minimise any adverse environmental impacts. Our discussions with landowners and stakeholders will continue.

Public consultation on the proposed project prior to planning application submission, including detail on environmental mitigation,

traffic management and project phasing will take place in July 2017. It is expected that the planning application will be ready to submit in winter 2017.

The current indicative programme is that, subject to all necessary negotiations, approvals and consents, on-site works will commence in spring 2019 and take approximately three years to complete.

STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS



Two Stakeholder Reference Group meetings were held in Dorset in 2016/17

THE DORSET AONB WAS DESIGNATED IN 1959 IT COVERS MOST OF THE DORSET COAST AND AREAS INLAND.



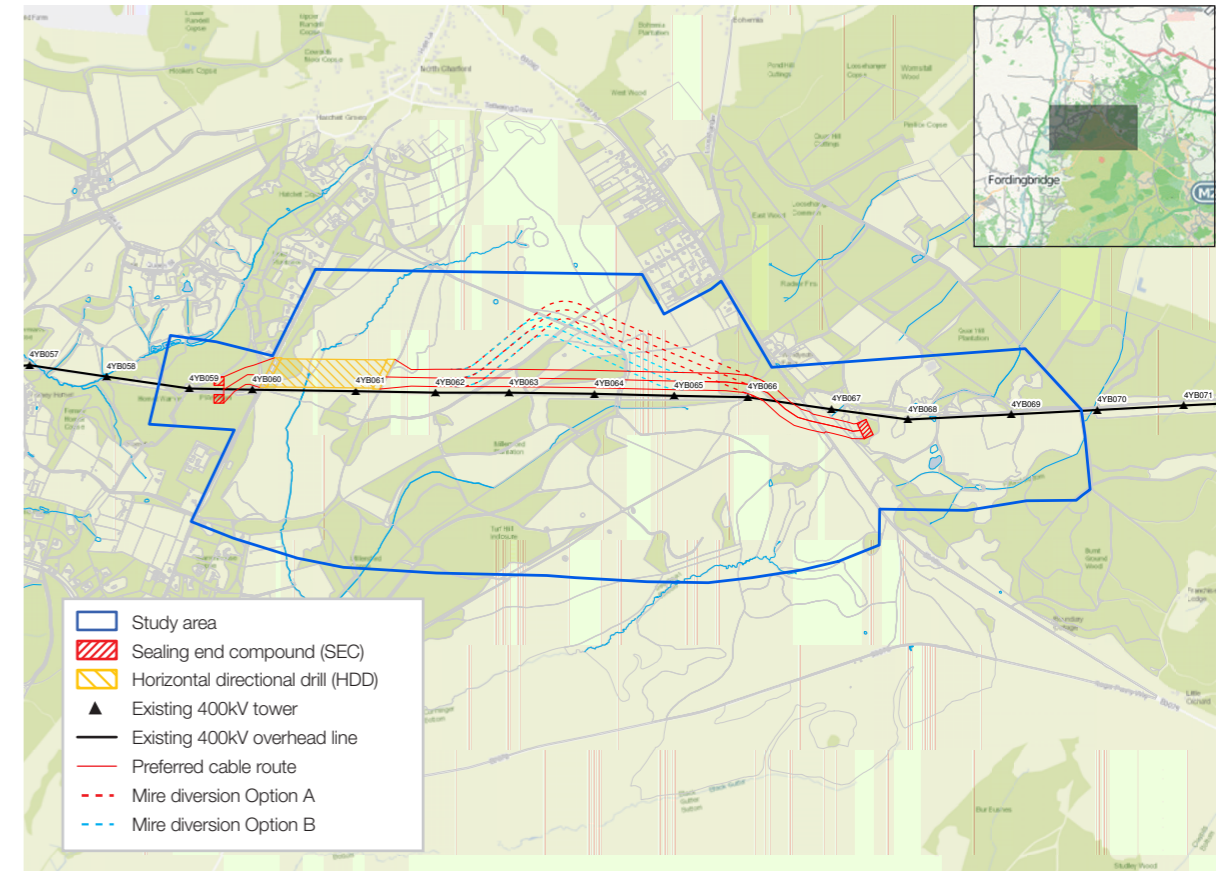
PROJECT ADVISORS

- Environmental assessment & archaeology – RSK
- Ecology, geology, soils & contaminated land – AECOM
- Engineering – Mott McDonald
- Landscape – Land Use Consultants
- Hydrology/water resources – MWH
- Noise, air quality, agriculture & land use – Arcadis
- Socio-economics – Jacobs
- Stakeholder engagement – Camargue



New Forest National Park

Current route option as of May 2017



The New Forest National Park project will replace a 3km section of overhead line near Hale with an underground cable, permanently removing eight pylons from the landscape. The current preferred route for the new cable is shown on the map above. Construction of two sealing end compounds is required to connect the cable to the remaining existing overhead line.



New Forest National Park

Progress to date

In July 2016, two drop-in events were held in Hale for members of the public. Over 100 local people attended and the overall feedback suggested strong local support of the project.

Following these events, further discussions with stakeholders and detailed technical work, an emerging route preference was agreed with the Stakeholder Reference Group. An understanding, in principle, has been reached between the landowners and National Grid regarding the purchase of land needed for the two new sealing end compounds at Pound Bottom quarry (at the eastern end) and Stricklands Plantation (at the western end).

