

**Bolsover District Council**

**Meeting of the Planning Committee on 17th July 2024**

**Non-Statutory Stage 1 Consultation from National Grid for the Chesterfield to Willington Project.**

**Report of the Assistant Director of Planning & Planning Policy**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Contact Details</b>	Neil Oxby, Principal Planning Policy Officer

**PURPOSE / SUMMARY OF REPORT**

National Grid Electricity Transmission (National Grid) is proposing to enhance the East Midlands electricity network by building and operating approximately 60 kilometres (km) of new 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead electricity line from Chesterfield to Willington (South Derbyshire). This report sets out:

- A summary of the proposals.
- A summary of the potential longer term implications for the Council once the Development Consent Order is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.
- A potential response to National Grid's Non-Statutory Stage 1 Consultation.

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**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Meeting the challenge of climate change will result in a substantial increase in the use of electricity as it is anticipated that electrical power requirements will double by 2050<sup>1</sup>. To deliver clean power and increase energy security it is necessary to significantly upgrade the energy infrastructure.
- 1.2 High voltage electricity needs to be moved from where it is generated, to where it is needed. The existing network was largely built in the 1960s being designed to connect in-land, large coal-fired power stations and nuclear power stations. Electricity generation has moved towards renewable energy sources which make-up a significant proportion of the electricity mix. The Government has set targets of 50GW<sup>2</sup> of offshore wind generation by 2030 and up to 140GW<sup>3</sup> by 2050. This requires reinforcement of the network in the Midlands region to secure the operation of the transmission system and ensure reliable, economic long-term supply.

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<sup>1</sup> Climate Change Committee.

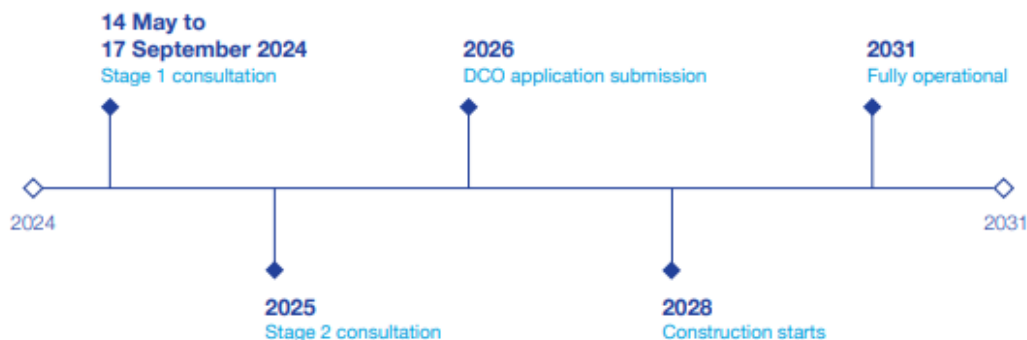
<sup>2</sup> Offshore Wind Net Zero Investment Roadmap, March 2023. HM Government.

<sup>3</sup> Climate Change Committee 6th Carbon Budget Electricity.

- 1.3 As part of the reinforcement of the transmission system, National Grid Electricity Transmission (National Grid) is proposing to enhance the East Midlands electricity network by building and operating approximately 60 kilometres (km) of new 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead electricity line, running between Chesterfield and Willington (near Derby). The potential route includes an area with Bolsover District at Stainsby Common.
- 1.4 The scale of the project means that it is defined as a National Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). NSIPs are major infrastructure developments which, due to their size and national importance, means that the local planning authority does not consider the application. Under the provisions of The Planning Act 2008, the developer must apply to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) (see Appendix 1). Guidance in considering a DCO is set out in National Policy Statements and not the Council's local plan. The Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State who takes the final decision.
- 1.5 To build and operate the new Chesterfield to Willington line, National Grid will require a DCO under the Planning Act 2008. Consultation is part of the DCO process providing the opportunity for any party to raise issues. A summary of the DCO process is set out in Appendix 1. Figure 1 sets out the timescale National Grid anticipated for the Project.

**Figure 1: Timescale for the Project.**

Source: [Chesterfield to Willington Introducing Chesterfield to Willington Stage 1 Consultation, July 2024](#)



These timings are indicative.

- 1.6 National Grid is currently undertaking a non-statutory Stage 1 consultation on the proposals. This is not part of the statutory procedure for a DCO but is intended to:
- introduce and provide an overview of the project to the public;
  - explain why there is a need to build the new electricity transmission line;
  - present and explain National Grid's Emerging Preferred Corridor;
  - set out the options National Grid has considered and how they arrived at the decision on the Emerging Preferred Corridor;
  - ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to provide feedback; and

- outline next steps, the project programme and how National Grid will further develop their proposals.
- 1.7 The consultation was set out to run from 14th May to 11:59 on 9th July 2024. Information is available on [National Grid's website](#) with paper copies of some of the consultation material being made available at Bolsover Library. However due to the General Election National Grid have rescheduled the consultation events that were planned during the pre-election period and will be extending the deadline for consultation feedback.

