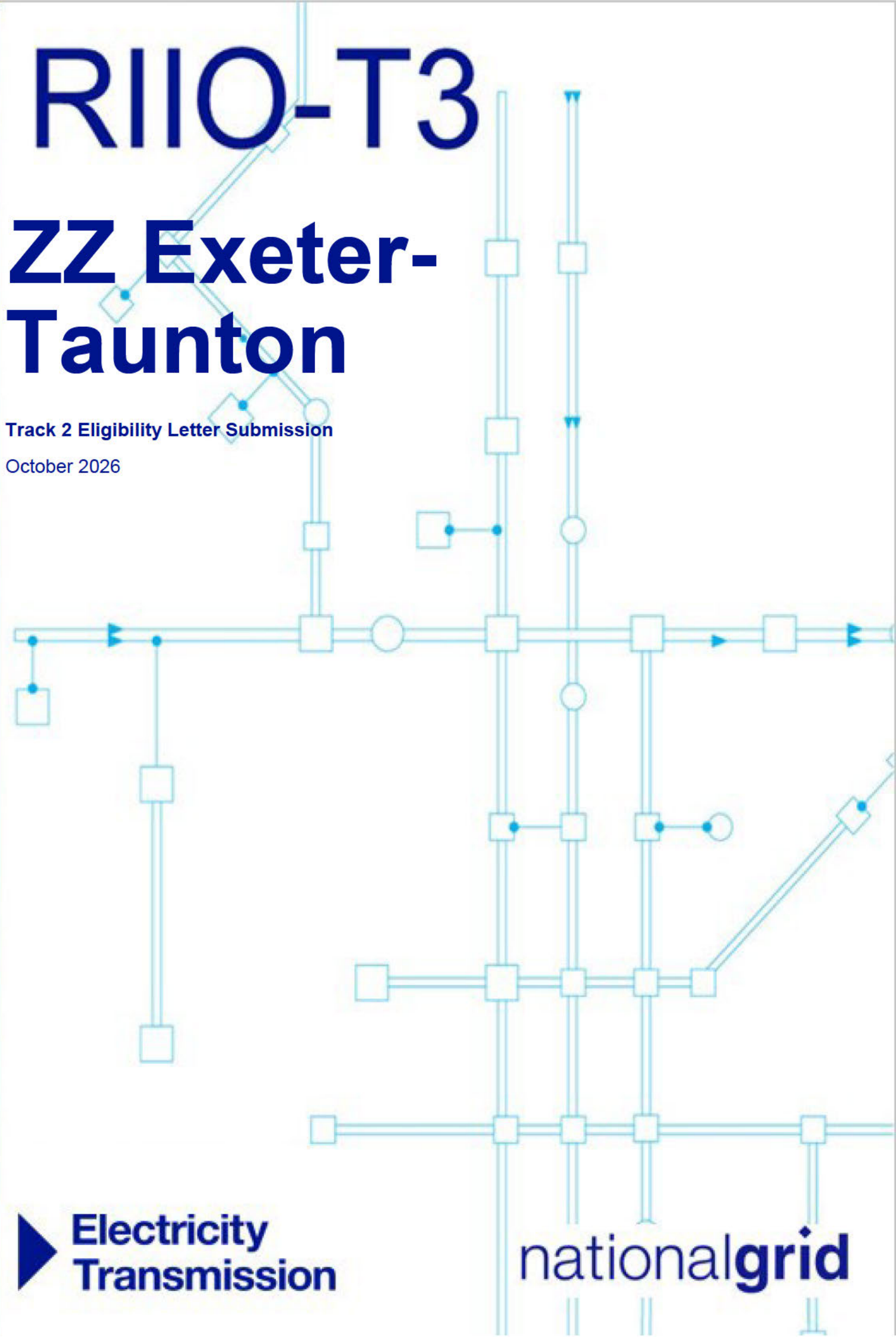
RIIO-T3

ZZ Exeter-Taunton

Track 2 Eligibility Letter Submission

October 2026



Electricity Transmission

nationalgrid

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Reference and summary table

Field	Description
Name of project	ZZ Exeter-Taunton
TO's preferred re-opener track	Track 2 Eligibility Letter (EL)
RRP Reference	NGT500096
BPDT / Scheme Reference Number	NGT500096
Load Board Reference	NGT500096
Investment driver(s)	System operability and compliance. The primary driver is increasing SC1 boundary capability through reinforcement of the ZZ Exeter-Taunton route, identified as THRE in Transitional Centralised Strategic Network Plan 2 (tCSNP2).
Project outputs	Reconductoring of the existing 400kV ZZ overhead line route with [redacted] conductor across [redacted] towers, including replacement of associated fittings and [redacted] Optical Ground Wire (OPGW) earth-wire, targeted foundation, steelwork and protection works, delivering circuit ratings of [redacted] MVA winter pre-fault and [redacted] MVA winter post-fault.
Short list of strategic options considered	Two main options were shortlisted for detailed analysis: • Option D-3: Reconductoring with [redacted] conductor at [redacted] • Option D-5: Reconductoring with [redacted] conductor at [redacted]
Preferred solution and explanatory narrative on the rationale	Option D-3: Reconductoring of ZZ Exeter-Taunton route using [redacted] conductors operating at [redacted] Option D-3 is preferred because it meets the required [redacted] MVA winter post-fault rating using the highest-rated type-registered conductor that can be procured and installed within the [redacted] outage windows. It reuses the existing towers, corridor and land rights without requiring primary planning consent. It has the lower net present cost of the shortlisted options, [redacted] below [redacted].
PASE alignment	PASE Primary Option; [redacted] was selected as the highest-rated type-registered conductor available at optioneering stage.

Field	Description		