Technical work this year has included detailed ongoing ecological and hydrological studies as well as ground investigation works along the emerging route preference. Given the very high environmental sensitivity of the area we are working closely with Natural England, the National Trust, the Forestry Commission and the Park Authority.

Breeding bird surveys have identified the presence of several internationally protected species including the nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler. Survey work to understand what effect the project's construction might have on these species is ongoing.

We have appointed a habitat translocation and reinstatement specialist to advise us on ways to minimise the impact of construction on the designated habitats and grazing areas of the New Forest livestock.

Ground investigation works have been completed to inform the cable system routeing and design.

In September 2016, the Stakeholder Advisory Group held its eighth meeting in the New Forest. The meeting included a site visit to the section of overhead line that will be undergrounded and a presentation from the New Forest National Park Authority's chief executive, Alison Barnes.

To involve the large number of stakeholders interested in the project, we established a Community Liaison Group inviting organisations including Parish Councils, RSPB, CPRE Hampshire, the Verderers of the New Forest and the New Forest Commoners Defence Association. The group met for the first time in December 2016. A site walkover took place in November 2016 with Hale Purlieu Commoners actively grazing the Purlieu.

A dedicated website for the New Forest project was launched in February 2017, with details of the route and progress updates: <http://newforest.nationalgrid.co.uk>.



New Forest National Park

Looking forward

Detailed technical work and discussions with stakeholders will continue into 2017/18. The current indicative programme is that, subject to all necessary negotiations, public consultation, approvals and consents, on-site works will commence in summer 2019 and take approximately two and a half to three years to complete.

STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS



One Stakeholder Reference Group meeting was held in the New Forest in 2016/17

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK
 Located largely in Hampshire, on the south-central coast of England, this former royal hunting ground and immediate surrounding area was given National Park status in March

