

Bengeworth Road Community Liaison Group

Minutes of the meeting

Overview

On Tuesday 30 November 2021, the sixth Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting was held to discuss the works at Bengeworth Road, as part of National Grid's London Power Tunnels project (LPT). All residents who previously signed up for the CLG were invited to attend the meeting. Emails were also sent to all ward (Herne Hill) councillors, as well as local MP, Helen Hayes.

Six residents attended the session, along with Cllr Jim Dickson. The CLG follows five previous CLG meetings held in February, March, April, September and October 2021 and three public information sessions, two held on 7 December 2020 and one held on 20 January 2021.

Meeting called by: National Grid

Date: Tuesday 30 November 2021

Time: 6-6.45pm

Venue / format: Zoom

Speakers and panel members (5)

- Mark Farmer (MF), Project Manager, National Grid
- Sarah Harris (SH), External Affairs Manager, National Grid
- Farhan Nomani (FN), Project Manager, UK Power Networks
- Phoebe Adams (PA), Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Manager, UK Power Networks
- Joe Cawley (JC), Director, Grayling

Technical Support and notetakers (2)

- Priya Aggarwal-Shah, Grayling
- Ellen Hodgetts, Grayling

Residents and members of the local community (8)

Presentation

Joe Cawley (JC) opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending the 6th Bengeworth Road CLG, the last meeting taking place before Christmas. He continued by introducing the team, starting with himself as a Director at Grayling, noting that he would also be chairing the meeting.

JC moved on to discuss housekeeping rules, asking attendees to raise the hand function or post in the chat if there if there was a question they would like to ask. He mentioned that the meeting would be recorded for internal purposes and that minutes and Q&A would be made available on the London Power Tunnels website following the meeting.

He continued by moving on to the agenda, noting that the meeting would cover the following:

1. Works on site
 - Current works on site
 - Air quality monitoring – JC noted this is something that is included in each CLG meeting
 - Christmas working arrangements
2. UK Power Networks' update

3. Site building designs engagement and timescales
4. Questions and AOB

JC then passed over to MF to discuss the current works on site.

MF began by showing images of the shaft on site, taken last week. He explained that construction is just about down to full depth; of the 33 segmentally lined rings in the photograph, workers were in the process of completing number 32 today. There was one more metre of segmentally lined rings to go at the bottom.

MF noted that text on his presentation was written last week and therefore only mentions 30 of the 33 rings. MF continued that all segments will be in place by Christmas and the shaft will be sealed for safety ahead of the Christmas break. After Christmas the team will make a large reinforced concrete base slab underneath the segments. Other works over the next couple of weeks are associated with the dewatering wells needed to lower the groundwater to a level where they can complete the concrete works at the base of the shaft.

In February, additional concrete works will install a secondary lining around the shaft at the bottom and build a dividing wall up the centre. This wall will separate the two circuits coming into shaft and allow ventilation into the tunnel. MF added that air quality continues to be monitored in accordance with the Air Quality Monitoring Plan and that works are well within the threshold with which National Grid are obliged to comply.

MF moved on to discuss air monitoring in more detail, noting that the monitoring system notifies National Grid's environmental consultant if works are exceeding the site threshold, known as the site action threshold, agreed with Lambeth Council. He continued that if the threshold were to be exceeded a complaint is logged and investigated and site activity and dust control measures would be reviewed. If exceedance is likely to be due to site activity additional mitigation would be applied as soon as practical and an exceedance report would be submitted to the local authority the next working day. MF finished by stating that National Grid receive monthly reports on air quality.

MF then showed a graph that showed the October results for air quality PM10 levels. The graph showed the hourly mean threshold along the top which sits at 190, with National Grid's recorded levels in blue sitting well within the threshold. MF explained that the next graph shows the 24-hour mean concentration with a threshold of 50. Again, National Grid's results are well within that threshold.

The next slide focused on Christmas working arrangements, with MF confirming that the site will break for Christmas on Friday 17th December, with no plans to be back at work until January 4th. He noted that National Grid will be leaving pumps in the wells running off mains electricity, which shouldn't cause any noise disturbance. MF continued that there will be no worker presence on site full-time, but if something goes wrong with the pumps, alarms will be triggered, and someone will be called out to visit. There is one planned visit around 29th December to gather data and carry out maintenance. MF finished by reminding attendees that the site is still a UK Power Networks 24-hour depot operating as usual. The Community Relations team will continue to monitor the hotline and email address and be available for any emergencies.

JC then handed over to FN to give an update on UK Power Networks works. FN noted that he is pleased that UK Power Networks has been working hard to try and minimise the noise concerns they've had over the past few months and that there have been no new major issues flagged over the past month.