## 2. **Details of the Proposal for Information**

### Summary Details of Project

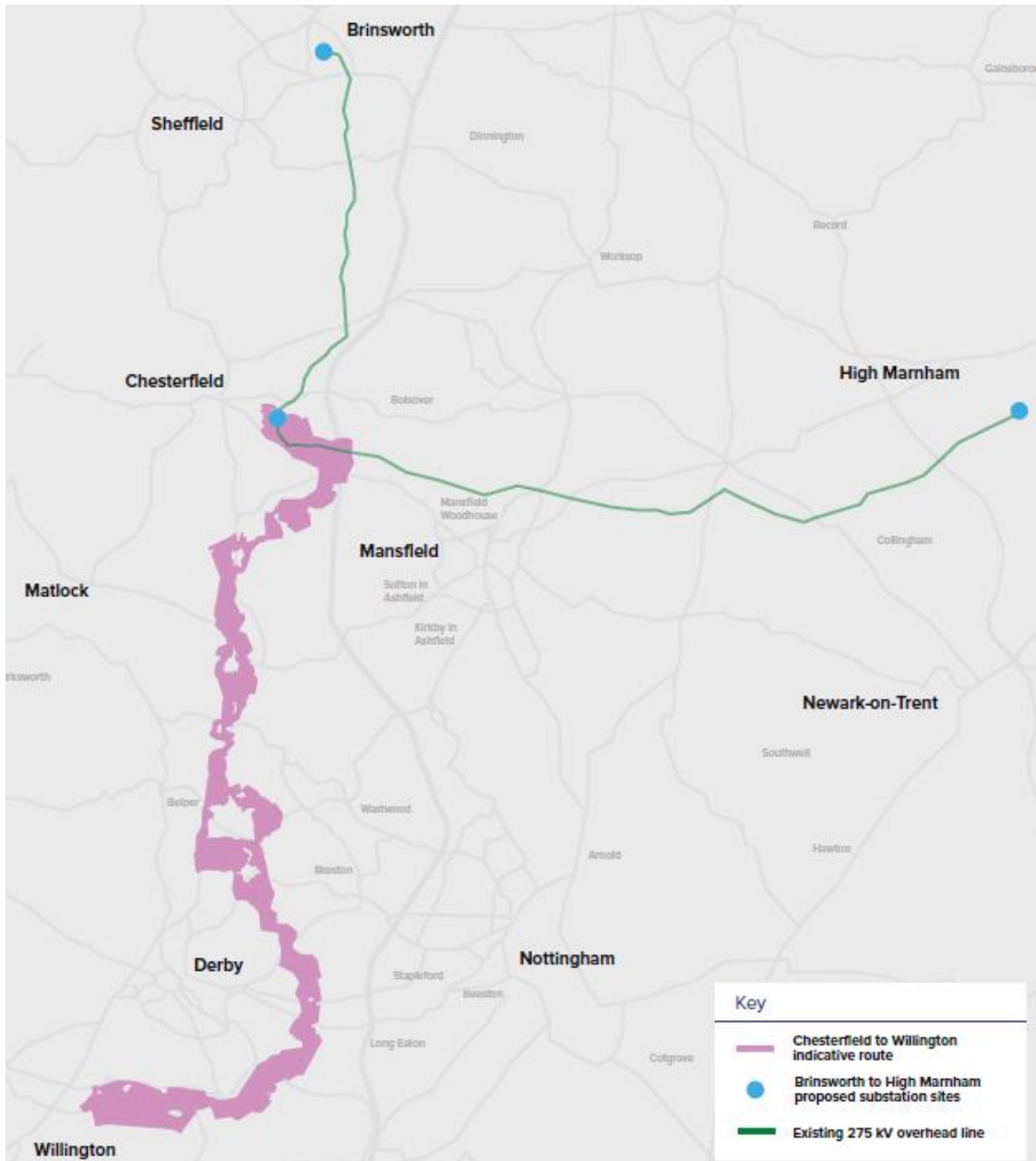
- 2.1 National Grid is proposing to enhance the electricity network by building and operating approximately 60 kilometres (km) of new 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead electricity line from Chesterfield to Willington. (See Figure 2).
- 2.2 The proposal is coordinated with improvements to the existing electricity network from Brinsworth to High Marnham. These improvements include new substations near Brinsworth (Rotherham); Chesterfield and High Marnham (Nottinghamshire). Some of the existing overhead lines will be upgraded from 275 kV to 400 kV. (See Figure 2 for the existing route of this network).
- 2.3 The proposed Chesterfield to Willington network will connect a new substation at Chesterfield with the existing substation at Willington proposed to be via overhead lines. Overhead lines typically are on steel lattice pylons, usually around 50 m high. National Grid identifies that a typical span distance between pylons is approximately 350m. In broad terms, there are typically three pylons for every kilometre of overhead line. Double circuit overhead lines of the proposed voltage typically require a minimum corridor width of 70-100m to establish a route. The high-level assessment of capital cost is £220.6m<sup>4</sup> and the lifetime circuit cost is £349m.
- 2.4 The overhead line will create a new linear feature within the landscape through both the lines and the steel lattice pylons. It will have a visual impact and a potentially negative impact on the setting of a number of heritage assets. During construction work use of the agricultural land would be impacted. However, only the land directly beneath the pylons will no longer be usable for arable purposes once the works are completed.
- 2.5 National Grid has initially evaluated ten options for reinforcement of the network in the East Midlands region before arriving at conclusion that the preferable option is a new transmission route from Chesterfield to Willington. The analysis and conclusions are set out in the [Strategic Options Report](#) and the [Chesterfield to Willington Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study](#) .

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<sup>4</sup> National Grid Strategic Options Report March 2024, Table 11.2 – Capital and lifetime circuit cost impact.

The [Chesterfield to Willington - Project Background Document](#) summaries the consultation and set out “How we identified the Emerging Preferred Corridor”.

