**National Grid Landscape Enhancement Initiative**

**Call for Projects in the vicinity of pylon line ZF2 (Upper Coberley to Alderton)**

**Supporting Information**

Also see the initiative’s website <http://lei.nationalgrid.com/>

***What is the Landscape Enhancement Initiative for?***

The overall objective of the scheme is to reduce the landscape and visual impact of National Grid’s existing electricity infrastructure and enhance the quality of the affected designated landscapes. Where the visual impacts of the electricity transmission line cannot be directly screened or otherwise mitigated it may be possible to shift emphasis away from the transmission line by enhancing the landscape in other ways.

**National Guidance**

***What can be funded?***

There is no strict limit on the type of project, the key being a strong fit with the selection criteria. To give an idea of the sort of things that can be funded the following projects have been identified as eligible.

Localised tree planting and/or woodland creation with the aim to:

* Screen or filter specific views of pylons or sections of 400 kV;
* Re-focus or channel views affected by 400 kV;
* Where appropriate increase tree cover to filter views and/ or enhance general visual amenity of areas affected by 400 kV OHL;
* Enhance the quality, condition and/ or special qualities of the landscape.

Management, re-planting and/or planting of new hedgerows with the aim to:

* Enhance the quality/ condition of the landscape;
* Screen or filter specific views of pylons or sections of 400 kV OHL;
* Restore characteristic landscape features where appropriate, e.g. reinstatement of historic field boundaries.

Changes to trails, footpaths, cycleways and riding routes that might include

* Localised diversions which may move people away from 400 kV OHL infrastructure and/ or re-focus people’s views away from the OHL;
* New trails which may offer alternative routes for walkers, cyclists or horse riders with the aim to re-focus views away from 400 kV OHL infrastructure and/ or allow people to appreciate the landscape with fewer views of the OHL.

Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit biodiversity

* Landscape works which enhance the landscape and also biodiversity. Such enhancements may include habitat creation; in particular where such habitats are considered to contribute towards the special qualities of the AONB.

Projects that enhance the special qualities of landscape and may also benefit cultural heritage

* Landscape works which enhance the landscape and also the setting of cultural heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments which may be affected by 400 kV OHL infrastructure.

***Selection Criteria***

Successful schemes will have a focus on implementing the most effective and value for money solutions to reduce the landscape and visual impacts of National Grid’s existing electricity infrastructure.

The primary criteria

* How effective is the project likely to be in reducing the impact of existing electricity transmission infrastructure on publically accessible viewpoints and the general visual resource experienced by local communities and/or by visitors to the area?
* How effective is the project likely to be in enhancing the landscape in the affected area (not related to specific groups of people or viewpoints) in ways that may reduce or compensate for the impact of relevant electricity transmission infrastructure?
* Is the project in keeping with the character of the landscape? Does it help to foster regional and local landscape diversity and distinctiveness (informed by Natural England’s national Character Area profiles, and any local landscape character assessments that may be available)?
* Does the project support objectives set out in the AONB or National Park management plan for the area? <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/planning/cotswolds-aonb-management-plan/>

There are further environmental, social and economic, and practical criteria. These are listed in Appendix A.

**Local Guidance**

***Project Area and Landscape Character Assessment.***

The Board has prepared a map showing the route of the power line and the area within 3 Km of it along with the Cotswold’s landscape character types, Appendix B.

The most appropriated landscape strategies and guidelines for these landscape types have been summarised in Appendix C. This is not a complete list. The strategies and guidelines most likely to trigger ideas for appropriate projects within each landscape character type have been selected.

The full Cotswolds Landscape Character assessment can be downloaded here;

<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-character-assessment/>

The complete Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for each landscape character type can be downloaded here;

<https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-strategy-guidelines/>

The guidance states that there is no fixed limit on the distance of eligible projects but as a guide, most visual impact occurs within 3km. ZF2 falls into the highest impact category so projects outside of the 3km area where the line can be seen as prominent may also be considered. Projects may include work outside the boundary of the AONB provided it can be clearly demonstrated that the benefits are mainly inside the area, as a result of improvements to landscape quality and/or people’s visual amenity. More detailed guidance and the line’s visual impact assessment are included in Appendix D.

**Appendix A**

***Further Selection Criteria (in addition to the primary criteria listed above)***

<http://lei.nationalgrid.com/selection-criteria/>

**Other environmental criteria**

* What other environmental benefits will the project bring through e.g. protecting or enhancing biodiversity and/or protecting or enhancing historic features?
* Has the project been designed to avoid adverse effects on environmental features such as wildlife sites and historic features?
(Applicants are expected to demonstrate that they have consulted the appropriate environmental and historic environment records and, where necessary, relevant advisors.)
* Does the project give rise to other inadvertent environmental impacts, for example through pollution or ground disturbance while works are carried out?
* Does the project require planning permission, protected species licencing, or other consent?
* This can be checked with your local AONB Partnerships or National Park Authority representative.

