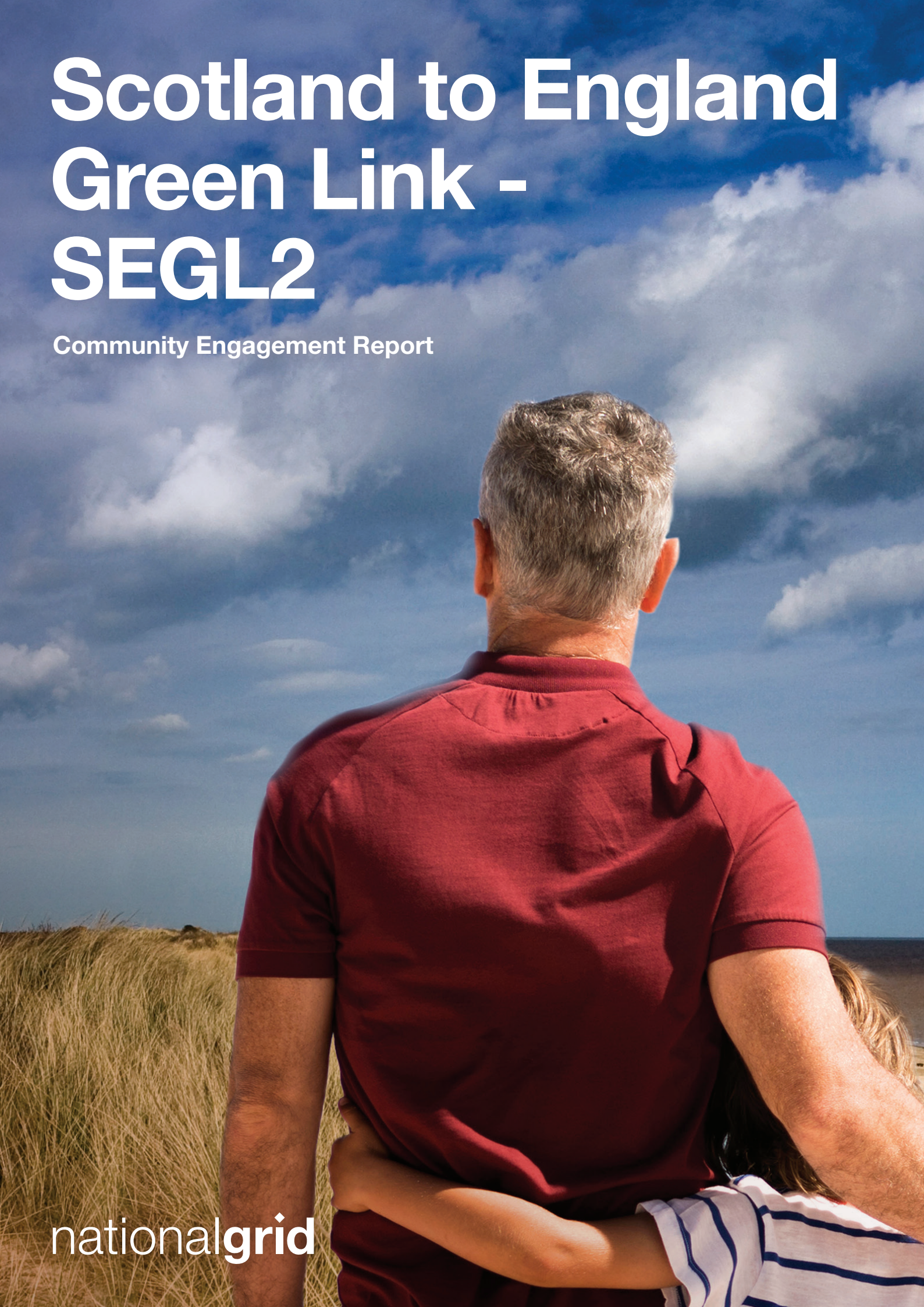


Scotland to England Green Link - SEGL2

Community Engagement Report

nationalgrid



Executive summary

This community engagement report has been developed by National Grid, following the completion of a public consultation and public information exhibition and events (PIEEs) for our proposed Scotland to England Green Link (SEGL2) project.

SEGL2 is a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) electricity superhighway from Peterhead in Aberdeenshire to Drax in North Yorkshire.

This report details the project’s engagement with local communities and stakeholders prior to the submission of outline planning applications to Selby District Council and East Riding of Yorkshire County Council.

This engagement was comprised of two main phases: a public consultation in March and April 2021 and PIEEs in February - March 2022.

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National Grid's SEGL2

The UK is a world leader in offshore wind energy and its target of becoming net-zero in all greenhouse gases by 2050 for England and Wales and 2045 for Scotland is now enshrined in law. In addition, the Government has shown a clear commitment to developing offshore wind at scale. The recent Ten Point Plan and Energy White Paper set a target of delivering 40GW of wind energy by 2030; enough to power every home in the UK.

As the country transitions away from traditional forms of fuel to heat homes, charge vehicles and power businesses, there will be a greater need for green electricity.

Network reinforcements are required to help bring Scotland's vast reserves of renewable energy to millions of homes across the rest of the UK. As such, we are proposing the construction of two new High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Links; one from Peterhead in Aberdeenshire to Drax in North Yorkshire, and another from Torness, in East Lothian, to Hawthorn Pit in County Durham.

These electricity 'superhighways', with buried cables under the North Sea, will transport renewable energy over the long distances from Scotland in an optimum way, whilst creating minimal disruption. The shorter delivery program also maximises benefits to the consumer.



A map of SEGL2's proposed route in Yorkshire
(An interactive map of the route can also be found via the SEGL2 project website – click the 'View interactive map' button on the homepage to view)

For SEGL2, the link will come ashore at Wilsthorpe, just south of Bridlington, East Yorkshire and connect to the National Grid Drax substation, located near Drax power station. After making landfall, the SEGL2 cable will run underground for 68km to a new converter station adjunct to an existing National Grid substation at Drax power station. We will also construct an underground cable between the new converter station and the substation. If approved, we intend to begin construction on SEGL2 in 2024 and complete the works in 2029.

As part of the planning application for these projects we consulted and engaged with local communities to explain what we're proposing and get their feedback, as well as sharing more detailed plans during the PIEEs. For SEGL2's public consultation, and subsequent PIEEs, we consulted with landowners, residents, and stakeholders on the two fundamental components of the project – the construction of a new converter station adjacent to Drax power station and the installation of underground cables from the landfall point at Wilsthorpe to the new converter station.

Consultation plan

We are committed to engaging with all communities in which we work and take great pride in our legacy of thorough public consultations. To ensure that our plans take account of the views of the local area and community, we delivered a comprehensive pre-application consultation to gauge local residents' and stakeholders' views on the proposed project, with feedback helping to shape the development of SEGL2.

The pre-application consultation is an ongoing process that has taken place in two phases, with the first being a public consultation that took place between Monday 29 March and Friday 23 April 2021, followed by PIEEs between Monday 21 February and Friday 4 March 2022. In between these dates, the project remained in listening mode and responded to enquiries from all interested parties.

