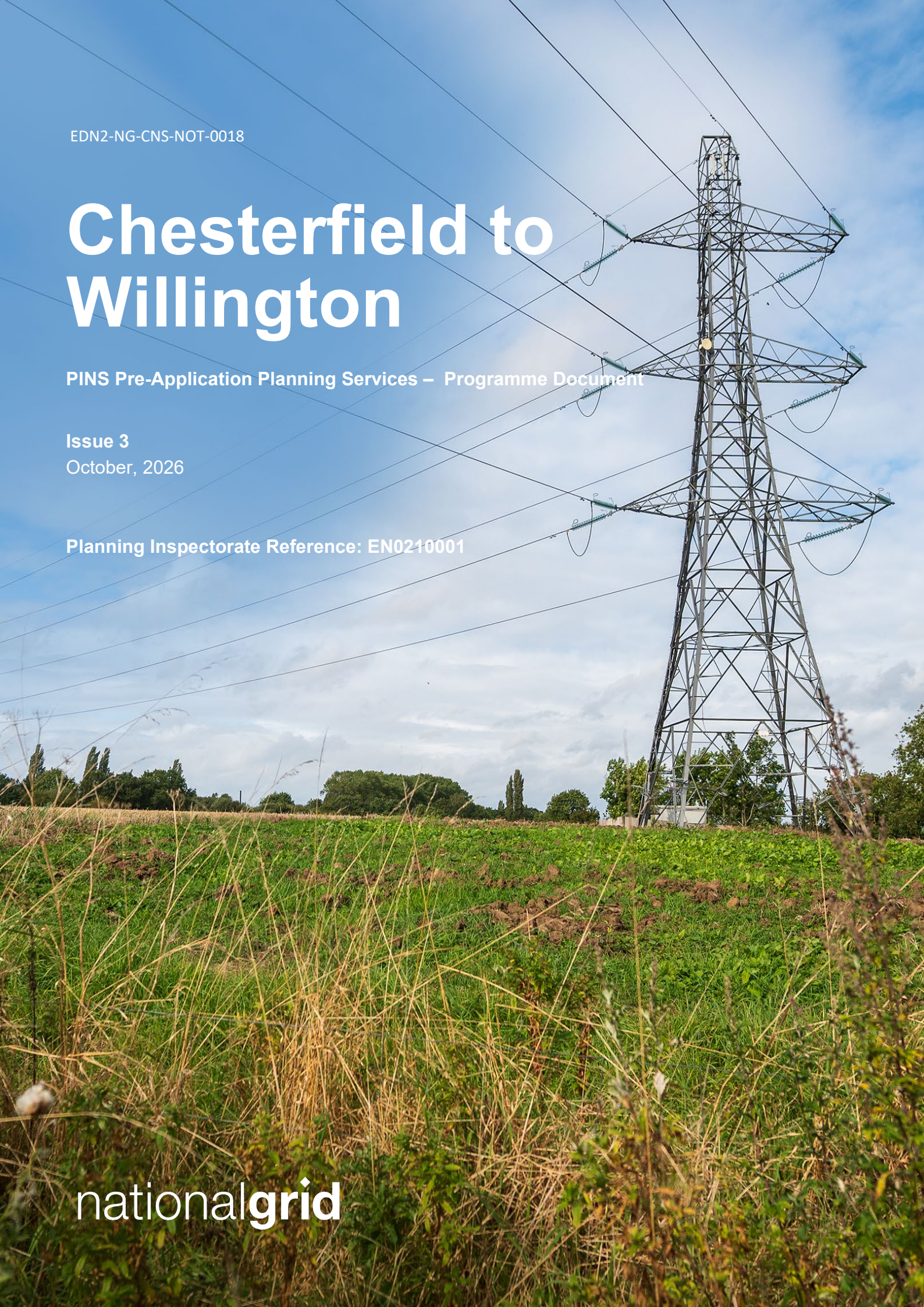
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# Chesterfield to Willington

**PINS Pre-Application Planning Services – Programme Document**

**Issue 3**
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**Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN0210001**



nationalgrid

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Programme Document has been prepared by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) as a requirement under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus in respect of the Chesterfield to Willington Project.

## 1.2 Purpose and Structure

1.2.1 This Programme Document sets out the timescales and describes the activities necessary to ensure an effective pre-application process, including the level of pre-application service requested from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and consultation with various parties required under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) as per the requirements for a Programme Document set out in Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application prospectus. It is expected that this document will be updated at key milestones throughout the pre-application process as the Project is further developed.