**Social and economic criteria**

* Does the project contribute to improving public access and enjoyment of the area?
* Does the project demonstrate a partnership approach and/or community involvement in its development, design and/or implementation?
* Does the project contribute to sustainable social and economic development in the area, for example through use of local suppliers of products, services and materials?
* Does the project contribute to education and development in the area including vocational and practical training that has the potential to improve the local skills base?

 **Practical project criteria**

* Does the project have a clear and realistic set of objectives which will allow outcomes to be monitored and evaluated?
* Are the arrangements for providing match funding appropriate and deliverable? (Note: we will only fund up to 75 percent of project costs, for details of how to raise the other 25 percent click here for our [Guidance on Match Funding](http://lei.nationalgrid.com/media/1105/lei-guidance-on-match-funding.pdf))
* Are the proposed arrangements for delivering the project appropriate and robust and likely to lead to successful outcomes?
* Are there realistic proposals for three year maintenance and for ongoing management to ensure that benefits are fully realised?
* Are measures in place to ensure appropriate levels of monitoring and evaluation of outcomes?
* Does the project include measures to publicise it (alongside other VIP projects, if appropriate), and to ensure that wider learning for other areas can take place?

Projects are not expected to meet every one of the above criteria, but your chances of being funded are likely to be higher if more of the criteria are met.

**Appendix B**



**Appendix C**

***Landscape Character Areas affected with selected landscape strategies and Guidelines.***

1. Escarpment Outliers

1b. Langley Hill

1c. Oxenton and Dixton Hills

1d. Dumbleton and Alderton Hills

* Stabilise historic buildings and undertake localised scrub and woodland clearance to enhance their landscape setting and increase the contribution they make to landscape character.
* Conserve the open, dramatic and often remote character of the Outliers and views to, from and between the Outliers and nearby Outliers and Escarpment.
* Encourage the mitigation of existing large agricultural buildings e.g by limited tree planting.
* Conserve areas of permanent pasture.
* Conserve field boundary and in-field trees and seek opportunities to plant replacements.
* Protect and retain ancient/veteran trees.
* Identify and protect existing traditional orchards and new potential sites for traditional orchards.
* Conserve and enhance historic parks and gardens, including their setting.
* Encourage the retention and maintenance of dry stone walls.
* Encourage traditional management regimes to limit scrub encroachment on areas of semi natural grassland. Re-introduction of grazing on semi-natural grasslands/improvement of existing grazing regimes.
* Introduce/reinstate rotational scrub clearance to maintain a varied scrub structure.
* Conserve Hedgerows and hedgerow trees and promote hedgerow planting to infill gappy hedges and replace post and wire fencing.
* Retain historic and distinctive field patterns on hillsides.
* Encourage traditional management methods such as hedgelaying and where maintained by machine ensure best practice cutting regimes.
* Priority should be given to species rich hedges, hedges that form part of ancient boundary patterns and areas where hedgerow patterns are a highly visible feature and contribute to local landscape character.
* Ensure new hedges reflect the surrounding traditional field boundary patterns and inherent species mix in that locality.
* Identify key views from roads.
* Manage/remove verge scrub and trees, particularly where views can be restored or where there are benefits for biodiversity.
* Reintroduce appropriate verge management and mowing.
* Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features.
* Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow.
* Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity.
* Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks and dry stone walls.
* Avoid the planting of new hedgerows or the development of volunteer hedgerows adjacent to dry stone walls.
* Ensure new woodland does not limit or obscure views from the outliers.
* Extend and/or link existing woodland in preference to creating new ‘standalone’ blocks.
* New woodland should reflect the irregular form, relationship with landform and interlocking pattern with field boundaries.
* Discourage conifer planting (unless as a nurse) and encourage the use of native broadleaves or species that reflect local broadleaved woodland.
* Encourage the replacement of conifers with broadleaves particularly on PAWS.
* Ensure woodland creation does not result in the loss of permanent pasture or unimproved grassland and does not impact on areas of archaeological or geological interest.
* For shelterbelts and plantations associated with designed landscapes, select species characteristic of historic designed landscape in the area.
* Have regard to the cumulative impact of woodland creation and tree planting on the character of individual outlier.
* Conserve and enhance areas of existing woodland through active management including replanting or natural regeneration.
* Conserve woodlands along gullies and streams.
* Felling coupes should be designed to take account of their visual impact.
* Seek opportunities to install ‘woody barriers’ in streams for flood management.

