

Comments from Shirland and Higham Parish Council

Whilst broadly supportive of the need for a grid upgrade to fulfil the projected increased demands on the distribution network, it would seem that all avenues to achieve this have not been assessed and fully investigated.

We are well aware of the need for transmission of off-shore wind generated electricity to get to the consumers, being industrial or domestic. However, the communities that will be involved in the upheaval of the construction phase and also the subsequent permanent scarring of the locality have yet to be convinced that the National Grid is not just applying a “cheapest is best” plan in its bid to complete these engineering works but also deliver profits for their shareholders and investors. We feel it is quite pointless delivering a project that propels the country towards net zero, if you end up destroying or degrading the extremely valuable ecosystems, habitats and the environment together with the unique panoramic vistas that have been identified in our Parish Neighbourhood Plan whilst in pursuit of that aim.

Blighting the scenic landscapes by the erection of massive latticed pylons to support this cable network is not the answer. The visual impacts will detract from the many listed buildings and their wider setting and overpower the rural character of our Derbyshire countryside and more particularly, the Amber Valley.

The main artery of the planning system in this country has always been that the benefits to the public of a particular application are outweighed by the spectrum of harm identified. That mantra seems to have been discarded in this instance, and we are disappointed that National Grid does not share the deep care and concern that we have for the countryside of our parish, its integrity and the need to safeguard it for future generations.