1.2.2 This Programme Document is structured as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction including the purpose and structure of the document
- Section 2: Background to Chesterfield and Willington ('the Project')
- Section 3: PINS Pre-application Service
- Section 4: Expected Submission Timeframe
- Section 5: Timeframe of the pre-application process
- Section 6: Main issues for resolution
- Section 7: Engaging with statutory consultees and Local Planning Authorities
- Section 8: Pre-application risks and how these are tracked and managed
- Section 9: Approach to preparing Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI).

# 2. Background to the Project

## 2.1 Overview of the Project

2.1.1 The Chesterfield to Willington Project (the 'Project') is a proposed by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) plc (hereafter referred to as National Grid) who is responsible for ensuring electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is needed and for developing upgrade to the network, as agreed with the industry regulator, Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).

2.1.2 The Project is still in development, and detailed design is not fully understood at this stage; however, the Project is likely to comprise the following principal components:

- A new 400kV overhead line, approximately 60 kilometres (km) in length between a proposed new Chesterfield Substation and the existing Willington Substation. It is anticipated that this would comprise steel lattice pylons in accordance with National Grid's guidance and national planning policy.
- Replacement of short sections of existing overhead line and local changes to the lower voltage distribution networks to facilitate construction of the Project.
- Other works needed for construction, such as temporary access roads, highway improvements, construction work compounds, ancillary works, and utility diversions and drainage. There would also be land required for mitigation and enhancement of the environment including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

2.1.3 The Project would connect into the existing Willington Substation located to the south west of Derby and a proposed new substation at Chesterfield. The new Chesterfield Substation will be delivered as part of a separate National Grid project (Chesterfield to High Marnham), distinct from the Project. The proposed Chesterfield Substation was granted planning consent by North East Derbyshire District Council by a Town and Country Planning Act Application in August 2026.

2.1.4 At the time of EIA Scoping and Stage 2 Consultation, there was potential that the new Chesterfield Substation would be included as works as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Project to provide an alternative consenting mechanism. In view of this, its potential environmental effects were considered in the EIA Scoping Report and the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) as part of the Stage 2 Consultation. As planning consent has now been granted, the Substation will not form part of the DCO application.

2.1.5 The Project is wholly within the County of Derbyshire, and the local authorities that are currently anticipated to be within the draft Order Limits are as follows:

- Derbyshire County Council
- North-East Derbyshire District Council
- Amber Valley Borough Council
- Erewash Borough Council
- South Derbyshire District Council

- Bolsover District Council

2.1.6 The following are the local authorities that are immediately adjacent to the draft Order Limits:

- Derby City Council
- Chesterfield Borough Council

## 2.2 Planning Act 2008

2.2.1 The Project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), as defined by the Planning Act and the Planning Act 2008 (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) (Electricity Lines) Order 2013, as it involves the installation of an electric line above ground of more than 2km, which will operate at in excess of 132kV in England.

2.2.2 As an NSIP, the Project requires the grant of development consent by the making of a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008.

2.2.3 For the purpose of Section 115 of the Planning Act 2008, development consent may also be granted for associated development. At this stage of the project the full extent of associated development has not yet been defined.

# 3. PINS Pre-application Service

## 3.1 Pre-application Service

3.1.1 The Project is subject to the 'Standard' level of pre-application service, which has since been confirmed by PINS. This is an appropriate and proportionate level of pre-application which is reflective of the scale and nature of the project and NGET's level of experience as an applicant.

3.1.2 The Project is similar to others within the Great Grid Upgrade that are further developed in their programme, and as such, lessons learnt and expertise in delivering DCOs are available to enable the application to be of a standard acceptable for examination.

3.1.3 The standard level of service will provide the Project with project update meetings, draft document review and risk review.

# 4. Expected Submission Timeframe

4.1.1 Stage 1 (Non-Statutory Consultation) on the Project was held between 14th May and 17th September 2024.

4.1.2 Stage 2 (Statutory Consultation) was undertaken between 3rd March and 28th April 2026.

4.1.3 It is anticipated that DCO application submission will be made in Q2 2027. The submission date timeframe will be refined as the period of submission draws closer. National Grid will provide PINS with regular updates regarding the submission date as the project progresses.