Cost (23/24 prices)	All figures are provided in 2023/24 base prices. Total Project Cost: £[redacted] Load Re-opener allowance request: [redacted] Closely Associated Indirect (CAI) funding: [redacted]		
Delivery year	Energisation readiness: [redacted] Project completion: [redacted]		
Applicable reporting tables	9.4 CAI, 11.1 ET Pipeline Log		
Interactive projects	The Exeter-Shurton-Taunton (ZZ) overhead line (OHL) circuit [redacted]		
Historic funding interaction	[redacted]		
Spend apportionment	**T2 (FY 2022-2026):**	**T3 (FY 2027-2031):**	**T4+ (FY 2032-2037+):**
	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

1. Introduction

1.1 ZZ Exeter-Taunton

This submission, coupled with Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), is made under the Load Re-opener and Price Control Deliverable (PCD) (Special Condition 3.18 of the RIIO-ET3 Licence) for the ZZ Exeter-Taunton OHL reconductoring project.

The submission seeks Ofgem's confirmation of project eligibility and confirmation that the project should proceed through Track 2 of the Load Re-opener process.

The project name "ZZ Exeter-Taunton" refers to the full ZZ route. The ZZ route is the 400kV OHL between Exeter, Taunton and Shurton substations ([redacted]), comprising the Exeter-Taunton and Shurton-Taunton sections. The route was previously referred to as Exeter-Hinkley Point-Taunton and was renamed following construction of Shurton 400kV substation. Both sections are within the scope of this submission. The existing [redacted] conductor will be replaced with [redacted] conductor operating at [redacted] across [redacted] circuits and [redacted] towers. The scope includes replacement of associated fittings, installation of OPGW, targeted foundation and steelwork works, and transducer and protection upgrades. The existing towers, transmission corridor and land rights are retained.

The project delivers circuit ratings of [redacted] MVA winter pre-fault and [redacted] MVA winter post-fault, increasing SC1 boundary capability to meet the identified network requirement. Energisation readiness is [redacted].