He continued that this is predominantly due to a noise survey carried out around the operational aspects of the site. He confirmed that UK Power Networks have moved some of the materials that were creating a large amount of noise out of hours to other areas and have introduced some noise attenuation barriers in those areas. He confirmed that if the noise persists there is a second phase which would involve installing acoustic barriers. Overall, FN stated that progress is being made.

FN confirmed that over Christmas the UK Power Networks depot will remain business as usual, however during the Christmas period activity is low, so it should have minimal impact on neighbours and residents.

SH spoke next with an update on site building designs and timescales. She confirmed that in the last few weeks National Grid has appointed an architect for the headhouse and substation. She continued by noting that Markwick Architects has extensive experience of designing substations in London for National Grid and UK Power Networks and has a strong track record of keeping designs in-line with the local inner-city area.

SH continued that National Grid's plan is to share the designs with residents and neighbours in February 2022 with a face-to-face public engagement session. Boards will show the designs and experts will be on hand to answer questions residents may have. She noted that National Grid is conscious of the current environment with COVID-19, so will also be offering an online event for those who are not comfortable meeting face-to-face. She confirmed that if government guidance changes, the whole exercise will be moved online accordingly. She explained that invites to this event will be shared with CLG members but also delivered to all homes in the local area in the New Year. SH continued that National Grid will be considering resident feedback and comments when finalising the building designs, so in the coming weeks there will be discussions around what elements they will be seeking feedback on. Final plans will be shared following the public information exercise at the CLG in the spring.

Finally, SH confirmed that National Grid will continue to deliver this piece of work with UK Power Networks, who also have their own substation design to progress.

JC brought the presentation to a close and opened the floor to resident 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.

Traffic Management:

Cllr Dickson opened by thanking the project team for their updates. He then asked for confirmation of vehicle numbers that will be accessing site via the Kings College Hospital (KCH) and exiting via Coldharbour Lane during the remainder of shaft sinking works and for the arrival of the Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) potentially in May.

MF confirmed that the shaft construction period was always expected and estimated to be the most intense period of HGV movements, due to the amount of muck generated and the materials that need to come in to construct the shaft. He confirmed that works are generally through this peak period and that the rate of production of muck has slowed as the shaft has become deeper, with more challenging ground conditions towards the base. He confirmed that average vehicle numbers for November was about 12 HGVs a day, including several vans. The peak was around 16-17 on a single day in November, but in August and September when the shaft was shallower it was closer to a 12-15 average.

MF continued that there is one peak day planned towards the end of January when National Grid will carry out a continuous concrete pour for base slab – this was highlighted in an earlier CLG meeting.

He noted that this is likely to require around 60 concrete lorries needed to pour 450 metres cubes of concrete to the base of the shaft. National Grid will likely need to apply for slightly extended hours on that day, but this would be a one off for that period.

Beyond that, MF confirmed that intensity in the longer term will be impacted by bringing the headhouse construction programme slightly further forward than originally planned, hopefully to summertime next year. He continued that this would reduce intensity towards the end of the programme with what's going on with substation work and UK Power Networks. MF finished by stating that National Grid continues to monitor the traffic going through the hospital very carefully, and there have been no issues to date.

Cllr Dickson followed up by asking National Grid to ensure that everyone is notified well in advance of the day planned for the continuous concrete base pour, and MF confirmed they would be.

On a similar point, a resident raised a question in the chat function asking for a greater indication of extended hours for the concrete base slab pour. MF responded that it would most likely be a 7am rather than 8am start for works, with works likely to proceed into the evening too, until about 8pm or 9pm. He

noted that this is dependent on a constant supply of concrete and nothing breaking down, but if there are any issues with the supply chain, this could extend further into the evening.

Cllr Dickson also asked whether National Grid has had a chance to speak to other construction projects intensively accessing their site with HGVs – the Higgs Industrial Estate, where Durkan are the constructors, and the Geoffrey Close Housing Works, managed by Riverside. Cllr Dickson expressed his concerns about the intense use of Coldharbour Lane and surrounding roads by three different construction projects at the same time.

JC confirmed that National Grid have been liaising with Peabody who have Durkan as their contractors and are setting up a meeting between HMJV logistics and Durkan directly. JC noted that Loughborough Junction Action Group (LJAG), who could not attend the CLG, had asked some additional questions on this issue. JC continued that they are kindly passing on contact details to National Grid as and when they get these, but asked Cllr Dickson if there are any contacts he could share so National Grid can ensure they avoid overwhelming local roads.

Air Quality Monitoring:

Cllr Dickson noted a spike in the air quality monitoring graph, although still below the threshold, on October 8th. He asked if National Grid could confirm what caused this spike and whether they are expecting any similar incidents that may take it over the threshold and affect people's health and the air quality.

