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HUGE NEW ELECTRICITY PYLONS TO CRISS-CROSS CUMBRIA?

By Staff Reporter

Last updated at 12:45, Thursday, 24 November 2011

Massive pylons could soon be criss-crossing the Cumbrian countryside.

Maps have been released plotting six potential routes for a new National Grid connection.

The project is part of a £2 billion package which could see new nuclear power stations built at Sellafield and Heysham in Lancashire.

A new connection linking the Sellafield site to the electricity supply network is needed before a new nuclear power station in Sellafield can begin to supply electricity.

The proposed routes show a rough guide to which areas could be affected by the connection.

One option is for pylons to cut through south Cumbria to connect to the National Grid near Heysham.

Another route is sending one power line north to join the grid near Carlisle while another offshore cable would bypass Walney and join the grid at a substation near Lower Darwen in Lancashire.

Running two offshore cables has also been explored with the lines joining the grid at a potential substation near Heysham.

Another route would see twin 400kV cables running through Whitehaven and Workington before connecting to a substation in the Carlisle area.

The six rough maps will then be updated with more detail later in the year before the public consultation is launched in the new year. It is not yet known if the routes will be overhead, underground or offshore.

The projected costs for overhead cables is £1.6m per km compared to £18m for an underground system. There is no estimated cost for an offshore network.

At present the National Grid is in discussion with every council in Cumbria and Lancashire about the proposals.

Copeland Council's strategic nuclear and energy board will discuss the plans at its meeting today.

Councillor Brian Crawford, chairman of the Duddon Estuary Partnership, has said he would prefer an overground route to minimise the impact of electro-magnetic forces on sealife.

He said: "Every route has pros and cons – but I think an overland one would be the simplest option. There has been some talk about using the same lines that are in place but they will have to replace it with much bigger ones.

"Due to the current flowing through the cables the electro-magnetic effect can be felt up to 150 metres away and a lot of people are very concerned about that.

"A lot of fish are sensitive to electro-magnetic currents and it could have a serious effect on fish off the coast. Every route gives problems but the connection is a necessary evil."

Richard Pearse Friends of the Lake District planning officer said: "Our favoured routes are the offshore options as there would be few implications for the landscape.

Peter Fendley, National Grid senior project manager for the Cumbria connection, said: "Next year we will discuss the opportunities for electricity connections with communities to ensure that we understand local needs and environmental sensitivities before commencing detailed environmental studies for the chosen option."

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Have your say

Why try and solve the problem with pylons, if you build the new power stations where the power is actually needed then the pylons won't be in Cumbria. Also why build a new power plant where the infrastructure is missing, ie no 400Kv grid in which to feed the power south. There are plenty of more suitable locations, ie Bradwell & Hartlepool.

Posted by Roy on 31 January 2012 at 08:54

Adam, yes the problems in West cumbria are down to lack of investment in infrastructure. But why is that the case? If you look at all the areas around Britain where there are Nuclear installations, including the MoD sites, you will find that there has been little or no investment on infrastructure over the last 50 years. That being the case, there will never be any real infrastructure improvements while there is a major nuclear industry dominating the local employment. Just look around the country before you reply.

Posted by sexapeel on 28 November 2011 at 13:16

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