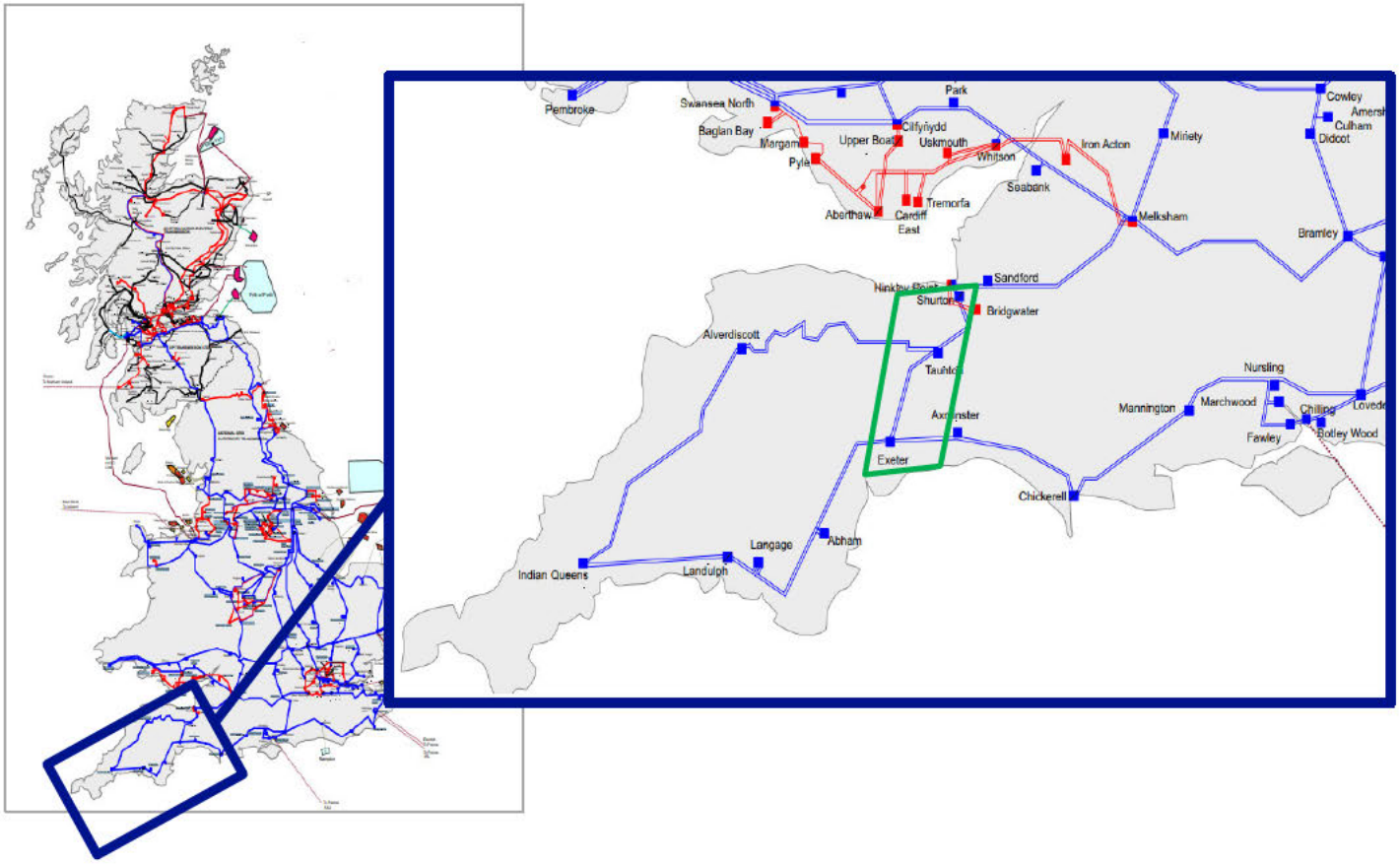
Eligibility, Project Track Statement and PASE

The project qualifies under Special Condition 3.18 as a load-driven investment scheduled for delivery within the RIIO-ET3 period. [redacted], Pre-Construction Funding or separate non-load allowance has been provided for the scope of this submission. The ZZ reinforcement formed part of the tCSNP2 Development Track portfolio that [redacted]

Track 2 is proposed because a single preferred option has been identified and is a PASE Primary Option. [redacted] is the highest-rated type-registered conductor that can be procured and installed within the [redacted] outage windows.

This project is PASE aligned. Further detail is provided in PASE alignment in Section 3.2.

Figure 1: Proposed location of ZZ Exeter-Taunton on our network



2. Drivers and need case

The ZZ Exeter-Taunton investment is triggered by SC1 boundary capability requirements in the South West.

