National Grid Starts Second Phase Of £30m Project To Secure Energy Supplies

Tuesday 6 August, 2013

National Grid has started the second phase of a £30 million project to upgrading a power line across Cumbria and Lancashire.

New wires are being installed and steelwork repaired and renewed on the 345 pylons which make up the 116km long electricity transmission line which runs south from a substation at Harker, near Carlisle to a substation at Old Hutton near Kendal and then on to a point on the national grid system at Quernmore in Lancashire.

Once the project is complete, over 300 tons of steelwork will have been replaced and over 1,000km of new wires suspended on the pylons.

Work to replace the wires on one side of the pylons is now complete and engineers have just started work on the wires on the other side. The project is very challenging, given that much of the line is in countryside exposed to the elements. The line also crosses five rail lines including the West Coast Main Line and the M6 motorway in two places.

At present, a total of 200 engineers are currently working on the project and, through efficient working practices, will complete the upgrade in just one year, instead of the two which work on this scale would normally take. This will result in a saving to the company of around £10m.

This line is just a small part of the massive network of overhead lines, underground cables and substations that carry high voltage electricity across the country. The investment will keep the lines in good working order to ensure that everyone has the power they need, safely, and at the touch of a button.

The work will also allow National Grid to increase the efficiency of the line once a project to install some new equipment at the substation at Old Hutton is also complete.

The work on the line is expected to be completed by November and temporary offices and working areas around pylons removed by April next year. There will be no interruption to electricity supplies during the work.

In preparing for work on the overhead line, National Grid has liaised with local authorities, the Environment Agency and Natural England, amongst others.

William Fenton, Project Manager said: "We are delighted with the progress we are making to date on this project. By using our teams of engineers and their ground support teams more efficiently, we're on target to complete this job in just a year - quite an undertaking when you consider the length of the line and the terrain it crosses.

"We're grateful for the patience people have shown during our work - particularly the local landowners who have pylons situated on their land."

National Grid is writing to homes and liaising with landowners directly affected by its work on the lines in the area. Advance notice will be given of any road and footpath closures. A special contact number has been set up for people to ring if they have questions about the work. The number is freephone 0800 389 7235.

National Grid, which is the UK's largest utility, is also currently working on a separate project in Cumbria and Lancashire. This is called the North West Coast Connections project and it is developing plans to provide a connection into the electricity transmission system for the proposed new 3.2GW nuclear power station, Moorside, near Sellafield in West Cumbria and a number of windfarms in the Irish Sea (see Notes to Editors). The work to refurbish the overhead line is not connected with this project.

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Notes to Editors:

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In Britain, we run the gas and electricity systems that our society is built on, delivering gas and electricity across the country. In the North Eastern US, we connect more than seven million gas and electric customers to vital energy sources, essential for our modern lifestyles.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales, operating it across Great Britain
- We own and operates the high pressure gas transmission system in Britain
- Our gas distribution business delivers gas to 11 million homes and businesses
- We also own a number of related businesses including LNG importation, land remediation and metering
- National Grid manages the National Gas Emergency Service free phone line on behalf of the industry - 0800 111 999 (all calls are recorded and may be monitored).
- Our portfolio of other businesses is mainly concerned with infrastructure provision and related services where we can exploit our core skills and assets to create value. These businesses operate in areas such as Metering, Grain LNG Import, Interconnectors and Property. National Grid Carbon Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of National Grid and it undertakes Carbon Capture Storage related activities on behalf of National Grid.

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