

Sundon substation extension

Frequently asked questions

About National Grid

Who is National Grid?

National Grid owns the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales. We're responsible for making sure electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it's produced, to where it's needed.

We're always investing to maintain a safe and reliable network, to keep people connected to the energy they need and to add more generators to our network. Much of this includes new low carbon electricity that is playing a crucial role in turning the UK's net zero ambitions into a reality.

As part of our work to maintain a secure electricity network, we're extending our Sundon substation near Chalton.

The project

Where is Sundon substation?

The substation is adjacent to the M1 motorway and Chalton in Bedfordshire. It is accessed via Water End Road and the B579 Luton Road in Chalton.

What is a substation?

A substation is an integral part of the UK electrical transmission system. It provides a connection point for generators to input power to the network or can connect the main transmission network to the distribution networks that supply homes and businesses.

Substations contain electrical equipment to transform the voltage to lower or higher voltages, switching equipment to connect and disconnect circuits, and protection equipment to ensure the network operates safely and reliably.

We upgrade existing substations to connect additional power generation or to meet increased demand from business and domestic consumers primarily in large towns and cities. These substation upgrades can be extensions of existing sites or can be new substations built alongside existing substations.

Why are you doing this work?

We are upgrading Sundon substation so we can safely connect new sources of low carbon energy generation and energy storage to our network, whilst also maintaining the security of electricity supplies for homes and businesses in the local area and beyond.

What permissions do you have to carry out the work?

We are carrying out this work under permitted development. This means we do not require planning permission to upgrade our substation. However, we must meet environmental licences as we carry out our activity. We are working closely with Natural England to make sure we protect the local environment and wildlife.

Are you keeping people up to date on what you are doing?

We will keep people up to date as we progress our project, including contacting our nearest neighbours before work starts. We will also keep important organisations and groups up to date as well, such as Chalton Parish Council. We are already engaging with Central Bedfordshire Council, for example, as the local authority for the area.

Who is involved in the project?

National Grid is responsible for the project and is working with GTDS to deliver this scheme. This means you may see their vehicles and equipment in the area and at our substation. Please contact us directly if you have any questions about this project.

How can people contact the project?

There are a number of ways people can get in touch with the project. You can contact us by emailing our community relations team at nationalgrid@NGSundon.co.uk, or by calling **0800 915 2487** and leaving a message. Our enquiry line is free, so you won't be charged for calling us. One of our team will then get back to you as soon as possible, typically between 9am and 5:30pm Monday to Friday.

Our work

What does your work involve?

We need to increase the number of connection bays at the existing substation. To do this we are installing additional equipment, such as transformers, and expanding the footprint of the substation at its northern boundary by approximately 138m².

Our work will be mostly within our site and will involve machinery such as diggers to move earth and make a suitable flat area of ground, and cranes to upgrade and install equipment. Lorries and vans will be used to bring materials to site and take away spoil. All our materials and equipment will be kept at a new site compound we are establishing within our current site boundary. Our site office and staff parking are also within this work compound.

What is a work compound and why is it needed?

We are creating a temporary work compound in a field next to our site. It will include areas for the safe storage of construction materials, facilities for staff and space for our vehicles to safely park and turn around in. The compound will be largely concealed as it is set well back and will be partially screened by existing trees and vegetation.

When will the work be taking place?

Preparatory work is starting in mid-September 2022, with the main work itself beginning from early October 2022, and taking just over a year to complete.

What are your working hours?

We will complete the work inside our normal working hours, between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday. However, we may need to work outside these hours occasionally for certain activities, or when circumstances such as poor weather affect our schedule. We will let you know if this is the case.

Are there security personnel at your site?

During construction there will be security staff on site during the day, so we can maintain a safe working environment. The substation site is also remotely monitored via security cameras at night. When our work is complete there will be no security staff on site and we will continue to monitor the substation remotely, as we did before we started this work.