**Figure 2: National Grid Chesterfield to Willington Stage 1 Consultation Indicative Route & identifying the Brinsworth to High Markham network.**  
Source: National Grid Chesterfield to Willington Stage 1 Consultation Strategy April 2024



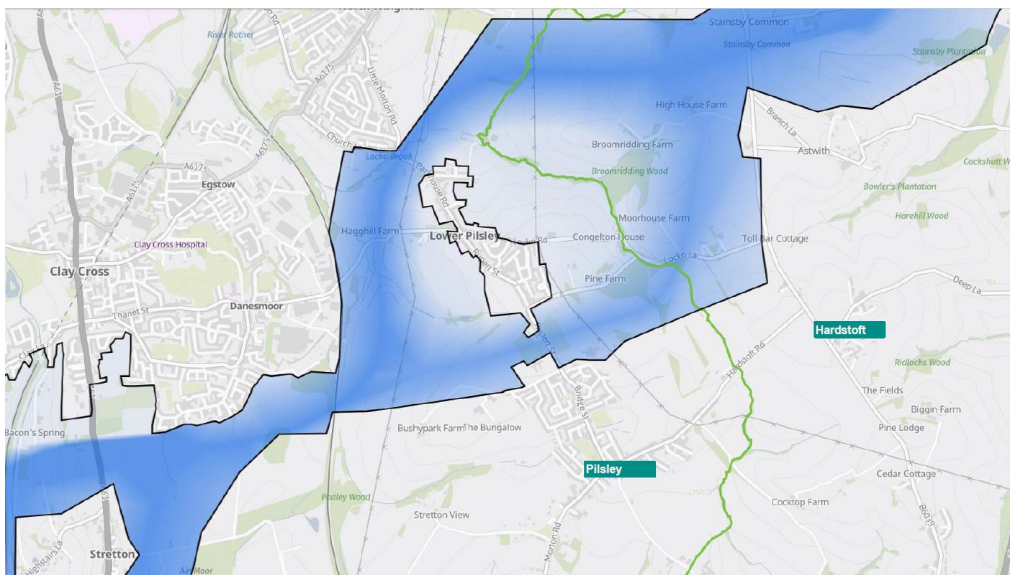
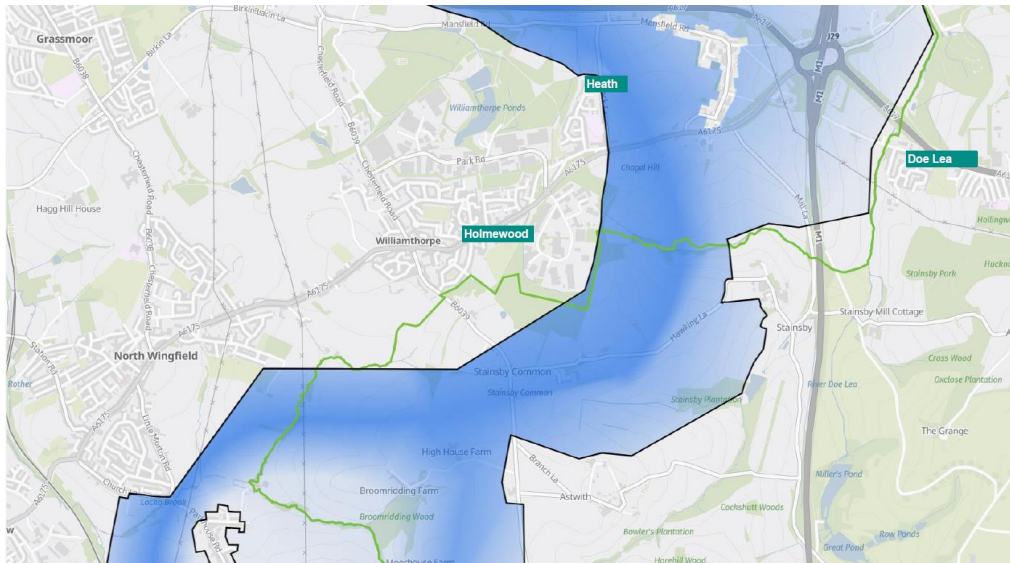
2.6 The Emerging Preferred Corridor, Figure 2, identifies the area of land in which the overhead lines could be build. National Grid identifies that it has been developed following environmental and technical assessments to understand areas of most sensitivity to the new infrastructure. Figure 3 identify the Emerging Preferred Corridor within the District of Bolsover or located close to the Council’s administrative boundary. The black lines identifies the proposed area that the electricity lines and pylons could be

located. The darker blue shaded areas signify where National Grid considers infrastructure placement could potentially be more appropriate within the Corridor.

### Figure 3: National Grid Chesterfield to Willington Stage 1 Consultation Emerging Preferred Corridor Within Bolsover.

Source: National Grid Chesterfield to Willington presentation to Councillors.

Note: The green line identified the District boundary.



### Implications for the Council of the Development Consent Order

- 2.7 At the non-statutory Stage 1 Consultation the Council is in the same position as any other party, whereby we can comment on the proposal.

