

# BRAMFORD TO TWINSTEAD TEE CONNECTION PROJECT

## COMMUNITY FORUMS

### *Terms of Reference*

#### **1 BACKGROUND**

National Grid has consulted on route corridors for the Bramford to Twinstead Tee connection Project and has announced Corridor 2 as its preferred corridor. The reports that explain its decision and the background to the project are available on the project website:

[www.bramford-twinstead.co.uk](http://www.bramford-twinstead.co.uk)

As part of the next stage of the Bramford to Twinstead Tee Connection Project (Stage 2), National Grid will develop its detailed connection design.

To ensure that issues of interest and concern to communities are reflected and considered in the development of its detailed connection design, National Grid is setting up Community Forums to be made up of representatives from local parish councils, community groups and local residents. The Community Forums will consider alignment and mitigation proposals, potential associated infrastructure and environmental assessment and encourage engagement in a number of location-specific consultations. A complementary public communications and engagement programme will seek to ensure all local residents and members of the public have the opportunity to express their views.

A separate programme of Thematic Groups has been developed to engage and consult with organisations with specialist expertise in environmental aspects that are relevant to the project. The issues discussed in these groups will be reported to the Community Forums for discussion and review.

Prior to submitting its application for Development Consent, National Grid will hold a formal Stage 3 Consultation on the detailed connection design.

In making its application for Development Consent to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) or its successor, National Grid will explain and provide evidence for its proposals in the light of the discussions at and views of the Community Forums and Thematic Groups, as well as those with interest in the land affected and by other individual representations.

#### **2 ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNITY FORUMS**

The Community Forums are a means of engaging and consulting with members of the community to identify issues and concerns during Stage 2 consultation. This consultation will be focussed on Corridor 2 as National Grid's preferred corridor.

- For local communities, the Forums provide an opportunity to raise issues and concerns and particularly to influence the detailed connection design which will be included within National Grid's application for development consent.

- The Forums will also provide the opportunity for local communities to challenge and review the evidence base on which National Grid will make its proposals in respect of the detailed connection design
- For National Grid, the Forums enable engagement with local communities to gather information to inform the decisions which it will need to take when developing the detailed connection design.
- Discussions at the Forums and the issues arising out of the Thematic Groups will be recorded and shared to provide transparency.

### **3 ORGANISATION OF THE COMMUNITY FORUMS**

- The Community Forums are convened by the Independent Chair.
- Four Community Forums will be set up along the route corridor on a geographic basis.
- Each Forum will have a common focus and have local issues to address.
- If a Community Forum is heavily oversubscribed, National Grid may consider setting up additional forums.
- Membership should be broadly representative of the views and interests of communities and stakeholders within each forum area; however, membership of forums is not limited to those living within a particular area.
- Forums need to be large enough to ensure a cross-section of representative interests to bring balance to the debate but at the same time need to be sufficiently contained to ensure that specific local issues can be represented.
- Community Forum meetings are planned to start in autumn 2011 and be held on a broadly monthly basis or as appropriate as project milestones are identified.
- Community Forum meetings across the project area will be co-ordinated to ensure each Forum meets within the same two-week period, to ensure consistency and timeliness of information, unless other factors restrict this from occurring.
- Members of the National Grid Bramford to Twinstead Tee Project team will be present at every meeting.
- Administrative support/secretariat will be provided by 3G Communications.
- National Grid will provide the venue refreshments for each meeting.

## **4 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY FORUMS**

- Membership of each Forum will be within the range of 15 to 25 representatives and will be largely self-selecting.
- Community Forum members should be representative of local communities and interests and members should normally be representatives of organisations or groups (this may be a group of people of similar opinion rather than necessarily an organisation set up for another reason).
- If more than one person is nominated from an organisation and the Forum is oversubscribed, only one individual with this representation should normally sit on the Forum.
- Membership of Forums is not limited to those living within particular areas; stakeholders may apply to join a Forum which is not in the area where they live or work if they can clearly demonstrate an interest in that area.
- Each Community Forum member is responsible for bringing the views of those they represent.
- The local authorities and parish councils may also assist with the representation of interests, particularly with respect to identifying harder to reach groups.
- Membership of Community Forums will be reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure that Forums are representative of local communities and interests.

## **5 THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR**

Following nomination by the local authorities, Brian Smith has been appointed by National Grid to provide independent chairing and facilitation for the Community Forums.

The role of the appointed Chair will be to:

- Set the agenda for each Forum meeting to include items identified by members of the Forum, the National Grid project team, and members of the public.
- Ensure that local issues are properly debated.
- Chair all Forum meetings across the corridor to provide a consistent approach and to ensure that all agenda items are properly discussed.
- Agree the issues and action log/record of the meetings.
- Work with the secretariat to produce a round up of each Forum meeting for publication and to be shared across the Forums.

## **6 RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**

In order for the Community Forums to operate successfully, the following protocols will apply:

- Participants are asked to respect the independence of the Chair and the right of the Independent Chair to manage the meetings to ensure that they are productive and effective.
- Participants are asked to respect the rights of others to have different views and that others have an equal right to be heard.
- Participants are asked to disclose any interests.

Participants should raise any potential concerns regarding the process being followed at the earliest opportunity.

## **7 MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES**

- Media representatives are asked to identify themselves to the Independent Chair at the start of each meeting.
- Media representatives are asked not to video or record proceedings without permission as this may inhibit people in expressing their views openly and to seek consent from any individuals featured or quoted in any coverage of the meetings.