2. Escarpment

2d. Cooper’s Hill to Winchcombe

* Identify key viewpoints to and from the escarpment.
* Create new woodlands that link to existing woodlands on lower escarpment slopes to counteract the impact of intrusive or degraded urban edges.
* Stabilise historic buildings and undertake localised scrub and woodland clearance to enhance their landscape setting and increase the contribution they make to landscape character.
* Historic field boundaries, such as hedges, walls and fences should be maintained or extended, and new boundaries should match the local vernacular wherever possible.
* Conserve areas of permanent pasture.
* Protect and retain ancient/veteran trees.
* Promote the conservation and restoration of hedgerows. Those marking ancient boundaries should be regarded as a priority.
* Identify historical sites of orchards and promote their restoration.
* Promote the appropriate management of existing traditional orchards and the planting of locally distinctive varieties.
* Encourage traditional management regimes to limit scrub encroachment on areas of semi natural grassland.
* Re-introduction of grazing on semi-natural grasslands/improvement of existing grazing regimes.
* Retain and manage Escarpment watercourses in their naturalistic form.
* Consider Rural Sustainable Drainage interventions such as in-stream woody barriers to slow peak water flow particularly within woodland.
* Identify key views from roads.
* Manage/remove verge scrub and trees, particularly where views can be restored or where there are benefits for biodiversity.
* Reintroduce appropriate verge management and mowing.
* Reinstate areas of degraded landscape.
* Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features.
* Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow.
* Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity by working with landowners to prepare site management plans and if necessary limit access.
* Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks and dry stone walls.
* Avoid the planting of new hedgerows or the development of volunteer hedgerows adjacent to dry stone walls.
* Extend and link existing woodland in preference to creating new ‘standalone’ blocks.
* Ensure that new woodland planting does not limit or obscure views from and along the escarpment.
* Ensure new woodlands respond to the scale and form of existing escarpment woodlands.
* Select species characteristic of the ancient semi-natural woodland on the Escarpment.
* Ensure woodland creation does not result in the loss of permanent pasture or unimproved grassland.
* Ensure the grassland corridor along the escarpment remains intact.
* Ensure new woodland maximises its open space with grassland to replicate and expand the woodland/grassland mosaic in LCTs 2C and 2D.
* Discourage the planting of conifers and encourage the use of native broadleaves especially when extending or linking the beech woodlands.
* Encourage the replacement of conifer with native species, particularly on PAWS.
* For shelterbelts and plantations associated with designed landscapes, select species characteristic of historic designed landscape in the area.
* Conserve and enhance areas of existing woodland, with priority given to ancient woodlands.
* Retain areas of grassland within woodlands to conserve and enhance the important mosaic of woodland and grassland (LCTs 2C and 2D).
* Retain the irregular form of woodland and its relationship to landform and interlocking patterns with hedgerows.
* Felling coupes should be designed to take account of their visual impact.
* Conserve woodlands along gullies and streams.
* Seek opportunities to install ‘woody barriers’ in streams for flood management.
* Establish a programme to plant replacement trees in the landscape outside of woodlands e.g. hedgerow trees, parkland and wood pasture.

7. High Wold

7c. Cotswolds High Wold Plateau

* Stabilise historic buildings and undertake localised scrub and woodland clearance to enhance their landscape setting and increase the contribution they make to landscape character.
* Conserve areas of permanent pasture.
* Encourage the protection of traditional field patterns.
* Retain and restore dry stone walls particularly adjacent to roads and public rights of way and in the vicinity of settlements.
* Conserve and enhance historic parks and gardens, including their setting.
* Restore lost elements of historic parks and gardens to restore the integrity of the designed landscape as a whole.
* Encourage the retention and maintenance of dry stone walls.
* Where possible use stone that reflects the colour, thickness etc of local stone walls.
* Retain and conserve areas of pasture and common land.
* Encourage traditional management regimes to control scrub encroachment on areas of common land.
* Re-introduction of grazing on semi-natural grasslands/improvement of existing grazing regimes.
* Identify key views from roads.
* Manage/remove verge scrub and trees, particularly where views can be restored or where there are benefits for biodiversity.
* Reintroduce appropriate verge management and mowing.
* Restore the wider setting of key monuments to ensure that they do not read as islands amidst a sea of arable farming.
* Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features.
* Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow.
* Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity by working with landowners to prepare site management plans and if necessary limit access.
* Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks and dry stone walls.
* Avoid planting new hedgerows or the development of volunteer hedges adjacent to dry stone walls.
* Retain the expansive, open character of the High Wold.
* Extend or link existing woodland in preference to new ‘stand-alone’ plantations.
* Have regard to the cumulative impact of woodland creation and tree planting on the open character of the High Wold.
* Select species characteristic of ancient semi-natural woodland in the area.
* Promote the felling of inappropriate coniferous plantations and replanting of farm woodlands and shelterbelts on enclosure age woodland footprints using suitable species.
* Ensure that new woodland planting does not limit or obscure views to and from and across the High Wold.
* Ensure new woodlands respond to the scale and form of existing High Wold woodlands;
* Locate new woodland and copses in historically characteristic topographical locations including their relationship to farmsteads and settlements.
* For shelterbelts and plantations associated with designed landscapes, select species characteristic of historic designed landscape planting in the area.
* Ensure woodland creation does not result in the loss of permanent pasture or unimproved grassland.
* Discourage conifer planting (unless a nurse) and encourage the use of native broadleaves or species that reflect local broadleaved woodland.
* Encourage the replacement of conifer with native species, particularly on PAWS.
* Encourage opportunities to manage and re-plant enclosure age tree belts using traditional species.
* Establish a programme to plant replacement trees in the landscape outside of woodlands eg parkland.

