

NORTH WEST COAST CONNECTIONS – NATIONAL GRID PROPSALS TO PROVIDE POWER LINE CONNECTIONS TO NUCLEAR NEW BUILD FACILITIES IN COPELAND – PROPOSED STRATEGIC ROUTE OPTIONS AND CHANGES TO GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS.

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WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?

The implementation of the grid connections and provision of power lines is fundamental to the development of new nuclear power stations in Copeland Borough and will therefore support the provision of new employment opportunities for Copeland communities.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?
(eg Key Decision, Policy recommendation for Full Council, at request of Council,etc.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Executive notes the 6 Strategic Route Options that are currently being investigated as possible options and the arrangements for stakeholder consultation.
2. That Executive supports the proposed changes in governance arrangements.
3. That the Executive notes the progress made with the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The National Grid's North West Coast Connections project aims to distribute power generated at the proposed new nuclear power station facilities to be constructed on a site adjoining the current Sellafield site and the associated supporting infrastructure required at Heysham, to the wider UK energy market via the provision of new and/or upgraded transmission cables.

1.2 Subject to the outcome of an assessment of route options the project could impact on local authorities across Lancashire and Cumbria, including the National Park Authority.

1.3 Joint working arrangements across the two counties, with Cumbria County Council acting as accountable body for the project will have significant resource implications for those local planning authorities through which the route might pass. Therefore the National Grid have agreed to provide adequate resources to local authorities through a formal Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).

2. PROJECT UPDATE

2.1 In July 2011 Executive received a report which noted that National Grid had already confirmed that, in principle, they were committed to providing adequate resources to Local Authorities through a formal Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The PPA has now been drawn up and is in the final draft stage. The Council has reviewed the final draft and has provided comments and suggested amendments to Cumbria County Council. The aim is to have an adopted PPA in place by end of November.

2.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Executive support for the restructuring of the project group as illustrated in appendix A. The new structure will allow Local Authority officers to deal with the processes, including the PPA, work packages and finances. The new structure will include a high level Members Reference Group to be consulted on the relevant aspects of the project of particular interest to members e.g. routing options, as outlined in this report, procurement procedures and the supply chain.

2.4 Discussions between National Grid and Cumbria and Lancashire local authorities continue regarding National Grid proposals for enhancing the grid route through Cumbria with the focus being the mechanism for consulting with the community regarding potential route options.

2.5 This document is intended to be a brief overview and is not an in depth consultation on the strategic route options. The National Grid's Strategic Options consultation will begin in the first week of January 2012 and run for 10 weeks. As part of the consultation officials from National Grid will be invited to a Member briefing session in January.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

3.1 The process is currently at stage one (refer to appendix B), strategic options. This involves choosing a broad corridor within which a route of pylons or underground cables can be located. There are currently 6 options under consideration. The 6 alternative routing options were chosen based on a technically acceptable and feasible means of connecting between two points in a power system. In choosing the out lined routes the following factors were taken into consideration:

- Environment
- Energy, resource use, waste
- Community / economy

- Safety
- Technical and financial issues

3.2 The following 6 routes have been identified see appendix B:

Option 1 (Twin South) Two overland Double – Circuits south from Sellafield

Option 2 (Twin South) Two Sub-sea Double Circuits South from Sellafield

Option 3 (Cumbria Ring) One Double-Circuit North from Sellafield and One overland Double-Circuit South from Sellafield

Option 4 (Cumbria Ring) One Double-Circuit North from Sellafield and One Sub-sea Double Circuit South from Sellafield

Option 5 (Twin North) Two Double- Circuits North from Sellafield and One Double-Circuit South from Harker

Option 6 (Twin North): Two Double-Circuits north from Sellafield, re-building the Northeast 275KV network at 400Kv.

3.3 A further option which was a hybrid of overland and subsea options has been removed as it is considered to be covered already by the options outlined above and therefore was duplicating the process.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 No strategic route option has been chosen yet. National Grid have been invited to host a workshop for members on the 25th of January. The nuclear and energy team will then collate the members' views from this workshop.

4.2 A draft consultation response will be produced as a direct outcome of the workshop, on the strategic route options. The proposed response will then be reported to the Executive in February. It will seek approval of what will be the Council's final response to the stakeholder consultation on the strategic route options, which will begin in January 2012 and run for 10 weeks.

4.3 National Grid will then review the responses from all the stakeholders on the 6 Strategic Options and prepare a short report, at the end of July, summarising the feedback and any changes to the scope which result from the consultation.

4.4 National Grid is working with the Council and other Local Authorities and stakeholders in the area to prepare their Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The SoCC sets out how the national grid proposes to carry out the consultation with the public and people living in the vicinity of the land in respect of which a Development Consent Order (DCO) would be made.

4.5 The project will rely on officer led project management arrangements to ensure effective delivery. The role for members outlined in this report is to receive information relating to progress of the Project and, through the Project Group, provide a steer on issues that may have implications for local authorities' internal decision making processes.

5. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

5.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments are: No further comment

5.2 The Section 151 Officer's comments are: There are no current financial implications for Copeland included in this report.

