



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017**

SCREENING OPINION

Applicant: National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (National Grid)

Date: 19th January 2024

Planning Application Reference: 23/03995/SCR

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Undergrounding of approximately 7km of Overhead Line and associated works

LOCATION: Land North Of Dowdeswell Reservoir/West Of Whittington, Gloucestershire

The application site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and therefore falls within a 'sensitive area' for the purpose of the above Regulations.

Having considered the criteria stated within Schedule 3 of the above regulations, the Local Planning Authority concludes that the proposed development will not be likely to have significant environmental effects having regard to its nature, size and location and is therefore considered **not** to be EIA development requiring the submission of an Environmental Statement.

Should you have any queries in respect of this response please do not hesitate to contact me.

Your attention is drawn to the NOTES overleaf.

Phil Shaw

Phil Shaw
Business Manager - Development & Sustainability

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

EIA Screening Opinion - Reasons

The application site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape and is therefore classed as a 'sensitive area' for the purposes of the above Regulations.

The proposed development forms part of National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) which seeks to *'achieve the maximum enhancement to the landscape from the available funds whilst ensuring that no significant adverse impacts arise as a result'*.

The Cotswold VIP project seeks to underground approximately 7km of overhead line in the Western part of the Cotswolds National Landscape, to the east of Cheltenham and stretching from Postlip Mill in the north, to the north of Dowdeswell Reservoir in the south. The construction corridor will be approximately 60-100 metres wide. The proposal will result in the removal of 18 pylons, the undergrounding of cables, the erection of 2 Cable Sealing End Compounds, landscaping works, temporary construction works and off-site infrastructure. The construction period will be approximately 3 years.

The proposed development will result in the removal of a number of electricity pylons and associated overhead lines from the National Landscape. This is considered to represent a betterment in landscape and visual terms. The cable sealing end compounds will introduce new development onto the site. However, they are relatively modest structures and will be located in an area already characterised by electricity infrastructure. They are considered to have a localised impact on the National Landscape. It is considered that the proposed development, once complete will result in an enhancement of the aforementioned area. It is noted that the construction phase of the development will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the designated landscape. However, this impact will be localised and the landscape will be subject to restoration once construction works have been completed. It is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effects on the National Landscape having regard to the above Regulations.

With regard to heritage assets, the removal of the pylons and associated new build development are considered unlikely to have significant effects on the setting or special interest of heritage assets. It is noted that the construction phase of the development may have an impact on features of archaeological interest. Mitigation measures are in place to ensure that archaeological investigations are undertaken and features of interest recorded. It is considered that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant effects on heritage assets in the context of the above Regulations.

With regard to biodiversity, the proposed development is considered to be sufficiently distant from existing sites of ecological interest such as Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest to avoid significant effects. The majority of the site consists of arable land and improved grassland of minimal diversity and ecological value. The cabling route has been positioned so as to reduce/avoid impacts on habitats considered to be of higher ecological value such as hedgerows and woodlands. It is considered that appropriate mitigation is in place to ensure that the scheme will be unlikely to have significant effects on biodiversity having regard to the above Regulations.

With regard to the arboricultural impact of the proposed development, the proposed cabling route has been designed to avoid veteran trees, TPO trees and ancient woodland. Mitigation measures such as the protection of root protection areas, protective fencing and a Construction Environmental Management Plan are proposed. New tree and hedgerow planting is also proposed. It is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have significant arboricultural effects.

With regard to traffic generation, the completed development is unlikely to generate significant levels of traffic and is considered unlikely to have significant effects. The construction phase of the development will have a greater impact on the highway network. However, it is noted that the Transport Appraisal indicates that the highway network can accommodate the level of traffic arising during the construction phase. Mitigation measures such as designated construction routes, warning signage and a Construction Traffic Management Plan will also mitigate the impact of the construction phase of the development. It is considered that the highway effects of the proposed development are unlikely to be significant in the context of the above Regulations.

The application site is predominantly located within a Flood Zone 1. A drainage strategy is also in place to mitigate the impact of the proposal. It is considered that the development is unlikely to have significant effects in respect to flooding when assessed against the above Regulations.

The proposed development does not generate unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects having regard to the above Regulations.

The construction phase of the development will be relatively short term and any effects will be localised. The operation of the development is unlikely to have significant effects in terms of noise, disturbance, air quality or pollution.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is not for development of more than local importance, does not have a significant effect on an environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location or raise unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects. The proposal is considered not to be EIA development requiring the submission of an Environmental Statement.