- 2.8 Once the application moves to the statutory stage, the Council is a statutory consultee under the provisions of The Planning Act 2008. (Section 42 and Section 43).
- 2.9 At the statutory stage, a local authority will potentially be substantially involved in responding to various aspects of the application for a DCO. (See Appendix 1). This may include:
- Pre-application stage – Commenting on the developer’s consultation proposals and submitting a response to the consultation.
  - During the examination stage local authorities may provide representations on the local impact of the proposals and any other matters considered appropriate to the examining authority. There may be a requirement for a Statement of Common Grounds. The examining authority (Planning Inspector) may seek written responses on matters concerning the proposals from the Council and may also invite representatives of the Council to attend hearings on particular topics.
  - If development consent is granted, local authorities are typically responsible for discharging and monitoring many of the requirements (e.g. planning conditions) associated with an NSIP in their area.
- 2.10 Based on the experience of other councils, NSIPs place a heavy demand on staff resources for a local authority. In these circumstances, it is usual for a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) to be agreed between a developer and a local authority. This secures payments from the developer to the local authority in order for the local authority to respond to the proposals. However, a developer is under no obligation to enter into a PPA with a local authority.
- 2.11 As the DCO is not anticipated to be submitted until 2026, the process for obtaining a DCO may change to some extent. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and the Energy Act 2023, provide for significant changes to the assessment of environmental effects. Environmental Outcome Reports are anticipated to replace the EU-derived environmental assessment processes of strategic environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment. The Government has also consulted in 2023 on [“Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects \(NSIP\) reforms: action plan”](#).

### Stage 1 Consultation Considerations and Summary Responses

- 2.12 Any response to the Consultation by the Council has to be considered in relation to the statutory duties set out in the Electricity Act 1989 and National Planning Statements in relation to energy comprising:
- EN-1 Overarching National Policy Statement for energy.
  - EN-5 National Policy Statement for electricity networks infrastructure.

The NPSs set the regulatory context within which the routing and siting for electricity infrastructure networks is undertaken.

- 2.13 Under EN-5 the government’s position is that “overhead lines should be the strong starting presumption for electricity networks developments in general, this presumption is reversed when proposed developments will cross part of a nationally designated landscape (i.e. National Park, The Broads, or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty<sup>5</sup>). (Paragraph 2.9.20). National Grid’s evidence will take into account the provisions of the NPSs.
- 2.14 National Grid Consultation has an on-line response for the consultation, which sets out a series of questions. The consultation reflects general questions and specific questions related to six sections of the route comprising:
- Section 1 - Chesterfield to Stretton
  - Section 2 - Stretton to Ripley
  - Section 3 - Ripley to Morley
  - Section 4 - Morley to Ockbrook
  - Section 5 - Ockbrook to Aston-on-Trent
  - Section 6 - Aston-on-Trent to Willington
- 2.15 It is proposed to respond to Section 1- Chesterfield to Stretton which includes the area in Bolsover District and the majority of the general questions. The questions together with potential responses are summarised below and are set out in detail in Appendix 2 of this report.

**Question 1a) Do you have any comments to make on our work to identify our preferred strategic option?**

- 2.16 National Grid’s Strategic Options Report identifies that, after refinement, 4 options were considered as possibilities including EDN-2 – New Chesterfield substation to Willington 400 kV Substation, a distance identified as 51 km. The current consultation documents identifies the route as approximately 60 km, presumably reflecting that from Chesterfield it moves south eastwards towards the M1. The response raises whether this increase in the distance from Chesterfield to Willington, with the associate costs, changes National Grid’s initial conclusions.

**Question 2a) Do you agree with the Emerging Preferred Corridor that has been identified for each section of the proposed route?**

- 2.17 The option sets out are:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Section 1: Chesterfield substation to Stretton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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<sup>5</sup> Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been renamed by the Government as National Landscapes.

It is proposed to respond that the Council ‘disagree.’

**Question 2b) Please tell us the reason for your answer. Please also use this box to provide any comments you might have about the work we have done to identify our Emerging Preferred Corridor.**

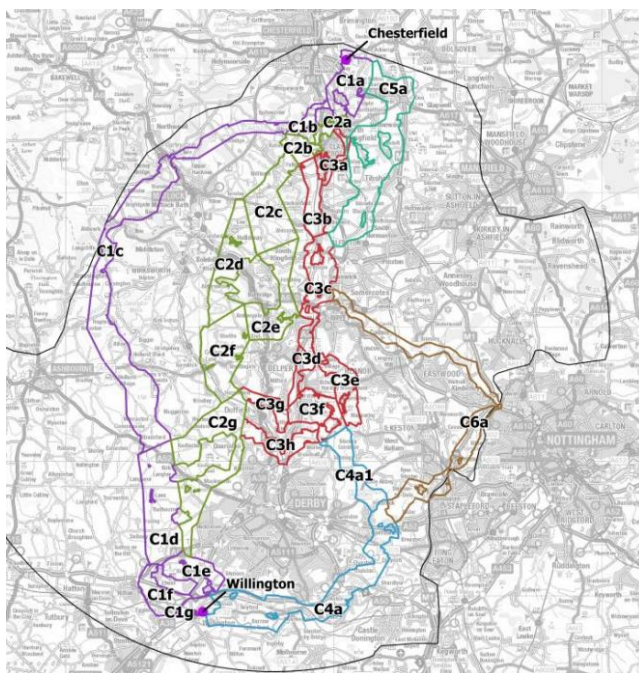
2.18 The Chesterfield to Willington Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study, March 2024 followed on from the Strategic Options Report. It considers the four Preliminary Corridors 1, 2, 3, and 4 to which it adds two additional options, Corridor 5 and 6. The six refined corridors do not form end-to-end solutions, as they were split into discrete ‘sections’ with a series of connecting links to other corridors, Figure 4. For each corridor, an assessment of the following aspects is undertaken:

- Ecology.
- Landscape and Visual Value.
- Historic Environment.
- Socio Economic.
- Water, Soils, Geology, Noise and Vibration.

