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To: Members of the Planning Committee Date: 12 October 2018

Direct Dial: 01824 712589

e-mail: democratic@denbighshire.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

I refer to this agenda for the meeting of the **PLANNING COMMITTEE** to be held at **9.30** am on **WEDNESDAY**, **17 OCTOBER 2018** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER**, **COUNTY HALL**, **RUTHIN** and enclose the following supplemental report.

Agenda Item No

9 NORTH WALES CONNECTION PROJECT (Pages 3 - 12)

To consider a report regarding an application by the National Grid for an order granting development consent in respect of the Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Station Scheme (copy attached).

Yours sincerely

G Williams

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Ellie Chard Bob Murray
Ann Davies Merfyn Parry
Meirick Davies Peter Prendergast
Peter Evans Andrew Thomas
Alan James Tony Thomas

Brian Jones Julian Thompson-Hill

Huw Jones Joe Welch
Tina Jones Emrys Wynne
Gwyneth Kensler Mark Young

Christine Marston

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

17th OCTOBER 2018

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

NORTH WALES CONNECTION PROJECT

APPLICATION BY NATIONAL GRID FOR AN ORDER GRANTING DEVELOPMENT CONSENT FOR NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report provides background information in relation to the National Grid proposals to run a grid connection from the proposed Wylfa nuclear power station to a substation at Pentir, near Bangor.
- 1.2 It outlines the basis of the proposals and the procedural steps involved in the examination of the application by the Planning Inspectorate, which include notification to Denbighshire County Council as an authority with a shared administrative boundary with Gwynedd, one of the Counties in which the development would take place.
- 1.3 It seeks member resolution on the Council's actions in response to consultation on the project and future engagement in the formal examination of the application.

2. BACKGROUND.

- 2.1 Members may be aware that an application has been submitted to the UK Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy by Horizon Nuclear power, to develop a new nuclear power station located adjacent to the existing station at Wylfa A, on the north coast of Anglesey. The scheme is referred to as the Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Station, and is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project which will be the subject of examination by the Planning Inspectorate in due course.
- 2.2 The Wylfa Nuclear Power Station development will give rise to the need for related infrastructure developments. One is the provision of an additional electricity grid connection. This connection is the subject of a separate Nationally Significant Infrastructure project application, involving a new line of pylons running alongside an existing overhead line across Anglesey, an underground section below the Menai Straits and a connection to an existing substation at Pentir, near Bangor. This is an application submitted by National Grid and is referred to as the North Wales Connection project. It will be subject to examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2.3 Information on the Wylfa Nuclear Power Station and North Wales Connections projects, and the progress on the applications can be viewed on the Planning Inspectorate website through the following link https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk

- 2.4 Regulations governing the processing of such infrastructure projects require applicants to undertake specific consultations / notifications with affected communities, and with those County Councils which share an administrative boundary with the Counties where the developments are actually located. As the development affects land near Pentir, Bangor, this involves land within Gwynedd County Council. Gwynedd shares a section of administrative boundary with Denbighshire east of Bala, and accordingly Denbighshire have been made aware of the proposals in the preliminary stages of the submission to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2.5 The North Wales Connections project has reached the stage where the Planning Inspectorate have requested Denbighshire to comment on the adequacy of consultation on the application, as a preliminary to the start of the lengthy Development Consent Order Examination process. In order to comply with the deadline for submission of comments, Officers have sent the response in Appendix A to the report, confirming there has been relevant communication with Denbighshire in relation to the scheme.
- 2.6 Looking to the next stages in the examination of the Development Consent Order application, Officers are seeking members' agreement to the most appropriate actions, as it is apparent from basic scrutiny of the application proposals that the implications for Denbighshire from an overhead line connection to the Wylfa scheme are negligible. The nearest part of the development to Denbighshire would be some 40 kilometres (24 miles). A National Grid information leaflet in relation to the North Wales Connection project is in Appendix B, and provides useful background to the scheme and the examination process, including a map showing the physical extent of the proposed grid connection.
- 2.7 In circumstances where there are no anticipated impacts on the County, Officers do not consider it would serve any useful purpose to engage further in the Examination process, which would involve commitment to preparation of a detailed Local Impact Report, and attendance at a Preliminary meeting and Hearing sessions.
- 2.8 It is therefore suggested that unless members consider there are specific reasons why the Council should commit to engagement in the detailed Examination process, for example in terms of impacts on the Council from the project, Officers inform the Planning Inspectorate at the relevant time that the County Council do not propose to participate further in the process.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the Committee agree to Officers notifying the Planning Inspectorate that Denbighshire County Council do not wish to engage further in the Examination stage of the North Wales Connection project.