2005

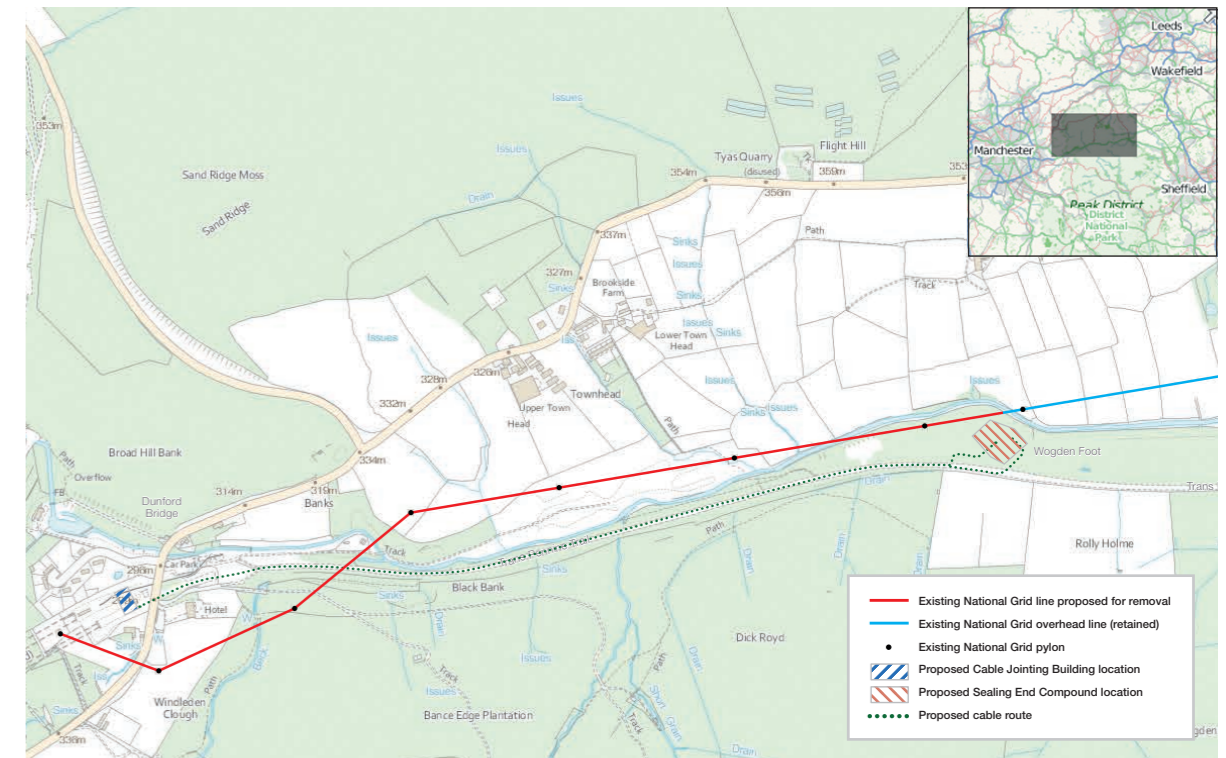
PROJECT ADVISORS

- Environmental assessment & archaeology – RSK
- Ecology, geology, soils & contaminated land – AECOM
- Engineering – Mott McDonald
- Landscape – Land Use Consultants
- Hydrology/water resources – MWH
- Noise, air quality, agriculture & land use – Arcadis
- Socio-economics – Jacobs
- Habitat translocation & reinstatement – Alaska
- Stakeholder engagement – Camargue



Peak District National Park

Current route option as of May 2017



The Peak District National Park (East) project will replace a 2km section of overhead line east of the Woodhead Tunnel near Dunford Bridge with an underground solution, permanently removing seven pylons and a sealing end compound from the landscape. The preferred route for the new cable, shown on the map above, will run alongside the Trans Pennine Trail to the south of the River Don to join existing cables in the Woodhead Tunnel.

Construction of a new sealing end compound and associated replacement terminal pylon is required at Wogden Foot Local Wildlife Site to connect the cable to the remaining existing overhead line. As part of the project the Trans Pennine Trail will need to be temporarily diverted for approximately two years to allow for construction work.



Peak District National Park

Progress to date

In July 2016, three drop-in events were held in Penistone, Dunford Bridge and on the Trans Pennine Trail. Over 70 people attended and the overall feedback suggested good local support of the project. In September 2016, we had more than 100 visitors to our stand at the Penistone Show, the vast majority of whom were very positive about the project.