5.3 Other consultee comments, if any:

6. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

6.1 Copeland Borough Council input to the proposals is currently being led by the Corporate Director of People and Places with support from the planning policy and nuclear teams. Project management arrangements including the development of a project risk register will be delivered by the project team and reported to the Strategic Project Board.

7. WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS WILL ARISE FROM THIS REPORT?

7.1 The proposed Strategic Route Options are noted, a full report on the Options for consideration and comment to be reported to the Executive in Feb. All Member representations will then be co-ordinated and feed back to the National Grid by the end of the 10 week consultation period.

7.2 The proposed governance arrangements are supported and approved.

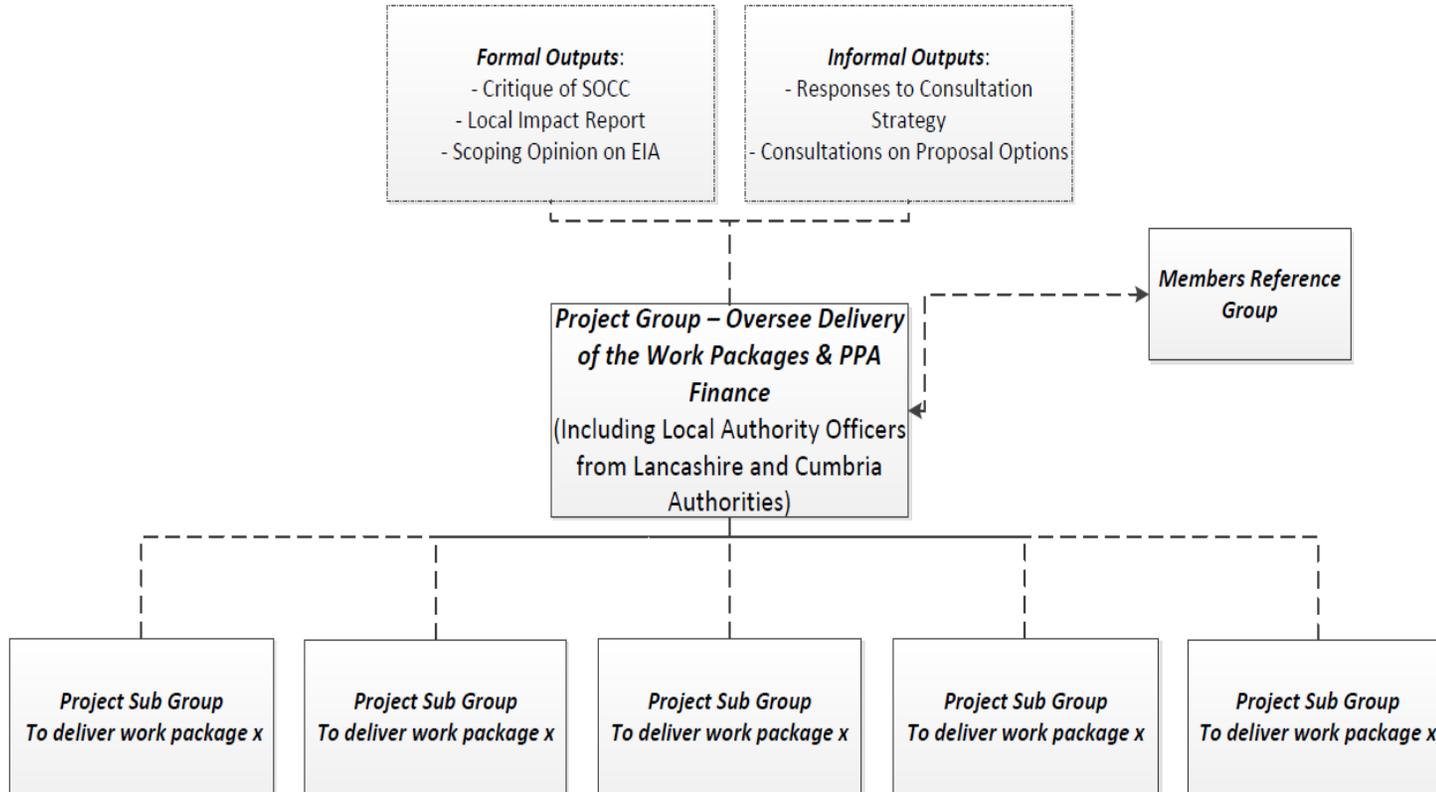
List of Appendices

Appendix A - <Major Infrastructure Project Governance Structure >

Appendix B - <Strategic Route Options North West Coast Connections (NWCC) Project>

List of Background Documents:

Appendix A – Major Infrastructure Project Governance Structure



Appendix B – Strategic Route Options North West Coast Connections (NWCC) Project

Option 1: Twin South – Over land



Options 2: Twin South – Subsea



Option 3: Cumbria Ring – Double Circuit



Option 4: Cumbria Ring- one subsea south



Option 5: Twin North – Double Circuit



Option 6: Twin North- Northeast connection