EMLYN GWYNEDD JONES

HEAD OF PLANING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

APPENDIX A

Response sent to Planning Inspectorate in relation to adequacy of consultation on North Wales Connections project

Subject: North Wales Connection DCO application

Planning Act 2008 (as amended) – Section 55
Application by National Grid for an Order Granting Development Consent for the North Wales Connection Project
Adequacy of consultation request

You have notified Denbighshire County Council of the submission of the DCO application for the above project, and have invited comments on the adequacy of the pre application Consultation and Publicity undertaken by the applicants on the scheme.

On behalf of the County Council, I can confirm:

- The Council was made aware of the scheme through communication in October 2016 as an 'A' Authority (a County sharing a boundary with one of the Counties in which the project is located). Denbighshire shares a small length of administrative boundary with Gwynedd in the area east of Bala, at which point the Pentir Substation is some 50km away, and overhead line network at Trawsfynydd some 30km.
- As the main developments proposed will be on the Isle of Anglesey and in Gwynedd it is not considered appropriate to comment on the adequacy of consultation in the areas primarily affected by the engineering / construction works involved.

APPENDIX B

National Grid Information leaflet on North Wales Connections project

Project News

nationalgrid

North Wales Connection - connecting new low carbon energy in North Wales

Autumn 2018

- Connection will unlock investment in Wylfa Newydd and the benefits it brings
- Hundreds of decisions and changes made in response to feedback
- Register with the Planning Inspectorate to take part in the next steps

Inside:

- Large map of our final proposal
- How we have acted on your feedback
- The planning process and how to get involved





Final plans for Wylfa Newydd connection submitted to Planning Inspectorate

We have submitted our application to the Planning Inspectorate for a second connection for Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station.

Our proposals are for a new, second line of pylons close to the existing line and a tunnel at the Menai Strait.

This is an important step in unlocking many millions of pounds of local investment and around 9,000 construction jobs the power station will create. The connection will also transport low carbon power to the homes and businesses that use it.

Our proposals bring together eight years of detailed work. This includes consultation with communities and stakeholders, and thousands of assessments to consider the effects of the project.

Hundreds of decisions and changes have been made based on what people have told us and we've worked hard to keep the effects of our proposals on Anglesey and Gwynedd as low as we can.

At the same time, we have met the requirements placed on us, which include providing value for money for households and other electricity consumers.

We would like to thank everyone who has provided feedback, including the landowners, stakeholders and residents who have worked with us to develop our proposals.

Among the key decisions based on what people told us, we have:

- Selected a route corridor in the centre of Anglesey in preference to route corridor options nearer the coast. This option was the most popular in feedback.
- Reviewed where the connection could be routed on the approach to the Menai Strait, avoiding areas such as Menai Bridge, Llanfairpwll and Y Felinheli.
- Identified a route mostly in parallel to the existing line, keeping any effects of the two lines to one area and away from larger towns and villages. Of those who gave a view, this was the preferred approach.
- Chosen a tunnel to put the connection under the Menai Strait, changing from an original overhead line proposal, to protect the Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and iconic landscape of the Menai Strait. We heard this strongly expressed by stakeholders and members of the public.
- Worked with landowners to make many small refinements to pylon locations and construction access tracks to reduce effects on land and agricultural activity.

While we have made many changes in response to what people have told us, we also recognise that we have not been able to do everything we have been asked. The most significant being to put the new connection subsea or underground, which the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils have also requested during the project.

We have looked carefully at both these options, but they raise both technical and environmental challenges. Both options are also much more expensive than overhead lines so would not meet the obligations placed on us to keep costs low for bill payers.

We think our proposals offer the best balance of all the factors we must consider – such as the landscape, local economy, environment, technical and policy requirements – and mean there are no long-term effects for most areas of Anglesey and north Gwynedd.

What happens now?

It's now up to the Planning Inspectorate to examine our proposals and review the decisions we have made.

During this process, public hearings will be held in the local area. You have the opportunity to take part and give your feedback directly to the Planning Inspectorate to consider alongside our application documents.

If you want to get involved, you will need to register to take part. This process is managed by the Planning Inspectorate and all future comments need to be submitted to them, not National Grid.

There is more information on the planning process and how you can get involved on the back page.



Connecting Wylfa Newydd – developing the proposals

The project has developed over many years and been influenced by what people have told us.