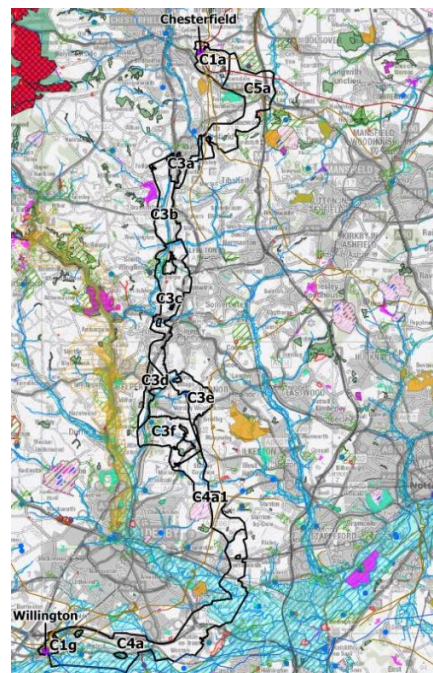
These assessments are undertaken on a corridor basis rather than for the separate sections of each corridor. This makes it more difficult to consider these alternative options.

**Figure 4: National Grid Chesterfield to Willington Stage 1 Consultation Emerging Preferred Corridor Within Bolsover.**

Source: The Chesterfield to Willington Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study March 2024. National Grid.

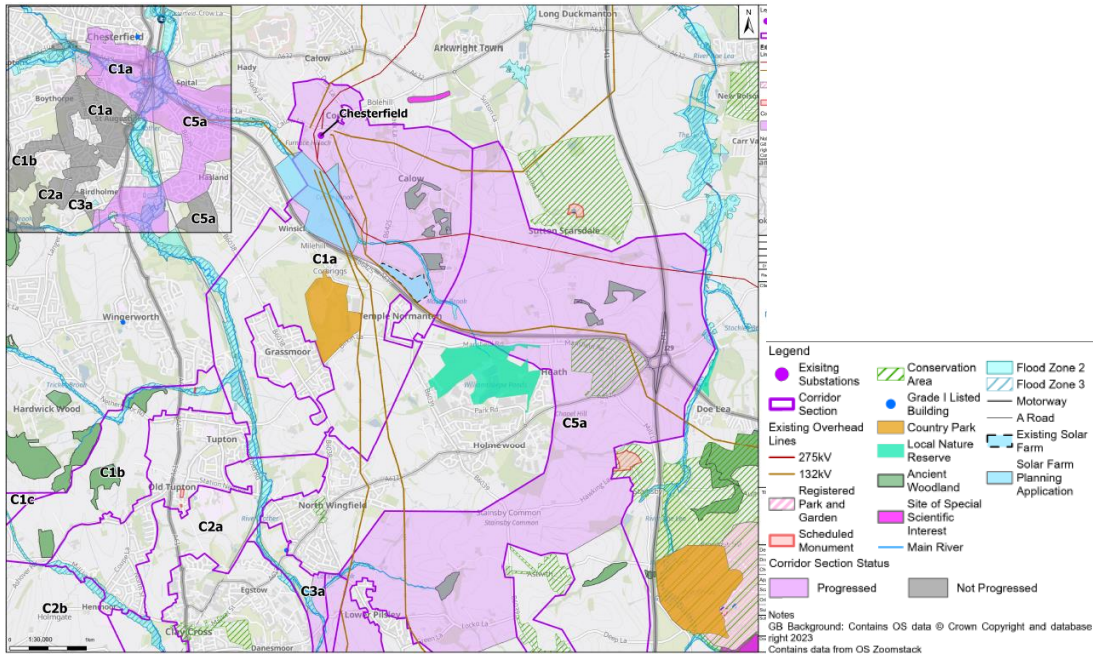


National Grid Corridors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6



National Grid Preferred Corridor

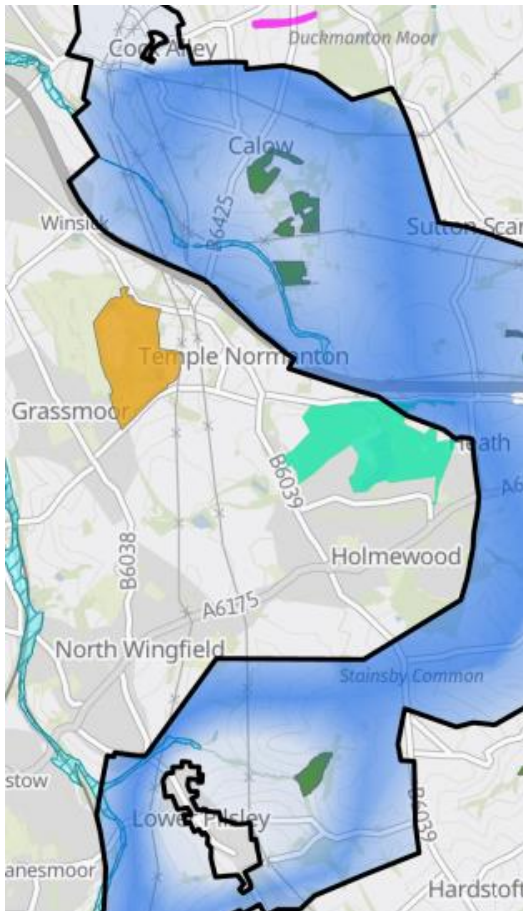




National Grid Preferred Corridor C5a (within Bolsover District)

2.19 In relation to Section 5a, it is noted that existing power lines are located between Holmewood and North Wingfield, Figure 5. The response raises whether this could be an alternative route?

