

**The Great Grid Upgrade**

Chesterfield to Willington

# Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Volume 1: Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered

March 2026

nationalgrid

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# 3. Main Alternatives Considered

## 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter sets out the consideration of alternatives in accordance with Regulation 14(2)(d) and Schedule 4, paragraph 2 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (Ref 3.1). It states that an Environmental Statement (ES) should include:

*‘a description of reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment’*

3.1.2 The consideration of alternatives, which is in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate’s Advice Note Seven (Ref 3.2), focuses on the development of the proposed route alignment for the Project. As the Project develops, this appraisal will be updated with the final consideration of alternatives presented within Chapter 3 of the ES which will be submitted with the development consent order (DCO). While there is no statutory requirement to include an assessment of alternatives within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), the consideration of alternatives is an integral part of the ongoing development of the Project, and so relevant steps taken are included within this chapter to allow the reader to understand how the Project has evolved having regard to environmental considerations.

## 3.2 Project Development Process

3.2.1 National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (National Grid) undertakes an options appraisal for its projects, accounting for the various approaches that a project can consider, involving different locations, technologies or designs. Each project requires judgements and decisions about the most appropriate way to achieve the required outcome. The options appraisal process provides information to help inform those judgements.

3.2.2 An options appraisal is a robust and transparent process that is used to (i) compare options and (ii) appraise and balance the likely negative and positive effects that they may have in terms of environmental, socio-economic, technical, and cost factors. The aim is to find the most appropriate design solution that accords with the relevant national planning policy, taking into account National Grid’s statutory duties and having regard to established policy and principles, such as the Holford Rules (Ref 3.3) and Horlock Rules (Ref 3.4) Further details can be found in National Grid’s ‘Our Approach to Consenting’ document (Ref 3.5).

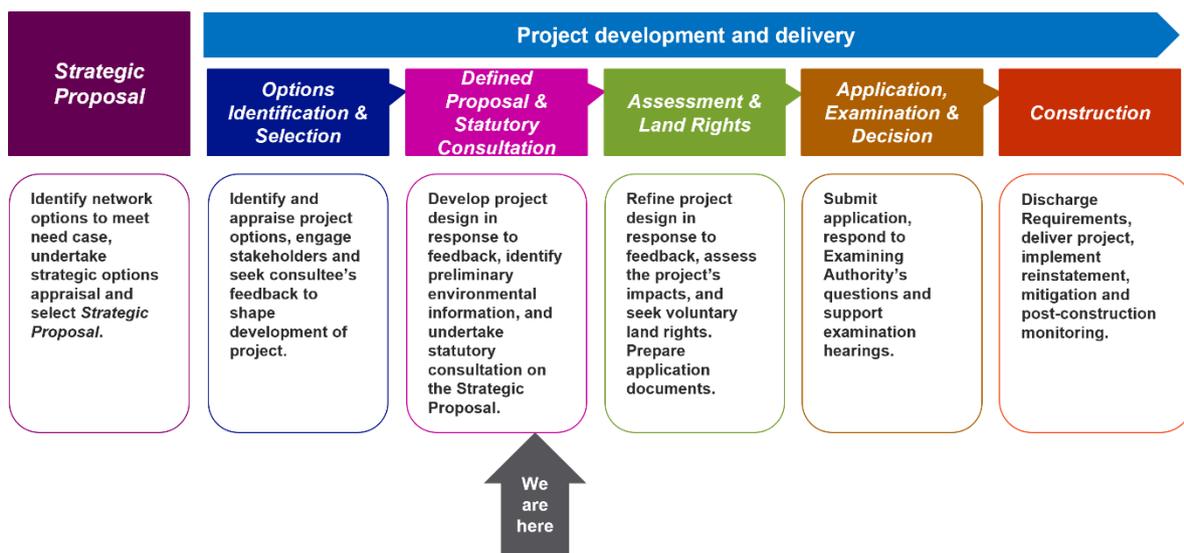
3.2.3 At each stage in the options appraisal process for the Project, transparent methods are used to inform the iterative decision-making and design development processes, including inputs from engineers and environmental, planning and land consultants. Interim decision making takes into account feedback from prescribed bodies, as defined in the Planning Act 2008 (Ref 3.6), other stakeholders, and the local community

through an extensive programme of engagement and consultation. In addition, projects are subject to continuous challenge and review to ensure the robustness of the decisions made in the light of changing environments, relating to technical, environmental, socio-economic and cost matters. An options appraisal has been undertaken for the Project. **Image 3.1** presents where the options appraisal sits in the overall National Grid consenting process and where statutory consultation fits in with the process.

3.2.4 National Grid’s Approach to Consenting document (Ref 3.5) outlines the development process for major infrastructure projects, from initial inception to consent and construction. The approach is divided into the following six stages, as detailed in **Image 3.1**:

- Strategic Proposal;
- Options Identification and Selection;
- Defined Proposal and Statutory Consultation;
- Assessment and Land Rights;
- Application, Examination and Decision; and
- Construction.

**Image 3.1: National Grid’s consenting process**



3.2.5 The Project decisions have considered National Grid's statutory obligations and licence requirements, as well as the policy and principles set out in sections 9 and 38 of the Electricity Act 1989 (Ref 3.7). This includes the relevant National Policy Statements (NPS) EN-1 (Ref 3.8 and EN-5 (Ref 3.9) and the Holford and Horlock Rules (Ref 3.3 and Ref 3.4), which provide industry-guidance on the routeing and siting of electricity transmission infrastructure, and all other relevant considerations.

3.2.6 The following sections of this PEIR chapter provide a background to the Project and a summary of the alternatives that have been considered at each stage to date:

- section 3.3 summarises the strategic optioneering, as presented in the Strategic Options Report (SOR) (Ref 3.10);
- section 3.4 sets out the options identification and selection, as outlined in the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS) (Ref 3.11);

- section 3.5 sets out how the non-statutory (Stage 1) consultation feedback was considered in the context of developing the Project from the graduated swathe which was presented at Stage 1 consultation;
- sections 3.6 and 3.7 set out the SOR and CPRSS backchecking exercises to confirm the validity of the conclusions of the SOR and CPRSS; and
- sections 3.8 and 3.9 set out the work undertaken to develop the Project using the Stage 1 consultation, the SOR and CPRSS backchecking exercises and ongoing design work, appraisal and survey information.