At the request of the Stakeholder Reference Group, we reconsidered an alternative route option to the north of the River Don. This route avoids the Trans Pennine Trail and Wogden Foot but would require more complex and disruptive engineering activity, including horizontal directional drilling under the River Don, dealing with steep gradients and generating large amounts of spoil.

Project consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff were commissioned to undertake an engineering feasibility study for this option. The study showed that this option would result in considerably more significant adverse, landscape changing, socio-economic and traffic/transport impacts than the preferred route south of the River Don. Considering these findings at its November 2016 meeting, the Stakeholder Reference Group formally agreed that the preferred southern route should be pursued.

A number of meetings were held in 2016 with senior officers and members of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, the local authority area in which the project is located. Agreement has been reached to work collaboratively on the project. As part of this, the potential social, economic and regeneration benefits of the project are being considered.

Workshops were held in January and February 2017 to begin detailed discussions on mitigation and enhancement opportunities at Wogden Foot Local Wildlife Site. Attendees included the Trans Pennine Trail conservation volunteers, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Local Access Forum, British Horse Society and other user groups. These were followed by further meetings with stakeholders with a specific interest in ecology.

Discussions began with stakeholders and landowners on arrangements for the temporary diversion of the Trans Pennine Trail. It is important that the trail remains open and continues to be a route for local residents and long distance walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

We are investigating the appropriate underground solutions for this project along the preferred route.

A dedicated website for the Peak District (East) project was launched in February 2017, with details of the route and progress updates: <http://peakdistricteast.nationalgrid.co.uk>.



Peak District National Park

Looking forward

Detailed ecological and environmental work and discussions will continue in 2017/2018, as will our investigations into the appropriate underground solutions for the project. We are undertaking a full environmental assessment of the project to ensure that we avoid or minimise any adverse environmental impacts. Our discussions with landowners and stakeholders will continue.

Public consultation on the proposed project including detail on environmental management, traffic management and

project phasing will take place prior to planning application submission in autumn 2017. It is currently envisaged that a planning application for the sealing end compound will be ready to submit in early 2018.

The current indicative programme is that, subject to all necessary negotiations, approvals and consents, on-site works will commence in spring 2019 and take approximately two years to complete.

STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS



Trans Pennine Trail™



Three Stakeholder Reference Group meetings were held in the Peak District in 2016/17

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK
was the first National Park in England and Wales, being designated in **1951**



It covers parts of Derbyshire, Yorkshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire.

