



**National
Trust**

Ingrid.samuel@nationaltrust.org.uk
Direct line: +44 (0)7919 419999

Ofgem
Canary Wharf, London

7 September 2018

Dear Ms Zhu,

Re: Consultation on Ofgem assessment of National Grid's proposal for reducing visual amenity impacts in the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The National Trust is pleased to offer a short response to the above consultation. While we are unable to comment on your assessment of the technical and cost aspects of the scheme, we do wish to support your assessment of both the benefits of the scheme and the appropriate implementation of the VIP policy.

One of the founding beliefs of the National Trust is that places matter to people. Our statutory core purpose is to promote and protect places of historic interest and natural beauty – forever and for everyone. Over the last 120 years we have continually sought to ensure that the nation's countryside, heritage and natural environment are protected for the enjoyment of all and for inheritance by future generations. As a result, the Trust has supported National Grid's Visual Impact Provision (VIP) project since its inception. We strongly commend the VIP's ambition to enhance the natural beauty of the nation's special places, our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks.

Both throughout the wider VIP programme and in connection with the Dorset scheme I can confirm that National Grid have taken an exemplary approach to active engagement and consultation with the National Trust as relevant stakeholders. It is also our confident opinion that National Grid have taken appropriate steps to implement their obligations under the VIP policy.

Turning to the benefits of the project, it is our assessment that the landscape of the Dorset AONB is of national and global significance, from the unspoilt Jurassic Coast, England's

National Trust
Heelis
Kemble Drive, Swindon
Wiltshire SN2 2NA
Tel: +44 (0)1793 817400
Fax: +44 (0)1793 817401
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

President: HRH The Prince of Wales
Chairman: Tim Parker
Director-General: Dame Helen Ghosh DCB

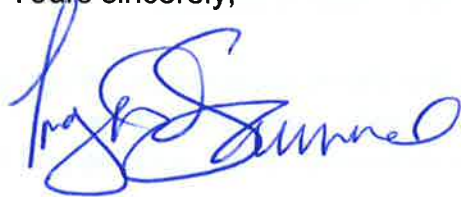
Registered office:
Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2NA
Registered charity number 205846

only natural UNESCO world heritage site, to the many Iron Age hill forts that punctuate its heathland and rolling hills. Delivered well, we do believe that National Grid's proposal to remove pylons near Martinstown and Winterbourne Abbas and replace them with underground cables would have a transformative effect on this setting. In particular, it would greatly improve views from the Hardy Monument, a local landmark and a popular heritage attraction visited by tourists from across the country, as well as from the well-used South Dorset Ridgeway trail.

The Trust recognises the tangible landscape benefits this scheme would provide, and by extension, the benefit to people who live in and visit the area. We also recognise that it is an innovative proposal. The successful completion of the project will represent the first time that existing high-voltage electricity transmission line has been removed purely to enhance the surrounding landscape.

Successful delivery of this proposal will not be without its challenges however. We are pleased to note that planning consent has been received from West Dorset District Council, and trust that National Grid will continue to work with local stakeholders to meet accompanying planning conditions and deliver an appropriate scheme.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Ingrid Samuel

Historic Environment Director

For and on behalf of

The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty

About the National Trust

The National Trust is Europe's largest conservation charity and a turnover of £592 million in the 2016/7 financial year. Established over 120 years ago, our primary purpose is to promote the preservation of special places for the benefit of the nation. To achieve this aim we manage over 250,000 hectares of countryside, 3,620 listed buildings, and 775 miles of coastline across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We own 56 villages and wholly or partly own ten World Heritage Sites and manage 8% of registered historic parks and gardens. More than 100 million visits are made every year to the properties in our care.