## 3.3 Strategic Proposal

- 3.3.1 As set out in **Chapter 1 Introduction**, the need for the Project was first identified by the National Energy System Operator (NESO)<sup>1</sup> in 2019. In response to this, National Grid undertook a Strategic Options Appraisal at the Strategic Proposal stage which identified the most appropriate strategic solution to bring forward, considering a wide range of options for providing the necessary north–south power flows for reinforcement of the electricity transmission system. The Strategic Options Appraisal is reported in the SOR (Ref 3.10) and SOR Update (Ref 3.12), which describes the future network requirements and the options appraised to meet these requirements. The consideration of strategic options was part of an iterative process in response to the interaction of a range of emerging energy projects and customer requirements. This report also considered how the strategic options interact with other proposals.
- 3.3.2 Within section 4 of the SOR, the Strategic Options Appraisal initially identified the need case for the works and identified a list of strategic options which could be further refined through evaluation processes. A chronological history of the projects that were evaluated is also included in the SOR. The process identified a range of different options, a combination of which satisfied the need as it was defined in the Holistic Network Design in the Network Options Assessment 2021/22 Refresh (Ref 3.13). A high-level technical, environmental and socio-economic assessment was undertaken of each option, considering a Study Area around the strategic options identified. Options were also evaluated for interactivity with other investments identified by the NESO to enable the connection of 50 GW of offshore wind by 2030, rising to up to 140 GW by 2050, and 70 GW of solar generation by 2035.
- 3.3.3 Subsequently, this initial long-list of strategic options was reduced by removing those that would not deliver the required outcomes, with four options taken forward for further appraisal in accordance with National Grid’s Approach to Consenting (Ref 3.5). The environmental and socio-economic constraints, technology alternatives, and capital and lifetime circuit costs of the options are detailed in full within sections 7 to 10 of the SOR.
- 3.3.4 For each strategic option, a Study Area was established within which the strategic option could reasonably be expected to be developed. The options appraisal at this stage had particular regard for internationally or nationally important sites and other features that are of a scale and importance to inform decision-making at a regional level. A technical appraisal was also undertaken to ensure the option would satisfy the

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<sup>1</sup> The UK’s 2023 Energy Act set the legislative framework for an independent system planner and operator to help accelerate Great Britain’s energy transition. Therefore, the formerly known ‘Electricity System Operator’ (ESO) has transitioned to the ‘National Energy System Operator’ (NESO), taking a whole system view, beyond electricity, inclusive of all energy sources and uses.

National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS) and resolve the requirements set out in the need case, along with a cost evaluation of the option transmission works.

- 3.3.5 The SOR concluded that the establishment of a new transmission connection (comprising primarily of overhead line) between a new Chesterfield Substation and the existing Willington Substation was the preferred option.
- 3.3.6 More details on the appraisal of the strategic options can be found in the SOR (Ref 3.10). Additionally, an update of this has been undertaken for statutory (Stage 2) consultation in the form of an SOR Update (Ref 3.12). The conclusion following the update is that Chesterfield to Willington remains the preferred strategic option for the Project. This continues to be the most advantageous of the options considered when balancing environmental and socio-economic effects, cost, technical performance and constructability. National Grid will continue to assess relevant technical, environmental and cost factors as part of ongoing appraisals.

## 3.4 Options Identification and Selection

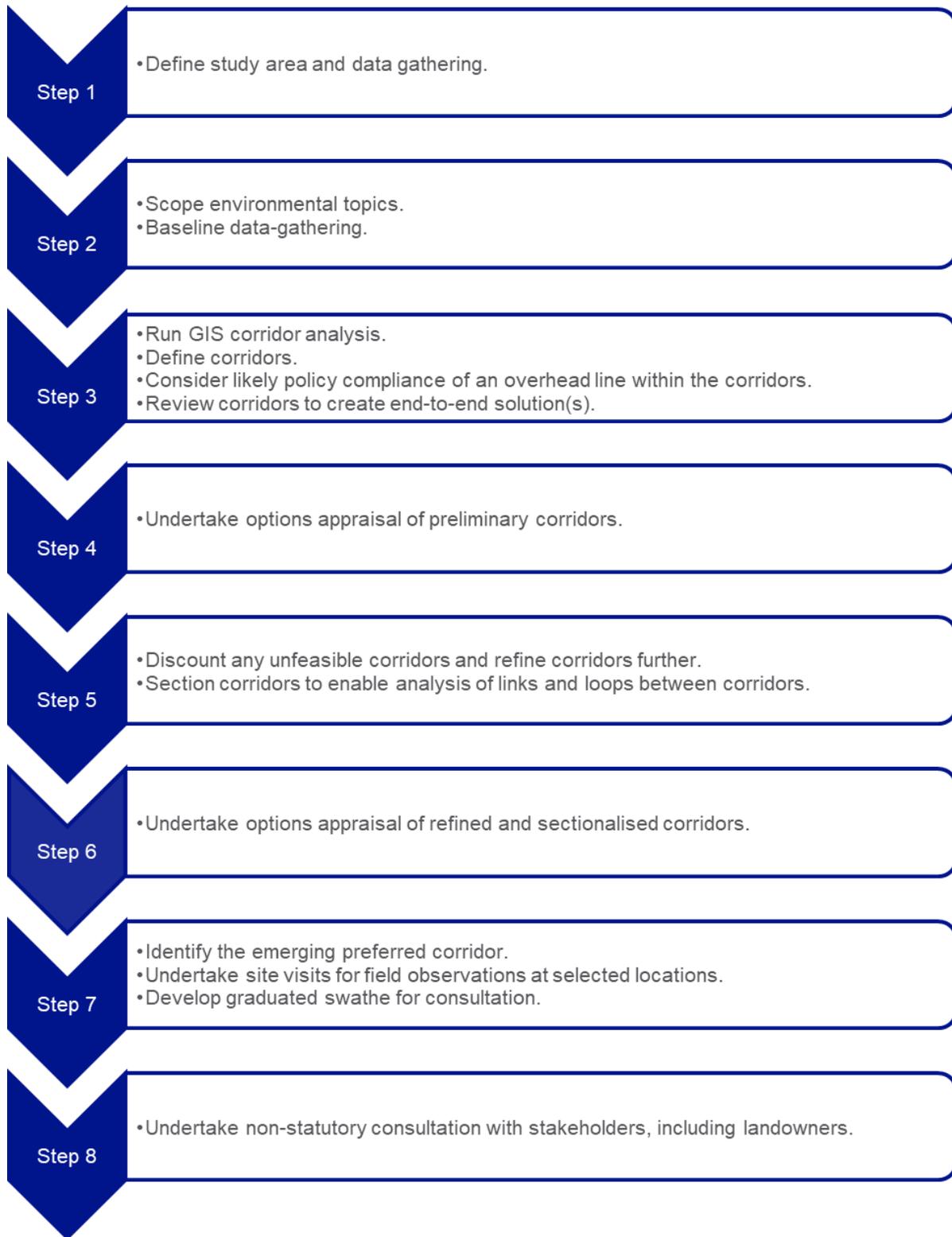
### Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study

- 3.4.1 Having identified the preferred strategic option, National Grid undertook a CPRSS (Ref 3.11) to establish an Emerging Preferred Corridor (EPC) for the Project. This presents the findings of the Options Identification and Selection stage which identified and assessed preliminary route corridors and concluded with the identification of an EPC. This section summarises the approach to this stage and the key considerations in the identification and assessment of alternatives. For further detail, please refer to the CPRSS.