In the public consultation, the project team presented its proposals and received comments and feedback on them. This feedback is explored in detail on pages 22 to 26.

The objective of the subsequent PIEEs was to brief residents, community groups and stakeholders on the plans, which had developed since the public consultation, ahead of the submission of the planning application, as well as answer any questions. It was not to take further feedback, although questions and comments by participants were collated (as outlined on page 21) and shared with the SEGL2 team. We ensured it was clear in the PIEEs materials to event attendees that further feedback on SEGL2 can be made via Selby District Council's and East Riding of Yorkshire County Councils' planning portals during the formal planning consultation period once the applications have been made.

In addition to the above phases, we also 'soft launched' the project at the start of 2021, when landowners on the project were approached by the project's lands team to organise surveys. This marked the first direct contact our project had with the local community. At the same time, we proactively introduced the project to the wider community and stakeholders by issuing a newsletter to landowners, issuing letters to stakeholders, opening our 0800 number and project email address, and launching the project website. This ensured that the project effectively communicated the rationale and potential impact of the project from the outset and laid the groundwork for constructive engagement during the consultation.

The project advertised the public consultation extensively and by a variety of methods, including:

- print advertising in four local newspapers (public consultation only)
- a press release which was covered by six media outlets (public consultation only)
- targeted social media advertising that reached 56,348 people during the public consultation and 9,745 people during the PIEEs
- two hardcopy newsletters that were posted to 1,248 properties in close proximity to the project
- 200 letters sent to local elected members and hard-to-reach groups informing them of the public consultation and PIEEs.



Results of the public consultation

Due to the Government restrictions that were in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public consultation was held online via a dedicated website that displayed information about the proposed scheme and encouraged people to share their views on it.

The overview of the public consultation in figures, focussing on feedback (feedback forms, email and telephone enquiries, stakeholder letters and briefings, digital consultation sessions), are below.

- **Unique page views of website:** 2,362
- **Total responses to the consultation:** 38
- **Response rate:** 1.6%
- **Support:** 6 (16% of responses)
- **Oppose:** 3 (8% of responses)
- **Neutral:** 29 (76% of responses)
- **Overall average sentiment:** slightly positive

Whilst all feedback received during this consultation was incorporated into this report, it was notable that across the course of the consultation there was considerable engagement with the website, but only 1.6% of consultees who visited the site responded to the consultation by filling out the feedback form, taking part in online Q&A sessions, briefings or engaging via email and telephone. This suggests that many consultees viewed the online public consultation materials and did not feel strongly enough about the project to leave feedback.

Results of the public information exhibition and events

Following the emergence of the Omicron variant in December 2021 and the high potential for new restrictions in the proceeding months, we took the difficult decision to pursue virtual-only PIEEs, instead of a blend of the in-person and virtual exhibitions and events that had been previously planned. The public and stakeholders were given the same amount of time to engage with the project as was planned for the non-restricted events. Provisions were made for those without access to the internet.

The overview of the PIEEs in figures are below.

- **Unique page views of website:** 886
(1,476 less than the public consultation)
- **Downloads of the PDF digital exhibition boards:** 92
- **Hours of online events:** 23
- **Public participants in online events:** 8

Overall, the average sentiment of all communications and feedback with consultees was slightly positive. Most of the responses we received from consultees, including statutory bodies, were matter of fact and neutral, comprising mainly of questions about the project. This neutral feedback, coupled with 6 responses in total (16% of responses) in favour of the proposed scheme, resulted in a slightly positive sentiment. Only 3 responses received (8% of responses) said that they did not support National Grid developing new infrastructure in their area that will enable the country to achieve Net Zero by 2050.

The standout themes encountered in the feedback from consultees relate to the specific route of the cable (and its implications for landowners) and questions about how the project will ensure that the local environment will not be damaged. Interestingly, the main bulk of the feedback is directed at the cable route and its installation, with the proposed converter station receiving little attention from consultees.

2. Engagement through the COVID-19 pandemic

Government guidance about in-person meetings and indoor events shifted several times throughout the period that the public consultation and PIEEs took place. During the public consultation there were restrictions on public gatherings, and there was uncertainty around the impact of the rapid emergence of the Omicron variant when in the planning phase of the PIEEs. Nevertheless, the project’s priority was to ensure that as many people as possible could take part in the consultation and PIEEs.

With impacts of the pandemic in mind and following the Selby District Council’s and East Riding of Yorkshire’s Statement of Community Involvement and the Government’s advice on the planning consultations during COVID-19, we decided to run a digital-first public consultation and PIEEs, albeit with in-person briefings with councillors and other stakeholders when safe and appropriate.

The project team ensured that there was support for any individuals who had any problems with being able to view information and join events online. Furthermore, the project team shared its plans for an online consultation with both Councils’ planning officers.

Selby District Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (section 11.0 Pre-application Consultation)

The Statement of Community Involvement 2020 was adopted by Selby District Council on 22 September 2020 and was implemented from 1 January 2021. This Statement of Community Involvement replaces the 2007 Statement of Community Involvement. The key points from the SCI are outlined below (Section 3.17 - Pre-application Community Involvement):

3.22 Developers need to be clear and up front with the community about the progress of the application as well as the constraints the proposal will occur.

3.23 It is expected that consultations are carried out at an early stage in the design process to allow sufficient time for public consultation comments before the submission of the application.

3.24 The type of methods to be employed by potential developers could include the following:

- press adverts
- community meetings
- exhibitions (opening hours to include out of office hours)
- information on village and parish notice boards
- delivery of explanatory leaflets.

3.25 The Council expects communities to be offered genuine choice and a real opportunity to influence proposals in these consultation exercises. The Council has been set demanding targets by the Government in determining planning applications within strict timescales. Where developers have submitted significant proposals without undertaking any consultation with the community, the onus will be on them to resolve any public objections within the timescale that the Council has to determine the application. Failure to consult may reduce the weight the Council gives to the Consultation Statement and be material to the determination of the application.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (section 11.0 Pre-application Consultation)

The Statement of Community Involvement 2020 was adopted by East Riding of Yorkshire Council in May 2020 after being reviewed following the COVID-19 pandemic. The key points from the SCI are outlined below (Section 1.10 – Effective Consultation).

To overcome these problems [to effective community engagement], the council has devised the following principles to underpin the way it undertakes community involvement in planning:

- involvement should be as early as possible in the process so that the community have the opportunity to discuss issues and options and the potential to make a difference
- the methods used to encourage participation should be relevant and appropriate to the community. It should consider methods of communication that are appropriate for any particular interest groups identified, as well as how to consult effectively with hard-to-hear groups

- encourage greater use of electronic communication and social media, which is an extremely quick and cost-effective means of contacting large numbers of people
- engagement should be designed around being easy for the community to get involved (i.e. go to them, do not expect them to come to you)
- involvement must be continuous with meaningful feedback on decisions and an opportunity to see how ideas have developed throughout the process
- the process should be clear so that people know how and when they will be able to participate and the ground rules for doing so
- potential opportunities for community involvement should be planned from the start of document preparation
- if possible, related consultations should be run side by side, to help increase awareness and to prevent consultation fatigue.



