



Historic England

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

We welcome this new opportunity to submit a response on RIIO-2. As this is a very extensive consultation, we have confined ourselves to the question which is most relevant to our locus.

ET Q7. What are your views on our consultation position for setting the expenditure cap for visual amenity mitigation projects in RIIO-2?

We are a member of the National Grid Visual Impact Provision (VIP) Stakeholder Advisory Group, and have welcomed engagement with it. As a member, Historic England (previously English Heritage) has helped National Grid to develop the VIP project. One example of this relates to the landscape of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with its outstanding archaeological heritage. We helped develop the detail of the VIP project to bury overhead power lines along a five-mile (8km) stretch of the county near the villages of Martinstown and Winterbourne Abbas, which will remove about 20 pylons and the overhead lines constructed between 1965 and 1969. This project – currently underway - will be highly beneficial to the historic environment. The Peak District AONB project which was recently given planning approval is another project we welcome, and we are working on other projects which will also benefit the historic environment elsewhere in the country. We also advise on the Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) and welcome its outcomes.

You have given three options:

Option 1: Aggregate consumers' median WTP estimate for undergrounding plus an additional 2.5% for each TO to deliver non-undergrounding mitigation projects. Overall expenditure cap = £925m.

Option 2: Cover costs of all potential pipeline projects identified in the Business Plans plus an additional 2.5% for each TO to deliver non undergrounding mitigation projects. Overall expenditure cap = £725m.

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Option 3: Cover those potential pipeline projects identified in the Business Plans that have an affordable impact on energy bills and visual impacts of high importance, plus an additional 2.5% for each TO to deliver non undergrounding mitigation projects. Overall expenditure cap = £465m.

We welcome all expenditure which positively impacts on the historic environment, and given the fact we have been advising on potential pipeline projects, would prefer Options 1 or 2 to maximise these benefits. This is because Option 3 is less than the previous funding period expenditure cap and we would be disappointed, especially with inflation, if less money was made available for visual amenity projects in this new funding period.

4th Sept 2020

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