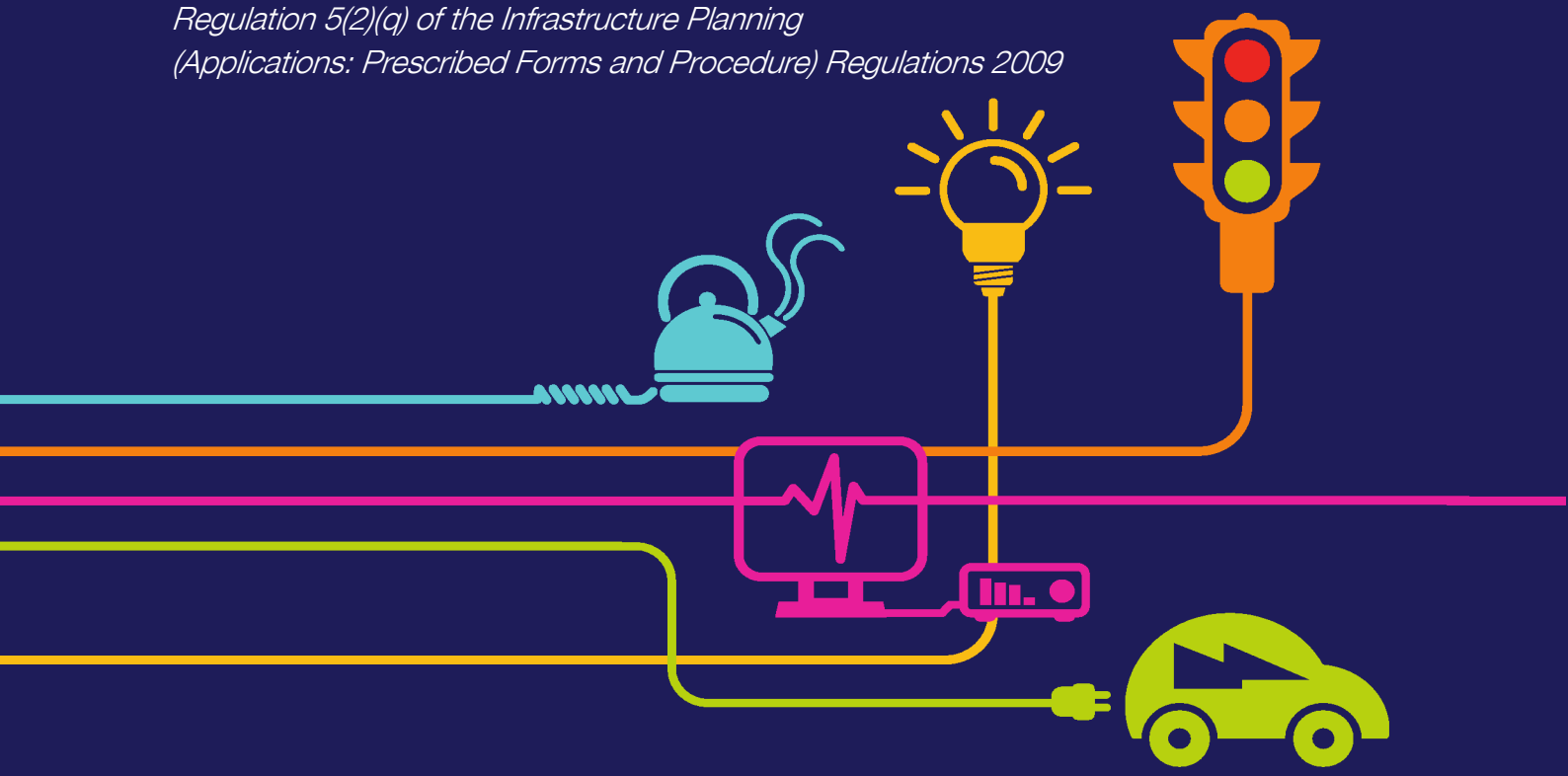
nationalgrid

DOCUMENT 7.3

History of the Project

National Grid (North Wales Connection Project)

Regulation 5(2)(q) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009



Application Reference EN020015

September 2018

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Introduction

Summary

This document provides an overview of National Grid's North Wales Connection Project including the need for the project, the policy framework, the strategic option selected, and the work done up to submission of the DCO application.

A second connection is needed between Wylfa on the northern coast of Anglesey, to the existing National Grid substation on the mainland at Pentir, Gwynedd in order to connect Horizon Nuclear Power's proposed new nuclear power station, Wylfa Newydd.

Our proposal is for a combination of an overhead line, running predominately parallel to the existing overhead line across the island, with a tunnel beneath the Menai Strait and Anglesey Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and a short section of overhead line in Gwynedd. The tunnel would require tunnel head houses and cable sealing end compounds to make the transition from an overhead line to an underground connection. Minor works to reconfigure the existing substation at Wylfa and an extension to the existing substation at Pentir would also be needed.

To support the project, National Grid has carried out many technical and environmental studies, published a suite of detailed reports and held three stages of consultation to seek feedback from local communities and stakeholders.

The volume and document numbers in this report are as submitted in the DCO application. Please see the Navigation Document (Volume 1, Document 1.1).

Who is National Grid

National Grid owns and operates the high voltage electricity transmission system in Wales and England and operates the high voltage electricity network in Great Britain. It has a statutory duty to maintain 'an efficient, co-ordinated and economical' system of electricity transmission. Under the terms of its license, National Grid has to offer terms to connect electricity generators to the transmission system.

Need Case

Wales and the rest of the UK needs new secure and reliable energy supplies while at the same time tackling climate change. This means large investment in new low carbon power sources. This new energy needs to be able to get to the homes and businesses that need it throughout Wales and the rest of the UK via the national electricity network.

The need for the North Wales Connection was first considered in 2008 and a Need Case published at the launch of the first consultation in 2012. This was reviewed to support the statutory consultation. An updated Need Case, reflecting the current contractual requirements, is part of the DCO application documents. The historic Need Cases for the project can be found in Volume 9 Document 9.7.

The 2018 Need Case document looks at the updated contractual requirements, identifying signed connection agreements to connect 5,419 MW of new generation in North Wales, as follows:

- Orthios Power, 299 MW connecting 2019-2020;
- Codling Park Wind Farm, 1,000 MW connecting in 2021;
- Morlais Tidal, 180 MW connection 2019-2024;
- Greenwire Wind Farm (Pentir), 1,000 MW connecting in 2021; and
- Wylfa Newydd, 2,940 MW connecting in 2026 – 2027.

Wylfa Newydd will generate nearly three times as much power as the existing Magnox power station. To carry all that power securely to the homes and businesses that need it, National Grid will need to use the existing overhead line and build a second connection. Wylfa Newydd will use both lines.

National Grid's Options Appraisal / Approach to Routeing

Electricity Act (1989)

National Grid has a duty under the Electricity Act (1989) to "have regard to the desirability of preserving" amenity when undertaking projects. This includes impacts on communities, landscape and visual amenity, cultural heritage and ecological resources. To satisfy this duty, National Grid seeks to avoid, when routeing, areas which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, wildlife or cultural significance, such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

National Grid recognises that not all sites that are valued by and important for the wellbeing of local communities are designated. National Grid makes sure that the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of proposed projects are considered, not just those relating to designated sites.

Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy

National Grid's *Stakeholder, Community and Amenity Policy* sets out how the company will meet the duty to the environment placed upon it. These commitments include:

i. only seeking to build new lines and substations where the existing transmission infrastructure cannot be upgraded technically or economically to meet transmission security standards;

ii. where new infrastructure is required seek to avoid areas nationally or internationally designated for their landscape, wildlife or cultural significance, and

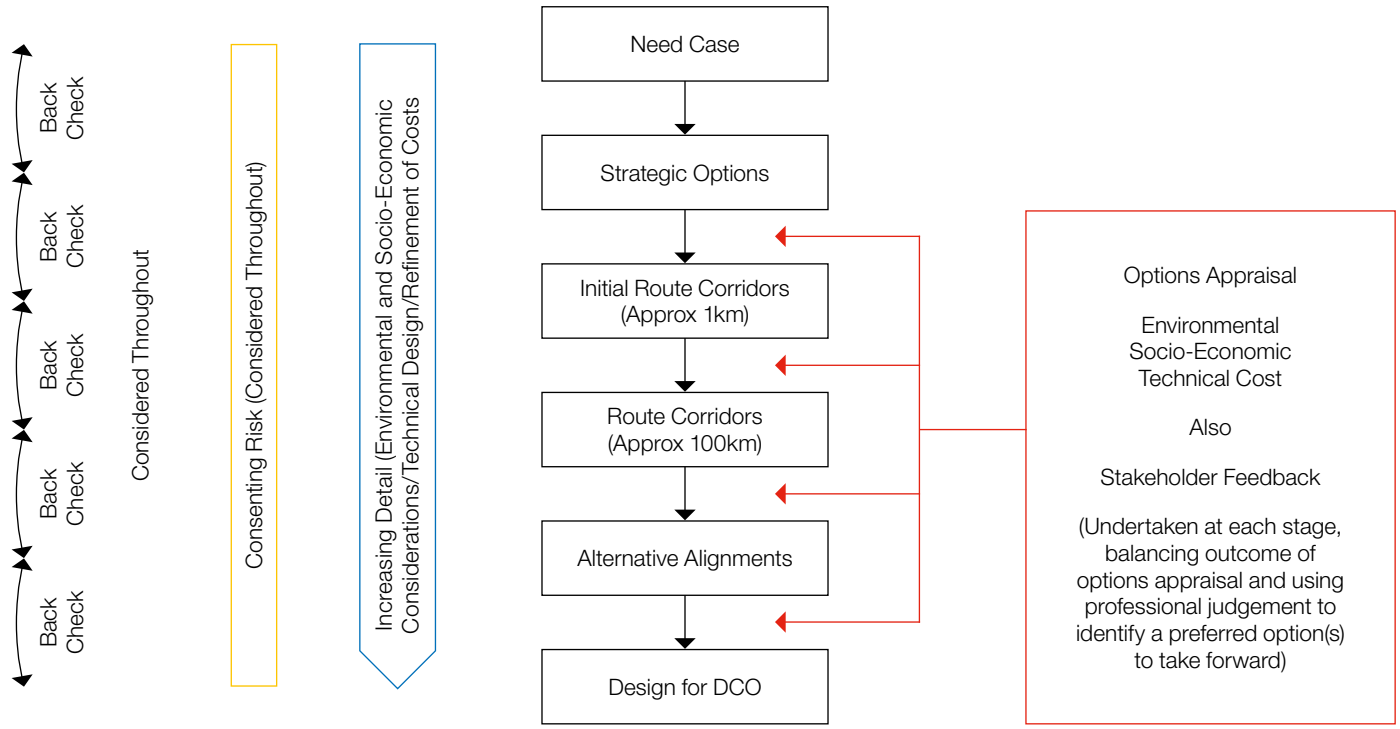
iii. minimising the effects of new infrastructure on other sites valued for their amenity.

The Policy refers to the application of best practice methods to assess the environmental impacts of proposals and identify appropriate mitigation and/or offsetting measures. Effective consultation with stakeholders and the public is also promoted.

Our Approach to the Design and Routeing of New Electricity Transmission Lines

National Grid has also published *Our Approach to the Design and Routeing of New Electricity Transmission Lines*. This document sets out the process, which was developed with stakeholder involvement, by which National Grid delivers its projects and also seeks to inform stakeholders of the stages it will follow before submitting an application for development.

The Approach is applied to all stages of a project's development from strategic options, outline routeing, and detailed routeing through to an application for consent (see diagram below).



At each stage, options are appraised and compared in order to look at their relative costs and benefits. This approach means that stakeholders can see the basis on which judgements have been made and how National Grid has balanced its duties.

Appraisal work requires further evaluation to be undertaken involving representatives from the environmental and engineering specialists within the project team. Reports are then written based on the data, assessments and outcomes from the work.

As a project progresses more detailed information is gathered about the constraints that may affect a particular route. At the strategic options stage, constraints identified include nationally or internationally designated sites (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Parks). At later stages, other features are considered, including non-designated sites such as particularly sensitivity landscapes and iconic views. As a project progresses and more detailed information is gathered, 'back-checking' is undertaken to identify whether new information would have resulted in a change to the choices made at previous stages of the process.

Potential landscape and visual issues are always considered when it comes to new overhead lines and played an important part in all stages of the project's development, from initial mapping and desktop evaluations of landscape sensitivity to site visits, identification of viewpoints, stakeholder engagement and scoping for the environmental impact assessment.

The detailed methodologies for the landscape and visual assessments have been discussed and refined through engagement with stakeholders and are included within the *EIA Scoping Report* (which has been published on the PINS National Infrastructure Planning website). The methodologies are based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment* (Version 3) published by the Landscape Institute in collaboration with IEMA. The outcome of the detailed assessments are within the *Environmental Statement* (Volume 5), submitted with the application for a DCO.

Holford Rules

The 'Holford Rules' (1959) is a recognised set of guidelines that inform the identification of potential routes for new overhead electricity transmission lines. The Rules are predominantly based on visual impacts and amenity values but provide an important basis for all environmental assessment of power lines.

National Policy Statement EN-5 refers to the Holford Rules and confirms that they are the main guidance for the routeing of new overhead electricity transmission lines. The central theme of the Rules is that the extent of the landscape and visual effect of an overhead electricity transmission line can be reduced by careful routeing. Holford Rules 1 and 2, for example, refer to the avoidance of areas of highest amenity value or scientific interest such as designated sites and advise that route alignments should be located to minimise the environmental effect on these areas.

Policy Context

National Policy Statements

The Planning Act 2008 defines the construction of an above ground transmission connection of 132kV or above and over 2km in length as being a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' (NSIP). A Development Consent Order (DCO) is needed to build such developments. It is up to the Secretary of State to determine the consent for such applications. The policy framework for NSIPs is set by a number of National Policy Statements (NPSs).

The Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) and the NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (which should be read in conjunction with EN-1) are the most relevant NPSs for the North Wales Connection Project.

EN-1 sets out government policy for delivering major energy infrastructure. Part 4 of EN-1 sets out the general principles that should be applied whilst recognising that the technology-specific NPSs provide further details on the way these impacts are to be considered. Part 5 of EN-1 sets out policy on the assessment of impacts which are common across a range of projects (generic impacts).

EN-5, is concerned with matters which are specific to electricity networks infrastructure, setting out how new proposals will be assessed, and the supporting evidence needed.

EN-5 recognises that the location of projects is often determined by the location of generating stations and existing network infrastructure, acknowledging that transmission connections may not be via the most direct route as many factors, including engineering and environmental aspects, will need to be taken into account (Part 2 para 2.2.2).

With regard to landscape and visual effects, NPS EN-5 states that:

"Government does not believe that development of overhead lines is generally incompatible in principle with developers' statutory duty under section 9 of the Electricity Act to have regard to amenity and to mitigate impacts… For the most part these impacts can be mitigated, however at particularly sensitive locations the potential adverse landscape and visual impacts of an overhead line proposal may make it unacceptable in planning terms, taking account of the specific local environment and context" (EN-5 Part 2 para 2.8.2).

Part 2 para 2.8.9 goes on to provide guidance with respect to undergrounding:

"The impacts and costs of both overhead and underground options vary considerably between individual projects (both in absolute and relative terms). Therefore each project should be assessed individually on the basis of its specific circumstances and taking account of the fact that Government has not laid down any general rule about when an overhead line should be considered unacceptable. The [Secretary of State] should, however only refuse consent for overhead line proposals in favour of an underground or sub-sea line if it is satisfied that the benefits from the non-overhead line alternative will clearly outweigh any extra economic, social and environmental impacts and the technical difficulties are surmountable." (Part 2 para 2.8.9).

Project stages

Summary

The North Wales Connection Project has evolved across seven years of development. The following sections set out the different stages, consultations and documents that have been produced.

Period prior to Stage One Consultation: 2010 - 2012

Prior to Stage One Consultation, National Grid carried out a number of assessments looking at how best to respond to the newly contracted generation. Several documents were published explaining the reviews. These documents have all been reviewed and updated and new versions of the *Need Case* and *Strategic Options Report* have been published to support the DCO application (Volume 7, Documents 7.1 and 7.2).