### Approach to Routeing and Siting

- 3.4.2 The routeing and siting approach is a phased process which enables National Grid to make informed and proportionate decisions on the selection of corridors and possible route alignments to be further refined. This process allows for options to be appraised on a comparable basis, so that an EPC/option can be identified and progressed.
- 3.4.3 A summary of the steps taken to identify an EPC for the Project are summarised in **Image 3.2**.

**Image 3.2: Chesterfield to Willington CPRSS methodology**



- 3.4.4 Once the corridors had been identified, an options appraisal process was undertaken which considered the following main factors:
- environmental and socio-economic constraints;
  - engineering and system feasibility; and
  - cost.

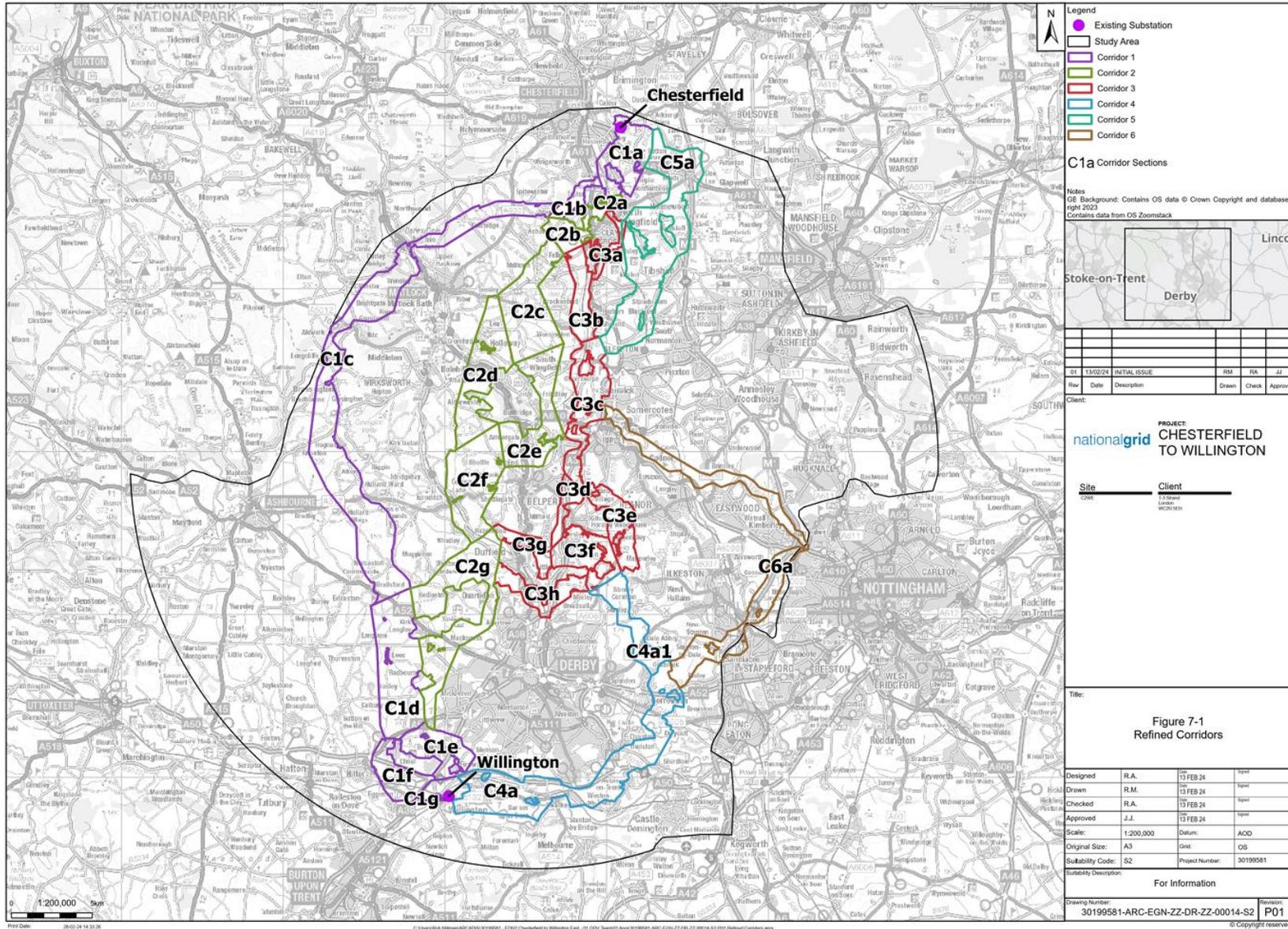
## Study Area

- 3.4.5 The routeing and siting Study Area was defined through a five-phase process which is detailed in section 5 of the CPRSS. The approach to developing the routeing and siting Study Area balanced National Grid's duty to develop an economical system of transmission (section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 (Ref 3.7)), with Holford Rule 1, which is to *'avoid altogether, if possible, the major areas of highest amenity value, by so planning the general route of the first line in the first place, even if the total mileage is somewhat increased in consequence'*, and Holford Rule 3, *'other things being equal, choose the most direct line, with no sharp changes of direction and thus with fewer angle towers'*, whilst also considering possible opportunities to follow existing transmission line corridors.
- 3.4.6 The routeing and siting Study Area was broadly located between Chesterfield Substation in the north, Willington Substation in the south, the Peak District National Park in the west, and the edges of Mansfield and Nottingham and smaller populated areas to the east.

