

## Bengeworth Road Community Liaison Group

### Minutes of the meeting

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#### Overview

On Tuesday 16 March 2021, the second Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting was held to discuss the works at Bengeworth Road, as part of National Grid's London Power Tunnels (LPT) project. The CLG was formed following our consultation events held on 7 December 2020 and 20 January 2020. All residents who indicated they wanted to participate in the CLG were invited to attend this meeting. Emails were also sent to all ward (Herne Hill) councillors, as well as local MP Helen Hayes. Two local councillors, Cllr Jim Dickson and Cllr Rebecca Thackray, attended the session, as did Helen Hayes MP and 16 residents.

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**Meeting called by:** National Grid

**Date:** Tuesday 16 March 2021

**Time:** 6.00pm – 7.00pm

**Venue / format:** Zoom

#### *Speakers and panel members (7)*

- Aleksandra Zefirova, Programme Manager, National Grid (AZ)
- Sam Chesman, Project Manager, National Grid (SC)
- Mark Farmer, Project Manager, National Grid (MF)
- Darren Kempson, Senior Land Officer, National Grid (DK)
- Sarah Harris, Regional External Affairs Manager, National Grid (SH)
- Petya Georgieva, Principal Environmental Consultant, Arcadis (PG)
- Farhan Nomani, UK Power Networks (UK Power Networks)
- Joe Cawley, Director, Grayling (JC)

#### *Technical support and notetakers (3)*

- Priya Shah, Grayling
- Vaishnavi Bongale, Grayling
- Flora McCaul, Grayling

#### *Elected representatives (2)*

- Helen Hayes, MP for Dulwich and West Norwood
- Councillor Jim Dickson, Ward Councillor for Herne Hill, Lambeth
- Councillor Rebecca Thackray, Ward Councillor for Herne Hill, Lambeth

#### *Residents and members of the local community (16)*

#### **Presentation:**

Joe Cawley (JC) opened the meeting and handed over to Sarah Harris (SH) who introduced herself and thanked everyone for joining. She welcomed the local MP Helen Hayes and introduced the project team from National Grid and UK Power Networks who would be answering questions in the meeting. She confirmed how the meeting would run and that there would be time for questions at the end.

SH then handed back to JC who ran through 'housekeeping', confirmed that the minutes of the meeting would be shared with residents and that we would be recording the meeting for internal purposes and to ensure all feedback was captured. JC then ran through the agenda and thanked residents for their questions ahead of the meeting.

JC updated the meeting on recent site activity undertaken at Bengeworth Road on a Sunday by a subcontractor of UK Power Networks. JC acknowledged that the activity, which took place two weeks ago, was outside of working hours. JC confirmed that National Grid and UK Power Networks have agreed that any works which relate to London Power Tunnels (LPT) will be within the hours stated on the LPT website, which is between 8am-6pm on weekdays and 8am-1pm on Saturdays. He then confirmed that residents will still see ongoing operational maintenance work carried out by UK Power Networks separate to LPT. He explained these operational works may look different to previous works as the UK Power Networks depo is now in the middle of the site rather than next to the railway arches. He confirmed that these are the same works as before, just in a different location.

JC then handed over to Darren Kempson (DK) to provide an update around the possibility of using Kings College Hospital (KCH) for access. DK confirmed he had been in contact with KCH since last summer regarding the possibility of using the access road through the hospital, but conversations have been slow as a result of the pandemic. DK noted conversations had significantly progressed in the last two weeks. He explained that National Grid is in advanced talks to take access from Coldharbour Lane into the site. DK presented a map of suggested access routes which took away vehicle access from residential properties. DK confirmed that a final decision will be made once it is proven that the hospital and National Grid site can operate safely together. Following this a legal agreement would need to be put in place.

JC then moved on to the next phase of works and handed over to Mark Farmer (MF) for an update on this. MF confirmed National Grid was already on site and that some short-term facilities were in place. He added that preparatory works, including clearance of the shaft area and sinking the dewatering wells, has begun. MF confirmed the next phase of the works will be the sinking of the shaft and that this would take place in the second half of April. He added that this is when heavy goods vehicles (HGV) movements will increase, but access will hopefully be via the hospital and there will be reduced impact on local residential roads.