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Guidance from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government has committed to increasing the ability of local communities to influence planning decisions and future development in their areas. The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out the Government's commitment to involve all interested parties in planning. We ensured that we followed all necessary aspects of this framework, specifically:

- paragraph 16: "Plans should ... be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between planmakers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees"

- paragraph 39: "Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community."

Government advice on consultations during COVID-19

Government guidance around consultation during COVID-19 was adhered to at every stage of the consultation process. In particular, regarding the temporary changes to the publicity requirements for certain planning applications that have been introduced through the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings and Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These changes were made to support timely decision-making, and avoid delays to development as a result of the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, while maintaining public participation in the decision-making process:

- the temporary publicity requirements still require local planning authorities (and in the case of certain applications for EIA development, applicants or recipients of further information) to publicise planning applications so that those with an interest can make representations and effectively participate in the decision-making process. Consultation, transparency and community engagement are key to effective decision-making in local planning authorities
- the temporary changes give local planning authorities greater flexibility in how they publicise certain planning applications during the response to coronavirus
- however, if the authority is not able to comply with a requirement which applies to that application because it is not reasonably practicable for reasons connected to the effects of coronavirus, including restrictions on movement, the authority must take reasonable steps to inform any persons who are likely to have an interest in the application of the website where notice of the application can be found. Those steps may include use of social media and communication by electronic means and must be proportionate to the scale and impact of the development.

Letter and briefing for stakeholders

To promote the public consultation and PIEEs, we contacted local parish councils and MPs directly with a letter via email and reached out to planning officers at Selby District Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council to make them aware that we were approaching members.

For the public consultation, every MP, ward councillor and parish council whose area would be directly impacted by the project was contacted and offered a briefing on the project in advance of the consultation commencing. We also contacted any stakeholder whose area was within 5km of the converter station and the cable route introducing the project and informing them of the consultation.

Stakeholder	Number of stakeholders issued a pre-public consultation letter	Number of stakeholders issued a pre-PIEEs letter
Parish Councils	71	48
Local Councillors	21	22
MPs	4	4
Hard-to-reach groups	15	15
Total	111	89

Of the stakeholders who received a briefing offer for the public consultation, the following accepted our offer and were briefed separately:

- Middleton-on-the-Wolds Parish Council
- Long Drax Parish Council
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

Of the stakeholders who received a briefing offer for the PIEEs, the following accepted our offer and was briefed separately:

- Long Drax Parish Council.

For the PIEEs, we contacted every MP, ward councillor and parish council whose area would be directly impacted by the project and offered a briefing.

To ensure wider engagement, the project also contacted local hard-to-reach organisations informing them of the consultations and offering briefings, these included Age UK, Selby District Disability Forum and Hull Ethnic Minorities Community Centre.

Skerne and Wansford Parish Council also agreed to a briefing but unfortunately no members attended the meeting.

In addition to the above pre-consultation and pre-PIEEs letters, we also issued a letter in October 2021 that offered post-public consultation briefings with directly impacted elected members. We did this to address and concerns from any elected members that missed the public consultation. We did not receive any interest.

Media

We utilised both press releases and advertising to publicise the consultation in media. Ahead of the consultation, a press release introducing the project and announcing the public consultation was sent to local and energy trade media, with six titles covering the news, including local titles Bridlington Free Press, Bridlington Echo and the Hull Daily Mail, and reaching an estimated total readership of 72,720. The press release included an explanation of the project, the link to the public consultation website and dates and times for live chat sessions.

In addition, we also advertised the details of the consultation on Thursday 25 March in four local print newspapers: Pocklington Post, Bridlington Free Press, Goole Times and Selby Times. These outlets together have a reach of 28,431 people. This helped ensure that we reached local residents who were not on social media but who consume traditional print media.

For the PIEEs, we decided to concentrate resources on social media advertising and the mailout of a four-page hardcopy newsletter rather than advertise again via local newspapers. This decision was reached due to the high engagement with the public consultation social media advert and newsletter from a wide range of people living in communities immediately next to the project area.



Newspaper advert for the public consultation

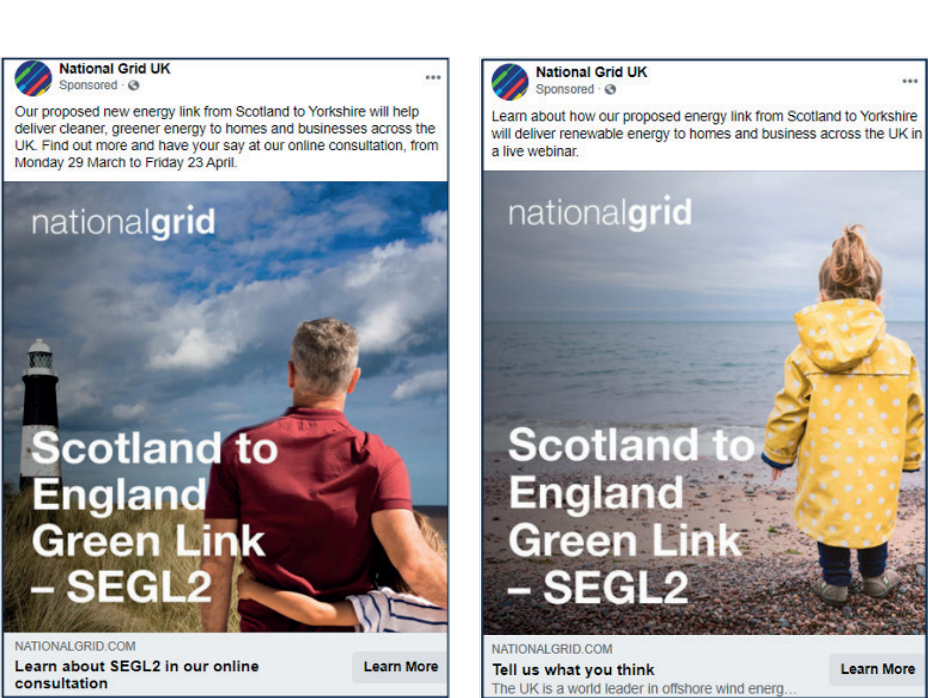
Social media advertising

In addition to traditional promotion methods, the project utilised social media to drive people to the SEGL2 public consultation and PIEEs websites. Given the high levels of its consumption by the local population, and the digital nature of our public consultation, social media was a critical tool at our disposal. This was evidenced by the fact that 30% of respondents to the feedback forms found out about the consultation via our social media advertising.