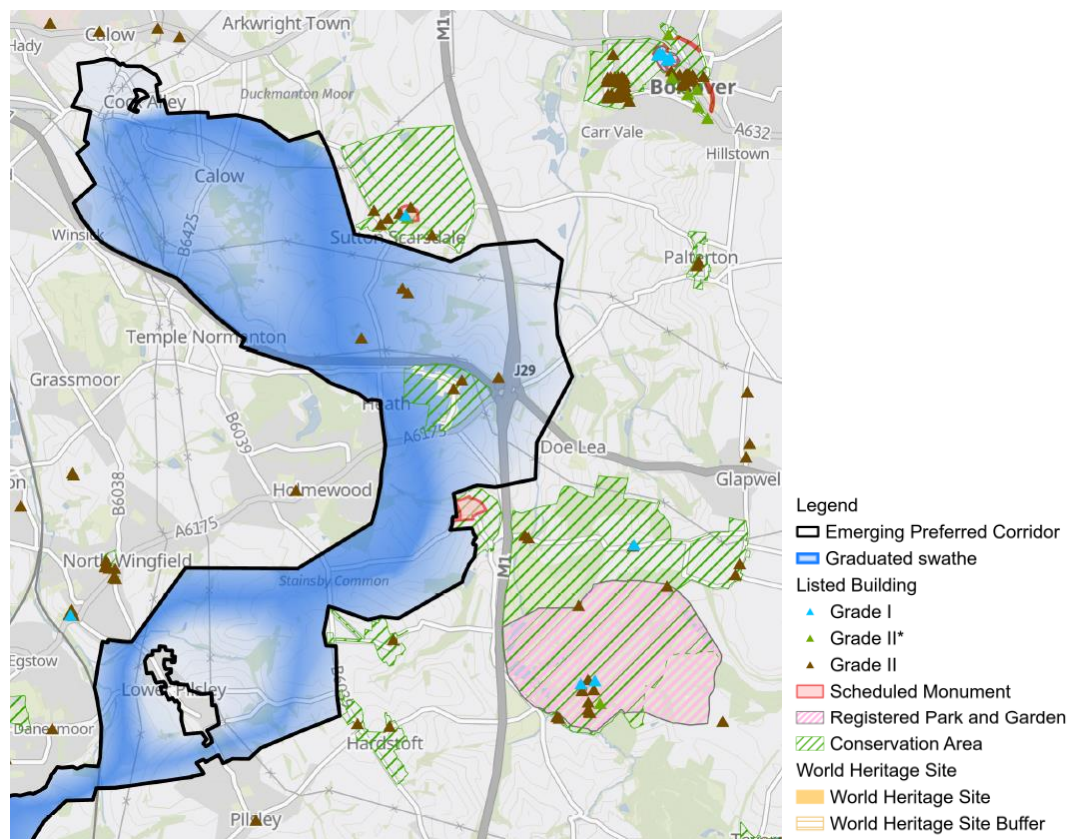
**Figure 5: Holmewood and North Wingfield Area.**