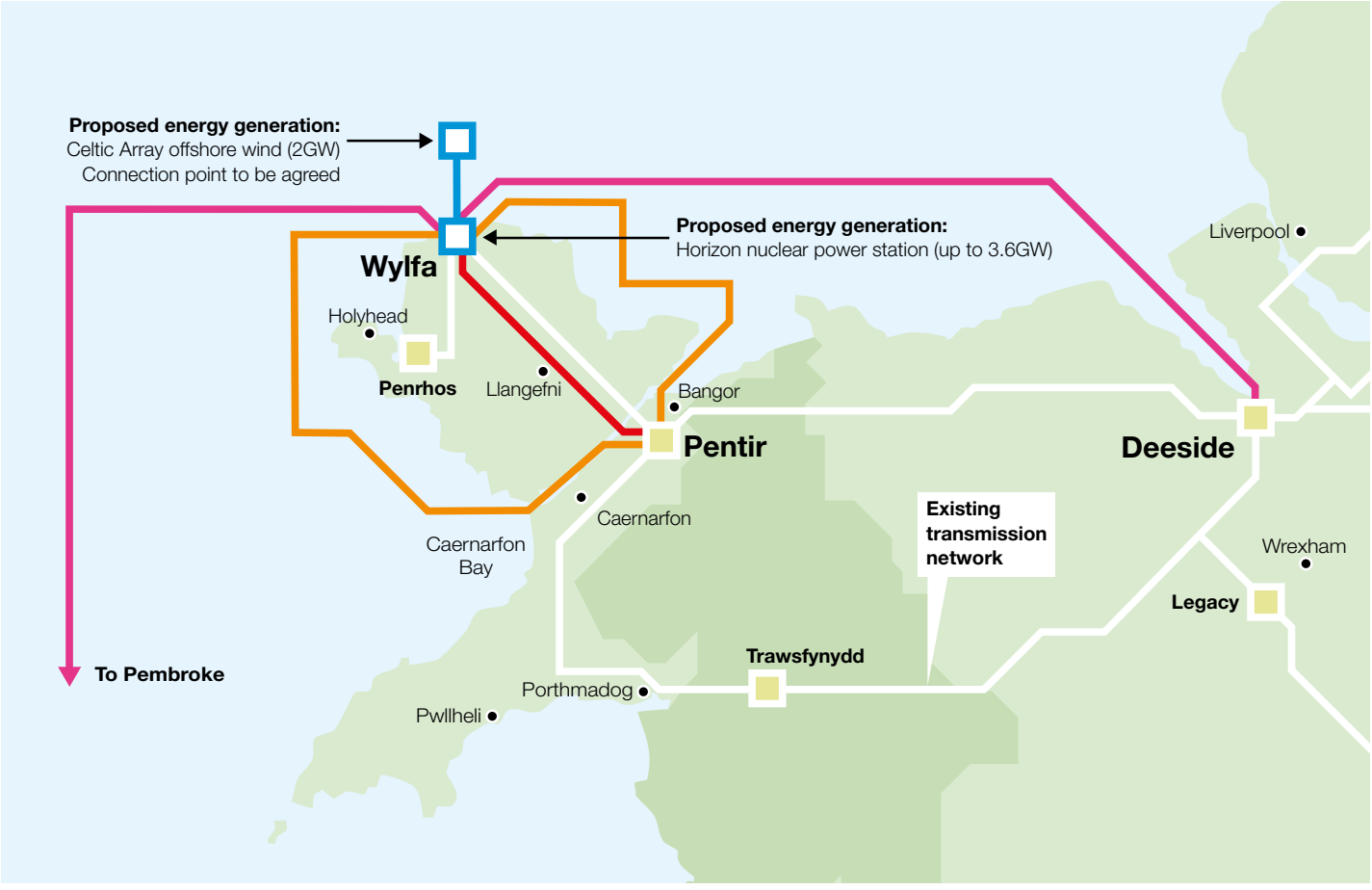
Strategic Options Report

The existing overhead line between Wylfa and the mainland cannot be securely used to carry all the electricity that is planned to be generated, so National Grid needs to build a new, second connection.

National Grid looked at a number of ways to connect the proposed new energy generation and published a *Strategic Options Report* (Volume 9, Document 9.8.1). This looked at the range of options and technologies which could provide the additional transmission infrastructure needed.

The strategic options identified were:

- Subsea – a new subsea connection; either between Wylfa and Deeside, or between both Wylfa and Deeside and between Wylfa and Pembroke.
- Subsea and overhead/underground – a new subsea connection around the west or east coast of Anglesey between Wylfa and Pentir.
- Overhead/underground between Wylfa-Pentir – an additional connection either overhead or underground between Wylfa and Pentir, with works needed on the existing line between Pentir and Trawsfynydd to support this.



A high-level review of each strategic option was carried out. The report provided an overview of the analysis and the environmental, socio-economic, technical and cost factors considered to inform decision making.

For the subsea options HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) cables and convertor stations would be needed. HVDC is an evolving technology and there are no HVDC systems of this capacity installed anywhere in the world connecting a single point of generation to a transmission network.

For an overhead option, the visual and landscape effects were recognised by National Grid. National Grid believed it would be possible to reduce/avoid these by careful routeing, planting and screening, or consideration of putting sections of the connection underground.

The difference in cost between options is significant. As noted above, at each stage a back check was carried out to ensure that the decisions made previously remained valid. In the updated *SOR (2016)* (Volume 9, Document 9.8.3) capital costs for a subsea connection were estimated at between £1.1 billion and £1.4 billion. The total cost for an approx. 40km connection onshore based on an overhead line route was estimated to be approx. £519 million. Connecting by onshore underground cables was estimated to cost approx.
£420 million more. These costs have been further updated in the latest Strategic Options Report that supports the application.

Discussions were held with statutory stakeholders who favoured a non-overhead solution, because of sensitivities such as the Menai Strait. The high-level environmental appraisal also recognised the sensitivity of the Menai Strait along with a number of other areas.

A preferred strategic option was selected based on the findings of the high-level options appraisal, cost information and the responses from stakeholders. National Grid's preliminary preferred option was for an overhead line (with appropriate mitigation, potentially including the use of underground technologies) between Wylfa and Pentir. This preliminary preferred option was thought to achieve the appropriate balance between National Grid's technical, economic, amenity and environmental obligations. It was considered that the Menai Strait and area around it was sensitive due to landscape, visual and cultural heritage features.

Initial Route Corridor Report

Following the identification of the preferred strategic option, National Grid looked at the potential constraints that could affect the routeing of a new overhead line between Wylfa and Pentir.