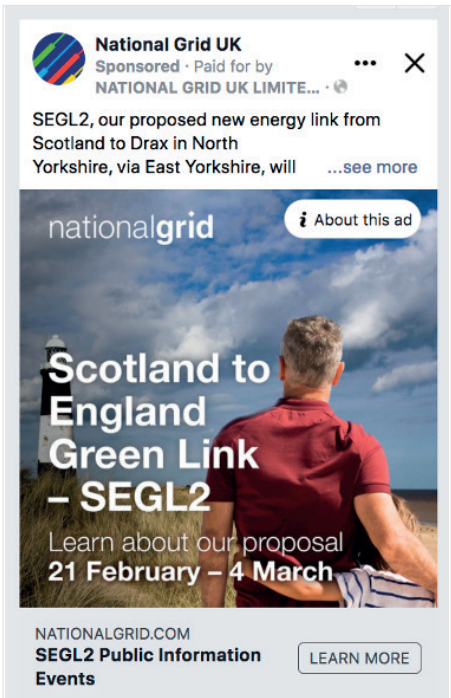
Facebook was selected as the most suitable social media platform for advertising due to its use among a wide range of demographics and its increasing use by many as virtual village community noticeboards through community groups. Advertising via Instagram was also trialled, however engagement was found to be much lower than Facebook, so funding for these adverts was diverted to Facebook.

For the public consultation, the activity on Facebook consisted of publishing six Facebook adverts from National Grid over a five-week period. In total, the Facebook adverts reached 56,348 people and gained 1,873 link clicks to the public consultation website.

For the PIEEs, the activity on Facebook consisted of publishing one geo-targeted recurring Facebook advert from the project over a three-week period (including a week in advance of PIEEs to advertise them). In total, the advert generated a reach of 9,745 and resulted in 253 click throughs to the PIEEs website. This is a decrease in engagement, however it still represents strong local interest in the PIEEs and can partially be attributed to the shorter time frame in which the PIEEs occurred (over two weeks, as opposed to five).



Examples of public consultation Facebook adverts



The PIEE Facebook advert

4. Public consultation engagement process

Through planning the public consultation, the project wanted to ensure everyone who wanted to provide feedback could do so without any difficulties. We designed the website to have a detailed, yet user-friendly feedback form, with a printable version also available, that asked a series of questions for participants to provide their views. It also had a dedicated email address and telephone number that anyone could use to contact the project team.

Although the consultation was held online, the project did not want this to exclude anyone, so ensured through its community newsletter, press releases and adverts that it made it clear that anyone who could not take part online were able to participate by getting in touch with the projects community relations team to arrange for a consultation pack to be sent to them via mail.

Through the website we also held three live chat sessions where anyone could speak directly to the project team using an easy-to-use live chat function. We also held Meet the Team video drop-in sessions, which allowed consultees to speak directly with a member of the project team. Overall, there were 23 hours of engagement sessions available to the public.

Across the different mediums, we had the following number of participants between Monday 29 March and Friday 23 April 2021:

Unique page views*	2,362
Total responses from individual consultees	38
Response breakdown	
Responses to the online feedback	10
Email enquiries received	12
Letters received	0
Meet the Team Drop-in session registrations	7 (4 of which were landowners who were subsequently passed to the lands team for direct liaison)
Drop-in session participants	1
Live chat participants	3
Telephone enquiries received	6
Requests for help as no access to internet	0

* Unique page views indicate the number of unique users that have viewed a web page and counts only one visit per unique user account.

To ensure complete accessibility for all residents, we offered support to anyone who was unable to access the digital consultation. Details were included in the newsletter, which was distributed to all landowners being liaised with for surveys by the project's lands team and those in villages most impacted by the project (1,248 properties in total).

Digital exhibition, live chat and meet the team video session

To replicate the experience of attending a physical consultation event, the project developed a digital exhibition (open for the duration of the consultation), that was complemented by the live chat function at certain times and dates. This allowed participants to review the digital exhibition boards and ask questions to the project team in a similar way to how they could at a physical event. Any questions that we were unable to answer on the chat we answered via email following the live chat sessions.



The public consultation digital exhibition

To ensure that the live chat feature was accessible to as many people as possible, we held the live sessions over three four-hour timeslots across three days at different times. In total, three consultees took part in the live chat sessions, which took place:

- **Tuesday 30 March, 4pm to 8pm**
- **Wednesday 31 March, 8am to 12pm**
- **Thursday 1 April, 1pm to 4pm**

The project also held meet the team video drop-in sessions, where consultees had the opportunity to speak to a member of the team directly. Consultees could book a half hour session in advance on select times on Tuesday 13 April, Thursday 15 April, Tuesday 20 April and Friday 23 April.

In total, seven individuals registered for a meet the team session, with one attending. Four of those consultees who registered for the sessions were landowners with specific questions for the lands team. Due to the potential sensitive and complex nature of these discussions, the community relations team arranged for the project's lands team to contact them directly.

Telephone and email engagement

Over the course of the consultation, the project received six enquiries via the project's freephone number and 12 enquiries via email.

The majority of these enquiries were neutral questions from landowners regarding their own land interests, following being approached by the project's lands agents, rather than general feedback about the project. As such, they were passed onto the project's lands team for continued engagement. The content and themes of the remainder of the telephone and email engagement is captured in this document's *feedback analysis* below.

Briefings with stakeholders

Long Drax Parish Council – Chair of the Long Drax Parish Council attended a virtual Q&A on Tuesday 20 April.

Middleton on the Wolds Parish Council –
councillors attended a briefing on Thursday 22 April.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council – the following East Riding of Yorkshire ward councillors attended a briefing on Friday 9 April:

- Councillor Lee - Driffield and Rural
- Councillor Rogers - Driffield and Rural
- Councillor Greenwood - Beverley Rural
- Councillor Gateshill - Beverley Rural
- Councillor Hammond - Wolds Weighton
- Councillor Rudd - Wolds Weighton
- Councillor Stathers - Wolds Weighton
- Councillor Aitken – Howdenshire

A copy of the presentation used at the briefing was subsequently sent to East Riding of Yorkshire Conservative Party Secretary for dissemination among members that could not attend the briefing.

Asselby Parish Council – engaged directly with the public consultation team, via email, regarding the cable routing through its parish.



5. PIIEs engagement process

The engagement process for the PIIEs mirrored that of the proceeding public consultation, although the focus of that phase was to show more detailed project plans and answer questions from communities and stakeholders. The exhibition went live on the PIIEs website on Monday 21 February, with online events taking place over a two-week period, from Monday 21 February to Friday 4 March 2022.

Those people with no access to the internet were encouraged to call the 0800 line to arrange for their questions to be answered, the mailing out of hard copies of the materials (such as the newsletter if they are outside the mailout zone) or to arrange a one-to-one call with the project team.

The website and digital exhibition remain live following the completion of the PIIEs, albeit in a reworded form to reflect the end of the two-week period. Similarly, the 0800 number and project email address remain open and those contacting the project will receive a response.

Unique page views*	886
Participant breakdown	
Live chat session participants	0 (176 people were viewing website materials during live chat sessions)
Webinar participants	8 (13 people signed up to attend)
Webinar participants raising questions (individuals and organisations)	6
One-on-one calls requested	0
Total hours of engagement sessions run by project team	23
Email enquiries received	3
Letters received	0
Telephone enquiries received	2
Requests for help as no access to internet	0
Stakeholder organisation briefings	1: (Long Drax Parish Council)

* Unique page views indicate the number of unique users that have viewed a web page and counts only one visit per unique user account.

Digital exhibition, live chat sessions, webinar and one-to-one calls

Similar to the public consultations, the project replicated the experience of attending physical events through the hosting of a digital exhibition (including an interactive detailed map), project document library, live chat sessions and a webinar on the project's dedicated website, as well as a dedicated page for landowners. Altogether, there were 23 hours of engagement sessions open to people interested in the project.