Primary driver – SC1 boundary capability (wider works). The primary driver is increasing the SC1 boundary capability. The ZZ reinforcement, identified as THRE in tCSNP2, is required because forecast transfers exceed the capability of the existing Shurton-Taunton circuits under N-1 conditions. Reconductoring the route provides the additional capability to maintain Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS) compliance.

Secondary driver – Asset health. The circuit was constructed in 1960/62 and is strung with [redacted] conductor. The condition of the conductor does not in itself warrant reconductoring. Associated OHL fittings include assets classified as [redacted] (2025/26 asset health review). Replacement of these fittings within the reconductoring works avoids a separate future asset health intervention and outage.

Without reinforcement, the existing circuits cannot accommodate forecast SC1 boundary transfers in compliance with the SQSS.



3. Optioneering

We follow a structured, multi-factor optioneering process to select the most economic and efficient solution, in the interest of consumers. In line with the Electricity Transmission Design Principles, our optioneering process takes into account engineering, environmental, deliverability, economic and stakeholder factors.

The works are undertaken within the existing transmission corridor and reuse the existing towers. No siting study is required. No new land for permanent infrastructure, compulsory purchase or primary planning consent is required.

3.1 Strategic options

Table 2: Strategic direction setting

Option	Description
Option A: Do nothing	This option involves making no changes to the network.
Option B: Market-based solution	This option involves managing SC1 boundary flows through the procurement and use of ancillary services only.
Option C: Non-transmission, whole systems solution	This option involves addressing the identified need without constructing new transmission assets, instead relying on coordinated interventions across the wider electricity system.
Option D: Make use of existing assets	This option involves making use of existing infrastructure such as substations and could include extension or uprating.
Option E: New OHL circuit	This option involves construction of a new OHL circuit.

We discounted Options A, B and C because none provides the SC1 boundary capability required to maintain compliance with the SQSS. The rationale for each option is set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of options

Option name	Description	Drivers met?	Shortlist?	Preferred?	Rationale
Option A	Do nothing	No	No	No	Engineering: The existing OHL cannot accommodate the forecast power flows, so the SQSS would not be met.
Option B	Market-based solution (ancillary services only)	No	No	No	Engineering: This would require pre-fault curtailment of generation and does not comply with SQSS Chapters 2 and 4.
Option C	Distribution Network Operator (DNO) alternative solution	No	No	No	Engineering: The 132kV and lower distribution networks are at full capacity.
Option D-1	Hotwiring of existing conductor to [redacted]	No	No	No	Engineering: The maximum rating is [redacted] MVA winter post-fault, below the [redacted] MVA requirement. Hotwiring is only possible on the Exeter-Taunton sections.
Option D-2	Hotwiring, then later reconductoring	No	No	No	Economic: Hotwiring does not meet the requirement and gives no benefit over reconductoring.
Option D-3	Reconductoring with [redacted] at	Yes	Yes	Yes	Engineering/Deliverability: Delivers [redacted] MVA winter pre-fault and [redacted] MVA winter post-fault. It is the highest-rated type-registered conductor available and can be delivered within the [redacted] outage windows. It is £[redacted] lower in net present cost than Option D-5.
Option D-4	Reconductoring with [redacted]	Yes	No	No	Engineering: Type registration was withdrawn after [redacted] testing

Option name	Description	Drivers met?	Shortlist?	Preferred?	Rationale
	[redacted] at [redacted]				found it did not comply with NGET's specification for maximum short-term fault temperature.
Option D-5	Reconductoring with [redacted] at [redacted]	Yes	Yes	No	Deliverability: Conductor and fittings not type registered in time to be procured and installed within the [redacted] outage windows.
Option E	New OHL circuit	No (not by the required date)	No	No	Consenting/Deliverability/Economic: Needs a Development Consent Order (DCO), with around 10 years for planning and build. It has the highest consenting risk and a significantly higher cost to consumers.

3.2 Preferred option

Option D-3: Reconductoring of ZZ Exeter-Taunton OHL route using [redacted] conductor operating at [redacted]

PASE alignment

The preferred option is a PASE Primary Option. [redacted] was selected as the highest-rated type-registered conductor available that can be procured and installed within the [redacted] outage windows.