# 5. Timeframe of the pre-application process

5.1.1 An anticipated timeline of the pre-application process is set out in Table 1 below, these timeframes are indicative at this point, and will be further refined, and further detail added as required following review of feedback provided by the Stage 2 Consultation and as the period of submission draws closer.

5.1.2 Stage 2 Consultation was held in accordance with Sections 46 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008, with the requirement for a Statutory Consultation.

**Table 1: Anticipated submission timeframe**

| Activity | Expected Timeframe (Status) |
|---|---|
| Stage 1 Consultation | 14th May 2024 to 17th September 2024 (extended due to General Election)(Concluded) |
| EIA Scoping | Submitted 31st October 2024, Scoping Opinion received 10th December 2024 (Concluded) |
| PINS project update meeting | 6th March 2025 |
| PINS project update meeting | 24th November 2026 |
| Consultation on the SoCC | October – November 2026 (Concluded) |
| Stage 2 Consultation | Q2 2026 (Concluded) |
| PINS project update meeting | 29th April 2026 (Concluded) |
| PINS project update meeting | Q3 2026 (Planned) |
| Targeted Consultation | Q4 2026 (If required) |
| PINS review of draft DCO documentation | Q1 2027 (Planned) |
| PINS Project update meeting (draft documents feedback meeting) | Q1 2027 (Planned) |
| PINS project update meeting (pre submission meeting) | Q2 2027 (Planned) |
| DCO Submission | Q2 2027 (Planned) |

# 6. Main issues for resolution

6.1.1 The Project completed Stage 2 Consultation in April 2026, and is currently reviewing all feedback received to feed into the development of the Project.

6.1.2 The table below sets out the general issues in line with the following National Policy Statements (NPS) which are considered likely to be relevant to projects of this nature together with a description of the current consideration of this issue for the proposed Project:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (NPS EN-1): NPS EN-1 sets out the Government's overarching policy about the development of NSIPs in the energy sector. It emphasises the need for new energy projects to contribute to a secure, diverse, reliable and affordable energy supply;
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (NPS EN-5): NPS EN-5 is additional to NPS EN-1. Applicants and the Secretary of State should consider both NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-5 together.

6.1.3 As Stage 2 Consultation has now been completed, references to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) have been included as an aide to a better understanding of the issues and their context (it is noted that the PEIR is one but not the only document relevant to the Statutory Consultation and the issues being addressed). The PEIR presents a preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the project, which was used to inform Stage 2 Consultation. The purpose of the PEIR is to enable members of the public, consultation bodies, and other stakeholders, to develop an informed view of the preliminary likely significant effects of the Project and comment on aspects of interest.

6.1.4 Further consideration will be given to these matters following review of feedback from communities and stakeholders in relation to the proposals following the Stage 2 Consultation.

6.1.5 An application for a DCO will be supported by documents explaining the consideration of issues arising from consultation and the application of the NPS's. An Environmental Statement will set out consideration of the Project's environmental effects.

