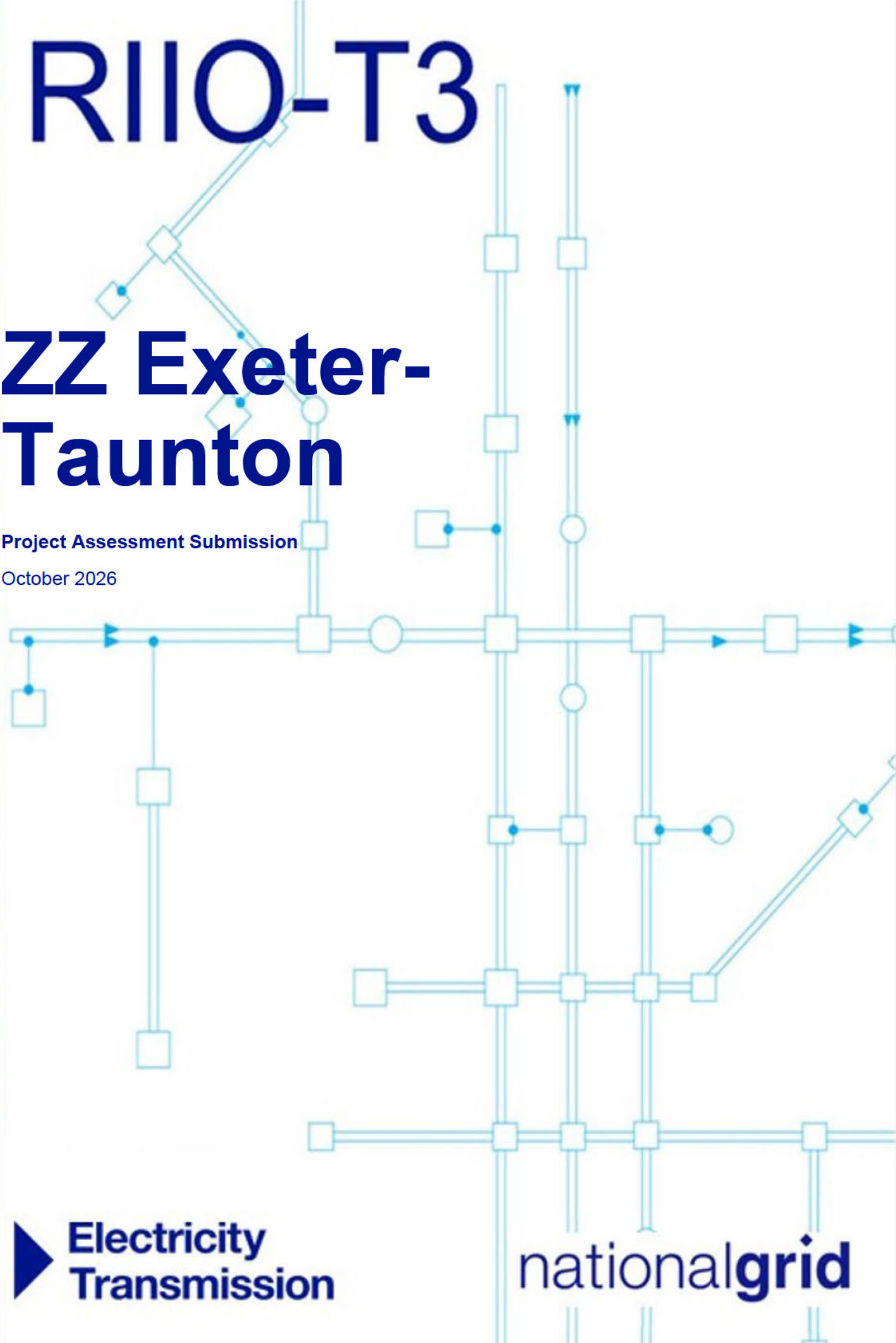
RIIO-T3

ZZ Exeter-Taunton

Project Assessment Submission

October 2026



Electricity Transmission

nationalgrid

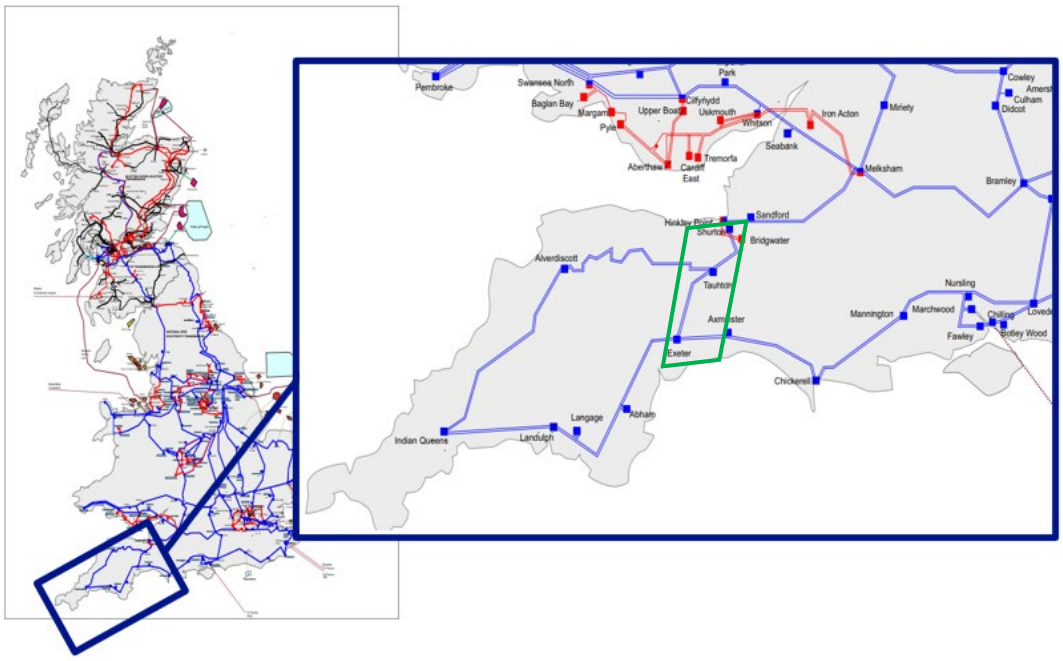
ZZ Exeter-Taunton Reconductoring: Project Assessment

Executive summary

Background

The The ZZ Exeter-Taunton project involves reconductoring the existing 400kV overhead line (OHL) between Shurton, Taunton and Exeter substations in the South West of England (see figure below) to satisfy the SC1 boundary capability.

Figure 1: Transmission route map



*Key: **Red** = 275kV assets, **Blue** = 400kV assets. Investment location shown in **green** box.*

The project involves:

- Replacing the existing conductors on all four circuits with a higher capacity conductor, which will increase each circuit's fault rating. This will be supported by targeted foundation, tower steelwork and protection upgrades.
- Replacing the associated OHL fittings and installing a new Optical Ground Wire.

By increasing the capacity of the route, the project will support growing generation in the South West and the UK's transition to clean power.

We are seeking Ofgem's Project Assessment decision for this project, which is being submitted under Special Licence Condition 3.18 (Load Re-Opener and Price Control Deliverable) as part of the RIIO-ET3 Load Re-opener.

Investment drivers

Customer connections:

The primary driver for this project is to increase transfer capability across the SC1 boundary in the South West, so the network continues to meet the Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS).

Asset health:

Some OHL fittings on the route are already classified as high or very high risk. Replacing them as part of the reconductoring avoids a separate future intervention and additional outages on the circuit.

Options

Reconductoring the existing route was identified as the preferred solution at Engineering Justification Paper (EJP) stage. Following withdrawal of Warwick Aluminium Composite Conductor Core (ACCC) type registration, the shortlisted options were reassessed through an updated cost benefit analysis (CBA) as part of the Project Assessment:

- **Option 1**: Reconductor the ZZ route with twin Matthew GAP conductor (**Preferred option**).
- **Option 2**: Reconductor the ZZ route with Holmes GAP conductor.[1]

Preferred solution

The preferred solution is Option 1.

Key benefits of this solution include:

- Highest consumer value – it has the highest Net Present Value.
- Most certain route to delivery – conductor is type registered and can be procured and installed within the delivery windows.
- Maximises existing infrastructure – reusing the existing towers, corridor and land rights avoids new land acquisition and primary planning consent.
- Meets network need – delivers the required winter post-fault rating, maintaining SQSS compliance ahead of 2032.
- Efficient combined works – high-risk fittings are replaced within the same programme, avoiding a future standalone intervention.
- Benchmarked efficiency – costs are comparable to similar projects of equivalent scope and complexity.

[1] Holmes GAP conductor could not be type registered in time to meet the required delivery timelines.