

Julie James AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd  
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ-PO-369-2023

Llyr Gruffydd MS  
Chair,  
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

28 November 2023

Dear Llyr Gruffydd,

Thank you for your letter of 5 October about our position on cable ploughing.

As you are aware, the UK Government retains full responsibility for energy networks and related decisions and so the Welsh Government does not maintain a significant evidence base on these matters.

In terms of research on cable ploughing, my officials met the senior team from ATP Cable Ploughing and gained an overview of the methodology, the benefits it can offer and its key limitations. Our current understanding is that this method of laying cables is in wide use for distribution infrastructure and can offer benefits in terms of land use and reduced disruption. I understand the technique of cable ploughing is being used internationally and my officials have identified its use for direct current (DC) transmission networks up to 220 kv However, its use for undergrounding alternating current (AC) transmission infrastructure as used in the UK has not been demonstrated. The National Grid publish a useful overview of the issues in undergrounding these cables: [Undergrounding high voltage electricity transmission lines.](#)

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I understand National Grid have commissioned the Institution of Engineering and Technology to develop a new study on costing of electricity transmission. NGET have informed my officials that the report will be similar to the 2012 report, which can be found [here](#). I understand it should be published in January 2024.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie James AS/MS**  
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Minister for Climate Change