Impacts on the local community

How are you managing vehicle movements?

We have developed a traffic management plan to minimise the impact of vehicle movements on local people, including our nearest residents. We will have a dedicated team at site during the day, controlling the flow of our construction traffic.

While there will be an increase in traffic to the site as a result of this work, we are ensuring that heavy goods vehicles access the site outside of peak traffic times as much as possible.

How many vehicle movements will there be a day?

We estimate that there will typically be 15-20 HGVs a day travelling to and from site between September 2022 and August 2023. We will do our best to minimise local congestion using our traffic management plan, so that these will not all be arriving at the same time.

How will you prevent vehicles queuing?

A dedicated team will ensure that deliveries and large vehicle movements are staggered to minimise any queuing as much as possible. Our work compound includes space for our vehicles to safely turn around in, to make sure that Luton Road is not obstructed.

What are you doing to prevent dirt and debris on local roads and property?

We will ensure that the site and surrounding area is kept tidy, using road sweepers to help keep Water End Lane, Luton Road and other nearby roads clean. We'll also be offering our nearest neighbours on Water End Lane regular window and vehicle cleaning if they feel it's needed.

Will there be any road or footpath closures?

We do not anticipate a need for road or footpath closures. If this needs to change for any reason, we'll make sure local people are informed in advance.

How are you managing construction noise?

Our work will create some noise. We will ensure that noise levels are kept to a minimum and regularly monitored. National Grid will always use the construction methods that best minimise disruption to local people and the surrounding environment.

Will there be lighting used?

You may notice additional lighting as we work, particularly on shorter winter days. We will turn this off when we have finished our activity each day. The lighting levels will return to how they were before, after we've completed our construction work.

Can you stop work or traffic at certain periods e.g. to avoid events at Chalton Village Hall?

While we will look to minimise disruption as much as we can, it's important we do this essential work to connect new sources of low carbon energy on schedule. But we'd ask people to make us aware of any issues that may occur so we can address them swiftly.

Will the expansion have an impact on people's homes and land?

All the work is happening directly around our existing substation, so we're confident the expanded substation won't have an impact.

What can I expect to see when the work is completed? Will the view of the site from properties or key viewpoints be changed?

The work is happening at the northern side of the substation, furthest away from homes and so we don't expect this to be visible. We are also looking at planting some trees in the surrounding land within the substation site to provide additional screening in the longer term.

How can local people benefit from this project?

Every year National Grid supports charities and non-profit organisations by awarding community grants. We fund all types of projects run by charities and community groups that provide a range of social, economic and environmental benefits in areas where National Grid's work has an impact on local people. Local groups and organisations near this project could be eligible for support. A successful project could receive a grant of up to £10,000.

The application process consists of submitting an application, which will then be reviewed by National Grid. To find out more, and to learn about the application process and eligibility criteria, please visit: <https://www.nationalgrid.com/responsibility/community/community-grant-programme>

Impacts on the environment

Will wildlife be affected?

We are aware of the sensitivities surrounding the site, and have carried out ecological surveys to understand what we need to do to protect local wildlife.

We have worked with Natural England to carry out all mitigation necessary. Vegetation clearance is being completed within the timeframe required by our licence, and all our work is being carried out under the supervision of a licenced ecologist.

We are also committed to replacing any of the natural environment that we effect on our own land with an additional 10% improvement, as measured by Defra.

Are you removing any trees?

We have removed and pruned some of the vegetation surrounding our site, so we can safely carry out our work. We will replant trees and hedgerow plants during the 2023/2024 planting season to compensate for the removed vegetation.

Will the work impact Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust's nearby Fancott Woods and Meadows?

The work is all happening on National Grid owned land, and we're confident they won't have any effect on the Fancott Woods and Meadows site.

Will the River Flit be affected by the work?

No works are happening on or near the river and we will also have in place measures to make sure any site run-off doesn't enter the local water courses.