## Route Corridor Options

- 3.4.7 Eight preliminary route corridor options were identified in the CPRSS between the start and end points for the Project (Chesterfield and Willington Substations respectively) within the routeing and siting Study Area. These are illustrated on Figure 6.1 within the CPRSS. These eight preliminary corridors underwent an options appraisal process, taking into consideration all known environmental and socio-economic factors to minimise the risk of significant adverse impacts on the environment and communities whilst considering engineering and economic considerations. Four of the eight preliminary corridors (Preliminary Corridors 3a, 5a, 5b and 5c) were found to have a significant level of technical complexity associated with facilitating engineering solutions to overcome environmental and socio-economic constraints, and would likely have resulted in high socio-economic, cost and programme impacts. As a result, four preliminary corridors were taken forward for further refinement. An additional two corridors were identified to provide alternative routeing options within the eastern extent of the routeing and siting Study Area.
- 3.4.8 In total, six corridors were refined and then divided into Sections, with links between Sections for appraisal. These are illustrated on **Image 3.3** extracted from the CPRSS. The corridors were divided into Sections so that an EPC could potentially be identified using a series of Sections from different refined corridors linked together. This provided the opportunity to bypass areas of greater constraint in an otherwise suitable corridor to provide the best end-to-end solution. Not all corridors form an end-to-end corridor; some instead require linkages with other corridors.

Image 3.3: CPRSS Figure 7.1 – Refined Corridors (Source CPRSS Ref 3.11)



## Option Selection

3.4.9 Following the options appraisal, the environmental, socio-economic and technical constraints and opportunities identified were discussed and considered alongside the likely cost performance, and the performance of the different corridor options (including links between the corridors) were carefully compared and assessed. Further details on the options appraisal can be found in sections 6 to 9 of the CPRSS (Ref 3.11).

3.4.10 The preferred corridors were not considered as whole end-to-end corridors for the purposes of the comparative evaluation of options. Some of the corridors have constraints which are unavoidable, such as the Peak District National Park present in Corridor 1, and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site present in Corridors 2 and 3, whilst some of the refined corridors have localised constraints which may be avoided through alternative routing opportunities (i.e., linking Sections of different refined corridors). The presence of certain localised constraints within specific Sections of some of the refined corridors also resulted in a need to perform a comparative analysis of areas within those Sections. This analysis was required in order to determine which onward Sections remained feasible options after avoiding key constraints. Therefore, a combination of Sections of the different corridors, rather than a single corridor, was used to identify the EPC to route between the new Chesterfield Substation and existing Willington Substation. The Sections and their key constraints were broadly appraised from north to south within the Study Area and considered in a logical stepwise manner at key decision points, as described below:

- Step 1: Determining the viability of western options and corridor routing out of Chesterfield Substation;
- Step 2: Determining the corridor routing south to Oakerthorpe;
- Step 3: Determining the corridor routing around Ripley and other settlements;
- Step 4: Determining the corridor routing around Denby Bottles and other settlements;
- Step 5: Determining the corridor routing around Derby to Willington Substation; and
- Step 6: Considering all evaluation components as end-to-end solutions to ensure that there were no circumstances where an accumulation of smaller constraints in a 'discarded' option might justify reconsidering decisions in identification of the components.

3.4.11 A preferred option, referred to as the EPC, was identified having regard to relevant national planning policy, National Grid's statutory duties and all relevant policies and principles. On balance, the preferred option was considered to provide the most appropriate overall solution.

3.4.12 The EPC identified in the CPRSS ultimately consisted primarily of a proposed route alignment that:

- routes east from Chesterfield Substation towards Heath, around the eastern edges of Holmewood and North Wingfield, heading south west to Lower Pilsley;
- continues to Lower Pilsley, providing optionality to the north or south of Lower Pilsley, before continuing around the southern extent of Clay Cross towards Stretton;

- turns south from Stretton, along the River Amber valley, west of Alfreton, past Oakerthorpe and broadly following the A38 corridor to the west of Ripley, towards Denby Bottles;
- provides optionality either to the west or east of a cluster of settlements including Denby Bottles, Denby Village, Kilburn, Lower Kilburn and Horsley Woodhouse, heading south towards Morley; and
- heads south east from Morley towards Ockbrook, around the north east of Derby, heading west along the southern extent of Derby parallel to the River Trent and connecting to the existing Willington Substation from the east.

## 3.5 Non-Statutory (Stage 1) Consultation

- 3.5.1 The CPRSS EPC, together with a graduated swathe indicating which parts of the CPRSS EPC were considered more or less likely to host the Project, was consulted on at the Stage 1 consultation in 2024. National Grid undertook the Stage 1 consultation for an 18-week period between 14 May 2024 and 17 September 2024. This included a 10-week extension to the consultation following the announcement that the UK General Election would take place on 4 July 2024. The consultation period was extended from 9 July 2024 to 17 September 2024 to ensure that local communities and their representatives would be able to share their views beyond the original consultation dates, which were due to fall within the pre-election period. This also made sure that newly elected Members of Parliament could participate in the consultation.
- 3.5.2 The Stage 1 consultation sought to gather feedback to inform the early proposals for the Project and identify how National Grid could develop more defined proposals.
- 3.5.3 An overview of the CPRSS EPC and graduated swathe was presented as part of the Stage 1 consultation and was also provided in the Project Background Document (Ref 3.14).
- 3.5.4 The EPC and the associated graduated swathe was split into six Sections to make it easier for people to give feedback about any particular areas that they may wish to comment on.

### Responses to the Non-Statutory (Stage 1) Consultation

- 3.5.5 A total of 2,643 feedback submissions from local communities, stakeholders and other consultees were received during the Stage 1 consultation period. These included paper response forms, online response forms, emails and letters.

### Consideration of Consultation Feedback

- 3.5.6 The Stage 1 consultation followed the approach set out in National Grid's Stage 1 Consultation Strategy (Ref 3.15) and provided in Appendix A of the **Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report** (Ref 3.16).
- 3.5.7 A range of both face-to-face and online events were held and promoted to provide opportunities for all stakeholders and communities to engage with the development of the Project proposals. The consultation also offered opportunities to provide feedback on the proposals at an early stage of the Project development.