In addition to your feedback, we have completed thousands of assessments and surveys. We have considered issues like landscape, the local economy and land use. We have also looked in detail at points like ecology, going as far as DNA testing for specific species that are important for us to understand and protect.

All of this work has shaped our proposals and we are confident we have reduced the effects on the local area, while meeting the national policy requirements that we have to comply with.

2010



We started looking at ways we could connect Wylfa Newydd, assessing options for direct current or alternating current technologies, including subsea, overhead and underground cables.

2012



Our first public consultation on connection options and route corridors. We explained the work we had done and why we thought an overhead connection using pylons was likely to be the most appropriate option.

2013-2015



We reviewed your feedback, and re-evaluated connection technologies to look again at subsea and underground options including a 'hybrid' option suggested in feedback. We continued to meet with the councils and technical specialists to get their input.

EARLY **2015**



We chose a preferred route corridor through the middle of Anglesey, keeping it away from the coastal area and associated tourism sites. We also announced that we would avoid crossing the AONB and Menai Strait with an overhead line and would instead put the connection underground to protect this nationally important landscape.

AUTUMN-WINTER 2015



We developed a number of options where the new connection could be routed and held a second consultation to hear your views.

EARLY 2016



We reviewed your feedback on route options and carried out further assessments including landscape, ecology, tourism, communities and technology. This helped us to develop a proposed route alignment – where pylons could be placed. We developed more detailed plans about how we could cross the Menai Strait and carried out geological surveys.

AUTUMN-WINTER 2016





We held our formal third public consultation and asked for feedback on our proposed connection design, including sites for equipment, access tracks and construction areas. We continued to talk in detail to landowners directly affected by our proposals to understand their concerns and opinions. We proposed a tunnel under the Menai Strait and explained the infrastructure needed.

2017

We reviewed our work again based on what you had told us. We worked with landowners to refine our proposals and carried out consultation in specific areas about construction traffic routes resulting from small changes and refinements suggested in feedback. Further meetings were held with the councils and stakeholders to get their

EARLY 2018



We continued to review our work and completed surveys to understand more about wildlife and geology. We revised our transport plans in north Gwynedd and carried out further consultation on construction traffic routes.

SUMMER 2018



Horizon submitted its application for Wylfa Newydd to the Planning Inspectorate giving us information to help finalise our application.

AUTUMN 2018



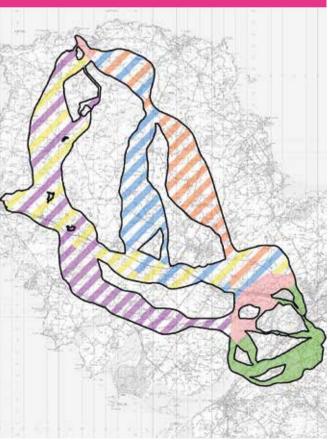
After eight years of work, we submitted our application for development consent. If we're granted consent, construction would begin in the early 2020s.

FIND OUT MORE

ongoing comments.

documents and reports, which explain our work and the decisions we made in detail.

2012 route corridor options





2015 route options within orange corridor





2016 route alignment



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What you've told us and what we've done

To develop our proposals, we talked with thousands of residents, community councils and local groups. We also had hundreds of meetings with the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils, and technical stakeholders to seek their expert opinions.

Members of the public sent in over 5,000 pieces of feedback and told us many things about Anglesey and Gwynedd, all of which has been considered.

While we have not been able to do everything people and the councils have asked, all of the issues raised have been carefully taken into account. A number of key themes have been particularly important to you.



Tourism

Tourism is a crucial part of the local economy and pylons could affect this

We consulted tourism bodies and businesses to get their comments. We also considered areas important for tourism, such as the coast, and kept away from them wherever possible. Our assessments suggest any effects from the new pylon line will be in the areas closest to it and that the majority of tourism sites across Anglesey and north Gwynedd will be unaffected.



Property

Your proposals will affect people and property

In selecting a route, we kept away from larger towns and villages. Where the new line is close to villages, we kept to the opposite side of the existing line, where possible, so that it's further away from communities. We met with residents and looked carefully at the position of pylons to keep effects on views and property as low as we can.



Landscape

The Anglesey and north Gwynedd area is special because of its landscape and we want this preserved

We kept pylons away from designated landscape areas, such as the coastal AONB and are also proposing a tunnel under the AONB at the Menai Strait so there are no new pylons in this valued area.

In Gwynedd, we looked at the setting of the Snowdonia National Park and don't think that our proposals would affect this. Keeping the new line next to the existing line for much of the route has avoided spreading the effects of overhead lines across a far wider area of Anglesey and north Gwynedd.