The PIIEs website saw 886 unique page views, a decrease of 1,476 people when compared with the public consultation. This decrease can be attributed to wider knowledge of the project in the local area from the public consultation period, particularly from local landowners, and the shorter window in which the PIIEs were advertised and occurred.

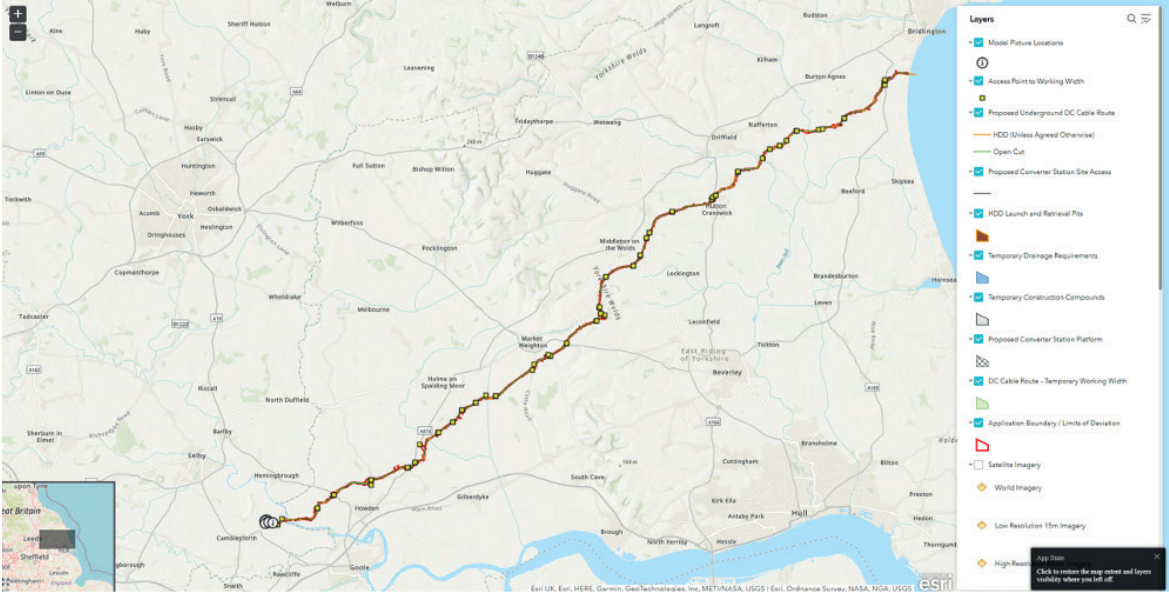
We ensured that the rationale for the public information events was communicated prominently and made it clear that any formal feedback should be directed at Selby District Council's and East Riding of Yorkshire Council's planning portals when the formal consultation stage begins following the submission of the planning application.



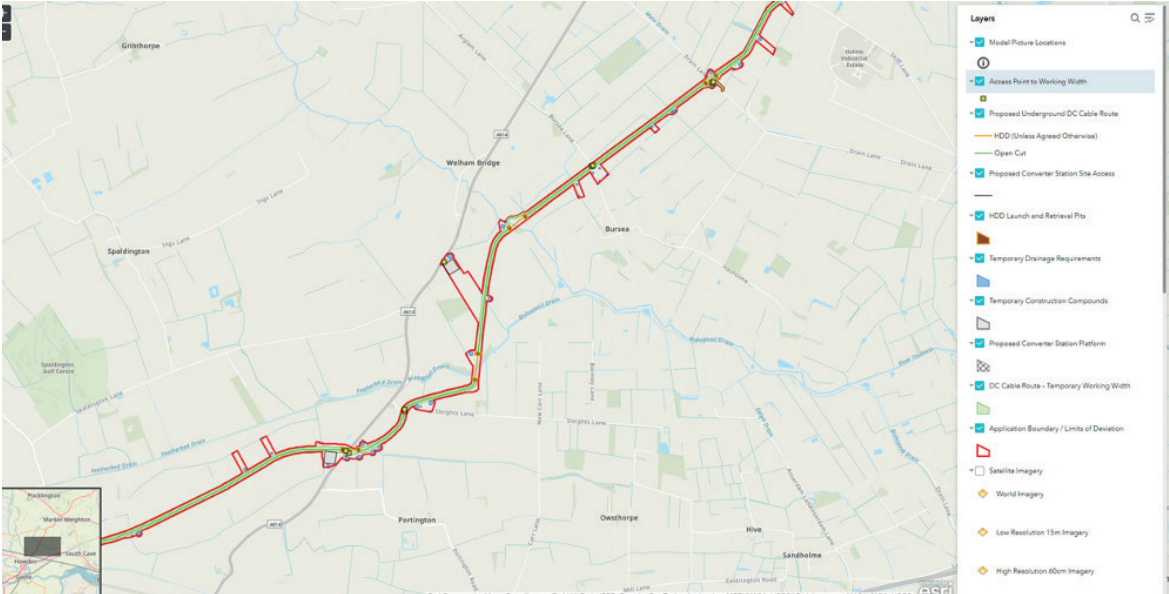
The PIIEs digital exhibition

Project documentation for download	
Name	
SEGL2 - boards Spring 2021	
Construction best practice for underground cable installation	
Construction best practice for overhead line installation	
Introducing the Scotland to England Green Link - Project background doc - Spring 2021	
SEGL2 Public information event exhibition boards - February 2022	

The PIIIE project document library



The PIEEs interactive map (zoomed out)



The PIEEs interactive map (zoomed in)

To ensure that the live chat feature was accessible to as many people as possible, the project held the live sessions over four six-hour timeslots across four days at different times, including the weekend. In total, no participants actively engaged with the project team during live chat sessions, although 176 people actively viewed the digital exhibition during sessions. The sessions took place on:

- **Tuesday 22 February 10:00 – 14:00**
- **Thursday 24 February 14:00 – 20:00**
- **Saturday 26 February 11:00 – 17:00**
- **Thursday 3 March 14:00 – 20:00**

In addition to live chat sessions, on Wednesday 2 March, 18:30 – 19:30, the project held a webinar that included a presentation on the project and addressed points that were raised in the public consultation (see

page 22 for more detail). People were required to pre-register to attend via a simple form on the website and they were able to ask the project team questions via a chat function, with us answering via video call. In total, 13 people registered to attend the SEGL2 webinar, with eight attending on the evening. Their questions and comments are captured on page 32.

In addition to the webinar and the live chat sessions, we offered one-to-one calls with a range of specialists in the project team (engineering, lands, marine consents, etc). These ad-hoc sessions catered for those people who are either unable (or unwilling) to take part in the online sessions or would have liked to speak in confidence with a member or members of the project team. These calls could have taken place over Microsoft Teams or telephone. There was no interest from the public or stakeholders.

Telephone and email engagement

Over the course of the PIEEs period, the project received three email enquiries and two phone enquiries via the project’s freephone number and project email.

