Introduction

National Grid has submitted a full planning application to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and Peak District National Park Authority for the following development:

• Construction of a new sealing end compound, including permanent access;

• Construction of a temporary haul road from Brook Hill Lane including widened bellmouth;

• Construction of a temporary Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) diversion for use during the construction phase.

• Erection of two bridges (one temporary and one permanent) along the TPT diversion.

The application forms part of National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project which represents a major opportunity to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and environmental heritage within Great Britain's most protected landscapes. The VIP project will make use of a £500m allocation by Ofgem to carry out work to help reduce the impact of existing transmission lines in English and Welsh Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks.

Following submission of the planning application, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council raised a query in relation to the safeguarding of potential rail options along the Woodhead line. In addition, National Grid was also asked to provide a high-level cost estimate for the re-instatement of the OHL should a rail option be considered as part of any future rail links between Sheffield and Manchester. The response below sets out National Grid's current understanding of these matters.

Safeguarding Rail Opportunities

There are no plans to re-establish the Woodhead line within the Northern Powerhouse Rail programme or Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan. Both of those set the priorities for rail investment in the north for the next 30 years. The Northern Powerhouse Rail Director explained in The Sheffield Star on 4 January 2020, that the Woodhead route has already been looked at and discounted because re-opening it would cost too much; and that Transport for the North is focused on the Hope Valley line for improvements to journey times between Sheffield and Manchester, including for freight. Whilst Transport for the North can never say never, they have confirmed to us that they have no immediate interest in the Woodhead route.

If a rail line were ever to be reinstated on the Woodhead route, and if our underground cables were in the way of that, the 2km section of transmission line that we are proposing to bury below ground, could be put back overhead. The cost of doing that would be in the region of £35 million*, which would be insignificant and immaterial against the hundreds of millions it would cost to reinstate the rail line between Sheffield and Manchester. This important stakeholder-led initiative to bury this section of overhead line below ground and deliver significant enhancements to the landscape and views at this gateway to the Peak District National Park would not, therefore, impede or prevent the reinstatement of a rail line, if any proposal were ever to come forward.

Reinstatement of the Transmission Line

National Grid has undertaken a high-level assessment of the likely cost that would be incurred to reinstate a specific 2km section of transmission line between Woodhead Tunnel and tower 4ZO157. This high-level cost estimate has been summarised in Table 1 below. This estimate assumes that any consenting and access requirements would not be prohibitive in the development or delivery of a reinstated transmission line. It is estimate is expected to be in the region of +/- 20% depending on external factors such as outage availability, metal prices and inflation.

Table 1: High-Level Cost Estimate for Reinstating the 2km Transmission Line (4ZO route only)

Activity	**Cost Estimate (£)**
Project Enabling Works	£6,500,000
Project Management	£2,500,000
Cable Circuit Removal and Reinstatement Works	£8,040,000
Miscellaneous Civils Works	£500,000
Subtotal	**£17,540,000**
Contractor Project Risk (10%)	£1,754,000
Subtotal	**£19,254,000**
Contractor Fee (12%)	£2,315,280
Subtotal	**£21,609,280**
Transmission Line	£7,257,646
National Grid Overheads	£2,770,309
National Grid Risk	£3,241,392
Total	**£34,878,627***

**This high-level cost estimate was developed for comparison purposes only and may not be indicative of the outturn cost of reinstating this section of transmission line in future years. This estimate was based on 2020 prices.*