MF confirmed that the construction logistics plan had been revisited for the shaft construction phase of the works (the first four months) and that vehicle numbers are unlikely on average to exceed 36 vehicles per day, significantly lower than anticipated. However, MF clarified that the maximum peak number of anticipated vehicles per day remained at its earlier forecast, but this volume would remain on an ad-hoc basis, such as during the shaft construction phase of works, when the hospital access would hopefully be used. He said this update was good news for the local community as National Grid is moving away from the worst-case possible scenario. MF noted that working hours will remain the same, 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and Saturday morning work (8am to 1pm), though Saturday working is not currently required. He discussed further activity National Grid was doing to minimise disruption on local roads, such as ensuring HGVs arrived on site at the times they are booked in, traffic marshals, noise and vibration monitoring on site as well as wheel washing to keep vehicles clean.

MF handed back to JC to run through matters arising from the previous CLG meeting. JC reiterated that if the community wanted to chair this meeting then National Grid would be happy to facilitate this. He reminded residents that the minutes and Q&A from this evening's meeting would be shared with residents and uploaded to the website. JC also explained that the light survey is being redone, National Grid is looking to verify that assessment and then resubmit to the council. He then moved on to the questions raised by residents prior to the event.

To address environmental concerns, JC handed over to Petya Georgieva (PG) to clarify how environmental assessments have been carried out. PG explained the team followed best practice guidance that follows the precautionary principle, which means looking at the reasonable worst-case scenario for every topic. She explained that this meant assessing 120 vehicle movements for HGV numbers and 100% plant in use for noise monitoring. PG clarified this does not necessarily mean that

the site will have 120 vehicle movements passing through it every day for 5 years, this is just how the worst-case scenario assessment is set out, and in reality, the movements will be significantly less.

Aleksandra Zefirova (AZ) then updated the meeting on the option of moving muck away by rail, acknowledging that there had been lots of interest in this idea. She explained that the engineers had explored this option but that it would result in more HGVs needing to access the site to build the railway siding, thus introducing the very problems National Grid are trying to combat. AZ also explained that Network Rail have not given National Grid permission to use their line because it is a very busy commuter line. Instead, to mitigate the impact of HGVs, AZ reiterated that National Grid has explored alternative options to alleviate the concerns of high HGV numbers, including working with KCH to reroute HGV traffic.

AZ then moved on to the layout of the buildings, she noted that National Grid received questions on how the site layout was developed and explained there were several considerations which come into play when developing the layout. She explained that National Grid must place a shaft to connect with the main works tunnel as well as considering positioning of noisy elements, such as transformers and the headhouse, to be nearer the railway, rather than people's homes. AZ also noted National Grid had to consider existing services on site and where National Grid could build the main substation buildings, the 400 KV and 132 KV, as these buildings mask the noise. Considering all these factors AZ confirmed that the layout planned is the best solution. She noted that National Grid is bound by programme dates and as a regulated company National Grid must consider cost and the end consumer. With regards to early designs and timescales for the substations, AZ noted that there is lots of interest in what the buildings will look like but explained that this part of the project is still in very early days and National Grid will have some more information available towards the second half of the year once National Grid has detailed designers on board. She confirmed National Grid will work with the local council and the community for feedback on designs, but that National Grid is not able to share these yet.

Regarding compliance of HGVs, PG noted this was covered at a previous meeting and that the site will be compliant with ULEZ from September 2021 with all vehicles meeting the Euro 6 Standard.

JC closed the presentation and asked Cllr Dickson if he would like to ask his questions. Cllr Dickson responded by saying how he would wait until after the resident questions. Residents were then invited to ask questions.

## Questions

*Please note that this is a summary of the questions and responses and there is a separate document with all questions and answers for your reference. For ease, we have grouped questions under themes.*

### Noise and air pollution

JC raised a resident question around air quality and noted that this is something that has been raised several times before. JC handed over to PG to reiterate where National Grid get their monitoring from in terms of council stations and how that feeds into the worst-case scenario assessment? PG explained that with regards to air quality monitoring, National Grid will monitor the dust at the site and that National Grid is putting an air quality monitoring station within the site to pick up dust, particulates and anything that comes from excavated material stockpiled on site. PG explained the location for the monitor is currently being discussed with subconsultants as it needs to be connected to the electricity supply for real time data. PG confirmed they will not be monitoring the roads because National Grid's assessment concluded that there will not be any significant effects from construction vehicle movements. JC added that if National Grid uses KCH access, there would be further reduction on the number of vehicles.