- 3.5.8 The feedback received during consultation has been carefully reviewed and taken into account, informing ongoing surveys, technical work on the engineering design and the Environmental Impact Assessment process.
- 3.5.9 Feedback that contained requests for changes or considerations relevant to design elements of the Project were identified and considered in the context of environmental and socio-economic constraints and opportunities, engineering feasibility and cost, and planning policy considerations.
- 3.5.10 The process of considering the proposed changes and requests comprised an initial filter for benefit and feasibility, an assessment incorporating inputs from relevant technical experts, and further stages of additional study, if they were required. This was assessed in conjunction with the results of the closed questions from the feedback form which sought to gauge respondents' views on consultation and Project development processes.
- 3.5.11 The outcome of the consideration of potential design changes and requests was either that the request informed the current draft proposals for the Project subject to this Stage 2 consultation, or that the request was not considered further following balanced and informed assessment. The current draft proposals will be subject to ongoing review in response to all feedback and further engineering and environmental assessment work and surveys.
- 3.5.12 Further detail on the consideration of the proposed design changes received from the Stage 1 consultation feedback is provided in the **Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report** (Ref 3.16) which has been submitted as part of this Stage 2 consultation alongside this PEIR.

## 3.6 Strategic Proposal Backcheck and Review

- 3.6.1 The development of any project is always evolving and iterating as the knowledge about the project, and the potential areas in which it will be sited, grows and/or alters. In addition, previous preliminary assumptions and decisions are the subject of constant checking and backchecking as part of the consideration and engagement process. Any description of the assessment and rationale for non-final decisions (particularly at non-statutory stages of a potential project) must be understood in that context.
- 3.6.2 A backcheck and review was, therefore, undertaken of the previous design stages of the Project's design development. As highlighted in section 3.3 above, an update of the SOR (Ref 3.10) has been undertaken for statutory (Stage 2) consultation in the form of an SOR Update (Ref 3.12) which re-assess the strategic option for the Project. The conclusion following the update is that Chesterfield to Willington remains the preferred option for the Project. This continues to be the most advantageous when balancing environmental and socio-economic effects, cost, technical performance and constructability. National Grid will continue to assess relevant technical, environmental and cost factors as part of ongoing appraisals.

## 3.7 Options Identification and Selection Backcheck and Review

- 3.7.1 The SOR Update (Ref 3.12) has confirmed that the Strategic Proposal for the Project – the connection between Chesterfield to Willington – remains the optimum option. In addition, **Chapter 4 Review of Previous Development Stages of the Design**

**Development Report (DDR)** (Ref 3.17) confirmed that the Strategic Proposal, the legislative and policy context, and the overarching Project design assumptions (i.e. that the connection would consist of an overhead line supported by steel lattice pylons) that informed the identification and selection of the EPC taken forward to Stage 1 consultation remain valid.

- 3.7.2 The backcheck and review of the corridors presented in the CPRSS confirmed that the appraisals of those corridors remained valid with the exception of some of the technical assumptions made in relation to refined corridor Sections C3a and C3b, which form part of the EPC between North Wingfield/Lower Pilsley and Alfreton. In these areas, additional engineering studies undertaken after the Stage 1 consultation, as part of the development of a Preliminary Preferred Alignment within the EPC, indicated that routing a new transmission connection through this area would be more technically difficult than had previously been assumed due to the nature of the terrain, accessibility and the recorded mining history. From a technical perspective, it was concluded that it would be preferable to avoid routing through this Section of the EPC if a more plausible alternative was identified.
- 3.7.3 Feedback received from the Stage 1 consultation also included suggestions that the Project should be routed away from Pilsley and Lower Pilsley and away from the River Amber valley.
- 3.7.4 In the light of this feedback and the new information regarding the anticipated technical difficulties and consequent environmental impact implications with routing through Sections C3a and C3b of the EPC, it was decided that the decision to include Sections C3a and C3b in the EPC should be revisited and alternative options considered for this part of the route.

## **3.8 Summary of Environment and Technical Considerations Outside of the Emerging Preferred Corridor (Astwith and Alfreton)**

- 3.8.1 **Chapter 5 Review of the Corridor Presented at Stage 1 Consultation** of the DDR (Ref 3.17) describes the detailed process undertaken by National Grid in reconsidering the decision to include Sections C3a and C3b in the EPC.
- 3.8.2 As described in the DDR and Section 3.7 above, it has been concluded that it would be preferable to avoid routing through sections C3a and C3b if a more preferable alternative could be identified. As outlined in Section 3.6, Stage 1 stakeholder feedback also highlighted some concerns with the EPC in this area.
- 3.8.3 The Section of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment under consideration extended from an area north west of Astwith in the north to near Alfreton in the south. The Section of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment under consideration was approximately 12.9 km in length.
- 3.8.1 In identifying potential alternative routing options, consideration was given to all of the preliminary corridors appraised in the CPRSS that had the potential to host an alignment that either avoided or reduced the use of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment between Astwith and Alfreton. This process identified two options (Options 1 and 2) for an alternative to the Preliminary Preferred Alignment that are within Section 5A and avoid or reduce the challenges associated with the parts of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment within Sections C3a and C3b. The process also identified a third option (Option 3) which, whilst not avoiding the technical challenges

identified above, might potentially lessen environmental impacts by routing outside the EPC to utilise the opportunity for close parallel routing afforded by an existing 132 kV overhead line. These options are referred to as Alternative Routing Option 1, Alternative Routing Option 2 (including a sub-option 2b) and Alternative Routing Option 3. The relevant part of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment and each of the alternative routing options are shown on **Images 5.1 to 5.5** within the **DDR** (Ref 3.17).

- 3.8.2 These options were then subject to an appraisal of the technical, cost, environmental and socio-economic performance of each in relation to that of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment. The appraisal of these options was undertaken in accordance with the process set out in National Grid's 'Our Approach to Options Appraisal' document (Ref 3.18).
- 3.8.3 Due to the significant engineering challenges associated with the inherent terrain and characteristics of the local road network in the River Amber valley area between Stretton and Oakerthorpe, the technical appraisal resulted in a strong preference for Alternative Routing Option 1, as this was the only option under consideration that would wholly avoid this area. The preference for Alternative Routing Option 1 was supported by the environmental appraisals for landscape and visual, ecology and biodiversity, and by the cost appraisal. Whilst the environmental appraisal for historic environment identified a marginal preference for the Preliminary Preferred Alignment and Alternative Routing Option 3, no barriers to the overall preference for Alternative Routing Option 1 were identified by the environmental appraisals for historic environment and water environment or the socio-economic appraisal. It was considered that Alternative Routing Option 1 was the best performing option overall, as it represents the optimal balance between minimising environmental impact and technical challenge.
- 3.8.4 Alternative Routing Option 1 was selected to be taken forward as the preferred corridor instead of the Preliminary Preferred Alignment between Astwith and Alfreton.

