

28 February 2011

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Ofcom Draft Annual Plan 2011/12

The Campaign for National Parks (CNP) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Ofcom's draft annual plan for 2011/12. CNP campaigns to protect and promote National Parks for the benefit and quiet enjoyment of all.

CNP would like to see the undergrounding of telephone wires within National Parks become a higher corporate priority for Ofcom. This would be of particular value where it could be pursued in conjunction with Ofgem's dedicated funding allowance that has been used to great success by companies to underground unsightly overhead electricity wires within National Parks and AONBs. The adoption of a similar scheme by Ofcom would lead to significant improvements in visual amenity and public enjoyment of these landscapes. It would also help to avoid the current situation in which overhead telephone lines remain in place once electricity lines have been placed underground, which reduces the impact of the initiative.

A recent example of this in practice is at Strumble Head in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Telephone wires were placed underground by BT Openreach in conjunction with an electricity undergrounding scheme being taken forward by Western Power Distribution. It would be extremely encouraging if Ofcom could give corporate support to such initiatives and adopt a scheme similar to Ofgem's that supports companies to carry out this work. This would contribute directly to the enhancement of visual amenity and public appreciation of our finest landscapes. It would also be useful if Ofcom could issue a policy statement encouraging Openreach to adopt schemes like Strumble Head as the norm rather than the exception.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require clarification of any of the above.

Yours sincerely



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