

Bengeworth Road Community Liaison Group

Minutes of the meeting

Overview

On Tuesday 27 April 2021, the third Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting was held to discuss the works at Bengeworth Road, as part of National Grid's London Power Tunnels project. All residents who had 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. Three local councillors, Cllr Jim Dickson, Cllr Pauline George and Cllr Rebecca Thackray attended the session, as well as Helen Hayes MP and nine residents.

The CLG follows two previous CLG meetings in February and March 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 27 April 2021

Time: 6.00pm – 7.00pm

Venue / format: Zoom

Speakers and panel members (6)

- Gareth Burden, Project Director, National Grid
- Mark Farmer, Project Manager, National Grid
- Georgina Grant, DCO Manager, National Grid
- Darren Kempson, Senior Lands Officer, National Grid
- Farhan Nomani, Project Manager, UK Power Networks
- Joe Cawley, Director, Grayling

Technical Support and notetakers (3)

- Priya Shah, Grayling
- Ellen Hodgetts, Grayling
- Mary Lee, Grayling

Elected representatives (4)

- Helen Hayes MP
- Cllr Jim Dickson
- Cllr Pauline George
- Cllr Rebecca Thackray

Residents and members of the local community (9)

Presentation:

Introductions:

Gareth Burden (GB) opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. He introduced himself as the Project Director for London Power Tunnels (LPT) and briefly explained the project's role in rewiring South London. GB explained that the tunnel will run from Wimbledon to Crayford across eight main sites, including Bengeworth Road. Bengeworth Road was included in LPT following a connection request from UK Power Networks. He noted that National Grid is duty bound to spend money efficiently and effectively. GB confirmed that the session would cover the following points:

- (1) Update and next steps
- (2) Project update and developments
- (3) Future communication channels and time scales for the project.

GB handed over to the project team to introduce themselves. Mark Farmer (MF) introduced himself as the Project Manager for tunnels and shaft work; Georgina Grant (GG) introduced herself as the DCO Manager working for the national consents team; Darren Kempson (DK) introduced himself as Senior Land Officer, working with the hospital and other third parties; Farhan Nomani (FN) introduced himself as Project Manager from UK Power Networks. Finally, Joe Cawley (JC) introduced himself as a Director at Grayling and ran through the housekeeping for the meeting.

Agenda for the meeting:

GB returned to the presentation to run through the meeting agenda. He stated that the first point of discussion would be the withdrawal of the Certificate of Lawful Development application, noting some residents may have seen this on the council website. He explained two main reasons for this decision: firstly, that National Grid has been in detailed discussions with the council about how to move forwards with securing the mitigation for works, and secondly that the project has moved on – GB noted MF would explain these changes in more detail – making it appropriate to provide new screening to reflect these changes. This follows the initial screening submission in July 2020.

GB continued that the meeting would cover a project update since July 2020, stating MF would go on to talk about key changes and developments. GB noted those who joined the engagement meeting in January would remember the project's need to do the right thing by consumers, noting that if National Grid can reduce engineering on site, it can reduce capital investment and impact on t consumers' bills. GB reminded residents that the project is in conversations with Kings College Hospital (KCH) about access through the hospital to minimise impact on local roads, and that National Grid has since secured one way access and briefed residents on this. He continued by stating that the project is considering a number of other engineering solutions to enable National Grid to propose a different solution on site and for the project moving forwards.

GB said the next point would be around next steps for consenting, which GG would expand on including details of the consultation proposed by Lambeth in May and the steps needed to go through this process. GB noted MF and FN would then talk about current works on site, reminding residents that Bengeworth Road is an operational site and there are also some temporary National Grid works currently taking place y. National Grid have been in discussions with the council about these works.

GB stated the presentation would finish off with plans for resident engagement and how National Grid will make things clearer and help the process – including pausing the CLG whilst the council consultation is ongoing so there is one channel for residents to submit questions and challenges. GB continued by saying that the meeting will finish with questions, either through raised hands or via the chat function.