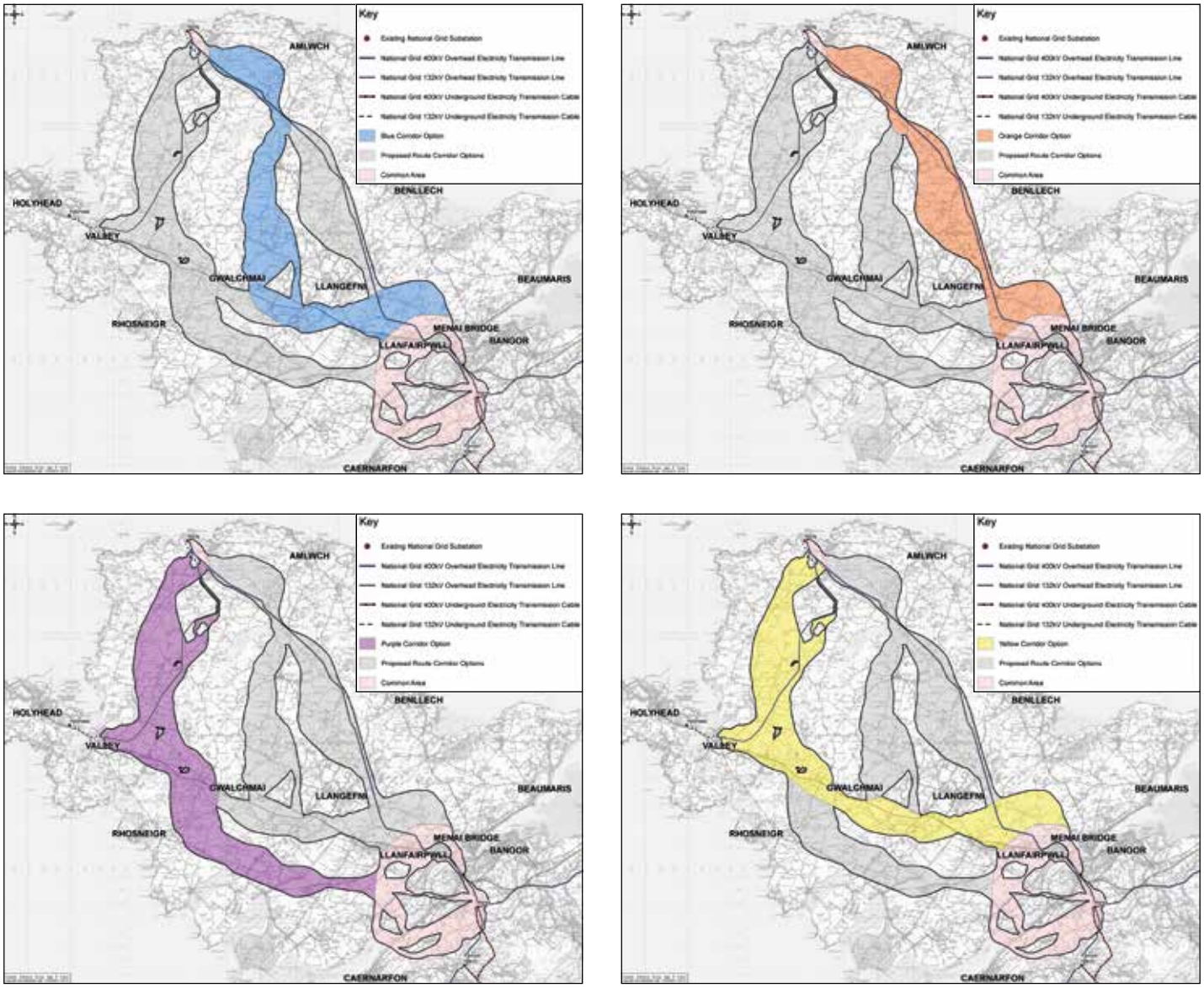
A number of significant sites and features were identified, including:

- National and international designated nature conservation sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); National Nature Reserve (NNR);
- Anglesey AONB;
- Special Landscape Areas;
- Scheduled monuments;
- Grade I, II* and II listed buildings;
- Recreational and tourism facilities;
- a large number of wind farms on Anglesey;
- Caernarfon and Beaumaris Castles.

Four possible broad route corridors across Anglesey and five possible crossing options for an overhead line across the Menai Strait to Pentir were identified. Consideration was given to environmental and social economic factors, technical constraints and costs in developing these corridors.

The initial route corridors were:

- **Orange** – broadly based on the route of the existing 400kV overhead line between Wylfa and Pentir;
- **Blue** – avoiding paralleling most of the existing overhead line, running generally through open countryside in the centre of the island;
- **Yellow** – routeing a line to the west of the island; and
- **Purple** – an alternative option to yellow, also routeing to the west of the island.



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Stakeholder engagement prior to Stage One Consultation

National Grid engaged with statutory and non-statutory consultees at an early stage in the development of the Project.

At the start of the Project, National Grid consulted with selected stakeholder organisations and officers from the relevant local authorities. This was to help obtain a greater understanding of the local area and to develop the best approach to consultation.

The organisations consulted included Isle of Anglesey County Council (IoACC), Gwynedd Council, Welsh Government, Snowdonia National Park Authority, Cadw, National Trust, Environment Agency Wales, Countryside Council for Wales (now Natural Resources Wales) and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

Relevant Members of Parliament (MPs) and Assembly Members (AMs) were also given an overview of the background to the Project and why it was needed.

The North Wales Connection Project websites were launched in 2012, along with the first *Project News* newsletter (Volume 6, Document 6.2, Appendix 3.H), published in English and Welsh.

Stage One non-statutory Consultation: October – December 2012

The Stage One non-statutory consultation was held between 3 October 2012 and 21 December 2012. National Grid asked for feedback on its strategic options and preliminary preferred option for the Project, which comprised of an additional overhead connection between Wylfa and Pentir.

People were also asked to comment on the four initial route corridors, the Menai Strait crossing options and sensitive locations across the whole Project area. Three feedback forms, one for each package of work, were developed in both Welsh and English, along with corresponding feedback form explanation booklets which were designed to help people fill in the forms.

During the first stage of consultation, National Grid held 35 exhibitions across Anglesey and Gwynedd, which were attended by 736 people.

In total, 1,549 responses were received to the Stage One Consultation through the different means of providing feedback. A number of themes emerged which were analysed and responded to in the *Consultation Feedback Report (June 2014)* (Volume 6, Document 6.2, Appendix 2).

Key themes raised were:

- Underground/Overhead
- Subsea connection
- Environmental impacts
- Socio-economic impacts

Out of those people that expressed a preference for a route corridor, most preferred the Orange Corridor. Feedback focused on keeping the two overhead lines together rather than developing a new line in an area that didn't already have infrastructure.

Many of the respondents did, however, express concerns about the visual effects an additional overhead line on Anglesey could have, particularly in sensitive areas such as the Menai Strait. A number of locations in Gwynedd and Anglesey were also identified as being sensitive due to their environmental, visual, historical, community or tourist importance.

The 2012 consultation also invited feedback on proposals for a new substation at Bryncir and plans to replace the existing underground cable in the Glaslyn Estuary.

Changing energy proposals in North Wales post Stage One Consultation: 2013

Following the close of Stage One Consultation, there were a number of changes to the proposed sources of energy generation in North Wales and therefore to the Project Need Case. These included:

- Two Irish wind farm projects, Greenwire and Codling Park, both asked for a connection to National Grid's substation in Pentir, Gwynedd
- Celtic Array terminated its offshore Rhiannon Wind Farm project. This meant National Grid no longer needed to build a local connection to its existing line on Anglesey at Rhosgoch.
- Horizon Nuclear Power reduced the amount of energy it intended to generate from Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station and changed connection dates to the mid 2020's.

All of this meant that the proposed new generation National Grid needed to connect had changed on Anglesey and in North Wales more widely. In view of these changes, it was important that a thorough review was undertaken to ensure the most appropriate option was taken forward, based on the information available.

This work established that a further connection was still required in addition to the existing 400kV from Wylfa to Pentir and that a second overhead line was still the preferred connection technology.

Ongoing community and stakeholder engagement: 2013

In the spring of 2013 National Grid produced a further dual language *Project News* newsletter and sent this to all addresses in the Stage One consultation zone, stakeholder organisations and landowners and occupiers with the existing overhead line infrastructure on their land. The newsletter thanked everyone who had taken part in the Stage One Consultation and provided an overview of themes and key questions received during the consultation. National Grid also updated the project website and sent an email update out to registered users.

Also in the spring of 2013, National Grid commissioned a further independent public awareness survey to feedback on a range of issues. This was intended to obtain views of a broad and representative sample of the area and provided a means of reaching those who may not have necessarily participated in the Stage One Consultation.

Revision of proposals and selection of preferred route corridor: 2013 – 2014

During 2013 and 2014, feedback from stakeholders and the public was analysed, alongside further detailed appraisals of the likely environmental, socio-economic, technical and cost impacts of the route corridors.

A hybrid option comprising of a land and sea combination, which was suggested in feedback, was also analysed. Details of this analysis can be found in the updated *Strategic Options Report (Jan 15)* (Volume 9, Document 9.8.2).

For most of the connection, taking into account the balance between the technical, environmental, socio economic considerations, the relative costs, and the feedback from the Stage One Consultation, the outcome was the identification of the Orange route corridor as the preferred option for a new overhead connection. In summary, it was considered that the Orange route corridor:

- would be less visible from Anglesey AONB than the Yellow and Purple route corridors;
- covered an area already affected by an existing overhead transmission line;
- had the greatest natural screening from the surrounding terrain;
- offered the best compliance with the Holford Rules, and against other policy considerations;
- would affect the fewest new visual amenity receptors;
- was the least likely route corridor to affect undeveloped landscapes and panoramic views to Snowdonia;
- was the only option that could avoid any need to manage risks of infringement of a safeguarding zone where development of tall structures is controlled to protect low flying aircraft;
- was preferred by the majority of the feedback from public consultation as it was the shortest, most direct route and followed the existing line; and
- was the shortest route so would require the fewest pylons and would therefore be the lowest cost option.

