

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation. I am a member of the National Grid VIP Scheme Board on which I represent the NAAONB. The VIP scheme applies in reality to the 30 Protected Areas (AONBs and National Parks in England and Wales) that have high voltage National Gridlines running through them.

My views on this consultation are the following:

General

1. The VIP Scheme approved by Ofgem Regulator has been an excellent scheme in my opinion, and is a credit to all those involved.
2. The Ofgem Regulator is to be applauded together with as National Grid on delivering the aspirations of this scheme.
3. The Ofgem Regulator does infact have a specific role that could be seen as an exemplar in what regulators can do in protecting England and Wales's 'Finest Landscapes.' It should be noted that **all three regulators (Including Ofwat and Ofcom) do have a legal duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 'to have regard for the purposes of AONB Designation'**
4. The scheme has been adapted by addition of the **Landscape Enhancement Initiative(LEI)** to consider smaller projects that can mitigate National Grid Lines. Again my congratulations to the Ofgem Regulator as well as National Grid on recognising that the VIP scheme could be more effective by creating the LEI scheme to become relevant to all 30 Protected areas as well as the 4 areas that are to be undergrounded.

Recommendations

1. That the scheme should be continued in to RIIO2
2. That the level of funding be increased at least with inflation. However if National Grid feel they have the capacity to undertake a 5th scheme that the funding be increased
3. That any further scheme have a ring fenced element for LEI
4. That the Ofgem Regulator call a conference of all regulators to explore how their can be economies of scale on projects
5. That the 3 regulators call a conference to meet and discuss closer working to deliver sustainable projects that are value for money
6. That the Lead Officer/ Chief Executive Ofgem Regulator meets face to face with the National Grid VIP Board at Ofgemes Headquarters for a joint discussion on the above.

Many Thanks

Howard

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