Withdrawal of Certificate of Lawful Development application:

GB handed over to GG to discuss the withdrawal of the Certificate of Lawful Development. GG echoed GB's comments that there are two main reasons for the withdrawal – National Grid has been in pragmatic discussions with the council about how to move forward with securing the mitigation for the works, this resulted in a joint decision to remove the application for a Lawful Development Certificate. GG noted that the certificate had also been withdrawn because of the new integrated engineering solutions, which means the assessment needs to change and National Grid needs time to be able to develop these assessments. GG stated the example of HGV movements: National Grid are now using a different access which informs the assessment. She continued that National Grid has been reflecting on the changes and the new screening assessment – which National Grid hope to submit by close of play that week (30 April 2021 – which takes into account all of those engineering solutions. GG stated that National Grid has had positive conversations with Lambeth Council about the approach they have taken, and that she hopes this will move the project forwards.

Project update since July 2020:

GG passed over to MF to discuss updates to the project. MF noted that the purple line on the map of the old tunnel alignment (slide 10) following Coldharbour Lane was the original tunnel route connecting the node points on the wider LPT project. This section of the tunnel is being driven from the National Grid site in New Cross to Brixton and then onto Wimbledon. MF stated this is the most efficient route for that section of the project. He continued that when UK Power Networks approached National Grid about a new connection at Bengeworth Road, this was the original solution developed. He noted that the red circle on the map shows the shaft location to connect to the UK Power Networks site, and that there would have been two spur tunnels connecting this to the tunnel following Coldharbour Lane. MF stated that at that point in time, this was considered to be the best value option for the project.. This involved easements with a couple of private properties on each of the tunnels heading out on Southwell Road. MF continued that as is always done on these projects, National Grid look for solutions that offer better value for consumers, to deliver works as efficiently and safely as possible.

Looking at the next slide (slide 11), MF discussed the realigned route and new engineering options. He explained this is now based on the blue route on the map, with the previous route marked in red – meaning that the route is now extended by approximately 150m and brings in certain complications around going underneath the hospital and railway on different alignments. MF noted the benefits the new route brings to Bengeworth Road properties, most notably by taking away the reason for building two spur tunnels which needed 6-8 months of slow progress tunnelling works using techniques creating spoil that resulted in the original HGV numbers. This also would have meant 24-hour work, five days a week during the construction phase to meet the end project deadline. MF continued by explaining that the new proposed route removes the need for this work – there will be an overall reduction in work, although some additional minor work at the base of the shaft to prepare for the main tunnel route will be required.

GB asked MF to remind residents what an easement is and why it's required. MF explained that an easement is required to go underneath privately owned land and properties and National Grid try to achieve these on a voluntary basis with landowners. National Grid try to minimise how many easements it needs to attain as it always comes with some risk of consenting. He added that going underneath large buildings like the hospital with deep foundations and potentially sensitive equipment, where we've had experience in the past with not being able to, was part of the reason we chose to use the spur tunnels originally. MF continued that the new blue route does bring about approximately 30 new additional easements including the hospital and the railway crossing.

GB confirmed DK would discuss what these new easements mean and how National Grid is reaching out to concerned individuals. MF concluded that the new blue route takes away the easement considerations on Southwell Road, Cambria Road and Harbour Road by re-routing the tunnel south.

Access to site:

The presentation turned to DK to discuss previous access routes. DK shared the original proposal for traffic movements (slide 12) and reiterated GB's comments about successful conversations with the hospital who have now agreed to allow National Grid to use access through the hospital and out onto site through the back of UK Power Network's site at Bengeworth Road. DK continued that this means there is a significant reduction in HGV movements on residential roads – with the removal of the spur tunnels and the diversion of vehicles through the hospital, this removes about 75% of vehicles from the residential streets. He confirmed that Harbour Road and the majority of Southwell Road won't be affected by vehicle movements, but the one-way system will take traffic down through Padfield Road.

DK continued that National Grid are still talking to the hospital for two-way access through the site, but that he's having difficulties getting in touch due to how busy they are. Touching on the easement point, DK noted that with the spur tunnels, tunnelling was required beneath four properties meaning four voluntary agreements were required. With the new route, there will be 25 individuals plus the hospital and Network Rail – resulting in up to 30 agreements National Grid need to secure. DK confirmed the majority have heads of terms agreed and solicitors instructed, and that conversations have been positive.

GB confirmed National Grid is in conversation with all of those affected, and reassured residents they will not be directly impacted unless National Grid has been in touch. He echoed that National Grid is committed to doing the right thing for the end consumers and regulators, and that as Project Director he is accountable for striking the right balance between consent, land permissions, risk and buildability. He confirmed that the latest changes are a better solution for the project, but it does require two or three things landing. He mentioned National Grid has had difficulties tunnelling under hospitals because of the sensitive nature of equipment and knew this was a conversation that would take longer. He finished by stating that National Grid had erred on the side of caution with this when submitting the original screening assessment last July.