Feedback relating to the Menai Strait said that stakeholders and local communities felt an overhead line connection would be unacceptable here, leading to potential significant adverse landscape and visual effects to the AONB. Views from Y Felinheli, Plas Newydd and the Vaynol Estate were also highlighted as important for consideration.

National Grid carried out a review of the environmental and technical challenges of crossing the Menai Strait, as well as considering social factors such as tourism. National Grid felt it was appropriate to put the cables underground at the Menai Strait and Anglesey AONB to avoid introducing further infrastructure in to the views here.

The *Preferred Route Corridor Selection Report* (Volume 9, Document 9.2) summarises the decisions made at this stage of the Project.

Identification of route options: 2014 – 2015

The next stage of the Project's development was the identification of potential route options for a new overhead line within the Orange route corridor between Wylfa and Pentir. Route options, around 100 metres wide, were identified within which more detailed alignments could be developed.

Route options were developed to keep existing and new equipment as close together as possible to give the best opportunity to keep the overall effect of the new connection as low as possible.

By keeping the equipment as close together as possible, it also would mean that the new route would not be put in new areas where there currently isn't any infrastructure.

Zones where the route might transfer from one side of the existing line to the other, called swap-overs or transpositions, were also identified to reduce impacts on communities and environmental factors

The routes were guided by policy requirements (EN-1 and EN-5) and by more detailed environmental, technical and socio-economic studies.

The route was split into five sections. These were:

- Section 1: Wylfa Power Station to Rhosgoch
- Section 2: Rhosgoch to Llandyfrydog
- Section 3: Llandyfrydog to the B5110 north of Talwrn
- Section 4: B5110 north of Talwrn to west of Star
- Section 5: West of Star to Pentir

The *Route Options Report* (Volume 9, Document 9.3) provides more detailed information about the routes. Information on the Menai crossing area was included in Stage Two Consultation as part of Section 5.

To make the change from an overhead line to an underground cable within Section 5, cable sealing end compounds would be needed; one on Anglesey and one in Gwynedd. Five search areas were identified within which a cable sealing end compound could be built. Feedback was sought as part of Stage Two Consultation.

Stage Two non-statutory consultation: October – December 2015

The Stage Two non-statutory consultation was held between 21 October 2015 and 16 December 2015. National Grid asked for feedback on the route options and cable sealing end compound search areas required for crossing the Menai Strait.

During the second stage of consultation, National Grid held 16 exhibitions across Anglesey and Gwynedd, which were attended by 405 people.

In total 2,076 responses were received to the Stage Two Consultation. A number of themes emerged which were analysed and responded to in the *Stage Two Consultation Feedback Report (May 2016)* (Volume 6, Document 6.2, Appendix 11).

Key themes raised were:

- Strategic options
- Support for undergrounding
- Potential socio-economic impacts

Feedback on Section 5 focused on:

- Heritage features, such as Plas Newydd and Vaynol Estate, and their importance for tourism
- Iconic views at the Menai Strait and surrounding area
- Communities, properties and businesses and the views to and from these
- The physical challenges of crossing the Menai Strait, such as the tide and geology

In March 2016, a community update was distributed to the Stage Two Consultation zone and everyone who had responded with feedback to the Stage Two Consultation. The bulletin explained how feedback was helping to shape the Project and highlighted the different considerations that National Grid must balance when developing a proposal.

Review of proposals and selection of preferred route option and further assessment at Menai Strait: 2016

Following the options presented at Stage Two Consultation, further design work was carried out with more detailed surveys. The options appraisal incorporated environmental, socio-economic, technical and cost considerations, and consultation feedback, as with all other stages. At this stage, a 'back-check' of the proposals was also carried out.

Menai Strait Crossing undergrounding confirmation: June 2016

In June 2016, National Grid distributed a *Project News* newsletter (Volume 6, Document 6.2, Appendix 12) to 8,500 addresses and stakeholder organisations about its plans for an underground connection at the Menai Strait. The update explained that up to 5km of the connection would go underground; that the cable sealing end compound search areas near the Menai Strait had been reduced in size; and that several overhead routes had been discounted.

Three 'drop-in' sessions were offered to residents living in Section 5, closest to the Menai Strait, to discuss the proposals in more detail.

Route alignment confirmation: July 2016

In July 2016, National Grid distributed a *Project News* newsletter (Volume 6, Document 6.2, Appendix 13) confirming the route chosen for the new connection. The newsletter provided an overview of feedback received about each of the route sections and explained which route option had been chosen within each section and why. The newsletter was distributed to all addresses within the Stage Two Consultation zone.

Menai Strait Crossing Report

Details of preferences within Section 5 (later referred to as Section E (Anglesey) and Section F (Gwynedd)) were outlined in the *Menai Strait Crossing Report* (Volume 9, Document 9.6). This report included details on sites for cable sealing end compounds, crossing zones on either side of the Menai Strait, the crossing methods, and overhead line routes within this Section.

These elements were initially considered individually and considered against environmental, socio-economic, technical and cost criteria. They were then considered in combination as 'end-to-end' options in order to identify a preferred option through Section 5.

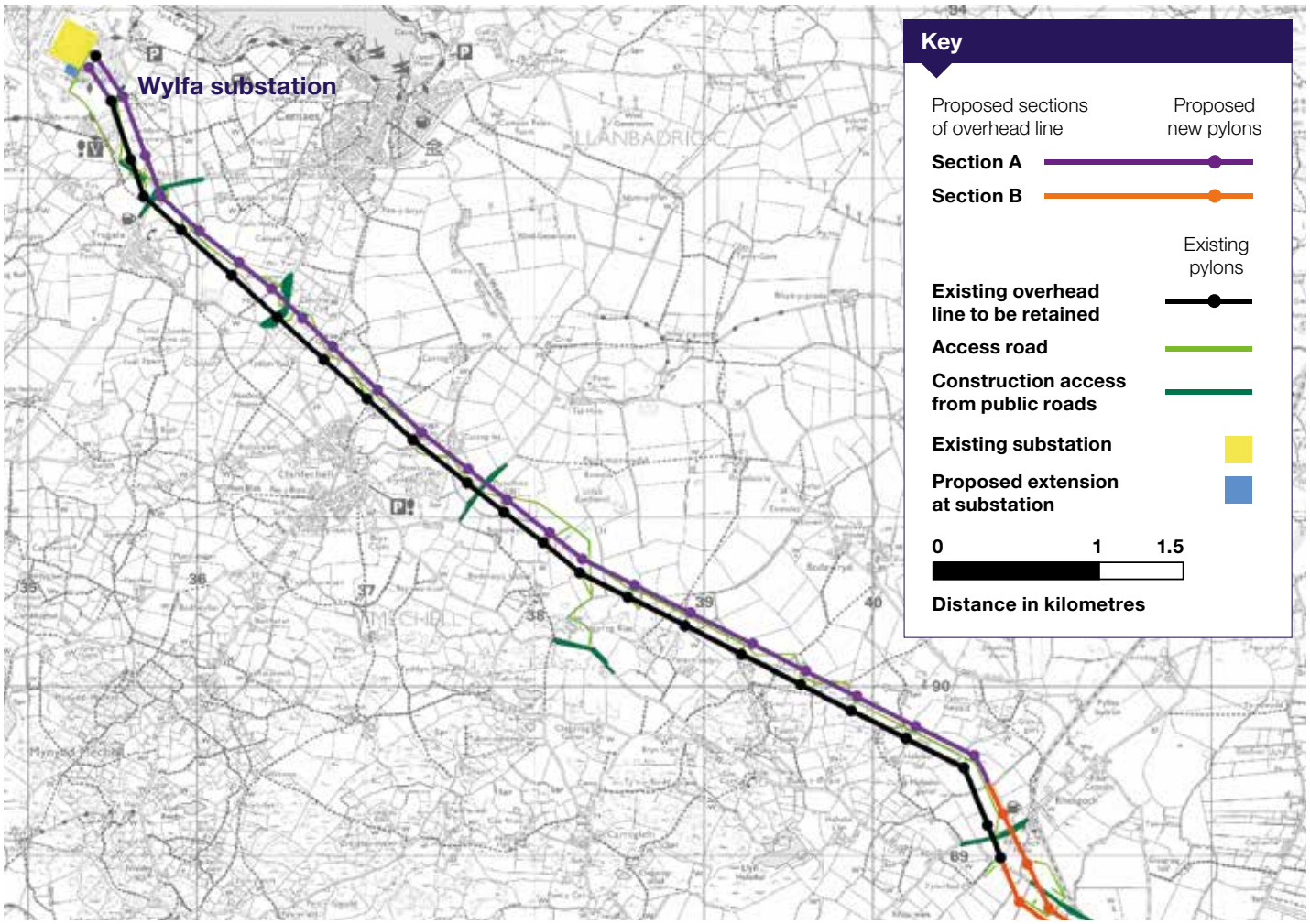
Route and crossing selections

The *Preferred Route Option Selection Report* (Volume 9, Document 9.4) identified the preference within each route section, referred to as A-D (previously 1-4).