The queries were mostly generic and not specific to the project’s content:

- one email enquiry was from a member of the public saying the link to our website did not work – we double checked the link to confirm it did work, sent the link to him and also offered printed materials
- one email enquiry was from a member of the public querying how the project could impact property value in Long Drax and whether compensation payments would be available. We provided a response by email
- one email query was from a member of the public who had registered for the SEGL2 webinar who had not received their link to join. After correspondence we were able to ascertain it had been sent to their spam inbox
- one phone enquiry was to pass on that our newsletter supplier’s parking had been concerning – we reached out to this individual to apologise for the inconvenience to their village
- the other phone enquiry was from an individual in Newsholme asking for additional information regarding planned construction works – we directed her to the online exhibition and provided a copy of the newsletter by email.

Briefings with stakeholders

Long Drax Parish Council – The project team presented the proposals, via Teams, to the Chair of the Parish Council on 4 March 2022

Skerne and Wansford Parish Council – The project team organised a meeting via Teams with the Parish Council on 10 March 2022, but no councillors attended.



6. Feedback from the public consultation

The objective of the public consultation phase was to present SEGL2 to communities and stakeholders and request feedback on the project. This feedback is presented below.

All consultees who submitted feedback or questions received a response from the project team either answering their question(s) or acknowledging their comment(s).

In contrast, the objective of the PIEEs was to brief residents, community groups and stakeholders, on the content of the planning applications, as well as answer any questions. However, topics of interest raised in the PIEEs are outlined in the next chapter.

Telephone and email

In summary, the project received six telephone enquiries via the project’s freephone number and 12 email enquiries over the course of the public consultation period.

The majority of these enquiries were neutral questions from landowners regarding their own land interests after being approached by the project’s land agents, rather than general feedback about the project. As such, they were passed onto the project’s lands team for continued engagement.

Feedback forms

The feedback below was collated via an easy to follow and clearly signposted survey form on the consultation website and was received over the consultation period. In the feedback form, consultees were asked a number of questions relating to their views on the project. The form consisted of a set Yes/No questions, an issues league table and sections for freeform writing. Any visitors to the consultation website encountered multiple prompts to fill out the feedback form.

Out of the 10 feedback forms completed, five were from landowners, one was from a statutory body (The National Trust for Scotland), three were from residents in the area and one from a member of the public living in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. Below are the results:

How supportive are you of National Grid developing new infrastructure in your area that will enable the country to achieve Net Zero by 2050?

Strongly support	Support	Unsure	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
1	5	1	1	2

How was your experience of the public consultation taking place online?

Excellent	Good	Unsure	Poor	Very Poor
1	3	2	3	1

The issues league table

Issues	AVERAGE Score (out of 5)	Importance
Landscape and visual impacts	4.8	Most important
Ecology	4.4	
Onshore water impacts	4.4	
Air quality	4.4	
Materials and waste	4.3	
Noise impacts	4.3	
Greenhouse gas emissions	4	
Heritage	3.8	
Transport	3.1	
Ground conditions	3.1	
Offshore water impacts	3.1	
Socioeconomics	2.7	Least important

Location of feedback form entries



Stakeholder feedback

Over the course of the public consultation, the project received several letters and emails containing feedback from statutory bodies and local elected members, as well as holding briefings. These are listed below. Responses addressing the feedback are included in a table on page 29.

Asselby Parish Council – via email - neutral

The Parish Clerk requested a more detailed route map of the route, which was provided via email.

Middleton-upon-the-Wolds Parish Council – via briefing video call – neutral

The parish council accepted the invitation for a briefing to introduce the project, which was held between the SEGL2 project team and the parish councillors. Following a presentation introducing the project, parish councillors asked questions about the impact of cable construction and whether there would be any harm posed by EMFs from the cable.

Long Drax Parish Council – via meet the team video session – neutral

The Chair of Long Drax Parish Council joined the project team for a Q&A session on Tuesday 20 April. The questions included how the project planned to cross the River Ouse, whether there was any danger posed by EMFs and what the visual and noise impact of the converter station would be.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council (Planning Officer and Ward Councillors) – via email and briefing video call – neutral

East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Planning Officer recognised the aims of the project and engaged with our consultation by facilitating a briefing to every ward councillor whose constituency may be impacted by the project. Eight councillors chose to attend the briefing on the Monday 19th April. Following a presentation by the project team, ward councillors asked questions around compensation for farmers impacted, how residents and fishermen were to be informed about the project, about the choice of DC over AC and the level of disruption at Wilsthorpe. There was also an offer by a councillor to facilitate pre-works education workshops in schools.

Selby District Council – via email - neutral

Selby District Council's Planning Officer recognised the aims of the project and engaged with our consultation by facilitating a briefing to the ward councillor whose ward may be impacted by the project. To date, the invitation has not been taken up by the councillor.



The National Trust for Scotland – via feedback form - neutral

National Trust Scotland expressed support for aims of the project but provided comments relating to the impact of the project on land and marine environment. These include:

- the Trust also notes the importance of ensuring the cable route and installation work with existing marine protections and avoid ecologically and culturally sensitive areas. The cable route should avoid passing through or too close to any Marine Protected Areas. The EIA should assess whether the route proposed will impact the species or habitats MPAs are designated to protect and if it will, mitigation should be proposed (e.g. re-routing of cables)
- where the proposed route overlaps with historic shipwreck sites or palaeolandscapes these should be protected from disturbance and all activities should be carried out according to the voluntary Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee Code of Practice for Seabed Development
- other considerations that should be covered in the EIA include if the cable will cause carbon accumulated in seafloor sediment to be released and if laying the cable will cause disturbance and harm to marine species through habitat disruption, sediment resuspension, chemical pollution, underwater noise emission, changes in electromagnetic fields, heat emission or chemical pollutions

- National Grid should adopt the Precautionary Principle to prevent environmental degradation or harm to marine species and habitats.
- with regard to the new converter stations at Drax and Peterhead, these will have considerable visual impacts on the surrounding landscape. They should be sensitively designed so they blend into the local landscapes
- we welcome the forthcoming EIA but note the only public consultation planned is this current one. There should be further public consultation on the findings of the EIA and proposed mitigation measures as this will give parties adequate opportunity to raise concerns and suggest alternatives to mitigation and ensure transparency.

The Wildlife Trusts and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – neutral

The Wildlife Trusts and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's joint response was neutral and stated that they welcomed the opportunity to discuss the project and a number of questions during a planned meeting with National Grid. The Trusts also ask for the project to consider implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and whether the project will be following a pre-application evidence plan.



Analysis of public consultation feedback

In total, the project received 2,362 unique page views to the public consultation website during the public consultation period, with the vast majority not providing feedback or raising any questions on the project. Of the 38 total responses the project did receive over the course of the consultation, only 10 were explicit feedback on the project feedback form, which was clearly signposted the digital exhibition and website. **This suggests that many more viewed the information about the proposed scheme online but did not feel strongly enough to comment on the proposed scheme.**

Those who did contact the project or provided a feedback form were most likely to be landowners or residents who believed that their land was impacted. **This also suggests that people (and stakeholders) in the local area do not feel strongly about the project unless it directly impacts their land interests.**

The proposed project also did not attract vehement opposition. The most robust feedback tended to concern land queries (many of which were due to landowner's and resident's confusion over the cable routing) and requests for reassurance that National Grid would ensure the environment would be protected.