8. High Wold Valley

 8c. Upper Churn Valley

 8d. Upper Coln Valley

* Conserve and restore traditional dry stone wall boundary features within settlements and on valley slopes bordering settlements.
* Retain and restore dry stone walls particularly adjacent to roads and in the vicinity of settlements.
* Where possible use stone that reflects the local style of dry stone wall including colour and thickness.
* Prevent the formation of volunteer hedges.
* Encourage small-scale mixed farming and encourage woodland and boundary management.
* Conserve herb-rich meadows and areas of permanent pasture.
* Conserve hedgerow and in-field trees and seek opportunities to plant replacements.
* Protect and retain ancient/veteran trees.
* Conserve and enhance historic parks and gardens, including their setting.
* Restore lost elements of historic parks and gardens to restore the integrity of the designed landscape as a whole.
* Conserve areas of open pasture and common.
* Consider traditional management regimes to limit scrub encroachment on areas of semi natural grassland.
* Re-introduction of grazing on semi-natural grasslands/improvement of existing grazing regimes.
* Identify key views from roads.
* Manage/remove verge scrub and trees.
* Reintroduce appropriate verge management and mowing.
* Retain and manage watercourses in their naturalistic form. Seek opportunities to restore natural meanders etc, removing engineered channels, culverts etc to restore a functioning watercourse and floodplain.
* Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features.
* Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow.
* Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity by working with landowners to prepare site management plans and if necessary limit access.
* Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks and dry stone walls.
* Avoid planting new hedgerows or the development of volunteer hedges adjacent to dry stone walls.
* Conserve views, particularly along and across the valleys.
* Extend and link existing woodland.
* Plant new woodland or allow natural woodland regeneration on valley sides and surrounding new development, but not on areas of permanent pasture or unimproved grasslands.
* Conserve hedgerow and in-field trees and seek opportunities to plant replacements.
* Select species characteristic of ancient semi-natural woodland in the area.
* Identify key viewpoints.
* Locate new woodland and copses in historically characteristic topographical locations including their relationship to farmsteads and settlements.
* For shelterbelts and plantations associated with designed landscapes, select species characteristic of historic designed landscape planting in the area.
* Conserve and manage ancient semi-natural woodlands. Initiate schemes for the phased removal of invasive non-native species.
* Re-establish traditional woodland management/woodland products.
* Restore PAWS.
* Conserve grassland habitats found in close proximity to areas of broadleaved woodland.
* Establish a programme to plant replacement trees in the landscape outside of woodlands e.g. parkland.

18. Settled Unwooded Vale

 18a. Vale of Gloucester Fringe

* Stabilise historic buildings and undertake localised scrub and overgrowth clearance to enhance their landscape setting and increase the contribution they make to landscape character.
* Retain existing hedgerow trees and seek opportunities to plant or tag new hedgerow trees.
* Encourage cycling on safe routes.
* Promote road verge protection and management.
* Retain and conserve areas of permanent pasture and semi-natural vegetation.
* Protect remnant areas of species rich grassland.
* Conserve and enhance riparian habitats.
* Encourage the protection of traditional field patterns and encourage hedgerow and dry stone wall restoration.
* Retain and restore hedges particularly adjacent to roads and in the vicinity of settlements and farmsteads using traditional methods such as hedge laying where possible.
* Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features.
* Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow.
* Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity by working with landowners to prepare site management plans and if necessary limit access.
* Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks.
* Woodland creation is not appropriate in this landscape type to retain the open un-wooded character. The exception is tree planting in association with new development.
* Conserve, enhance and replant existing copses using native broadleaves or species that reflect local broadleaved woodland.
* Conserve and enhance existing traditional orchards wherever possible.
* Create new traditional orchards. Priority should be given to re-establishment of former orchards and the use of traditional local fruit varieties.