Section A: Wylfa to Rhosgoch

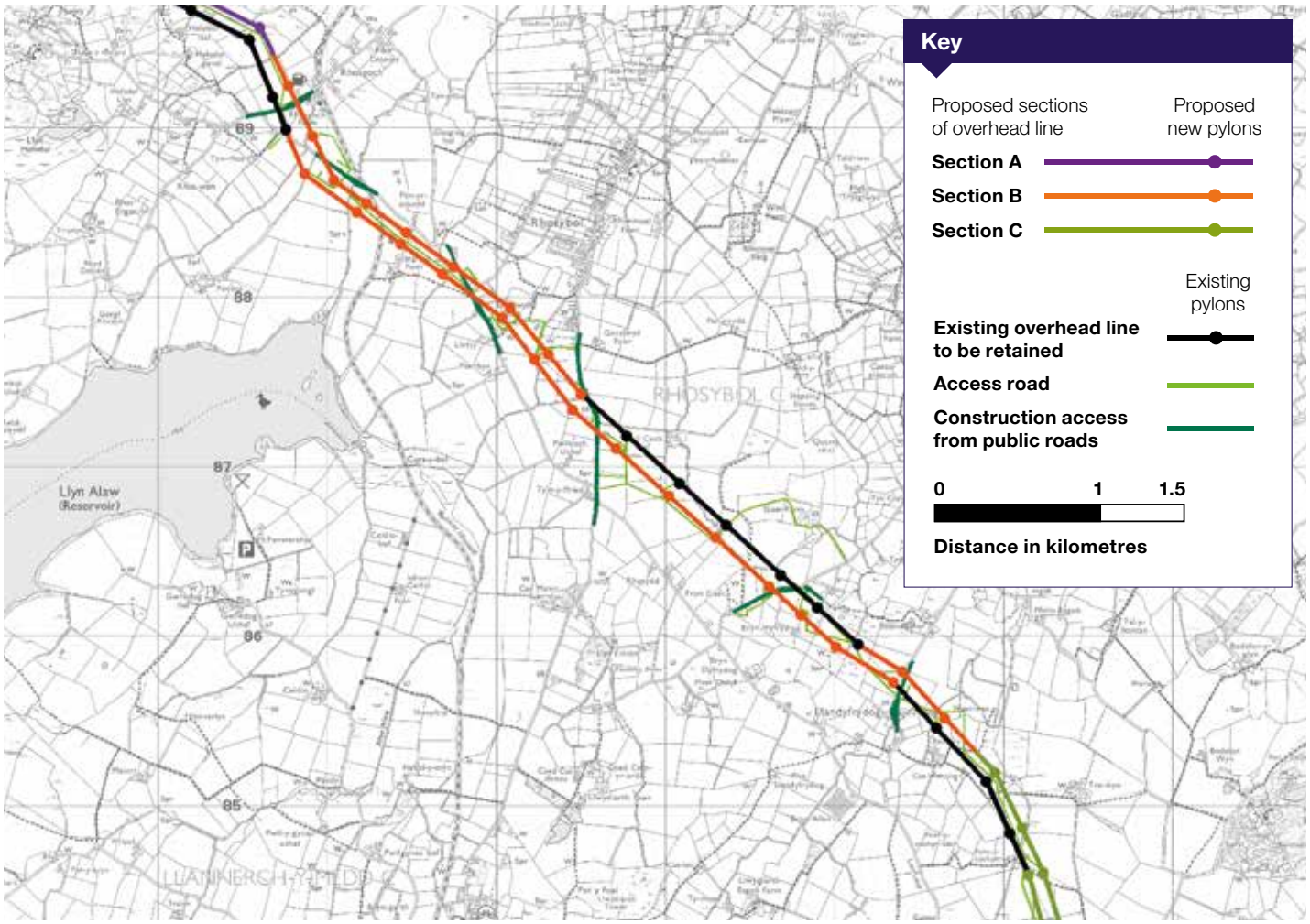
In Section A, Route Option 1A was selected. At Wylfa substation, the proposal realigns the existing wires that connect to the substation so fewer trees surrounding the site would need to be removed. The new connection keeps close to the existing line to reduce effects on individual properties and avoid encircling them. It's also on the far side of the existing line to Llanfechell and Tregele.

The proposal avoids routeing on higher ground within Mynydd Mechell Special Landscape Area and pylons have been positioned to reduce effects on water pipelines in the area.



Section B: Rhosgoch to Llandyfrydog

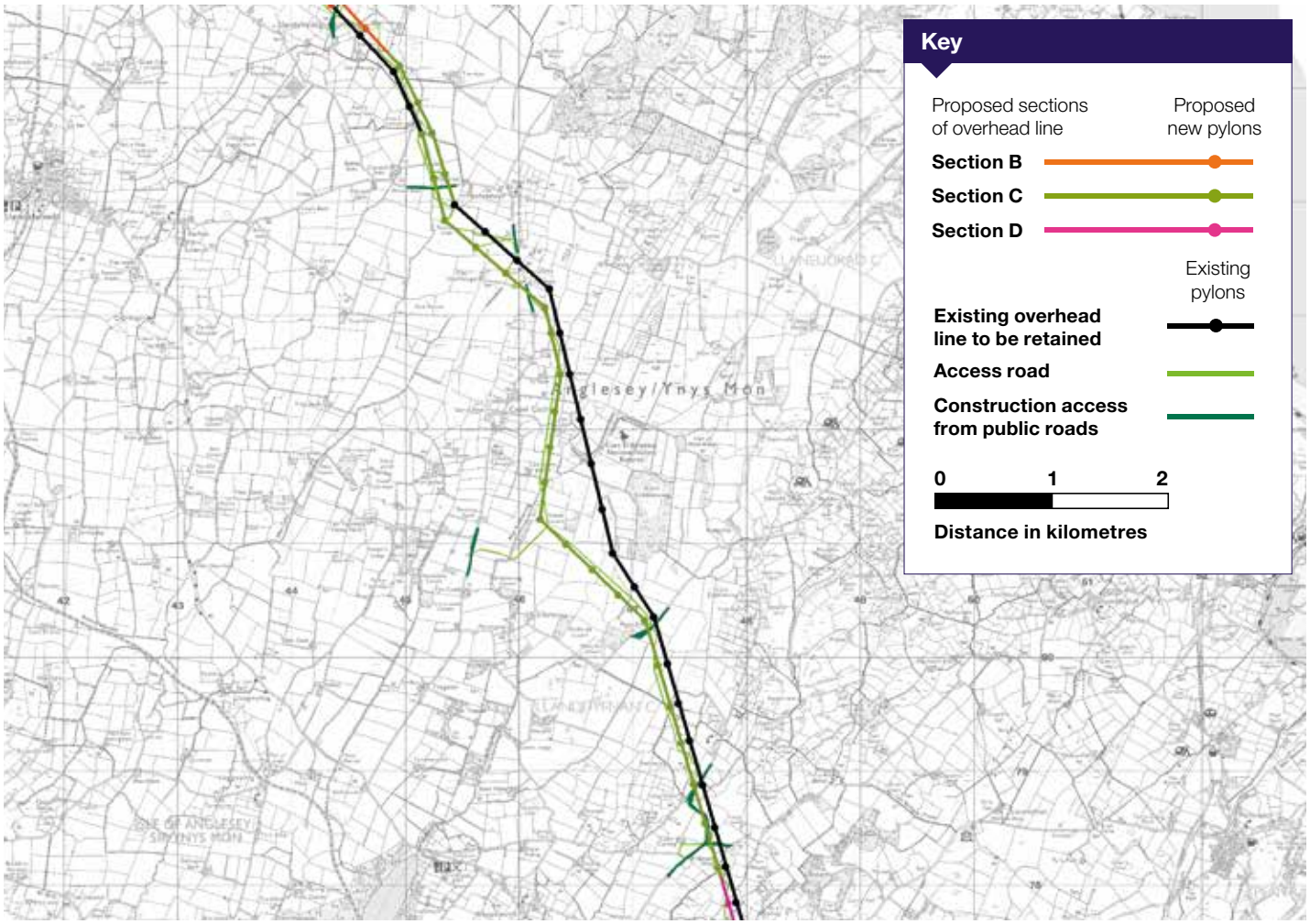
Due to the location of the existing line a parallel option couldn't be chosen here without sharp changes in the route direction and encircling properties. The proposal looks to re-route parts of the existing line to keep effects on properties as low as possible. The connection keeps to the west of Rhosybol before moving to the east of the existing line past Llandyfrydog and overall mostly avoids putting pylons into views that don't already have them.