Overall unique page views of the consultation website:	2,362
Total responses to the consultation:	38
Response rate:	1.6%
Supportive responses:	6
Supportive responses as a percentage:	16%
Opposing responses:	3
Opposing responses as a percentage:	8%

From the explicit feedback, we received, six responses were supportive of the project, versus three that opposed the proposed scheme. The rest of the feedback was widely neutral, including that from all stakeholders that provided responses via email (i.e. The Wildlife Trust) and those that accepted briefings from the project team (i.e. East Riding of Yorkshire Council ward councillors). **When all this feedback is viewed together, then we arrive a slightly positive sentiment for the project from consultees who appear to be generally accepting of the project and its rationale.**

In addition, the vast bulk of the feedback that the project received relates to the cable route, with only two consultees commenting on the proposed converter station at Drax power station. **This suggests that overall, the converter station's location next to Drax power station is not a significant issue for local residents and stakeholders.** This is reinforced by the neutral briefing the project held with the Chairman of Long Drax Parish Council, the parish council where the converter station will sit.

Primary concerns/interests of feedback

Land queries

As previously demonstrated, many respondents to the consultation were concerned with how the project, and its construction, would personally impact them and their property. We found that many of these respondents' land was not on the cable route and had therefore not been approached directly by the lands agents before learning of the consultation. Consequently, in error, they thought that the consultation was the first point in which they were told of the impact on their land. However, considering the numbers of the landowners and non-landowner approached by the project to publicise the consultation, these numbers are small.

The project was also contacted by a number of respondents that have businesses on their land and would prefer the cable not to be routed near to them. Many of these specific enquiries, the majority neutral, were addressed directly by the project's lands team.

Onshore cable routing

Many respondents stated that they wanted further detail on the project's cable route, stating that the map of the provisional cable route was not detailed enough. The feedback also indicates that some landowners and residents feel powerless to stop the project. One piece of feedback from a respondent even went as far to ask whether the hamlet of Little Kelk was to be demolished to make way for the cable.

A handful of respondents provided suggestions of how the cable route could be aligned with other projects involving cable and pipeline traversing East Yorkshire. These included following the routes of the Dogger Bank Creyke Beck offshore wind project and the proposed Zero Carbon Humber Carbon Capture and Storage project. Similarly, there were a number of questions requesting information on how the cable would cross significant watercourses, in particular the River Hull and River Ouse.

Environmental impact

The potential of the project to impact upon the environment featured prominently in the feedback, with ecology being ranked highly by feedback form respondents. It is important to note that the many of those respondents that raised specific environmental issues support the project in principle. Specific environmental concerns included:

- protecting the seabed and marine environments
- protecting the chalk streams in the headwaters of the River Hull
- protecting onshore ecology, such as hedgerows and meadows

The most notable responses regarding the environment came from The Wildlife Trust and The National Trust for Scotland, who asked for reassurance that measures would be taken to limit the impact of the project onshore and offshore. The Wildlife Trust asks for the project to consider implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and whether the project will be following a pre-application evidence plan. Similarly, the National Trust for Scotland has stated that there should be another round of public consultation on the findings of the EIA.

Visual/landscape, noise and air quality impact

These topics featured highest on the feedback form topic league table and we received a number of questions regarding the visual impact of the cable and associated disruption of construction. Concerns around these impacts comes as no surprise give the bulk of respondents were either landowners or residents living close to the cable route.

Interestingly, only two respondents (Long Drax Parish Council and The National Trust for Scotland) commented on the converter station's visual or noise impact.

Secondary concerns/interests of feedback

Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs)

A small number of respondents, including Parish Councillors from Long Drax and Middleton-upon-the-Wolds, were concerned about the health impacts of the cable's electromagnetic field.

Cost

One respondent questioned how much this could cost the taxpayer and whether it was value for money as it would not result in lower energy bills for consumers.

Impact of Scottish independence

Two respondents commented that Scottish independence is inevitable and as such questioned whether it would be better to the invest in offshore wind in English waters.

Feedback on consultation methods

The feedback that we received for the online consultation was mixed as demonstrated by the below data. From the responses, it appears that a majority of respondents had a positive/neutral experience of the public consultation taking place online, which is backed up by a majority of respondents happy with another public consultation taking place online in the future.

It seems that the main source of negative feedback was that a majority of respondents could not access all the information that they required, as evidenced by comment feedback and the series of questions in the feedback forms (of which have been replied to by the project team). However, anecdotally it appears that some respondents to the feedback form simply did not attempt to attend the live chat Q&A or meet the team sessions to have their questions answered in real time.

How was your experience of the public consultation taking place online?

Excellent	Good	Unsure	Poor	Very Poor
1	3	2	3	1

Did you find all the information you needed on the website and digital exhibition boards?

Yes	Unsure	No
3	0	7

If we were to hold this consultation again, after the Covid pandemic restrictions on events have lifted, would you be happy for the consultation to take place online?

Yes	Unsure	No
6	1	3

Positive feedback examples

- “Thank you for that - it is useful for the parish council to know as residents may ask - your help is greatly appreciated.”
- “That’s great thank you very much for the information from today’s chat!”
- “I like the way the exhibition looks.”

Constructive/negative feedback examples

- “Not easy to follow on website as letter indicated people would be there to talk too.”
- “The online consultation simply didn’t work.”

How feedback from public consultation will be incorporated

Feedback from landowners, residents, stakeholders, and elected members from the public consultation provided insight on how the project could develop the design of its proposed scheme and address consultees’ concerns on a variety of issues, as well as shaping the subsequent PIEEs.

Please note, all consultees who submitted feedback or questions received a response from the project team.

You said		
Topic	Feedback	Our response to feedback
SEGL2 proposal		
Land queries	1. Concerns about impact on land interests.	1. A detailed, interactive and easy to use map was published via the project website for the PIEEs. Landowners continued to be engaged directly by the lands team.
Onshore cable routing	1. Request for more detail in mapping so people can cross reference their property against the route. 2. Suggestions that the cable follows various existing and proposed cable/pipeline projects, such as Dogger Bank Wind Farm project and Zero Carbon Humber pipeline, or runs along the riverbeds of the Ouse and Humber.	1. A detailed, interactive and easy to use map was published via the project website for the PIEEs. 2. The project team provided the consultees with an explanation as to why Drax is the optimal location for SEGL2’s connection into the UK’s electricity transmission network.

