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Dear Kathy

Thank you for your note of 5th February 2019.

At the meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group in December 2018, the New Forest project was discussed in some detail with particular reference to the direct burial solution. In response to a request from Hale Parish Council, an alternative option using a tunnel was raised. Costs were not detailed to the Group but it was informed that initial calculations suggested that it would be 50 percent more expensive than the direct burial solution.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group therefore concluded that while the potential for a direct burial solution exists, it should be pursued as the preferred option, as its cost would be significantly less than a tunnel and would therefore offer better value for money for electricity consumers. The outline of the discussion is contained in the minutes of the meeting which I have included with this note.

To answer your points specifically:

- 1 All the discussions on the options for the New Forest VIP project are contained within the minutes of the Stakeholder Advisory Group minutes which are available from our website <https://www.nationalgridet.com/planning-together/visual-impact-provision>
- 2 As members of the Stakeholder Reference Group are aware, we are currently in the process of running a commercial tender for the direct burial work for the New Forest project. As a result, we are not able to give out any costs or figures relating to the project for commercial reasons.

However, as a result of stakeholder feedback, we have commissioned further studies into the feasibility and costs of the tunnel option.

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Once this work and the tender process is complete, we will be able to share this information with Ofgem, the Stakeholder Advisory Group and local stakeholders. We appreciate that this is far from ideal from a Parish Council perspective but once the tender event is complete, we will be in a better position to share information which will help you to form your decision on the project well ahead of any planning submission.

In the meantime, you could contact the Institute of Engineering & Technology via its website <https://www.theiet.org/> and they may be able to assist in providing you with an indication of the cost of tunnel construction.

I hope this gives you sufficient information to work with for now. We will be in touch via the Stakeholder Reference Group as further information becomes available.

Yours sincerely



Ben Smith

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