Positive outcomes since July 2020:

MF moved on to discuss engineering solutions and what they mean for the project and locally. He continued that not having to do the spur tunnels removes about six months of fairly intensive work onsite and the associated material movement, resulting in an overall reduction in HGV movements in the first phase of shaft and tunnel works. MF confirmed that the tunnel boring machine (TBM) will go straight from New Cross through the shaft – all that National Grid need to do is sink the shaft to full depth and prepare it for the TBM coming through in good time. The TBM approaches the area in approximately April next year (2022), the shaft must be fully prepared ahead of this.

MF continued by confirming that this results in less work on site, meaning there will be less noise and dust producing activities, and the requirement for night-time working is reduced. MF noted that if we can proceed with the shaft sinking works in good time the need for night-time working could be entirely removed. MF echoed DK that there would also be fewer HGV movements on residential roads, both daily and with overall numbers.

Next steps:

The presentation continued with GG explaining next steps for the consenting timescales. She confirmed that all work discussed by MF has been taking place over the last nine months, including revising the environmental assessment. She confirmed that at the end of this month (April 2021) National Grid will be submitting the screening assessment to the London Borough of Lambeth. There will be five days of validation work, and from there the council will send all interested parties – including residents – a letter of notice confirming that the 21-day consultation period has begun. GG explained that it is quite unique to have a consultation period at a screening stage, but that National Grid understand how important this is, so it has been factored into timescales. The consultation will all be done formally through the council website, so all feedback is captured as part of the screening determination.

GG continued that in June 2021 the council will consider the assessment National Grid has produced – all conversations National Grid has had with the council to date about additional assessments or updates to assessments (such as the Daylight and Sunlight assessment) have been taken into account and will form part of this application. GG confirmed that there is a month of consultation and set up before the screening assessment will come out. If it's a negative assessment, the next steps in July are for National Grid to submit the application for the Certificate of Lawfulness and works can proceed on site from 1 August.

GG continued by confirming that National Grid has not yet completed the full design of the headhouse and annexe building, but that there will be an opportunity for residents to comment on the materials and the façade further down the line – this is built into the prior approval process with the council. GG continued that National Grid have already agreed a similar consultation period around this element once the detailed design is complete.

On the next slide, GG confirmed the importance of the timeline, repeating MF's comments that the TBM will be passing through the area next April, and that National Grid need to make sure the shaft is sunk ready for the TBM to come in. She continued that this is why National Grid is unable to confirm that they will not be using extended working hours, but that within its assessment these unknowns have been looked at with a conservative approach to make sure the correct level of mitigation has been applied. GG concluded by confirming that if the project works to the timescales presented, this will remove the requirement for 24/7 working and prolonged working hours and avoid impacting customer bills. She

stressed the importance of the need to minimise delays to rewiring London and that the solution presented benefits to the community, and National Grid has worked through and done its due diligence.

Current works on site:

GB passed back to MF to discuss current works on site and FN to discuss UK Power Network's operational works.

MF confirmed that National Grid has been preparing the site for start of shaft construction, but that shaft construction will now not take place until National Grid has gone through the steps outlined by GG. He confirmed that site establishment activities will be continuing in isolation over the next 4-6 weeks, these would have been taking place in parallel with shaft construction. He continued by explaining that National Grid has two more deep wells to install in the vicinity of the shaft, and some follow up pump tests to ensure the groundwater level at the base of the shaft can be lowered for safe shaft construction. He confirmed National Grid will continue with these works so that any issues can be de-risked now. National Grid will also be pouring foundations for what will be the crane location in the vicinity of the shaft and a muck bay where spoil from the shaft can be stored in a retained area, as well as some additional work for setting up the site road and access ways, and medium to longer term welfare. MF concluded by stating that working hours will remain the same, 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday, with no works currently intended on Saturdays during the present enabling works. National Grid will continue to work to and monitor noise limits to mitigate disruption as best as possible.

UK Power Networks work:

FN picked up with an update on works on the UK Power Networks operational site, stating that he appreciates there have been enquiries and questions raised about work at night and out of hours, with some residents impacted directly by this.