Traffic

Your construction traffic will cause congestion on local roads

We plan to use A-roads as much as possible and will build temporary tracks along the length of the route to get to construction areas and help keep our vehicles off local roads where we can.

Working with both the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils we have developed an outline construction traffic management plan which looks to reduce disruption to the local road network, particularly during network peak periods.

We will continue to work with them before and during construction, to ensure construction traffic is well-managed, responds to any changes in conditions and minimises effects on local people, motorists, residents and cyclists.



A third bridge

You should put your cables on a new bridge across the Menai Strait

We are carrying out a feasibility study with Welsh Government into potential options to use a new bridge.

There's lots to consider before we know if putting our cables on a new bridge is possible. Costs, technical considerations, a route on and off the bridge and timing are just some of the things to be worked out.

At the same time, it's vital we are able to deliver a connection for Horizon by the mid-2020s, when they expect Wylfa Newydd to start generating. That's why we are also continuing with our plans for a tunnel under the Menai Strait. When completed, the feasibility findings will be considered and next steps agreed.



Undergrounding and subsea

The connection should be put underground or offshore on the sea bed

We have looked carefully at both these options. Subsea proposes a number of technical challenges in connecting a nuclear power station. Undergrounding is technically possible but raises significant environmental concerns due to the intensive construction work it requires. Both options are also much more expensive than an overhead line so would not meet the obligations placed on us to keep costs low for bill payers.

People also asked for certain sections of the route to be placed underground. We looked at these areas and considered them against national planning policy and our duty to keep the cost of the connection low for bill payers. In each case, we consider that the benefits of an underground connection do not outweigh the likely environmental effects, increased technical complexity and cost of an underground solution. Our 'Back-check of Wylfa-Pentir Design Decisions Report' explains this further (see back page).

FIND OUT MORE

Our 'Consultation Report' details all of the feedback we received since our first consultation in 2012 and how we



The planning process – what happens now?

The Planning Inspectorate is responsible for examining our application and providing a recommendation to the UK Government's Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who makes the final decision on whether to give the project consent. The process for examining our application follows several stages:



Submission

We have submitted our application to the Planning Inspectorate, which includes a detailed assessment of the many environmental and community considerations related to the proposals. You can view our application documents on the Planning Inspectorate's website:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/ projects/wales/north-wales-connection/

Acceptance

The Planning Inspectorate will review our application to decide whether it is suitable for examination. They will consider whether our consultation was adequate and whether we have submitted the right documents. They have 28 days to do this following submission.

Pre-examination around four months

During the pre-examination period, the Planning Inspectorate will give people an opportunity to register to take part in the later stages of the process. You can do this by filling in a form on the Planning Inspectorate's website. Everyone who registers with the Planning Inspectorate will be invited to attend a preliminary meeting. At this meeting, a timetable for the examination will be set.



Examination

In the examination period, the inspectors will gather evidence about the application and review the information provided by National Grid. People who have registered can provide their comments to the Planning Inspectorate by post or email. The Planning Inspectorate will also hold a series of hearings in the local area. These give local people an opportunity to speak directly to the inspectors.



Recommendation - around three months

Following the examination period, the Planning Inspectorate will have three months to prepare a report for the Secretary of State. This report will recommend whether or not to grant a development consent order, taking into account the benefits and effects of the project and relevant planning policy.



Decision - around three months

Ultimately, the UK Government's Secretary of State will decide whether to grant consent for our project. They will consider the Planning Inspectorate's recommendation but do not have to agree with it.





Find out more

You can read all of our technical documents and see maps and images of the final proposals at: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/wales/north-wales-connection/

Some of the documents that you might find particularly useful are:

- Navigation Document: provides a description of all documents and reports contained within the application.
- Consultation Report: an overview of all of our consultations, including all the themes raised in feedback and how we have considered them.
- History of the Project: narrative of the project from beginning to end.
- Environmental Statement -**Non-Technical Summary:** an overview of all the different factors we considered in developing our proposals, including landscape, socio-economics, agriculture, ecology and others.
- Draft Development Consent Order and accompanying Explanatory **Memorandum:**

a list of all the work we propose to do and what we'd do if consent is granted.

- Strategic Options Report:
- how we developed our preferred connection option and why we didn't choose an underground or subsea option.
- Menai Strait Crossing Report: an explanation of the equipment we need and our plans to build a tunnel under the Menai Strait.
- Design Report:

explains the reasons for the design of the proposed connection, and the changes that have been made following our third, statutory, consultation in Autumn-Winter 2016.