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)

CBA outcome

Table 4: Lifetime CBA (2023/24 prices, central carbon pricing, discounted values)

Option	Costs (discounted) (£m)	Environmental Impact (discounted) (£m)	Net Present Value (NPV) (£m)
Option D-3 (ZZ OHL Reconductoring Route, [redacted])	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Option D-5 (ZZ OHL Reconductoring Route, [redacted])	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

The CBA identifies [redacted] as the lower-cost shortlisted option, with a net present cost £[redacted] below [redacted].

Assumptions of the CBA analysis

The CBA results are based on the following high-level assumptions (with sensitivities used to test robustness where appropriate):

- Appraisal period of 50 years (2027–2076), with costs and benefits discounted and presented relative to the counterfactual.
- Price base: 2023/24 prices, aligned to the Ofgem RIIO-ET3 CBA template inputs (including treatment of replacement CAPEX and maintenance).
- Benefits scope applied consistently across options; where option-specific benefits exist (e.g. constraints), the basis and evidence are documented and applied consistently.

4. Delivery

4.1 Delivery year and indicative timeline

[redacted] is delivering the works under a [redacted] contract. The works are carried out across [redacted] outages, [redacted] circuit. [redacted] is a [redacted] and uses the [redacted] methodology, which [redacted] The circuits will be ready for energisation in [redacted]

Table 5: Key delivery dates

Event	Date
Contract award ([redacted])	[redacted]
Construction start on site	[redacted]
[redacted] outages [redacted]	[redacted]
All equipment ready for energisation	[redacted]
Post-energisation works ([redacted]	[redacted]
Completion of whole works	[redacted]

The programme has these key assumptions:

- The [redacted] outages are planned with the [redacted]
- National Grid [redacted] from [redacted] and [redacted] it to [redacted]
- All [redacted] and [redacted] is completed before [redacted]
- Design packages are approved and issued for construction between [redacted] and [redacted].

4.2 Procurement and contracting strategy

The project was allocated through National Grid's [redacted] which was established by open competitive tender. In [redacted] were assessed through a [redacted]

[redacted] was the [redacted]

4.3 Risks and risk management

An overview of current delivery risks is listed below along with mitigations. As risks continue to evolve, an updated detailed view of risk and mitigations will be supplied within the Project Assessment submission.

Table 6: Summary of risks and mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]

5. Conclusion

This Eligibility Letter seeks Ofgem's confirmation of project eligibility under Special Condition 3.18 and confirmation that the project should proceed through Track 2.

The tCSNP2 Refresh identifies a requirement for additional SC1 boundary capability on the ZZ route following [redacted] The preferred option, Option D-3, reconductors the route with [redacted] conductor operating at [redacted]. It includes replacement of associated fittings and OPGW, and targeted foundation, steelwork and protection works. Option D-3 is a PASE Primary Option. It delivers the required [redacted] MVA winter post-fault rating within the [redacted] outage windows, at the lower net present cost of the shortlisted options. The works are undertaken within the existing transmission corridor and reuse the existing towers and land rights. Efficient costs will be determined at Project Assessment.

Table 7: Submission summary

Submission summary	
Main drivers	Primary: SC1 boundary capability (wider works; tCSNP2 THRE), required following [redacted] Secondary: replacement of [redacted] OHL fittings.
Preferred option	Reconductoring with [redacted] at [redacted] across [redacted] circuits and [redacted] towers.
Estimated cost and timing	Total project cost [redacted] (23/24 prices). Total Load Re-opener allowance request: [redacted]. CAI funding: [redacted]. Energisation readiness [redacted]; project completion [redacted]
Outputs	Circuit ratings of [redacted] MVA winter pre-fault and [redacted] MVA winter post-fault; replacement of associated fittings; [redacted] OPGW; targeted foundation, steelwork and transducer/protection upgrades.
Proposed PCD	Energisation of the reconductored circuits, delivering the uprated circuit capability on the ZZ Exeter-Taunton route.

National Grid plc
National Grid House,
Warwick Technology Park,
Gallows Hill, Warwick.
CV34 6DA United Kingdom

Registered in England and Wales
No. 4031152
nationalgrid.com