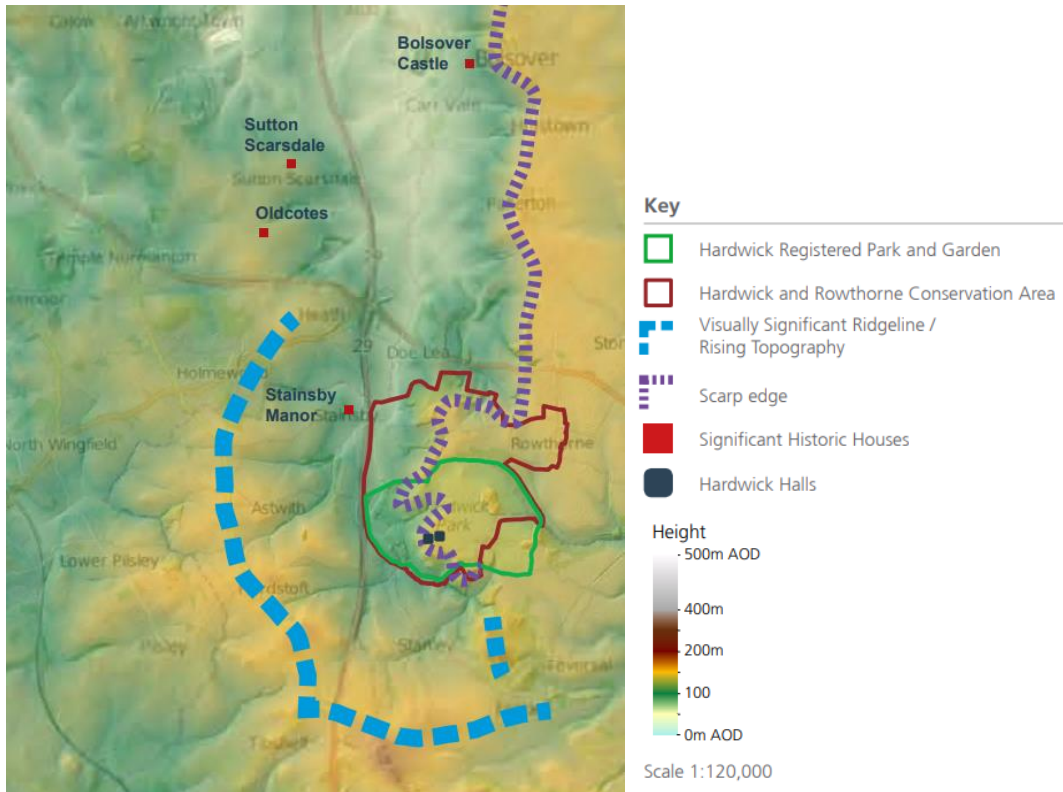
## Heritage

- 2.20 The response highlights the negative impact on heritage assets including Hardwick Hall, Hardwick Old Hall, Hardwick Hall Register Park and Gardens, Bolsover Castle, the scheduled monument at Stainsby defended manorial complex and the Conservation Areas located at Hardwick and Rowthorne, Stainsby, Astwith and Hardstoft. (Figure 6).
- 2.21 The response emphasises the importance of the Grade 1 designated heritage assets and the impact on their setting. Figure 7 illustrates the topography and visually significant ridge line, highlighting the evidence from the Hardwick Hall Setting Study 2016. It also stresses the potential impact on the scheduled monument at Stainsby and the Conservation Areas at Stainsby, Astwith and Hardstoft within Bolsover.
- 2.22 A meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 between officers and representatives of the National Trust to review the implication of the proposals for Hardwick Hall. Both parties raised concerns over the potential impact on heritage assets and an onsite meeting at Hardwick Hall has provisionally been arranged. It was also agreed that a National Trust representative would raise with Historic England the possible impact on Hardwick Old Hall, Bolsover Castle and Sutton Scarsdale Hall.

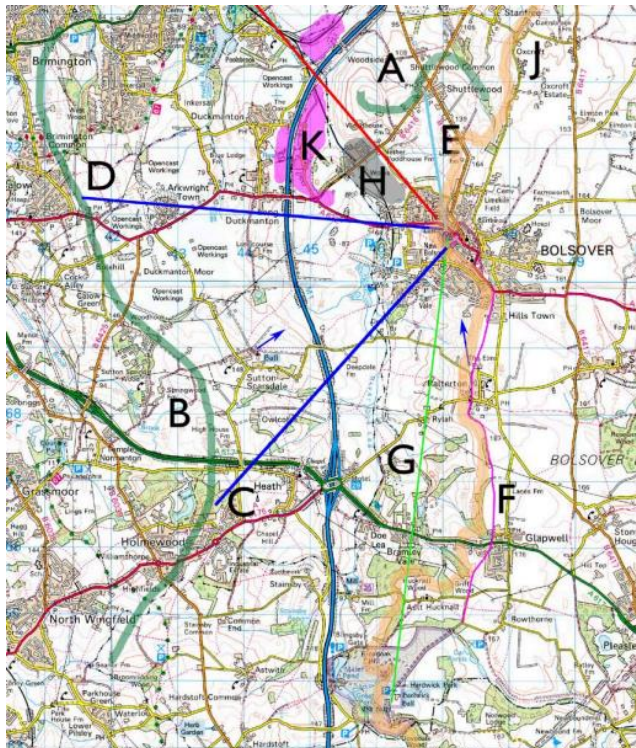
**Figure 6 Heritage Assets in Bolsover District**  
Source: National Grid Constraints Heritage Map



**Figure 7: Hardwick Hall Topography, Ridgelines & Heritage Assets**  
 Source: The Hardwick Hall Setting Study 2016 (Atkins/National Trust) Map 2.



**Figure 8: Key views from Bolsover Castle**  
 Source: English Heritage Bolsover Castle Conservation Management Plan (2012) Fig 102 The topographical context of Bolsover (OS base). A, B are ridges substantially limiting views from Bolsover; J is the limestone escarpment; H the Coalite Site, K the Markham site. For other references, see Appendix 2.



2.23 In this context, the Council consider that:

- If the route of the proposed transmission line is amended it would substantially negate the impact on the heritage assets identified above.
- Under National Policy Statement EN-1 an assessment of any likely significant heritage will be required and considered in relation to the impacts on the heritage assets. EN-1 emphasises that any harm or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. Therefore, the impact on heritage assets forms an important aspect in determining the final route of the transmission lines.
- If it is determined that an alternative route is not to be taken forward, National Grid must give full consideration on how to mitigate the impact of the heritage assets and particular the Grade 1 designated heritage assets.
- In relation to the Conservation Areas, if it is necessary for the transmission network to following the route through Holmewood and Heath, the response identifies that the Council would anticipate that the route should be on the darker shaded areas as this will reduce the impact on Stainsby Conservation Area and the scheduled monument at Stainsby. It should extend to the north of Lower Pilsey reducing the impact on Astwith and Hardstoft conservation areas as well as avoid the ancient woodlands to the west of Astwith and the visual impact on the exposed upland ridge to the east of Astwith and Hardstoft.

#### Environmental

2.24 The response raises that the environmental constraints do not take into account Local Wildlife Sites which are protected under Local Plan policies by local councils. This is an additional aspect that should be considered particularly given the emphasis of the Environmental Act 2021 and biodiversity net gain. The Council does not support a route which would have a negative impact on biodiversity and the environment.