JC raised a question around the rules for compliance with noise and vibration monitoring and how National Grid was complying with this. PG confirmed that all monitoring, including noise monitoring, will be on a continual basis. PG also confirmed that the thresholds are identified in Section 61 the Environmental Assessment Report and National Grid will not exceed any thresholds outlined in this report. PG noted that noise monitoring was already taking place on site.

JC noted there were several more resident questions about air quality. JC noted that National Grid is trying to remove as many HGVs as possible via KCH access. JC asked PG to confirm how the HGVs will have no impact on air quality. PG reminded residents that information about air quality had been uploaded to website and explained that based on the worst-case scenario of 120 HGV movements and based on the thresholds in the environmental legislation, none of these thresholds are going to be breached on any road and all environment effects are assessed as negligible, further details, such as levels predicted, can be found in the Environmental Assessment Report. PG reiterated that this is all based on the worst-case scenario which still shows the impacts will be negligible in terms of impact on air quality.

Cllr Dickson said he is very concerned that despite keeping big vehicles off local roads there will be reduction in air quality. He explained that he has suggested to the council that they put air quality monitoring stations throughout the area and that National Grid / UK Power Networks, alongside other works projects in the area, could contribute to the cost of these.

Helen Hayes MP (HH) reiterated Cllr Dickson's point about air quality monitoring and that she would be expecting National Grid to be contributing to that process and making sure that there is accurate live information about the impact of these works on air quality.

### **Site ownership**

JC raised a resident question around who owns the site and clarified that the site is owned by EDF Energy which is leased to UK Power Network and that National Grid leases a space from UK Power Networks.

Cllr Thackray asked why this differed to her previous understanding that Network Rail (NR) owned the site. JC explained that NR own the neighbouring land. Cllr Thackray explained this was not communicated to her previously. JC confirmed that National Grid would pick up with her separately as to why this had not been communicated to her clearly before.

There were other questions with regards to landownership. DK reiterated that NR is National Grid's neighbour on the boundary, the site itself is owned by EDF Energy, leased to UK Power Networks and National Grid has taken a lease from UK Power Networks.

### **Waste removal**

A resident questioned where the spoil from the site will go? MF explained that National Grid does not have a destination for it yet but confirmed it will be diverted from landfill. He explained on previous projects, spoil has been used to fill old National Grid gas holders that need back filling with clay or landscape golf courses. Once the destination is confirmed, National Grid will provide an update.

### **HGV movements and access routes (King's College Hospital)**

Cllr Dickson noted it was good to hear about the possibility of rerouting of vehicles in and out of KCH and noted the benefits of this to residents. However, he asked whether anything could be done to help those on Northlands Street and the far end of Southwell Road who would now be shouldering the new vehicles.

JC raised other points from residents around what is happening with larger vehicles to site. MF began by confirming their work had taken place outside of hours for site clearance which had to be carried out before the project could start. MF explained these are only temporary enabling works, not permanent works and we will have further information in due course. MF explained that National Grid is doing all it can to manage traffic movements into the site. He acknowledged that some of these are long vehicles and that the roads are narrow, but that National Grid does not want to modify the junctions to remove car parking unnecessarily, with the possibility of using hospital access in the future. FN from UK Power Network reiterated this point, stating that works which took place outside of hours were short-sighted and that contractors have been spoken to, and it has been clarified when they should and should not be operating. FN confirmed that business as usual work will still be carried out and that any other work (relating to LPT) will be carried out under conditions agreed with the council and National Grid. JC also noted that the working outside of working hours should not have happened.

JC noted questions around the access route through the hospital where plans showed the egress via Padfield Road. JC noted that Cllr Thackray had asked a question around this and asked DK to update on what considerations had been made of the exit route via Padfield Road and the residents who live there. DK explained that access and egress was via residential streets but following good conversations with KCH, KCH access would take 50% of the vehicles away, National Grid is exploring if this could be two-way. National Grid will need to confirm that two-way traffic can be managed safely. DK stated that once National Grid receives the reports from the KCH traffic management team, the hope is that access will be two way.