**Table 2: List of issues for resolution**

| Issue | Description of Potential Issue |
|---|---|
| Air Quality | Chapter 13 of the PEIR considers the potential effects arising due to air quality and emissions. The preliminary assessment is set out within this chapter and considers the effects on air quality including dust mitigation, emissions from generators and effects on air quality. The effects from construction vehicle emissions is to be reviewed following further assessment. Further assessments are being carried out and feedback from Stage 2 Consultation is being considered. |
| Aviation and Defence | As set out in Chapter 12 of the PEIR, a specialist aviation consultant has been engaged by National Grid to support in ongoing discussion and analysis relating to the operational safety of airports, aerodromes and heliports in the vicinity of the Project and currently no adverse operational or safety impacts on these facilities are anticipated. Further engagement will be undertaken with airfield owners and operators as the Project progresses and impacts on aerodrome receptors will be reported within the DCO as appropriate. |
| Alternatives and good design | Potential issues may include site and route selection and alternatives, including the application of the Holford Rules. Chapter 3 of the PEIR considers alternatives and Chapter 2 of the Design Development Report sets out the good design principles that have and will continue to guide the Project's design process. |
| Biodiversity and geological conservation | Chapter 7 of the PEIR considers the Project's potential effects on ecology and biodiversity, setting out the preliminary assessment of potential effects on internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites of ecological importance. Table 7.15 of Chapter 7 sets out the preliminary assessment of effects on statutory and non-statutory designated sites. Chapter 10 considers the Project's potential effects on geology including that the route is partially located within a development high risk area as designated by the Mining Remediation Authority, with the preliminary assessment of effects set out in Section 10.7. The Project will continue to be progressed and refined, taking account of relevant sites and habitats and the impacts to sites of geological importance during construction and operation.<br><br>Surveys are ongoing and survey data alongside consultation feedback will be used to inform continued design development. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) | National Grid's Environmental Action Plan makes a commitment to achieving at least 10 per cent gain in environmental value on all construction projects. The Project will seek to deliver at least 10 per cent BNG and align with the latest government guidance. The strategy will be progressed and refined as development progresses, alongside engagement with relevant stakeholders. |
| Climate change adaption and resilience | Embedded mitigation measures associated with the Project which address potential effects relating to climate change resilience are outlined within Chapter 4 of the PEIR (Description of the Project). Additionally, standards, measures and processes identified would be secured through design and the DCO requirements and via measures outlined in the Draft Outline Code of Construction Practice. |
| Flood risk | The Project area includes some flood risk zones associated with the River Derwent, River Trent and various other waterbodies. Chapter 9 of the PEIR considers the Project's potential effects on the water environment including flood risk. The preliminary assessment identifies and assesses the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the Project and demonstrates how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account. |
| Greenhouse Gas (GHG Emissions) | A quantification of GHG emissions as a result of the Project will be completed and submitted as part of the DCO application. In the unlikely event that likely significant effects are identified within the report, these will be included within the ES.<br><br>Design embedded and good practice mitigation measures have been outlined within Chapter 4 (Description of the Project) and Appendix 4a (Draft Outline Code of Construction Practice) of the PEIR respectively. Mitigation measures will continue to be developed as the Project progresses. |
| Health | Chapter 16 of the PEIR considers the Project's potential effects on health and wellbeing. Section 16.7 considers the preliminary assessment of effects.<br><br>Further assessments are ongoing and will be considered along consultation feedback. |
| Historic environment | Chapter 8 of the PEIR considers the Project's potential effects on the historic environment. The preliminary assessment considers impacts of the Project on the historic environment/assets above, and at below the surface of the ground.<br><br>Further assessments and surveys are ongoing and will be considered along consultation feedback. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Inter-relationships with other infrastructure projects | National Grid is aware of several projects along the proposed route and is engaging with other relevant developers. Inter-relationships and cumulative impacts with these projects will be considered. |
| Land rights and land interests | National Grid is and will continue to engage with affected parties to secure the necessary land rights to deliver the project. |
| Landscape and visual | Chapter 6 of the PEIR considers the Project's potential landscape and visual effects. Consideration of Project design and routeing has been carried out in accordance with the Holford Rules.<br><br>Further assessments and surveys are ongoing and will be considered along consultation feedback. |
| Noise and vibration | Chapter 14 of the PEIR considers the potential effects of noise and vibration from the Project. The preliminary assessment considered potential mitigation measures to manage the preliminary likely significant effects.<br><br>Further assessments and surveys are ongoing and will be considered along consultation feedback. |
| Land use including open space, green infrastructure, green belt | Chapter 11 (Agriculture and Soils) of the PEIR considers the Project's potential land use effects with regards to agriculture. Ongoing engagement with various stakeholders, including further assessments are being carried out as development of the Project progresses. This is in addition to feedback received as part of consultation. |
| Socio economic impacts | Chapter 15 of the PEIR sets out the Project's potential socio-economic effects. The preliminary assessment considered local and regional level socio-economic effects at construction, operation and maintenance.<br><br>Further assessments are being carried out alongside feedback from statutory consultation. |
| Traffic and transport | Chapter 12 of the PEIR sets out the potential traffic and transport effects of the Project. The preliminary assessment collates potential and residual effects, alongside managed mitigation throughout the Project. This is set out within the chapter.<br><br>Further assessments and surveys are ongoing and will be considered along consultation feedback. |
| Water quality and resources | Chapter 9 of the PEIR considers the effects on water quality and resources from the Project. The preliminary assessment considered potential mitigation measures to manage the preliminary likely significant effects.<br><br>Further assessments and surveys are ongoing and will be considered along consultation feedback. |

# 7. Engaging with statutory consultees and Local Planning Authorities

7.1.1 National Grid began early engagement with the host Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) prior to the Stage 1 Consultation in Spring 2024. In 2024 each LPA was consulted on a draft consultation strategy ahead of the consultation period, with engagement ongoing throughout including at Stage 1 Consultation and EIA Scoping. Meetings were held and continue to be held with all relevant host authorities.

