

Derbyshire HS2 Land Urged for Grid Use

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Campaigners in Derbyshire are urging the National Grid to reconsider using previously safeguarded HS2 land for a major new pylon scheme to avoid further disruption to rural communities and protected landscapes.

In July, the Government removed safeguarding from land originally allocated for the now-abandoned Phase 2b of the HS2 high-speed rail route. The cancelled section would have connected Birmingham to Chesterfield via East Midlands Airport and Derbyshire, but plans

have since shifted to upgrade the existing Midland Mainline instead. As a result, significant tracts of land set aside for the HS2 line are now potentially available for other uses.

Councillor Amanda Paget of Amber Valley Borough Council is among those advocating for the National Grid to reroute its planned 37-mile overhead power line—part of “The Great Grid Upgrade” to this disused corridor. The line is set to run from Chesterfield to Willington, with intermediate connections through Ripley, Morley, and Aston-on-Trent.

Paget argues that reusing the HS2 corridor would reduce environmental harm and visual disruption to the countryside, especially in areas near listed buildings and heritage zones. In a formal appeal to National Grid, she noted that while the organisation had previously dismissed the route due to its passage through developed areas, the lifting of safeguarding changes the viability of that decision.

“This newfound flexibility presents a unique opportunity for more optimal planning,” Paget said. She urged a fresh assessment of what she called a “strategic and potentially far less disruptive pathway.”

The National Grid responded by reiterating that the HS2 route had initially been excluded due to several constraints, including its passage through built-up residential areas and existing infrastructure. A spokesperson explained that environmental and technical limitations at the time made the route unsuitable for large-scale energy infrastructure. However, they confirmed that revised proposals would be released for public consultation in early 2026.

“We’re committed to keeping local communities informed and involved,” the spokesperson said. “We will provide a clear opportunity for people to give feedback, helping to shape the plans.”

The Department for Transport, which manages the disposal of former HS2 assets, confirmed that around 100 homes were acquired for the now-defunct rail project. These properties will be sold on the open market starting in 2026. Until then, many are being let at market rates to cover taxpayer costs and meet rental demand in affected areas.

Derbyshire County Council has voiced opposition to the current pylon route, citing concerns over its impact on the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, Hardwick Hall, and other

protected landscapes. The council, along with local communities, fears the current proposal would result in unnecessary environmental damage and visual intrusion.

With “The Great Grid Upgrade” hailed as the most significant overhaul of the UK’s power network in decades, local authorities and residents alike are calling for a more thoughtful approach, one that makes full use of already disrupted land rather than carving through untouched countryside.