## **3.9 Defined Proposal 2026 Statutory (Stage 2) Consultation**

### **Selection of the Preferred Corridor and Draft Order Limits**

- 3.9.1 The draft Order Limits (shown in **Figure 1.1 Project Location and Route Sections**) and the Project described in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project** present the refined proposals for the Stage 2 consultation. As outlined above, the chosen option for the indicative overhead line, draft Order Limits and design development considered:
- the 2024 Stage 1 consultation feedback;
  - the Strategic Proposal backcheck exercise;
  - the options appraisal and selection backcheck exercise; and
  - ongoing design work, appraisal and survey information.
- 3.9.2 **Chapter 7 Development of the Preferred Draft Alignment and Substation Siting of the DDR** (Ref 3.17) outlines the design considerations and decisions made by National Grid to inform the proposed route alignment and substation siting. All proposed changes to the preferred corridor and graduated swathe identified during

the Stage 1 consultation were considered. The chapter describes the design changes that were incorporated and taken forward to inform the proposed route alignment.

- 3.9.3 **Chapter 7 of the DDR** also provides commentary on the siting study and design considerations made in relation to the new Chesterfield Substation. Similar to the proposed route alignment, an optioneering process was completed to consider potential sites for the substation within a substation siting Study Area informed by the Horlock Rules. The siting of the proposed new Chesterfield Substation has been determined by the Chesterfield to High Marnham project with further details found later in this chapter.
- 3.9.4 The **Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report** (Ref 3.16) provides details on all the Stage 1 consultation feedback which requested design changes (both those accepted as well as those not taken forward).
- 3.9.5 **Chapter 8 Temporary Works and Draft Order Limits Development of the DDR** outlines the further considerations made by National Grid in developing the draft Order Limits associated with the proposed route alignment and substation siting. It discusses the temporary works proposals, including the overall transport strategy, access strategies for construction and maintenance, temporary compounds and other temporary works requirements.
- 3.9.6 The chapter also describes (i) the approach to works by third parties, which may include existing overhead and underground third-party services that would need to be diverted, removed, undergrounded, or protected in order to mitigate impacts of the Project; (ii) access strategies for maintenance; and (iii) the development of environmental mitigation areas.
- 3.9.7 In addition, it summarises how the design evolution informs the scale and location of the outermost boundary for the Project, known as the draft Order Limits. Eventually, the final DCO Order Limits will define all the land required to construct, operate and maintain the Project.

## Undergrounding

- 3.9.8 As part of feedback to date to consultation and engagement, there have been a number of stakeholders who have provided feedback suggesting that undergrounding should be considered. The Project's consideration of undergrounding is summarised below, and the consideration of undergrounding and other technology options are outlined in the **DDR** (Ref 3.17).
- 3.9.9 National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-5 (Ref 3.9) makes it clear that the Government expects overhead lines to be appropriate in most instances, although it recognises that there may be, at particularly sensitive locations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, potential adverse landscape and visual impacts of an overhead line which may make it unacceptable in planning terms, taking account of the specific local environment and context.
- 3.9.10 National Grid has carefully considered the feedback received during the Stage 1 consultation in 2024, the alternatives available, and other factors including its duties and obligations. These duties include balancing the need to be economical and efficient, which includes optimising costs in the interests of the bill-paying consumers, while maintaining a duty to have regard to preserving amenity, which includes the natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality.

- 3.9.11 There are also location specific environmental factors to consider including that Sections 1 to 4 of the Project are located within a 'Development High Risk Area' as allocated by the Mining Remediation Authority (formerly known as the Coal Authority) where historical coal mining activities pose a significant risk to new developments due to potential instability or other hazards. With pylons having a reduced footprint compared to undergrounded transmission cables, these pose a lower risk in this regard.
- 3.9.12 Given these considerations, the Project continues to proceed with an overhead line as the default design assumption; however, bespoke sections of undergrounding may be considered where specific contextual factors require it. This will be considered as the design refines and the assessments for the ES progress.

## Chesterfield Substation Siting

- 3.9.13 Detail on the appraisal of sites for the new Chesterfield Substation is outlined **Chapter 7 Development of the Preferred Draft Alignment and Substation Siting of the DDR.**
- 3.9.14 Similar to the proposed overhead line, an optioneering process was completed to consider potential sites for the new Chesterfield Substation within a substation siting Study Area, informed by the Horlock Rules. The siting of the proposed new Chesterfield Substation has been determined by the Chesterfield to High Marnham project which relates to a proposed uprating of existing 275 kV overhead lines on the 4ZV Route to facilitate an increase in transmission load to 400 kV and the development of three new substations at Brinsworth, Chesterfield and High Marnham which will help reinforce the NETS. The study and decision-making process behind the siting of the new Chesterfield Substation has also influenced in part the routing of the proposed route alignment for this Project between the proposed new Chesterfield Substation and Tibshelf.
- 3.9.15 The location selected was informed by considerations including:
- proximity to the existing 275 kV/132 kV Chesterfield Substation site;
  - an area of sufficient size to accommodate the temporary and permanent infrastructure;
  - maintaining close proximity to the local road network to avoid the need to construct new, long access roads;
  - exclusion of extensive areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3;
  - avoidance or minimisation of effects on environmental and socio-economic constraints, including environmental designated statutory and non-statutory sites;
  - avoidance of land identified in planning applications, commons and recreational areas, Crown land, National Trust land, and Countryside and Rights of Way land; and
  - ideally located on flatter land to minimise elevation change across the site.
- 3.9.16 The siting area around the existing substation is predominantly agricultural but includes the local settlements of Cock Alley, Calow, Brimington Common, Arkwright Town and Winsick and the suburbs of Chesterfield Hasland and Spital. These residential communities and receptors introduce constraints to the location of new infrastructure. In identifying the site of the new Chesterfield Substation, National Grid

has sought to maximise the separation from these communities as far as practicable, balanced with other technical and environmental factors, to reduce as far as possible the potential amenity impacts to these receptors (in accordance with Horlock Rule 1).