#### **Question 3a) Do you have a preference for the new line to be located north or south of Calow?**

2.25 The proposed response sets out 'The preference is for the route to be located to the south of Calow to minimise the impact on the setting of heritage assets and enable the route to follow the A617.'

#### **Question 3ai) Do you have a preference to then follow the M1 or to take a shorter, straighter path between Holmewood and Heath?**

2.26 The response identifies that consideration should be given to the alternative route set out in Question 2b Holmewood and North Wingfield Area. If the

existing route is taken forward, the Council would support the preferred route between Holmewood and Heath on the basis that this is likely to reduce the impact on the heritage asset identified in the response to Question 2b.

**Question 3aii) Do you have a preference for it then to go north or south of Lower Pilsley?**

2.27 The proposed response sets out ‘The Council would support the route to the north of Pilsley for the reasons specified in the response to question 2b.’

**Question 4a) Do you have any general comments about these aspects at this stage that you would like us to consider?**

2.28 ‘As set out in the responses.’

**Question 5a) Is there anything we could do to reduce the effects of a new overhead line?**

2.29 The response identifies the potential from:

- Underground lines where this is justified by the potential impact on heritage assets.
- The utilisation of National Grid’s new T-ylons which are understood to be lower at 35m high, are sleeker on a single pole and utilise less land area.

**Figure 9: T-pylon.**

Source: [National Grid T-Pylon – an innovative new design for Somerset](#)



**Question 5b) Are there any other considerations we should consider when developing our proposals?**

2.30 The response highlights the infrastructure provision should also address the potential opportunities for local people for jobs and developing skills.

**Question 5c) In addition to our Community Grant Fund, are there other ways in which you would wish to see local communities’ benefit from hosting new electricity transmission infrastructure?**

- 2.31 The response references that the Government has consulted on [“Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission Network Infrastructure”](#) and the intention to introduce guidance on this aspect.

**Question 7a) Given the goal to deliver net zero carbon emissions in the UK by 2050 and the need to facilitate the connection of new renewable generation in the region, to what extent do you agree with the identified need for Chesterfield to Willington (as described on page 16 in the Project Background Document and in the Strategic Options Report)?**

- 2.32 The proposed response acknowledges the need to achieve zero carbon by 2050 and evidence of the targets to meet the increase needs for electrical generation and transmission. It also acknowledges that the Council does not have the expertise to determine whether the new connection from Chesterfield to Willington is necessary but from the National Grid’s Preferred Strategic Option there are alternative routes.

### **3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The report identifies that decisions on National Significant Infrastructure Projects will be taken at a national level. It summarises the statutory basis and procedures for National Grid’s proposal to enhance the East Midlands electricity network through a Development Consent Order.
- 3.2 The non statutory consultation undertaken by National Grid provides an opportunity for the Council to potentially influence the proposed scheme so as to minimise the impact on residents, the local landscape and heritage assets within Bolsover District.
- 3.3 The report and the supporting appendices sets out proposed representations to enable the Planning Committee to respond to National Grid’s proposals.
- 3.4 The National Grid Consultation closes on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The grant of delegated approval enables changes to be made to the proposed representations to reflect any additional information that may become available before the Consultation closed.

### **4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 4.1 Not to respond to the National Grid consultation. This alternative option has been rejected as it would not support the Council’s efforts to protect the quality of life for residents and businesses, meeting environmental challenges, and enhancing biodiversity.
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## RECOMMENDATION

That Planning Committee:

1. Notes:

- the proposal for a new overhead electricity line from Chesterfield to Willington, which is located in part of the District;
- the potential implications for the Council's if an application for a Development Consent Order is submitted and subsequently granted.

2. Responds to the consultation questions that are considered to relate to Bolsover District and which are set out Appendix 2 of this report.

3. Gives delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Planning & Planning Policy in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee, to amend the proposed responses set out in Appendix 2 of this report reflecting any additional information that becomes available.

**Approved by Portfolio Holder – Growth**

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

**Finance and Risk:**            Yes             No

**Details:** There are no financial implication at this stage as this is a non-statutory consultation undertaken by National Grid.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

**Legal (including Data Protection):**            Yes             No

**Details:** There are no legal implications in responding to the non-statutory consultation undertaken by National Grid.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

**Environment:**            Yes             No

*Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal / report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.*

**Details:** The proposal is identified by National Grid as a requirement to meet the significantly greater demand for electricity arising from renewable sources in order to meeting Government net zero targets. However, there are choices to be made over which route the overhead power lines should be located in meeting this requirement.

**Staffing:**            Yes             No

**Details:** There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

## DECISION INFORMATION

<p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b>  A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><b>Revenue - £75,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Capital - £150,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b>  <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No

<p><b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b></p>	Ault Hucknall Ward
<p><b>Consultation:</b>  <b>Leader / Deputy Leader</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>SLT</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  <b>Members</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details:  Briefing shared with all affected Ward Members</p>

<p><b>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment and Housing</b></p>
<p>The project is identified by National Grid as a key aspect in ensuring the electricity can be moved from where it is generated, to where it is needed and meeting the government's targets of achieving net zero by 2050. This is reflective of the Council's commitment to play our part in achieving net zero by 2050. However, there are choices over the route of the transmission line and the proposal has to be considered against the potential negative impact that it may have on heritage assets, which are important to growing our visitor economy.</p>

<b>DOCUMENT INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix A	National Significant Infrastructure Projects Background Information.
Appendix B	Response to National Grid's Consultation.
<b>Background Papers</b>	
<p><i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i></p>	