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National Grid Mid W Connection

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8 April 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

Mid Wales Connection Project Consultation

I am writing in response to this current public consultation. We have chosen to write in this letter rather than using the Feedback Form, as there are very few of the questions we wish to address. Also, our views would not be well represented by the form which asks about preferred routes from limited options, but does not ask about an overall preferred or least preferable route.

The AONB Partnership's position is simple and clear. Of the ten route options identified, only one, Purple South, would have any significant impact on the Shropshire Hills AONB. Though this route lies outside the AONB boundary, its proximity means that the impact within the AONB would be highly significant. This north-western part of the AONB is a sensitive receptor in terms of visual impact, including the settlements around Hope, and well used visitor locations including Stapeley Hill and the Stiperstones National Nature Reserve. Power lines through the Rea Valley just outside the boundary would have a significant impact on the landscape character of this fringe of the AONB. **The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership therefore objects to this route option, and would contend that with nine other options avoiding harm to a nationally important landscape, it would be quite wrong to use this route.** Since the other route options lie outside our area of expertise and knowledge, we do not express a view as to which alternative route, or indeed which of the substation sites, should be used.

Section 85 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 requires public bodies to have regard to the purposes of AONB designation in carrying out their functions.

Shropshire Council's approved Policy 36 of the statutory Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2009-14 states: *"Decisions on proposals for wind turbines and associated infrastructure outside the AONB should take account of the potential impacts within the AONB, especially the extent of visibility and significance of viewpoints affected, and potential cumulative effects with existing structures."*

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

George Chancellor
Chair