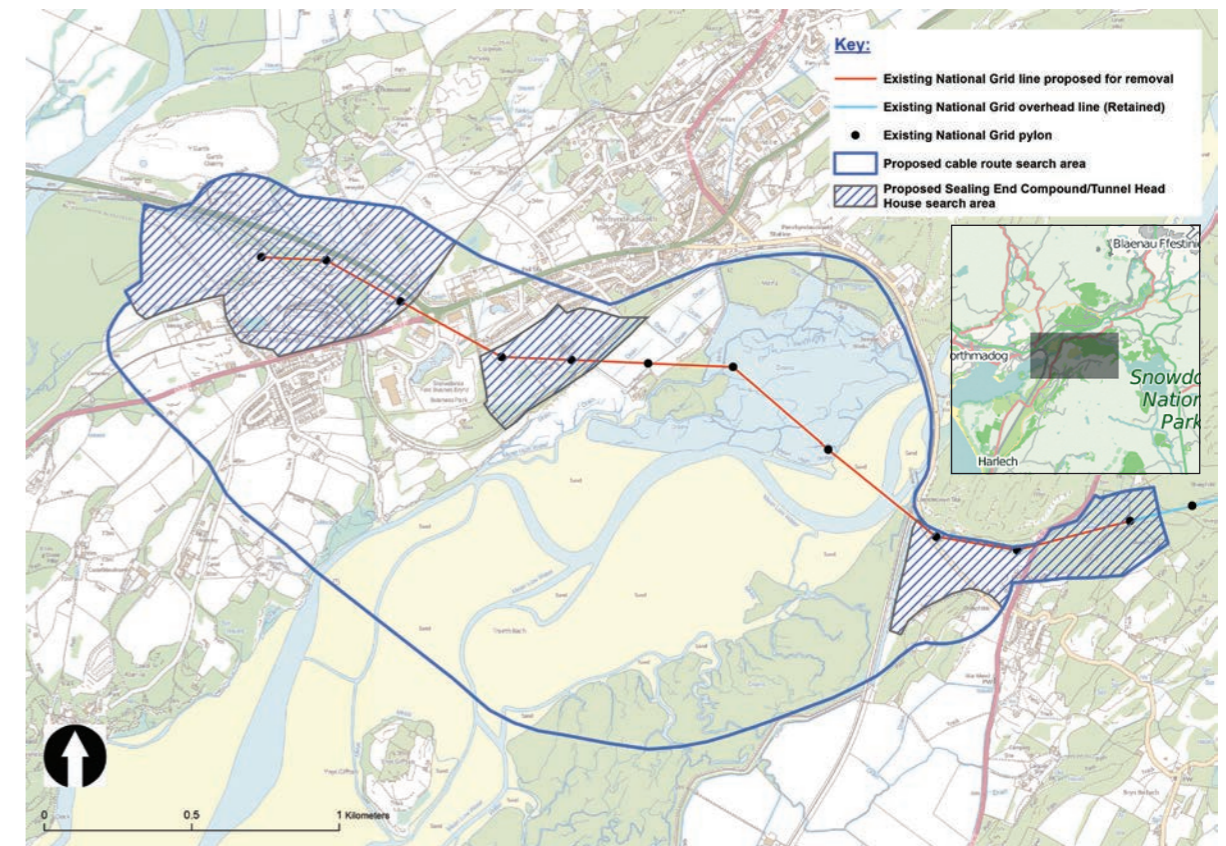
PROJECT ADVISORS

- Environmental assessment & archaeology – RSK
- Ecology, geology, soils & contaminated land – AECOM
- Landscape – Gillespies
- Transport – WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Hydrology/water resources – MWH
- Noise, air quality, agriculture & land use – Arcadis
- Socio-economics – Jacobs
- Stakeholder engagement – Camargue



Snowdonia National Park

Search area for potential underground route corridors, the sealing end compound and tunnel head houses as of May 2017.



The Snowdonia National Park project will replace a 3km section of overhead line crossing the Dwyrdd Estuary near Porthmadog with an underground cable, permanently removing 10 pylons from the landscape. The cable will run in an underground tunnel from Cilfor to Garth under the Dwyrdd Estuary. A tunnel head house would also be required at each end of a cable tunnel. Construction of a sealing end compound and an associated replacement terminal pylon is required to connect the cable to the remaining existing overhead line in the east.



Snowdonia National Park

Progress to date

In July 2016, two drop-in events were held in Penrhyndeudraeth for members of the public. Positive feedback was received from the 100 local people who attended, with strong support for extending the underground tunnel west from the Dwyrdd Estuary to Garth, joining up with the existing cable that crosses the Glaslyn Estuary. Extending the tunnel will avoid leaving the short section of line and three pylons between the two estuaries which have a negative landscape and visual impact.

Following these events, detailed technical work and discussions with stakeholders, the underground tunnel from Cilfor to Garth was agreed with the Stakeholder Reference Group.

Ground investigation work to determine the tunnel depth and route has been a focus for 2016/17. Consent for this work is required due to the area's environmental designations and in May 2017 we made an application for a Marine Licence to Natural Resources Wales. To inform the application detailed ecological, botanical and archaeological surveys have been prepared including a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Once the licence is granted, which is expected to be in summer 2017, work will get underway.

Progress has been made on the transport and traffic surveys. These were completed in summer 2016 to provide a baseline understanding of transport and traffic movements during peak season.