## **3.10 Scoping Feedback**

- 3.10.1 The Scoping Report (Ref 3.19) presented the main alternatives considered from the CPRSS (Ref 3.11) and the selection of a broad corridor used to inform the Scoping Boundary defined within the Scoping Report. The preliminary appraisal within this PEIR reflects the continued refinement and iterative design of the Project. The evolution of the design of the Project between the publication of the CPRSS and the current design proposals is described in the **DDR** (Ref 3.17). The current design of the Project is detailed within **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**. The consideration of alternatives and the optioneering process is outlined in this chapter.
- 3.10.2 The Planning Inspectorate provided a Scoping Opinion (Ref 3.20) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero in December 2024, which also included responses from relevant statutory bodies. A summary of the Scoping Opinion comments relating to the consideration of alternatives, and how these have been considered, is presented in **Table 3.1**.

**Table 3.1: Summary of stakeholder Scoping Opinion responses in relation to alternatives considered**

Consultee	Summary of Key Topics Raised	Response
Ault Hucknall Parish Council	<p><i>‘The scoping document should include any other options that may have been considered and why they have been discounted.</i></p> <p><i>The line of the M1 should certainly be discounted as this corridor already has a major impact on the environment and the addition of pylons would completely overload the environmental impact.’</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Further information on this specific challenge is provided in response to similar stakeholder feedback in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b> (Ref 3.16).</p>
	<p><i>‘The parish council is not opposed to the principle of this scheme in upgrading the national grid but believe that, as has been done in some other areas, the alternative of underground cabling should be seriously considered, even if this is only for parts of the route where residential areas may be impacted, as this would not visually impact the environment.’</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Further information on this specific challenge is provided in response to similar stakeholder feedback in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p> <p>Underground cables – The assessment was based on overhead lines as the preferred technology choice. This is consistent with the NPS EN-5 (Ref 3.9) which states in paragraph 2.9.20 that <i>‘it is the government’s position that overhead lines should be the strong starting presumption for electricity networks developments in general’</i>. National Grid will, however, consider localised undergrounding in areas where considered necessary.</p>
Bolsover District Council	<p><i>‘The Environmental Statement should make clear how the judgements regarding the preferred route and the alternatives were arrived at with a full justification for the final alternative taken forward.’</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter and will be presented in the ES.</p>
Clay Cross Parish Council	<p><i>‘We strongly recommend National Grid revisits and reconsults on using the existing M1 corridor, to demonstrate that it is listening to feedback from the many local residents plus the newly moved suggestions</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Further information on this specific challenge is</p>

Consultee	Summary of Key Topics Raised	Response
	<p><i>of a possible engagement when there is an electrification of the Midland Main Line.'</i></p> <p><i>'We also concur with CPRE Derbyshire when they say that there should be more meaningful engagement with communities, local authorities and other key stakeholders including improved mitigation through alternative routes and technologies i.e. Undergrounding; use of alternatively designed pylons and the wider provision of benefits, both for communities and the local environment.'</i></p>	<p>provided in response to similar stakeholder feedback in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p> <p>Consultation to date is outlined in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b> and further engagement will be undertaken as part of the Stage 2 statutory consultation and design development process.</p>
<p><b>Dale Abbey Parish Council</b></p>	<p><i>'The council believes that the installation of these pylons will result in significant and lasting harm to the local landscape, detracting from the natural beauty and character of the area. We also question the rationale behind selecting overhead lines when alternative solutions, such as underground cables, are available. Underground installations, while potentially more costly upfront, can minimize the visual and environmental impact, preserving the countryside for future generations.'</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. In addition, the consideration of stakeholder feedback is presented within the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p> <p>Underground cables – The assessment was based on overhead lines as the preferred technology choice. This is consistent with the NPS EN-5 (Ref 3.9) which states in paragraph 2.9.20 that <i>'it is the government's position that overhead lines should be the strong starting presumption for electricity networks developments in general'</i>. National Grid will, however, consider localised undergrounding in areas where considered necessary.</p>
<p><b>Draycott and Church Wilne Parish Council</b></p>	<p><i>'There appears to be no detailed reference to route EDN-1 (Chesterfield to Ratcliffe-on-Soar) suggesting that this route is not considered worthy of further consideration. We would like to see a more detailed analysis of this route and a clearer explanation of why, if appropriate, this route is no longer part of the planning.'</i></p>	<p>An assessment of the strategic option EDN-1 (Chesterfield to Ratcliffe-on-Soar) was considered as part of the SoR (Ref 3.10), which formed part of the Stage 1 consultation materials. In line with National Grid's Approach to Consenting (Ref 3.5) only one strategic option was taken forward for the next stage of assessment which is considered proportionate.</p> <p>As noted in this Chapter, an update and backcheck to the SoR has been carried out (the SoR Update (Ref 3.12)) and which</p>

Consultee	Summary of Key Topics Raised	Response
		has confirmed that the Strategic Proposal for the Project – the connection between Chesterfield to Willington – remains the optimum option.
<b>Glapwell Parish Council</b>	<i>'We are extremely concerned about the reasoning behind the route from Chesterfield along the A617 to the M1 rather than a more direct route south. There is already a lower capacity direct line from Chesterfield to Pilsley which avoids the M1 corridor.'</i>	A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Further information on this specific challenge is provided in response to similar stakeholder feedback in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b> , as well as the <b>DDR</b> .
<b>Holbrook Parish Council</b>	<i>'The route is travelling south, to the east of Alfreton to Ripley. South of Ripley, if the route went to the west of Denby Bottles, the cross over would be very close to the Cinder Hill Tarpits.'</i>	A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Consideration of this specific challenge is presented within the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b> , as well as the <b>DDR</b> .
<b>Little Easton Parish Council</b>	<p><i>'The Parish Council feels that there are alternatives available which would lessen the harmful impact of this development, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• <b>Underground Cables:</b> Burying the power lines underground would reduce visual and environmental impacts. While undergrounding is generally more expensive, it is a more suitable solution in this sensitive landscape.</i></li> <li><i>• <b>Alternative Routes:</b> Alternative routes e.g. the M1 corridor would be less intrusive and damaging.'</i></li> </ul>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Consideration of this specific challenge is presented within the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p> <p>Underground cables – The assessment was based on overhead lines as the preferred technology choice. This is consistent with the NPS EN-5 (Ref 3.9 which states in paragraph 2.9.20 that 'it is the government's position that overhead lines should be the strong starting presumption for electricity networks developments in general'. National Grid will, however, consider localised undergrounding in areas where considered necessary.</p>
<b>North East Derbyshire District Council</b>	<i>'the Council commented that more detail was needed to understand why certain routes had been discounted, as the Strategic Options Report (SOR) was deficient in this regard. For example, the SOR indicated that there may be solutions to the challenges identified with a connection to Ratcliffe on Soar. The SOR indicated that</i>	A description of the consideration of EDN-1 is presented within the SOR (Ref 3.10).

