

# factsheet

## The Planning Act 2008

National Grid is committed to genuine and meaningful community engagement throughout the development of our projects.

The Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) sets out how companies should consult the public about major projects, but we try to go beyond this wherever we can.

### **The Planning Inspectorate (PINS)**

The Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) covers the planning application and consent process for nationally significant infrastructure projects, which includes power stations and power lines of 132,000 volts and above.

On 1 April 2012, under the Localism Act 2011, PINS became the agency responsible for operating the planning process for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs).

The Planning Act 2008 sets out certain thresholds above which certain types of infrastructure development are considered to be nationally significant and require development consent.

Any developer wishing to construct an NSIP is required to apply for consent to do so. For such projects, PINS examines the application and will make a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State, who will make the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

Previously NSIPs were dealt with by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC), which was abolished by the Localism Act 2011, on 1 April 2012. Its functions transferred to PINS on that date and are now delivered through its National Infrastructure Directorate.

Further information about the role of PINS in determining applications for nationally significant infrastructure projects can be found on their website at <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/application-process/planning-inspectorate-role/>

### **Consultation**

Pre-application consultation with statutory consultees and local communities is a key part of the Planning Act. Developers must consult interested parties, including the public, local authorities and statutory bodies, such as Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency.

National Grid is committed to genuine and meaningful stakeholder and community engagement throughout project development. We will meet and, where we can, exceed the statutory requirements for consultation or engagement. Our Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy sets out the principles we will adopt to help us meet our commitment. The policy is available on our website (see overleaf for link).

Thorough consultation takes place with the statutory bodies that have local and specific knowledge of relevant sites, which could influence the project. This ensures that vital information is shared and included in the planning of projects at an early stage.



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**Statement of Community Consultation**

Before we formally consult the public under the Planning Act 2008, we set out how we will do it in a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC). We consult with local authorities when we draft the SOCC so that they can comment on how, when and with whom we consult on projects to ensure that local concerns are addressed.

**Consultation Report**

Having undertaken consultation under the Planning Act 2008, we are then required to compile a report explaining what we have done by way of consultation on the project and how we have taken into account or otherwise feedback received as part of that consultation and how that feedback has shaped the project. We submit our Consultation Report as one of the development consent application documents to PINS.

On receipt of our development consent application PINS will review the application and the Consultation Report to decide whether to accept the application for examination. This review will largely be based on a checklist of compliance against the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the adequacy of the consultation undertaken.

**Informal Consultation**

In addition to the ‘formal’ consultation National Grid is required to undertake under the Planning Act 2008, we value consultation at much earlier project development stages and so we will look to engage with core stakeholders and the public on an informal basis throughout our project development process and we report to PINS on this consultation and the role it has played in shaping the early project development in our Consultation Report.

More information on our project development process and how we consult with core stakeholders and the public can be found in National Grid’s ‘Our approach to the design and routing of new electricity transmission lines’ available on the website at <http://www.nationalgrid.com/majorprojectdocuments>

**Consultation on the Development Consent Order**

Once PINS has accepted a Development Consent Order application it will carry out a statutory period of consultation during which local communities and statutory consultees can comment on the application direct to PINS.

**Planning Inspectorate website:**  
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planninginspectorate>

**Planning Act 2008:**  
<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/legislation/>

**National Policy Statements:**  
<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/national-policy-statements/>

**National Grid Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy:**  
<http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/LandandDevelopment/SC/Responsibilities/sched9/schedule+9.html>