In April 2017, the Stakeholder Advisory Group held its ninth meeting in Snowdonia. The meeting included a site visit to the Dwyrdd Estuary and a presentation from Snowdonia Park Authority's chief executive, Emyr Williams.

We continue to work closely with colleagues working on the North Wales Connection project, which will connect a new nuclear power station that is proposed to be built on Anglesey by 2024. We are seeking to align our work where possible to mitigate disruption to both the local community and the environment.

A dedicated website for the Snowdonia project was launched in February 2017, with details of the route and progress updates in both English and Welsh:
<http://snowdonia.nationalgrid.co.uk>



Snowdonia National Park

Looking forward

Ground investigation works in the estuary will begin in summer 2017 to determine the exact tunnel depth and route. Locations for the tunnel head houses at each end of the tunnel and a sealing end compound on the eastern side of the estuary will also be identified. Working with stakeholders, our aim is to carefully select these locations to reduce visual impact.

In summer 2017, we will be undertaking a full environmental assessment of the project to ensure that we avoid or minimise any adverse environmental impacts. Our discussions with landowners and stakeholders will continue.

Public consultation on the proposed project, including detail on environmental mitigation, traffic management and project phasing will take place in advance of a planning application being submitted in winter 2018.

The current indicative programme is that, subject to all necessary negotiations, approvals and consents, on-site works will commence in spring 2021 and take approximately three years to complete.

STAKEHOLDER REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



One Stakeholder Reference Group meeting was held in Snowdonia in 2016/17

SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK
was designated in and is the largest **1951** National Park in Wales.
Snowdonia comprises of a varied landscape which includes mountain scenery, glacial views, extensive moorlands and two coastal estuaries.



PROJECT ADVISORS

- Environmental assessment, ecology & archaeology – RSK
- Landscape – Gillespies
- Geology – AECOM
- Hydrology/water resources – MWH, Marine – Intertek
- Noise, air quality, agriculture & land use – Arcadis
- Socio-economics – Jacobs
- Stakeholder engagement – Camargue

04: Landscape Enhancement Initiative

The Landscape Enhancement Initiative is a grant scheme that forms an important part of National Grid’s Visual Impact Provision project. The initiative, which has been championed by our Stakeholder Advisory Group, aims to use part of the Ofgem allowance for smaller local improvement projects.

4.1 About the Landscape Enhancement Initiative

Launched in May 2016, the Landscape Enhancement Initiative offers grants of up to £200,000 for local visual improvement projects. The overall objective of the initiative is to reduce the landscape and visual impact of National Grid’s existing electricity transmission infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected designated landscapes. Examples of projects that may be funded include:

- Localised tree planting
- Management of hedgerows
- Changes to trails, footpaths, cycleways and riding routes
- Rebuilding of dry stone walls
- Enhancing the special qualities of the landscape which may also benefit biodiversity.

The Landscape Enhancement Initiative is driven by our stakeholders. Each of the 30 National Park Authorities and AONB Partnerships in England and Wales covered by the initiative can submit applications for the funding of projects. There were two application windows in 2016/17. The first window was launched in May 2016 and the second window was launched in September 2016.

National Grid is being supported in these activities by external specialist advisors, including grants officer TrustCSR, and landscape advisors Gillespies and Land Use Consultants as well as Camargue as communications advisors.

4.2 Window 1 projects

The first window for expressions of interest in the initiative opened in May 2016. A total of 12 expressions of interest were received from six areas across the UK, including two AONBs and four National Parks. Following detailed assessment by the grants officer and landscape advisors, eight of these projects met the funding criteria and were invited to submit full applications.

Six full applications were subsequently put to the Landscape Enhancement Initiative Approvals Panel for review at their first meeting in August 2016. The independent panel, which is chaired by Mary O’Connor from the Landscape Institute and includes experts from Cadw, Historic England, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales, recommended five projects be taken forward to receive funding.