Section C: Llandyfrydog to B5110 north of Talwrn

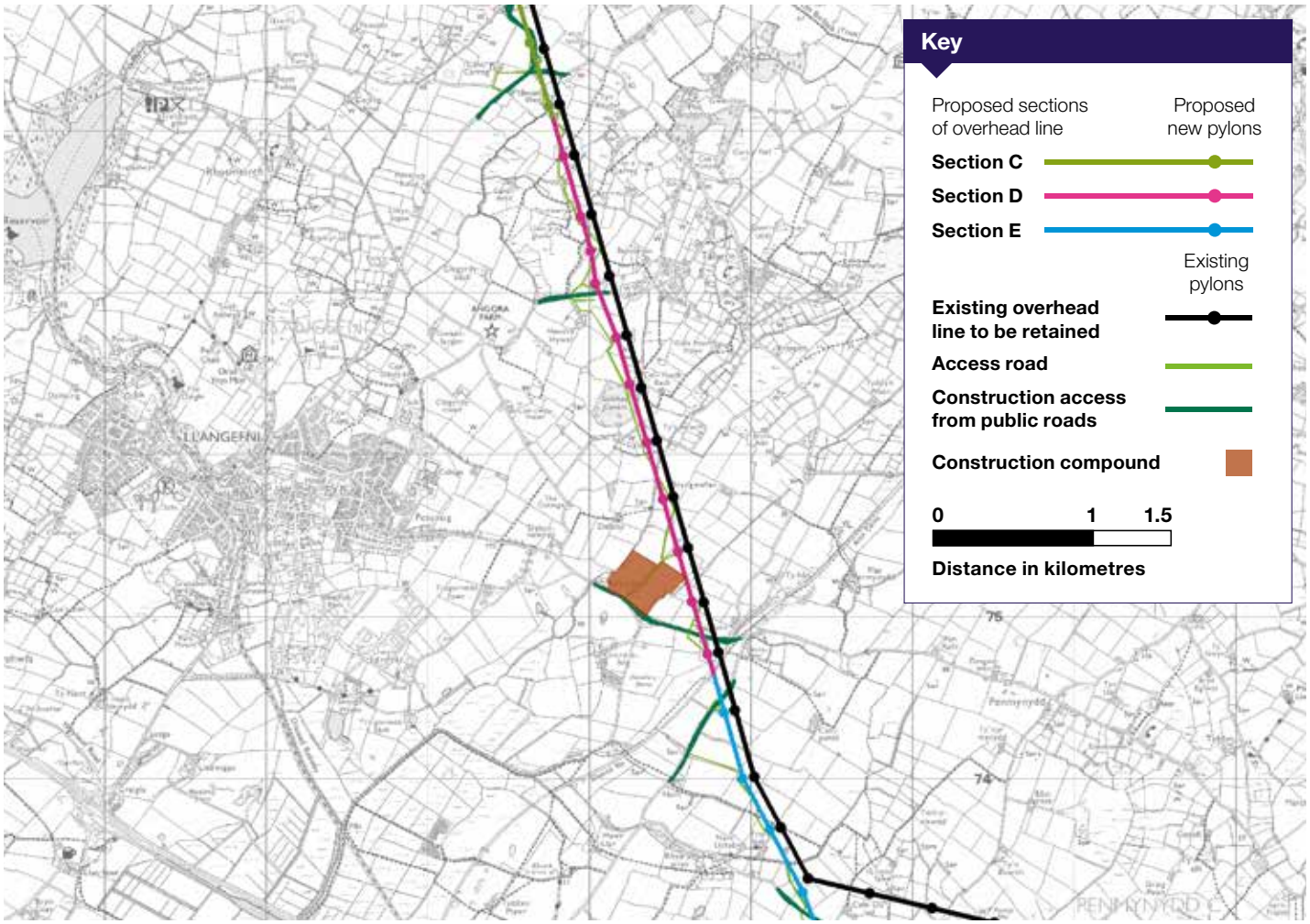
A wider parallel route in the north of this section was selected, having considered individual properties near Capel Coch. The new connection is on the far side of the existing line from Maenaddwyn and Hebron which will help to reduce effects on these areas.

The route moves out further west to keep away from Cors Erddreiniog (Special Area of Conservation) reserve to protect this valued habitat. This part of the line would be in lower ground to reduce visual effects.



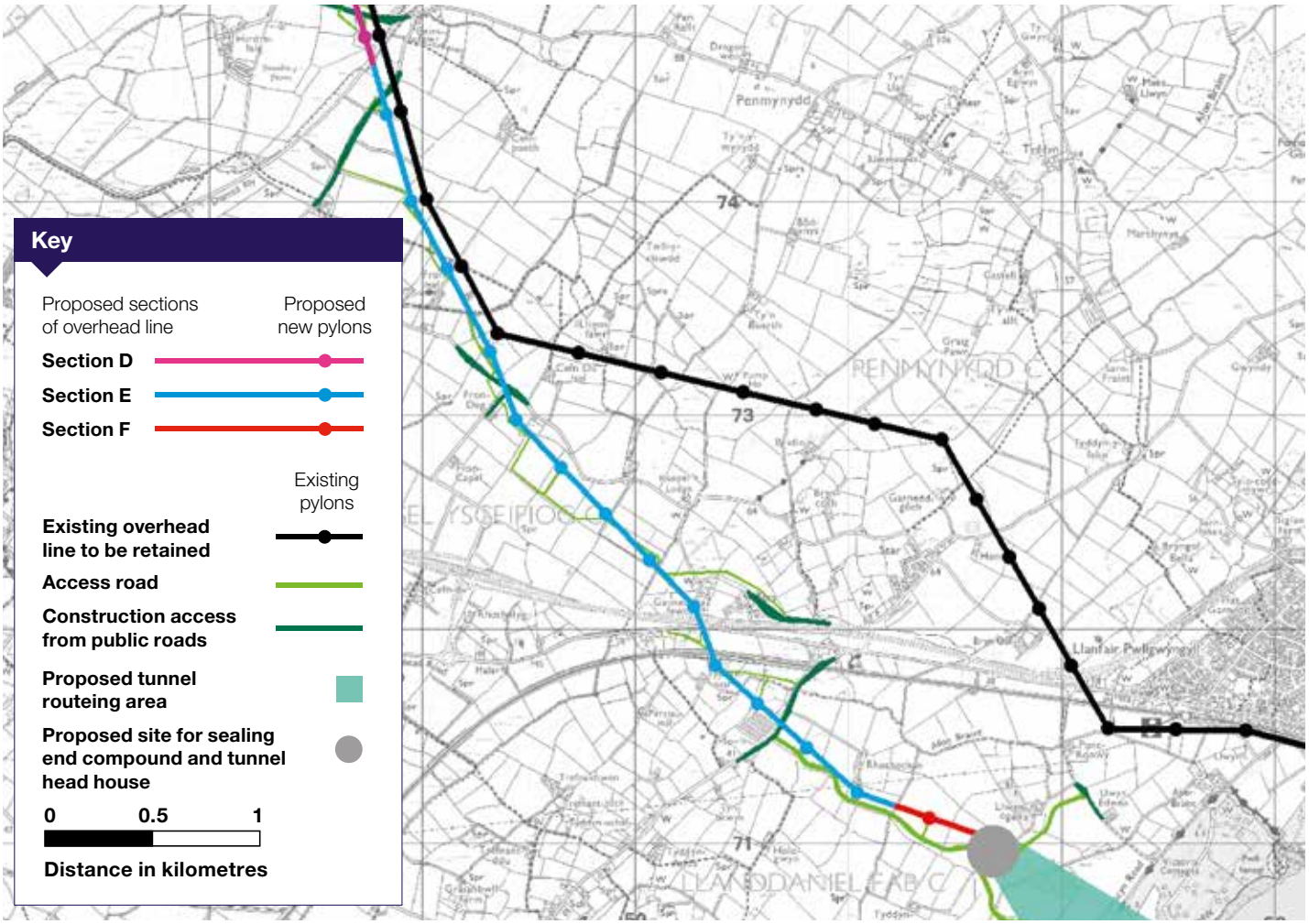
Section D: B5110 north of Talwrn to Ceint