Consultee	Summary of Key Topics Raised	Response
	<p><i>mitigation may be possible for routes EDN-1 and EDN-3, which are considered by the Council to be potentially less harmful (than the preferred route in landscape and heritage terms (in particular).'</i></p> <p><i>'In relation to the embedded mitigation measures, the Scoping Opinion states that the preferred route 'avoids and reduces impacts on individual receptors.' It is considered that this judgement can only be made once the evidence regarding the discounting of the alternatives is available.'</i></p> <p><i>'In relation to the design of the pylon structures, it is considered that the T-ylon/low height structures should be the only design in scope for areas designated in Local Plans as higher value landscape areas, close to settlements, or within/affecting the setting of heritage assets, except where undergrounding is physically possible.'</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter and will be presented in the ES.</p> <p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Consideration of stakeholder feedback is presented within the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b> and further information on pylon selection is presented within the <b>DDR</b>.</p>
<p><b>Ockbrook and Borrowash Parish Council (OBPC)</b></p>	<p><i>'Our key feedback to this consultation is that OBPC would implore the applicant to assess the environmental impact of all options open to them for the required purpose. That is, a full and complete environmental impact assessment of both of the options identified as preferable in environmental and socio-economic terms in the Strategic Option Report (March 2024) including EDN-2 (Chesterfield to Willington) but critically also option EDN-1 (New Chesterfield Substation to Ratcliffe-on-Soar).'</i></p>	<p>An assessment of the strategic option EDN-1 (Chesterfield to Ratcliffe-on-Soar) was considered as part of the SOR (Ref 3.10), which formed part of the Stage 1 consultation materials. In line with National Grid's Approach to Consenting only one strategic option was taken forward for the next stage of assessment which is considered proportionate.</p> <p>As noted in this Chapter, an update and backcheck to the SOR has been carried out (the SOR Update (Ref 3.12)) and which has confirmed that the Strategic Proposal for the Project – the connection between Chesterfield to Willington – remains the optimum option.</p>

Consultee	Summary of Key Topics Raised	Response
Smalley Parish Council	<p><i>‘Clarity on the various proposed routes, along with visual representations of where pylons would be situated, would facilitate informed discourse, and allow for more productive community engagement. The absence of such information has left many feeling frustrated and unrepresented at a seminal stage of the planning process.’</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>‘Given the breadth of considerations at hand, it appears prudent for the National Grid to explore and present alternative routes that circumvent the Green Belt, thus avoiding a confrontation with regulatory standards intended to protect these vital spaces. In reflecting upon community needs and environmental considerations, it becomes clear that the National Grid update scheme warrants further examination and modification.’</i></p>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the consideration of stakeholder feedback are presented within the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p> <p>The Stage 1 consultation presented a graduated swathe within the EPC, indicating where the overhead line could be located taking into account environmental factors and constraints (darker shading indicating potentially more appropriate siting areas). Feedback has informed design refinement, and this Stage 2 consultation presents the proposed route alignment of the pylons and indicative overhead line. Please refer to <b>Chapter 4 Description of the Project</b>.</p> <p>The Project and its associated infrastructure is routed through the ‘Derby and Nottingham Green Belt’ which emerges to the East and North of Derby and surrounds the conurbation of Nottingham. As set out in the <b>CPRSS</b>, at the routing and siting stage of the Project it was found that all but preliminary corridor 1, where a range of receptors and constraints are present and afforded high protection under the NPS (EN-1 and EN-5), all other preliminary corridors identified would pass through areas of Green Belt – including those also passing through the Derwent Valley Mills WHS. On the basis that corridor options seeking to achieve a connection between Willington and Chesterfield, asides from routeing westwards into the Peak District, would have to pass through the Green Belt, this was not assessed to be a differentiating factor.</p> <p>Due to the potential scale and nature of the Project, impacts on the Derby and Nottingham Green Belt are unavoidable however in developing the proposed route alignment, National Grid have sought and will continue to seek to minimise impacts on Green Belt (and green space) where practicable including utilising existing infrastructure corridors (such as the A38), taking a more</p>

Consultee	Summary of Key Topics Raised	Response
South Wingfield Parish Council	<i>'We have at all stages expressed the view that National Grid has failed to take seriously the alternative route of the M1 motorway and pointed out that the route of the motorway was planned to cause minimum possible disfigurement to the landscape. It should naturally follow that the pylon route should follow the same path.'</i>	<p>direct route where possible (thereby minimising the number of directional changes and pylons) and in Section 3 the reduction of 'wirescape' (rationalisation) through modification of the existing 33 kV overhead line on the distribution network.</p> <p>The Application for the Project will consider the impacts on Green Belt land further within the Planning Statement.</p> <p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Further information on this specific challenge is provided in response to similar stakeholder feedback in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p>
Stanton by Dale Parish Council	<i>'Stanton by Dale Parish Council acknowledges the need to upgrade infrastructure to meet future electricity demands but has expressed concern already in the first consultation, relating to the environmental impact of constructing large pylons across the countryside. The council believes these pylons will cause lasting damage to the landscape and questions why this approach is chosen when alternatives, such as underground cables, are available. The council urges National Grid to consider underground options for the cable installation.'</i>	<p>A description of the alternatives considered by the Applicant and the reasoning behind the option chosen is presented within this chapter. Further information on this specific challenge is provided in response to similar stakeholder feedback in the <b>Stage 1 Consultation Feedback Report</b>.</p> <p>Underground cables – The assessment was based on overhead lines as the preferred technology choice. This is consistent with the NPS EN-5 (Ref 3.9) which states in paragraph 2.9.20 that '<i>it is the government's position that overhead lines should be the strong starting presumption for electricity networks developments in general</i>'. National Grid will, however, consider localised undergrounding in areas where considered necessary.</p>

## 3.11 Design Evolution and Next Steps

- 3.11.1 Consultation on the information provided in this PEIR and the feedback received from Stage 2 consultation will be used to continue to refine the design of the Project, where appropriate. This refined design will be presented in the DCO application documents and form the basis of the ES assessment. The current Project design which is being consulted on during Stage 2 consultation is described in further detail in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**.
- 3.11.2 This chapter summarised the process to date to develop the Project, with reference to the **DDR** and Stage 1 consultation feedback, and reported the main alternatives considered to date. The ES will present the main alternatives considered and supporting reasons.

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