19. Unwooded Vale

 19d. Vale of Evesham Fringe

* Retain hedgerow tress and seek opportunities to plant or tag new hedgerow trees
* Conserve floodplain habitats.
* Seek opportunities to conserve and enhance roadside boundaries and habitats and secure their long-term management.
* Retain and conserve area of permanent pasture and semi-natural vegetation.
* Promote management of ditches and seek opportunities to restore ponds.
* Encourage low intensity grazing along riverside meadows.
* Protect remnant areas of ancient woodland and ancient/veteran trees.
* Conserve and enhance riparian habitats and riverside trees such as pollarded willows.
* Encourage the protection of traditional field patterns and encourage hedgerow and dry stone wall restoration.
* Retain and restore hedges particularly adjacent to roads and in the vicinity of settlements and farmsteads.
* Promote hedgerow restoration giving priority to those contributing to historic field patterns, species rich hedgerows and those closest to settlements, roads and footpaths.
* Conserve existing species rich meadows and encourage traditional farming techniques.
* Conserve and enhance riparian habitats and river/ streamside trees such as willow.
* Conserve and enhance historic parks and gardens, including their setting.
* Restore lost elements of historic parks and gardens to restore the integrity of the designed landscape as a whole.
* Encourage the retention and maintenance of hedges, using traditional methods such as hedge laying where possible.
* Identify key views from roads.
* Manage/remove verge scrub and trees.
* Reintroduce appropriate verge management and mowing.
* Retain and manage watercourses in their naturalistic form. Seek opportunities to restore natural meanders etc, removing engineered channels, culverts etc to restore a functioning watercourse and floodplain.
* Ensure tree planting does not take place on archaeological features.
* Control scrub and manage existing trees on archaeological features to minimise damage for example by root damage or wind-blow.
* Minimise or prevent damage to the historic environment by recreational activity by working with landowners to prepare site management plans and if necessary limit access.
* Repair badly eroded features such as earthworks.
* Woodland creation is not appropriate in this landscape type to retain the open un-wooded character. The exception is tree planting in association with new development.
* Conserve, enhance and replant existing copses using native broadleaves or species that reflect local broadleaved woodland.
* Conserve and enhance existing traditional orchards wherever possible.
* Create new orchards. Priority should be given to re-establishment of former orchards and the use of traditional local fruit varieties.

**Appendix D**

***Statement on project area and visual impact assessment***

**National Grid Annex to Visual Impact Provision Policy**

There is no fixed limit on the distance of eligible projects from the pylon line, but applicants will need to describe the existing nature of the landscape and visual impact which justifies the investment. In general, landscape and visual impacts decline with distance and the most important impacts usually occur within 3 km of the line. The information from the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (published separately) on the extent of theoretical visibility of the lines (combined with field checking) should be used as a starting point to inform the development of projects.

**National Grid Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of ZF2** (National Grid October 2014)

5.29 ZF.2 is judged to have combined landscape and visual impacts of high importance overall, while two of the subsections It has landscape impacts of high importance. The large scale landscape has few overt human influences, is of high quality and contains many features that are representative of the special qualities of the AONB. Expansive views across sparsely settled farmland and the distinctive skylines of the escarpments give the area a high scenic quality. The pylon line is a prominent feature which alters the rural qualities and tranquil nature of the landscape.

5.30 In terms of visual impacts, although the scale of impact of ZF.2 varies, pylons are clearly visible from many locations. This subsection is therefore judged to have visual impacts that are of a high level of importance. The nearby town of Winchcombe and some small dispersed settlements have views of the pylon line, but the wide geographical spread of these impacts and the numbers of people affected means that overall the importance of visual impacts on communities is considered to be moderate. Local public rights of way are mainly concentrated around the scarp slopes with fewer footpaths on the high ground. Although in places pylons are very visible, overall the importance of impacts on these receptors is also considered to be moderate. The Cotswolds Way National Trail runs along the top of the scarp and there are also a number of regional trails in the area. High importance impacts are recorded for these recreational receptors. There are also a number of visitor locations within this subsection including Sudeley Castle and other heritage sites, panoramic viewpoints and a number of car parks. The presence of these encourages people to access the area and visitors over a wide area are affected by views of pylons. High importance visual impacts are recorded for these receptor groups. 5