

National Grid VIP project in the New Forest National Park

Statement – March 2019

Despite strong support, National Grid has decided to pause work on its landscape enhancement project to remove eight pylons from Hale Purlieu in the New Forest National Park following advice from legal experts, the regulator and its independent Stakeholder Advisory Group.

The work is part of National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project, which makes use of a £500m provision from Ofgem as part of the current price control period to reduce the landscape and visual impact of existing overhead transmission lines in nationally important landscapes in England and Wales.

The decision has been made due to emerging complexities surrounding the European regulations designed to protect the natural habitats of protected species. While these regulations are designed to prevent the permanent loss of habitats, and not stop short-term work that we believe could have provided a net gain to the environment in which we were working, it is evident that the legal position is complex and, importantly, untested for a project of this nature. It is therefore unlikely that a planning application for this project would receive approval before the funding deadline.

National Grid will continue to progress its other VIP projects to replace pylons with underground alternatives in the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Peak District and Snowdonia National Parks. Early works on the construction of the fully-consented Dorset project to remove 22 pylons near the villages of Winterbourne Abbas and Martinstown began earlier this year.

Ends