The setting of individual pylons west of Talwrn has been carefully considered to avoid crossing properties. The connection stays to the far side of the existing line to reduce effects on the community. Pylons have also been carefully positioned to reduce the number of trees that would need to be removed at Gylched Covert. The proposal includes plans to plant a new area of woodland to replace any removed trees.



Section E: Ceint to the Afon Braint

The A5 and A55 crossing is proposed over an existing lay-by to help reduce any disruption from construction, before the connection moves away from the road to reduce effects on views. The route has been moved further away from Star, so it's on the opposite side of the A5 and A55 from the village, to reduce effects on views. The proposal in this section also tries to avoid as many properties as possible.

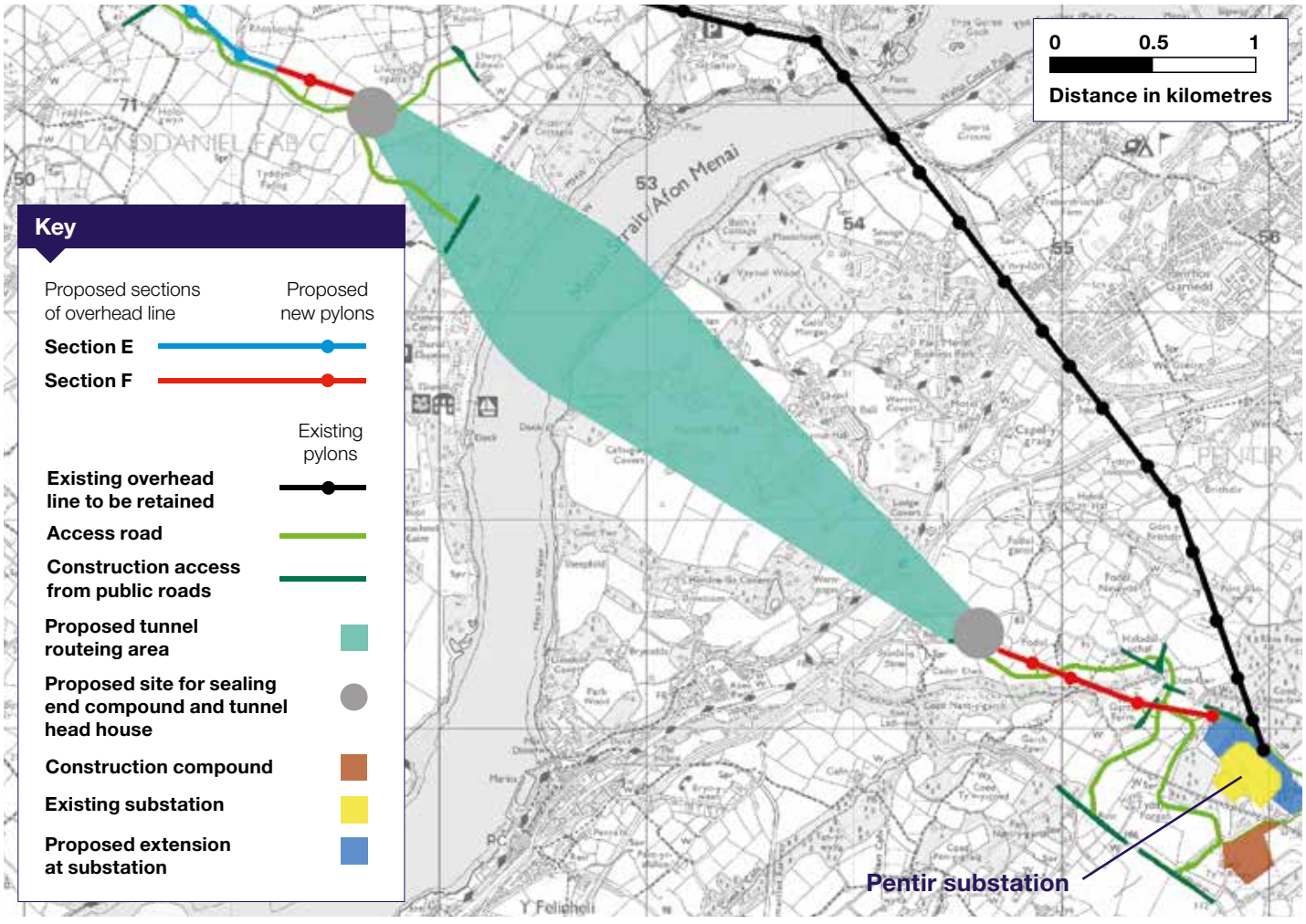


Section F: Afon Braint to Pentir

It was decided to put the route underground here to reduce effects on the Menai Strait and the wider area. The tunnel will be around 4km long, with the above ground infrastructure being set back from the coast and outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Vaynol Estate.

The cable sealing ends (where overhead and underground cables meet) and tunnel head houses are proposed to be sited next to each other to keep any visual effects in as small an area as possible. This also reduces possible construction disruption in the area. The sites will be screened with trees to further reduce visual effects.

The connection changes back to an overhead line on the Gwynedd side of the Menai Strait. This would connect to an extension to the existing substation at Pentir.



Stage Three Statutory Consultation: October – December 2016

The Stage Three statutory consultation was held between 5 October 2016 and 16 December 2016 under section 42 and section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, as well as publicity pursuant to Section 48. Section 42 consultation is directed towards statutory consultees, local authorities, landowners and those likely to be able to make a claim for compensation due to the effects of the proposals; while section 47 consultation is carried out with local communities.

The proposed route, as outlined above and in the *Preferred Route Option Selection Report* and the *Menai Strait Crossing Report*, was presented for consultation (Volume 9).

National Grid held 19 exhibitions across Anglesey and Gwynedd, which were attended by over 400 people. Engagement with prescribed and non-prescribed consultees was carried out, along with communities pursuant to the Project's *Statement of Community Consultation* (SoCC) (Volume 6, Document 6.2, Appendix 32).

Feedback

Feedback to the statutory consultation is reported in a Consultation Report which forms part of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). The Consultation Report evidences how National Grid fulfilled the statutory requirement to "have regard" to consultation responses.

Additional community and stakeholder engagement: Summer 2017

In the summer of 2017, the Project provided an update on proposed changes to construction vehicle routes across Anglesey. These changes were made as a result of feedback received during Stage Three Consultation from the Isle of Anglesey County Council's transport department.

During this time, additional communications activities were undertaken including distributing a newsletter to those who had responded to consultation, regularly updating the Project blog and engaging with hard-to-reach groups.

Further technical and environmental studies were carried out and ongoing liaison with stakeholders. Discussions continued with landowners to agree heads of terms.

Next steps

This paper provides a brief history of the North Wales Connection Project throughout its seven-year development. It accompanies a suite of documents submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). The Planning Inspectorate now takes over the process and information can be found at: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/wales/north-wales-connection/

Contact us:

There are lots of ways you can find out more information:

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:
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