### **Consents and planning applications**

Cllr Dickson added that he has been disappointed to see the extent of works taking place as part of the pre-commencement site establishment. He stated that the work started so far has already been intrusive and involved large vehicles. Cllr Dickson added that whilst he was reassured a little by some of the things mentioned in the presentation, he would prefer if everything agreed in a construction management plan, agreed by a planning committee prior to work starting. He asked whether National Grid could enshrine what was promised in the presentation and agree this, and other requests, with residents in a construction management plan.

A resident questioned how National Grid had submitted an application for lawful development before National Grid had the full designs for the substation and headhouse. PG explained that no matter the type of application it is not unusual to take an approach based on the best information you have at the time. If there is any uncertainty over this information, there is a way to deal with this in terms of environmental assessment and decision making. This allows us to identify the worst-case scenarios and to have sufficient information to decide whether the development will have a significant impact or not. PG explained it is rare to have a contractor on board before an application is permitted, they normally get involved later on in the process. She added that design development is something that continues for a long period of time, detailed design is normally developed after consents are obtained. She reiterated why the precautionary principle is mandatory for National Grid to consider a worst-case scenario and that this is the whole driver behind environmental legislation.

A resident asked how National Grid can be so sure they will get a Lawful Development Certificate. He added that a second screening is being requested by the council which may conclude that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required but it appears National Grid is going ahead with the development anyway. The resident described the works he saw taking place, such as drilling into the ground, soil removal, tarmac and diggers on site did not look like site clearance. He added some works were taking place at 7.30am and that it looks as though work has already started. MF explained the drilling works seen were part of dewatering well work mentioned earlier in the meeting. He explained this was needed to reduce water levels at the site to facilitate other works. The resident reiterated that he felt works had already started and asked whether National Grid is expecting the government to step in and allow the works to go ahead regardless. JC asked MF to clarify the difference between enabling works and main construction works. MF explained that dewatering works are enabling works as they are needed to reduce water levels around the perimeter of the shaft and other works, such as concrete breaking, were needed to facilitate permanent works.

### **Environmental screening**

JC asked PG to confirm questions around consents. PG explained that National Grid submitted an (Environmental Impact Assessment) EIA screening request in July 2020 to the council and that there was a negative determination on screening on 2 October, meaning it had concluded the development is not an EIA development. PG added that as part of the screening opinion, the council has requested an additional assessment to be carried out, which has now been submitted. PG noted that National Grid has submitted all documents requested, answered all questions asked and followed due process, giving National Grid confidence that the plans will get the go ahead.

The resident requested further clarification on how National Grid can be certain there will be no need to do a screening assessment again and asked whether there were flaws in first screening report? PG

confirmed that National Grid has not had a request to rescreen, she explained there is a period of six weeks when screening could have been challenged and that period is now over.

JC then handed over to Helen Hayes MP (HH). HH confirmed that she had met with representatives from National Grid on 15 March and discussed the screening process. She noted that there are ongoing discussions with the council about the screening report. She noted that the screening report may have concluded that the development was within permitted development rights, but it was subject to certain conditions and that conversations are ongoing between the council and National Grid. She requested further information on the status of the screening report and explained that further discussion were required between the council and National Grid to resolve the issue. HH noted that even if the screening report has given permissions, she requested that National Grid shows it is willing to work with the community and requested more clarity around the process for resolving issues. She added once again that it would be helpful to have a note about the screening process, following the meeting between National Grid and the council.

### **Design**

Cllr Dickson added that it is important National Grid engages on the appearance of the substation as soon as possible as there is unease around this. JC handed over to AZ to update on design. AZ confirmed that National Grid is just at the start of design work and National Grid will begin engagement early. She explained, currently there are no plans, but they will be shared as soon as they can. AZ added that for the National Grid substation, contractors have not been appointed yet, but the design process can start as soon as they are on board.

Regarding design, JC provided reassurance to residents that any design comments that have been noted, will be included once National Grid gets to the design phase. HH also discussed the particular importance around the process of building and the design of the building. HH noted that she had made a request on 15 March for more information on the location of the building and the constraints around the location of the larger building on the Bengeworth Road site. This is to ensure everyone can understand whether it has to be quite so close to the boundary with the residential buildings on Southwell Road.

HH explained that a clearer understanding of how the concerns and views of residents would be taken into account was required. Further details on how the long-standing impact of works, design, and appearance of the building once the major works have been completed, would be helpful. JC acknowledged residents have raised similar points and added that following National Grid's meeting with the council next week, National Grid should be able to provide a bit more clarity on the road map and our approach with them, he made a commitment to offer clarity around the process following that meeting.