- Back-check of Wylfa-Pentir **Design Decisions Report:**
- summarises our review of the earlier design decisions we made, including the choice of overhead line routes and decisions on whether the use of underground cables was more appropriate in areas where specific concerns had been raised.

Contact us:



Visit our project website at: www.northwalesconnection.com



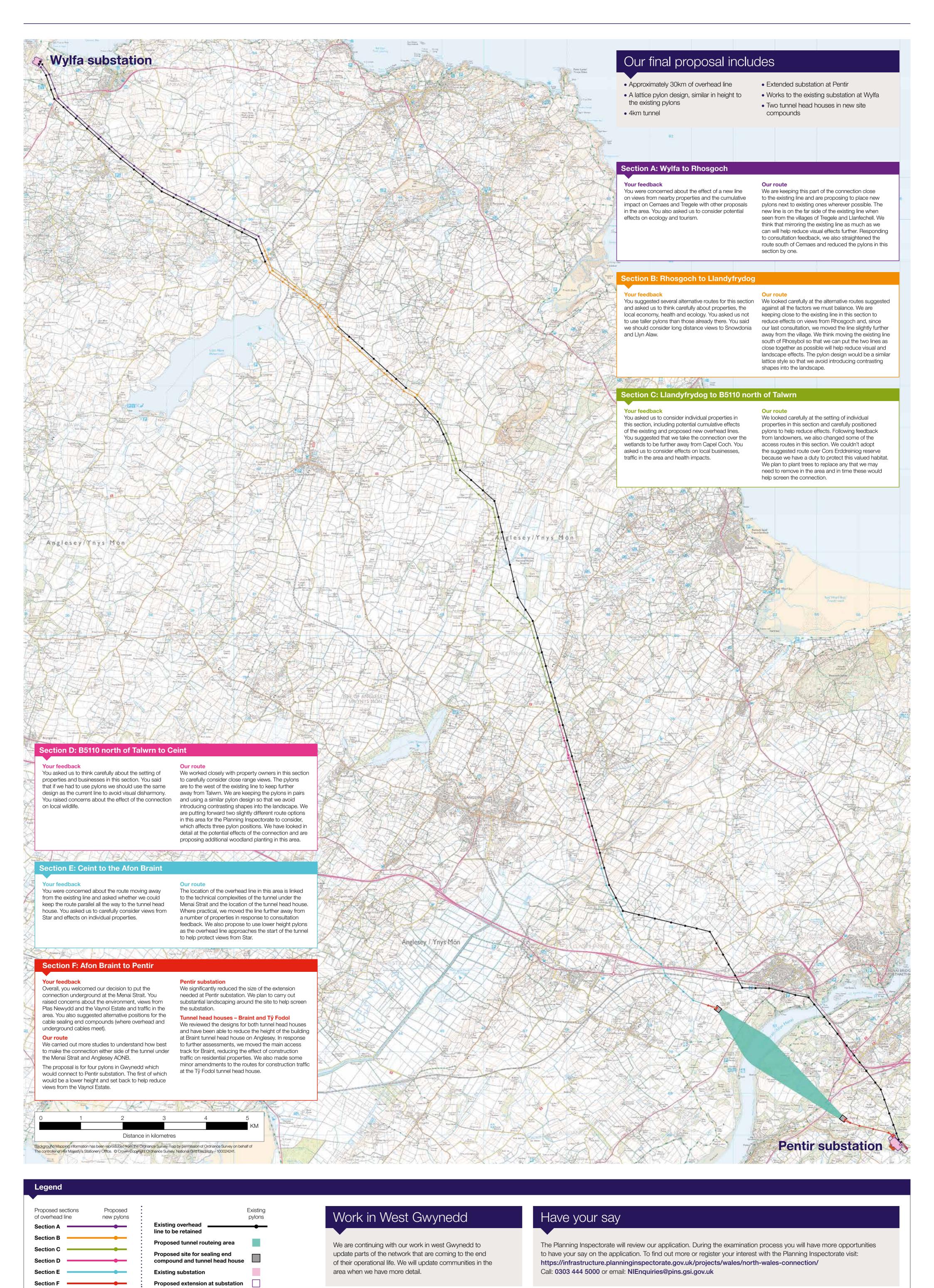
Send an email to: nationalgrid@northwalesconnection.com



Write to our freepost address at: FREEPOST NATIONAL GRID **NW CONNECTION**



Call our freephone number: **0800 990 3567** 9am - 5pm Monday - Friday or leave a message outside these hours



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