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National Grid reveals extensive measures to reduce impact of £2.8bn Cumbrian connection

National Grid proposing to put lines underground and under Morecambe Bay to protect the Lake District National Park.

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- New connection needed to link the planned Moorside nuclear power station in Cumbria into electricity network
- Extensive measures proposed to reduce the impact of what will be the biggest new power line project since electricity network was built
- Company proposing to put lines underground and under Morecambe Bay to protect the Lake District National Park Over a quarter of the connection could be underground
- Ten weeks of consultation from 28 October 2016 until 6 January 2017

National Grid has unveiled its detailed proposals for the £2.8bn project to connect the proposed nuclear power station at Moorside in Cumbria into the electricity network, ahead of starting consultation on Friday 28 October. The company is proposing extensive measures to reduce the impact of the project on the landscape of Cumbria while balancing this with the need to keep energy bills affordable. It has today announced plans to look at putting 23.4km (14.5 miles) of new line underground through the entire western section of the Lake District National Park. This could see the existing lines there being removed completely, leaving this part of the park free of pylons for the first time in 50 years. This is in addition to: - putting cables through a tunnel measuring approx. 22km (13 miles) under Morecambe Bay to avoid the south part of the national park at a cost of £1.2bn - removing many of the existing pylons owned by Electricity North West (ENW) and replacing them with fewer, taller pylons of its own operating at a greater voltage - replacing the low voltage line in the area around the Hadrian's Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site with underground cables Consultation on the proposals starts on Friday 28 October and nearly 90,000 newsletters have been mailed to homes and businesses along to route to explain how people can take part.

Robert Powell, Project Manager said: "We've undertaken significant engagement during the six years we have spent developing our plans. We've listened very carefully to groups like the Lake District National Park Authority, the National Trust and members of the public on the importance of the national park and other treasured landscapes in Cumbria and Lancashire. "Balancing the impact of the project on the landscape against its cost has involved making some difficult choices as the cost of building a connection is ultimately passed on to energy bill payers. We believe the proposal we are going to consult on over the coming months strikes the best balance. Our consultation will now give people a chance to have their say on the fine detail of the project." National Grid is confident that along the approx 164km (102 mile) route of the proposed connection, it can remove many of the existing pylons owned by Electricity North West which carry low voltage power lines around the west coast of Cumbria. It will replace them with fewer, taller pylons carrying lines of its own operating at a higher voltage. Engineers are already developing proposals for a £1.2bn tunnel under Morecambe Bay which would avoid putting new lines through the southern part of the Lake District. It is already estimated that around £1.9bn will be spent putting sections of the connection out of sight – over 50% of the cost of the total project.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Since publishing details of the route the new connection could take in June last year, National Grid has been talking to local authorities and key bodies about the technology which could be used to make the connection and to map out in detail exactly where in the landscape it could sit. The company has also made contact with landowners and land occupiers along the route and is currently carrying out surveys in some locations to gather vital information.

The company is proposing to build a complete connection to link the proposed new power station into the electricity transmission network. This will see the connection built along a route going onshore north from Moorside to an existing substation at Harker near Carlisle in addition to a route going onshore south from Moorside across the Furness peninsula and through a tunnel under Morecambe Bay which would come up at an existing substation near Heysham in Lancashire. This would effectively create a 'power ring' around the NW coast which would provide Moorside with a secure connection into the grid and also allow other new generators to link into the electricity network in Cumbria in the future. The company aims to submit an application for consent to build the new connection to the Planning Inspectorate in 2017. A decision will then be made by the Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. If consent is granted, construction work is expected to start in 2019. National Grid is currently contracted to provide NuGen with the first phase of the connection into its transmission network by 2024.

CONSULTATION

Consultation starts on 28 October 2016 and runs until 5pm on 6 January 2017. People can take part online on the project website and can register there for updates as the project progresses. The project website can be found at: www.northwestcoastconnections.com For further information about the project, please contact the project team direct using any of the following methods:

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

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Notes for editors

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- 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>

National Grid undertakes no obligation to update any of the information contained in this release, which speaks only as at the date of this release, unless required by law or regulation.

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