7.1.2 National Grid wrote to all LPAs and statutory consultees to inform them of the Stage 2 Consultation. Prior to the Consultation, National Grid consulted with the LPAs on a Statement of Community Consultation which presents further information on engagement activities.

7.1.3 Feedback has been sought from both LPAs and statutory consultees as part of the consultation periods, and feedback has been considered as part of ongoing design development.

7.1.4 National Grid are in discussions with LPAs on entering into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs), with some in place. These are supported by Engagement Plans which outline the engagement and input required from the LPAs.

7.1.5 National Grid continue to engage with LPAs through regular project update meetings.

7.1.6 In addition to engagement with the host authorities, National Grid has and will continue to liaise with the statutory environmental bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) and other organisations such as National Highways, Network Rail, utility companies, the National Trust and local interest groups such as the Wildlife Trust (amongst others that are relevant). Service Level Agreements (SLA) or similar are agreed or being agreed with key statutory bodies, such as the Environment Agency, Historic England and an SLA is in place with Natural England to ensure adequate resource to engage with the project at key times.

7.1.7 National Grid continue to monitor the level of engagement and responses from key Statutory Bodies or interest groups, and will continue to engage throughout project development.

7.1.8 Project update meetings continue to be held with the relevant organisations to ensure discussions are progressed and feedback obtained following the conclusion of the Stage 2 Consultation.

7.1.9 Further engagement with PINS will continue at relevant milestones and confirmed as the Project develops.

# 8. Pre-application risks and how these are tracked and managed

| Risk | Description of Risk | Tracking and managing risk |
|---|---|---|
| Limited local authority resources which could limit their ability to engage with the proposals. | LPAs may have limited resources to have effective communication throughout the pre-application process for the DCO. | PPAs are to be entered into with the relevant LPAs to ensure that resource allocation is managed to have effective dialogue. Meetings have commenced with the LPAs. |
| Design | The length of the scheme | The project will undergo several design evolution phases following consultation feedback and receipt of survey results.<br>The design work and discussions being held aim to minimise the impact on the environment and local communities. |
| Limited statutory consultee resources which could limit their ability to engage with the proposals. | Statutory consultees may have limited resources to have effective communication throughout the pre-application process for the DCO. | At present an SLA is in place between National Grid and prescribed bodies including Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. Cost recovery agreements will be put in place where appropriate |

| Risk | Description of Risk | Tracking and managing risk |
|---|---|---|
| | | for relevant stakeholders to help enable effective dialogue. The introduction of cost recovery will be engaged with positively, and engagement strategies are being mapped out with stakeholders. |
| Local authority or statutory resource/ability to respond to scoping consultation in the required timescales. | Resourcing and capacity issues may see difficulty for stakeholders and LPAs to respond within specified timeframes. | Effective communication is currently being held with the LPAs with introductory meetings and updates following consultation. National Grid continue to advise stakeholders on key timeframes to allow for resource accomodation. Continued dialogue will ensure that adequate notice is given for stakeholders to respond to any new information. |
| Challenges accessing land for surveys in a timely manner. | With some ecological surveys having seasonality constraints, there are time constraints in conducting these. | Effective communication between the relevant disciplines and land agents, in order to plan a survey schedule and timeframe to ensure land access is achieved. |

8.1.1 The applicant will produce an Issues Tracker during the pre-application period that will be informed by consultation with stakeholders. The Issues Tracker will culminate in a list of Potential Main Issues for the Examination, which will be submitted into examination if the DCO application is accepted.

# 9. Approach to Preliminary Environmental Information

9.1.1 A Scoping Report was submitted in support of a request by National Grid, under Regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, for a written Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Energy Security and Net Zero, administered by PINS on behalf of the SoS, to inform the EIA for the Project. Subsequently a Scoping Opinion was issued by PINS in December 2024.

9.1.2 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) was prepared in accordance with the Scoping Report and Scoping Opinion, and was considered within Chapter 5 Approach and Methodology of the PEIR. The information within this chapter was preliminary and based on the assumptions presented in Chapter 4 Description of the Project. The PEIR provided the information gathered to date and the preliminary assessment work undertaken for each environmental topic to inform the Stage 2 Consultation. The preliminary assessments applied a precautionary principle, where a realistic worse-case scenario has been assessed where limited information is available.

9.1.3 Each topic chapter within the PEIR presented further information to be collected to inform the Environmental Statement where applicable.

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