You said		
Topic	Feedback	Our response to feedback
SEGL2 proposal		
Environmental impact	<div>1. Request from The Wildlife Trusts/Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for a SEA and a pre-application evidence plan.</div> <div>2. Request from The National Trust of Scotland that the cable route should avoid passing through or too close to any Marine Protected Areas and that the EIA should assess whether the route proposed will impact the species or habitats MPAs are designated to protect and if it will, mitigation should be proposed.</div>	<div>1. SEA is for plans and programmes. This proposed development is a single project and therefore SEA doesn't apply. Outline planning permission for the project is sought under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and not through a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008, and therefore an evidence plan is not required as part of the planning application.</div> <div>2. The project's route has been designed to avoid designated sites in English waters. In Sottish waters the project's route partly crosses the Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast Special Protection Area.</div>
Visual, noise and air quality impact	<div>1. General concerns about the appearance of the cable route and noise/air quality impact during installation and use.</div>	<div>1. The project team has designed the cable route to avoid properties and therefore reduce visual, noise, and air quality impacts as much as possible. During construction there will be measures taken to prevent and reduce noise and air quality impacts for example use of mufflers or silencers on plant or dust suppression measures. Once construction work is complete the working width will be reinstated with no long-term landscape or visual effects.</div>
EMFs	<div>1. General concerns about impact of EMFs.</div>	<div>1. Although addressed in the public consultation, this issue was included in the PIEE FAQs, complete with a dedicated National Grid EMF helpline to reassure interested consultees. Project-specific detailed information on AC and DC EMFs, including background levels, has been produced and will be submitted as part of the outline planning applications.</div>
Cost	<div>1. Questions about the project's value for money</div>	<div>1. The needs case of the projects was stated in the PIEEs.</div> <div>2. The need for the project, and its costs, are evaluated by our regulator Ofgem.</div>
Scottish independence	<div>1. Questions about the project's future if Scotland becomes independent</div>	<div>1. Responses to the consultees were provided directly via email.</div>

You said		
Topic	Feedback	Our response to feedback
Consultation methods		
Finding information easier	<div>1. Some respondents stated that they did not find everything they wanted in consultation materials.</div>	<div>1. Although there was only outline detail on the project available during the public consultation, we ensured that the subsequent PIEEs included as much detail as possible at that stage in the project. This included:</div> <div><div><div></div><div>detailed mapping that included site compounds, road crossing information and a refined route corridor</div></div><div><div></div><div>a selection of CGIs of the site, from various locations and angles</div></div><div><div></div><div>a dedicated FAQ page</div></div><div><div></div><div>a dedicated page for those with land interests, which includes an FAQ</div></div><div><div></div><div>a document library page</div></div><div><div></div><div>23 hours of potential engagement with the project team over four live chat sessions and a webinar</div></div><div><div></div><div>the offer of one-to-one calls with members of the project team.</div></div></div>



7. Topics of interest from PIEEs

The objective of the PIEEs was to brief residents, community groups, and stakeholders, on the content of the planning applications, as well as answer any questions, rather than accept feedback on the proposals.

Over the course of the PIEEs, we received questions (rather than comments) on the project from eight members of the public (discounting three non-project related questions) and Long Drax Parish Council. These topics of interest were shared with the wider project team to aid the further development of the project, where relevant. Everyone who asked a question received a response from the project team.

The topics are outlined below by theme.

Compensation for disruption – questions on:

- whether residents’ property value was going to be directly impacted by the project and whether National Grid would pay compensation for inconvenience to residents?

Construction impacts on local residents/landowners – questions on:

- what are the locations of temporary construction compounds?
- interest in horizontal directly drilling (HDD) as a method of crossing obstacles on the cable route. Specific questions on:
 - the accuracy of the technique
 - the distance it can cover
 - the depth of the drilling
- whether HDD would be a more appropriate way to cross Main Street (between Drax and Long Drax) than the proposed open cut method, given that it is a single-track road and is on a bus route?
- interest in cable laying construction. Specific questions on:
 - the timetable for cable laying
 - what locations work will start at
 - how work commencement will be communicated to landowners
 - the duration of operation of construction compounds.
- what the location of the cable route haulage road would be in relation to a landowner’s land interests
- what is the width of the construction corridor for the cable route?
- is National Grid going to purchase the land in which the cable route travels?
- are any further SEGL links planned?

Environmental – questions on:

- what are the plans for hedgerow removal and reinstatement?
- how many years bird survey data was obtained for environmental surveys?
- does the project have a biodiversity net gain strategy?

Drainage – questions on:

- how does the project propose to cross main rivers and dykes?
- what would the project do if it encountered non-mapped drains?
- is land drainage is being checked before works commence?
- will drains be fully replaced on completion of works and their performance monitored for a period post-construction?
- is the cable burial as deep as it is on chalk as it is on Holderness clay?
- what would happen if the project intercepted a sand stringer that has no structural integrity and carries perched groundwater?
- what is the terminal emission of the cable in the context of ground drying and crop performance?

Project design – questions on:

- will the cable lie on the bottom of the river Ouse or travel under it?
- how many cables are being installed and in how many trenches?
- does the project have to terminate at a power station, or can converter station be placed next to a new substation?

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) – questions on:

- how does the project propose to cross PRoWs during installation and operation?
- whether the non-defied footpaths west of the river Ouse has been considered in the project’s plans?

8. Conclusion

If approved, National Grid’s SEGL2, along with its sister project, SEGL1, will have a transformative impact on the UK’s energy supply and will help the country meet its ambitious net zero carbon target. The proposed project that we consulted on comprised of an introduction to the project and relatively detailed overview. By consulting online, via a dedicated website, the project also overcame the challenges associated with COVID-19 restrictions on physical meetings.

The main objective of this consultation was to engage with landowners, residents and stakeholders along the 68km of the proposed cable route and around the location of the converter station at Drax, ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to take part. We wanted consultees to learn about the proposed scheme at an early stage, understand their views and concerns, and then collate their feedback. This is why the project utilised several communication methods to reach as many people as reasonably possible, from targeted social media to a newsletter sent to landowners and people in settlements closest to the project. For those unable or unwilling to use our website, we had a freephone number and email address that came direct to the public consultation team. The project also approached 111 stakeholders directly to introduce the project and inform them of the consultation.

Our consultation website saw 2,362 unique page views, representing a strong interest in the project from local people. Although we received a range of mostly neutral queries from landowners, residents and stakeholders, this was a small fraction of the consultees that reviewed our plans via our consultation website. This, coupled with the nature of the feedback, leads the project to the conclusion that a significant number of consultees did not feel strongly about SEGL2 and received adequate information through the consultation materials. Moreover, when analysing the sentiment of all responses and engagement over the course of the consultation we arrive at a slightly positive sentiment.

The project’s PIEEs, which came ten months after the public consultation, complemented the public consultation by providing local communities and stakeholders with a host of easily available detailed information on the project, and its likely impact on them. As demonstrated in the How feedback from public consultation will be incorporated section (page 29), the project did as much as possible to explore and address people’s feedback on the project.

The PIEEs website saw 886 unique page views, less than the public consultation, but the figure is still indicative of strong local interest. Lands queries were the one of the biggest drivers of engagement from people during the public consultation, so the drop in engagement at the PIEEs can be explained by local landowners having their interest addressed through direct engagement from the project’s lands team. Further lands queries will have been addressed through people viewing the detailed interactive map provided during the PIEEs.

The fact that the project team received no questions via the live chats and minimal queries through other channels, and no objections, reinforces our conclusion that a significant number of consultees did not feel strongly about SEGL2 and received adequate information through the wealth of materials made available by the project.

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