

Appendix 8 Log of Issues Raised by Chilterns AONB and Natural England

Review of Options to Improve Visual Amenity of Electrification in AONB Log of Feedback on Phase 1 Report

Lucy Murfett - Chilterns AONB

Comments on the draft Balfour Beatty Phase 1 options report: (by e-mail 14/5/16 19:10)

Comment	Response
1. Page 4. Geographical extent too small - include AONB setting. Is Moreton cutting enough to cover the whole of the NWD AONB north of South and North Moreton? Include a map in the appendices.	We can add a map in the appendices to illustrate.
	DK 18/5/16
2. Page 4. Should Phase 3 refer to LVIA work? Also public consultation and the work of the Review Panel/ AONB advisory group?	The LVIA should be included in phase two mainly. It is most accurately mentioned as work arising from phase 1. The Public Consultation is outside BB remit.
	DK 18/5/16
3. Page 4. It is not clear how the work of the AONB Advisory Group ties in with this process. Suggest this should be explained. Options have been developed, scored and discounted without our input. Balfour Beatty are doing this work but we have no contact with them.	A new section could be added stating, "the advisory group get the opportunity to comment on and influence the options under development". Contact with Balfour Beatty should be through NWR for reasons of manageability and clear reporting lines.
	DK 18/5/16
4. Requirement to provide early benefit, not sure about this, and unclear how long has been considered too long.	I don't understand this comment, Nia do you?
	DK 18/5/16
5. Page 10 Headspans score well but are written off based on uncertain wording ('it is understood that...' 'may not be...' Do we have real evidence? What could be done to make them work? How much of a reliability risk is it if only a short stretch of headspans through AONB? Re-consider.	We will rewrite with more definitive language.
	DK 18/5/16
6. Page 10 Rigid headspans seems a poor description, suggest suspended portals?	We will review, key thing is to avoid confusion and maintain consistency.
	DK 18/5/16
7. Who scored the options? How was it done? It based on consensus, voting, averaging individual	Those attending the workshop. Consensus following group

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scores?	discussion.
	DK 18/5/16
8. How does the maths work in the scoring system, what is the formula? How does visual improvement factor combine with the impact factors to produce a score?	1st section is Pass/fail. VIP is assessed. Formula is Score x Weighting/100.
	DK 18/5/16
8. How accurate is this scoring as a method given only vague workshop day 2 ideas of what the alternative systems could be? No chance to let ideas grows and develop new solutions.	The process is designed to narrow down the range to the optimum manageable amount.
9. How can you score and discount in a workshop without the context (topography, AONB special qualities, viewpoints)	The retrospective LVIA will capture the context.
	DK 18/5/16
10. The options to progress should exclude do nothing.	This option will be assessed as any other.
	DK 18/5/16
11. Coasting, staggered cantilevers and thinner T structures all seem to have been discounted too readily.	We will revisit and explain in the next phase.
	DK 18/5/16
12. Of the 11 options to progress, it is disappointing to see 9 include portal structures. Is this really going to make the required difference?	The process needs to be worked through. Active involvement of the stakeholders should mean an acceptable result is obtained.
	DK 18/5/16
13. Suggest that RAG should be given the report before it's finalised to make comments on the scoring system and options.	Network Rail Decision
	DK 16/5/15

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Andy Gale - Natural England

Comments on the draft Balfour Beatty Phase 1 options report: (by e-mail 20/5/16 13:38)

Comment	Response
Natural England's expectation of this first part of the project is for engineers to identify ways to reduce the scale, mass, 'clutter' and other sources of visual intrusion whilst still delivering an operationally safe and efficient electrification scheme. The initial options workshop appears to have made good progress although it would have been helpful for one or more representatives of the Advisory Group to have been present given that the workshop included judgements about visual improvements relative to the current Goring Gap structures. The actual landscape and visual impact of a particular design will arise from the unique interplay between its specific design attributes and the defining characteristics of its immediate site and wider landscape setting. This will of course be tested by the LVIA, but the preliminary options exercise may have benefited from a landscape person familiar with the landscape areas and types involved.	Noted, the LVIA assumes a greater importance.
	DK 23/5/16
In the meantime we note that: those judgements (to rate/weight a 'visual improvement factor') were based only on outline sketches and descriptions; and the 'visual impact assessments were made with the context of being relatively close to the structures' and that 'the relative effect of distance and views will be reviewed in later stages of the study'.	Noted
	DK 23/5/16
The second bullet point is important because a design which presents visual improvements when viewed close to may not offer benefits or could be particularly intrusive when viewed in large numbers within a more distant and wider field of view.	To be raised in LVIA scoping document.
	DK 23/5/14
The report's lack of clear images makes it difficult for non-engineers to fully envisage what each shortlisted option would look like or how it would work. We would however make the following general observations based on the limited visual and other information which has been made available:	Agreed.
	DK 23/5/16

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The option Portal Structure – radius (curved) or ‘PSC’ appears to present a much cleaner, ‘sleeker’ appearance relative to the other portal options (although how it compares in terms of height isn’t clear). A small image in the report shows that this gantry type is already in operation. We would be interested to compare a larger set of A4 sized images of this and the current ‘blocky’ and lattice structure designs.	Will expand in phase 2.
	DK 23/5/16
The ‘T’ shape gantries used on viaducts is an interesting model which demonstrates some potential to reduce ‘clutter’ in visually exposed locations. Again it would be helpful to view a larger image.	Will expand in phase 2.
	DK 23/5/16
Removal of the aerial ATF appears (from the report and a discussion at the Advisory Group’s recent meeting) to be achievable as one contribution to an improved design. This appears, from images we’ve viewed, to have already been achieved for the West Coast Main Line?	This is being investigated and will be reported on.
	DK 23/5/16
The option of a headspan of tensioned wires (as used on the East Coast Mainline) rather than a full portal has potential and it would be disappointing if, following the engineering review, such an option was not tested via the LVIA. A potential benefit of a headspan would be to reduce the ‘tunnelling’ effect created by portals stacked in close proximity to each other along the route.	This will be investigated and will be reported on.
	DK 23/5/16
The report says that further options for landscape mitigation were identified and it is proposed that these are considered as ‘complementary’ solutions once the context of the landscape has been better understood via an LVIA. We welcome this but would emphasise that both improved infrastructure/equipment design and landscape measures need to be considered together to provide an overall mitigation package. For example some design options may work better than others with the sort of vegetation screening available within or appropriate to the landscapes of the Chilterns, North Wessex Downs and Cotswolds AONBs.	These points will be taken forward.
	DK 23/5/16

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<p>The use of colour is an option which will be explored further. The report appears to recognise the potential pitfalls of using colour to reduce the visual impact of any significant structure and associated infrastructure. We would also sound a note of caution. The constantly changing light conditions associated with the British climate means that no single paint treatment can hope to be very effective all of the time in all locations. A paint treatment designed for one set of lighting conditions may cause the structure to become much more prominent at other times. This is why most major structures such as wind turbines are a uniform white or grey colour. We are not advising that the colouring option should be rejected but simply approached very carefully and take into the account the attributes of the location for which it is intended.</p>	<p>This point will be incorporated in any further work.</p>
	DK 23/5/16