MF responded that he wasn't made aware of the spike as the data goes directly to National Grid's environmental department. He continued that he would check in, but that it is likely they are only notified if the spike exceeds the threshold, which the 8th October data did not. MF also stated that he will look into whether there's a need to set alarms against these lower-level spikes that stand out against the baseline. JC stated that National Grid will look into the works going on at the time and see what may have caused it.

Another resident question on air quality monitoring asked for the location of the monitors. JC responded that photos and maps of the locations were included in last month's CLG, which can be found on the website. JC passed over to MF who confirmed that the monitor monitoring PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} is fixed to a lamppost between the shaft area and the back of the houses on Southwell Road. He continued that there are also four NO₂ diffusers placed around the site, these are not live monitors, but they are collected, and the data analysed with a report shared with National Grid a couple of weeks later. He confirmed that the first of these reports is due in a couple of weeks' time.

A resident asked a follow up to Cllr Dickson's question about the amount of traffic generated by simultaneous large-scale works, and whether special air quality monitoring measures could be introduced in the local streets. JC confirmed that this is not on site so cannot be monitored by National Grid, but that Cllr Dickson had mentioned he was looking into working with the Council on this. Cllr Dickson confirmed that it is an issue he is continuing to press with Lambeth Council.

The resident thanked Cllr Dickson for this. Cllr Dickson confirmed that he would come back when he had an update.

Substation Design:

A resident asked a question about the tendering process for the architects appointed and how they were chosen. MF responded that the project was pressed for time, so chose a reliable architect National Grid had worked with previously.

The same resident followed up asking for more information about the architect appointment, noting that MF mentioned a lack of time despite the fact the project has been ongoing for some time.

MF responded National Grid has gone with a tried and tested company with a track record of delivery with National Grid and UK Power Networks. He continued that National Grid takes on board CLG comments and had noted several negative comments from previous CLG meetings on the design of other headhouses across the project. National Grid has made a conscious decision to move away from

architects behind that and there was a strong opinion that the architects need to be independent from any of the engineering companies who National Grid typically work with. MF finished by stating that the work of Markwick will be monitored and there are other companies National Grid can turn to if they are not delivering.

Noise:

Another resident noted that he appreciates the efforts of UK Power Networks to reduce the noise from the depot. He is happy to have noticed a decrease in occasions of men in flatbed trucks arriving to unload signs and barriers noisily. He continued however that on the occasions that this does happen, an awful lot of noise is still produced. The resident mentioned specific instances the previous weekend at 10am and 9pm the night before the meeting.

FN answered that he was glad to hear noise had decreased but mentioned there was always some concern around out of hours noise. He continued that just because the incidents have decreased, it doesn't mean it's an excuse for any operatives who are on site to make additional noise. He confirmed that UK Power Networks is continuing to monitor the situation and ensure that these incidents and events become even less frequent.

He went on to describe changes made on site, some visible and some less visible, including a change to shift patterns and rotas which changes how deliveries are carried out. Equipment for deliveries has also been moved into the middle of the compound. Following a noise survey carried out by an independent contractor, attenuation barriers were recommended to be put up around areas where operatives tend to be, to minimise noise as much as possible. FN confirmed that it's good to see that this combination of measures has decreased noise, but that UK Power Networks is continuing to monitor and wants to get noise down to zero if possible.

FN finished by noting that due to COVID-19 the operatives are standing outside for morning briefings, which can cause additional noise. The UK Power Networks CEO has advised business as usual for January, so FN is hoping that operatives can return inside, but that this will depend on government guidelines with the new variant on the horizon.

The resident asked a further question about the possibility of additional noise attenuation measures around where signage is unloaded.

FN responded that if there is a requirement and a need for additional barriers there is capacity to do that. He continued that if that is the case, UK Power Networks can consider this as an option. He clarified that this is not as straightforward as putting attenuation barriers in and around a specific area, certain points were picked up from the noise survey report which were much higher receptors than others. There have been points allocated around the site where the attenuation barriers can go up and there is also a recommendation around the dividing wall between the UKPN yard and the resident housing line. FN noted this is not the prettiest option, which is something to consider, but it's in the proposals to put forward if needed. FN finished by noting that he will pick up with the resident separately and see if there's anything specific that can be done around the property in question.

Closing remarks

Cllr Dickson invited residents on the call to contact him about any issues that have been brought up in the CLG. He confirmed that he is happy to get observations as they happen about how the works are impacting the immediate neighbourhood and that he looks forward to consultation on the headhouse and substation.

Joe Cawley drew proceedings to a close and thanked everyone for their time.

MEETING ADJOURNED