These applications came from High Weald AONB, North York Moors National Park, Peak District National Park and two from Snowdownia National Park.

The panel considered that these projects all met the criteria in the Landscape Enhancement Initiative policy, and could effectively and efficiently mitigate the visual and landscape impacts of existing overhead transmission lines.

The final decision as to which projects are funded is taken by Ofgem based on the recommendations of the panel. National Grid formally submitted the applications to Ofgem in November 2016. Ofgem confirmed its satisfaction with three of the applications from High Weald AONB, North York Moors National Park and Peak District National Park, and funding will be distributed to the successful projects in summer 2017.

National Grid is currently working to finalise the two further applications with the Snowdownia National Park Authority and Ofgem. These are expected to be finalised in summer 2017.

LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE WINDOW 1 FUNDED PROJECTS

HIGH WEALD AONB BEAUTIFUL BOUNDARIES

Reducing the visual and landscape impact of overhead transmission lines by enhancing the landscape through restoration and creation of boundary features, including hedgerows, fencing and woodland

NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK OVER SILTON TO THIMBLEBY BRIDLEWAY UPGRADE

Diverting attention away from the overhead line to reduce the visual and landscape impact by improving the surface of a 2.2km public bridleway to provide a safe and attractive route

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK CENTRAL LONGDENDALE TRAILS LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS ENHANCEMENTS

Reducing the visual and landscape impact of overhead transmission lines through screening and enhancing access for all by improving trails and creating accessible circular routes

4.3 Window 2 projects

The second window of applications for funding opened in September 2016. Expressions of interest were received from eight areas across the UK, including four AONBs and four National Parks, and following detailed assessment, seven of these projects met the funding criteria and were invited to submit full applications.

The Approvals Panel met in May 2017 to review the applications and recommended five to be taken forward to receive funding. Based on its recommendations National Grid will seek confirmation of the successful projects from Ofgem during summer 2017.

If you are interested in making an application for funding from the Landscape Enhancement Initiative please visit our website for more information, www.lei.nationalgrid.com.



05: Next steps and timeline

Next year we will be looking to prepare planning applications for submission for a number of the prioritised projects. The different characteristics of each project area means that it is likely there will be ongoing variation to the programmes for each project.

To support this, we will progress environmental and engineering surveys and assessments, engage with landowners regarding land rights and access requirements, liaise with local planning authorities and other bodies regarding consent requirements and consult with local stakeholders and communities.

Our Stakeholder Advisory Group will review this work with a view to confirming progression of the projects to implementation. Confirmation of funding from Ofgem will then be sought.

The next application window for Landscape Enhancement Initiative projects opens in July 2017. All of the 30 AONBs and National Parks covered by this project will again be eligible to submit proposals.

We will continue to provide updates about the progress of the Visual Impact Provision project, including through our website: www.nationalgrid.com/VIP.

Visual Impact Provision project timeline

SUMMER/AUTUMN 2017

- Survey, routing and development work for the projects continues
- Public engagement events
- Stakeholder Advisory Group reviews technical and public input to confirm progression of projects
- Landscape Enhancement Initiative workshop for eligible AONBs in July 2017
- Landscape Enhancement Initiative third application window expressions of interest opens July 2017
- Landscape Enhancement Initiative second window Ofgem submission

2017 – 2018

- Project routing, development and consenting
- Formal public consultation
- First Landscape Enhancement Initiative projects underway
- Further rounds of Landscape Enhancement Initiative applications



2018 – 2021

- Funding Assessment approval from Ofgem
- Project construction
- Landscape Enhancement Initiative projects underway
- Further rounds of Landscape Enhancement Initiative applications



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Visual Impact Provision hotline: **0330 134 0051**

Visit our website at: **www.nationalgrid.com/VIP**

Send an email to: **visualimpact@nationalgrid.com**

Write to our freepost address and quote: **"FREEPOST VISUAL IMPACT PROVISION"**

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