A resident asked for confirmation of timelines for the design of the substation. She added that she felt the start of works began with UK Power Networks vehicles arriving at 5.30am and 6am, stating that for the project team to call this 'operations' is disingenuous as it is much worse than it has been in the past. She wanted to understand who will be taking responsibility for the increase in vehicles if this is not the responsibility of National Grid. Another resident explained that the noisy works had been going on for months and that it seemed odd that pre works could take place before the approval of this project.

With regards to design, Sam Chesham (SC) explained that the current programme National Grid is working to show detailed designs running from end of July 2021 for 12-15 months to the end of summer in 2022. During this stage National Grid will engage on how the building designs will look. The resident asked if there would be a glimpse of what this will look like in the next year? SC explained this will not be possible until a contractor is onboard but cannot confirm whether that will be this year or early next. The resident asked whether designs would be needed for National Grid to make a lawful submission? PG explained the design of external appearance of the building is a separate submission to what we are submitting currently. It is a condition within the environmental permitted development order that requires a developer to submit for approval to the council the design and external appearance of the buildings. Currently National Grid is negotiating with Lambeth council on the timeline for this.

### **Coordination with other sites**

JC noted that residents and Cllr Dickson have pointed out that there is a lot of building work going on in the area, and that residents have asked what coordination National Grid is doing with other sites? JC said National Grid will take this away and answer in the Q&A.

### **Working hours**

Another resident raised the issue of working hours. The resident asked National Grid to confirm that works were not going to start until 8am and site preparation from 7am? JC confirmed that was correct for LPT works. The resident asked if this was the case for preparatory works. JC acknowledged previous breach of this. The resident added that she was woken up this morning (16 March) at 6.30am with vehicles and workers making lots of noise, not for the first time. JC confirmed that National Grid will look into this incident as well as ongoing incidents and get back to the resident. FN also reiterated this.

The resident then asked if there is a process for repeated infringements of working hours? MF explained that National Grid can enforce their staff to be on site when they should be, however the site is a UK Power Networks operational site which manages emergency call outs out of hours. MF explained National Grid does not have control over this, adding that if it is National Grid work outside hours, this can be stopped. AZ added that if it is National Grid workers, then this will be addressed because National Grid will only be working within their working hours.

FN explained that from UK Power Network's perspective, the equipment at Bengeworth Road has been used for many years by UK Power Network for maintenance and operational works but that due to National Grid works, UK Power Network has had to move some stores and materials on site which have come closer to residential properties. FN added that he will discuss this with the UK Power Network depot manager to clarify which vehicles are loading materials onto vans close to residential properties. He added they don't typically see a lot of vans but will look into the possibility that UK Power Network operatives are making more noise out of hours. FN acknowledged there have been similar issues in the past and that if it is an issue which persists, he will discuss it with the team. He also apologised for any disruption from UK Power Network. The resident explained it doesn't matter who makes the noise, UK Power Network or National Grid. JC said the operational works are 24/7 and always have been, separate to National Grid works. The resident added that the works now are of a different nature to what took place before, another resident reinforced this, adding the site is noisy from 6am and all through the night, with workers behaving very disruptively for months. FN said he was disappointed with the actions of the operatives and that it appears nothing has been learned, he acknowledged that it might not mean much but that he will have further conversations with operatives. FN acknowledged it is a different type of work that is taking place and the noise is unacceptable and disappointing.

### **Community relations**

A resident asked why there was no phone number for residents to call in case of noisy works at night-time? JC explained there is a phone number and email address on the website which is staffed 24/7. JC confirmed the community relations team staff this line permanently who can then get in touch with staff on the site to take action.

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### **Closing remarks**

JC drew proceedings to a close and noted that whilst emotions are clearly high on this project there had been a recent incidence where eggs were thrown at staff members on site. He explained that National Grid has zero tolerance of this type of behaviour. JC explained National Grid would look into the noise on site at Southwell Road, and that National Grid is continuing to focus on removing as many HGVs as possible from local streets. National Grid will be addressing the questions raised by Helen Hayes MP, Councillor Dickson, Cllr Thackray and residents. He confirmed that National Grid will share the Q&A, minutes and notes from the chat following the meeting. He reminded residents that the community relations team is available via phone and email.

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MEETING ADJOURNED

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