He continued that mitigations from the previous meeting have been implemented on site. FN continued by explaining that a lot of work on site is reactive, such as works taking place out in the field or on the network. UK Power Networks staff have been subject to disruption around how their materials are stored on site, with some materials moving slightly closer to residential properties on Southwell Road, creating some issues with noise and night-time activities. FN confirmed that UK Power Networks has been working with the site team to try to minimise noise as best as possible. He continued by explaining that they have moved and planned some of the items which are required overnight or out of hours so staff and personnel will be moving this equipment in a communal area which is further away from site during the day so they can have access during the night to aid an emergency. He continued by stating that this might not be 100% effective, but UK Power Networks is working closely with the site team so if there are any issues or questions he will be taking those up with the site team and making necessary changes.

FN confirmed that noise monitoring has been installed on site and that all daytime work today was within the tolerances of the monitoring equipment. He continued by recognising that out of hour works is the main concern and reiterated that they are working on scheduled planning and moving the materials to a different location. FN concluded by reminding residents of the hotline number (0800 783 2855) and that National Grid and UK Power Networks' liaison officers and relations team will be directing questions to the appropriate people on site.

Engagement with residents:

JC concluded the presentation by outlining planned engagement with the CLG moving forward. He reminded residents that after submission at the end of the month there will be a 21-day council consultation period. He confirmed that National Grid does not anticipate holding any CLGs during that period to keep channels separate, so all queries go to the council, but that National Grid will look to hold a CLG after that period of consultation before any further works on site. JC again reminded residents of the hotline and email.

JC closed the presentation 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.

Site

The first question asked for a wider explanation about whether Bengeworth Road's inclusion in the LPT 2 project is a direct result of a request from UK Power Networks. GB responded, mentioning the three transmission circuits which are the needs case for the LPT 2 project, running from Wimbledon to Bexley. He explained that this type of project is called a non-load driver, to replace assets that already exist. The Bengeworth Road site was called upon following a consultation with UK Power Networks looking at the cost of network reinforcement in their network as well as upstream reinforcement and demand profiles that go into the next 15-20 years.

GB continued, answering another question from the same resident, stating that there will be a third transformer on the Bengeworth Road site at some stage, and to not engineer a solution for it now would be inefficient and against what National Grid is obliged to do for its regulator.

A resident addressed FN, asking him to confirm whether the piles of road barriers and signs that UK Power Network workers move early in the morning and after midnight would be moved, so the activity would be taking place in a different location. FN confirmed that UK Power Networks are looking into ways to facilitate the operations of the site – he noted that if this includes moving some of the equipment which is causing noise out of hours, UK Power Networks will be looking to move this away. FN continued by explaining that they are looking into implementing scheduled working, to temporarily move equipment that needs to be collected out of hours so operatives can collect without disturbing residents. This will need to be trialled to see if it minimises noise as the distance to properties would be 30m further away – UK Power Networks will see if this makes a difference.

The resident followed up, asking why there were no emergency works over the Easter weekend. GB responded that he had previously worked on street works for National Grid Gas and that emergencies cannot be anticipated. He continued that UK Power Networks workers are keeping lights on in local streets and responding to localised situations. FN added that during public holidays, UK Power Networks do dispatch working out of two South London sites, Bengeworth Road and Elton Grid, near Catford. It depends on the severity of works and faults that get recognised, these get dispatched onto personnel that have elected to work during public holidays. Typically, there is less work taking place, but emergencies are still tended to.

Screening Assessment

A resident asked for more detail about the discussions with Lambeth Council that led to the withdrawal of the Certificate and the revised approach. GG responded, stating the discussion was around the mitigation details in the construction, environmental and management plan, and the air quality, noise and vibration management plans, focused on securing mitigation through a legal process. She continued by explaining that National Grid has now come to an agreement about which legal process can be used for securing that mitigation. If a negative screening approval comes through this means the project can progress with unilateral undertaking to make sure that all parties are happy that National Grid is committed to these mitigation measures and following them through.

Another resident asked whether National Grid or the council are paying Avison Young for the new screening report. GG answered that Avison Young are auditing the new screening report at the request of the council. GB and GG confirmed that the council is paying.

The next resident question asked whether those who National Grid paid for the two spur easements will have to return the money – JC confirmed they would not.

HGV movements

JC took a question from Cllr Dickson about mitigation around Northland Street as a result of using KCH access. MF confirmed that National Grid are aware that this could cause issue for residents on Northland Street. He continued that National Grid has offered the hospital some resurfacing works as

part of the access arrangement and would look to work with the hospital if there were opportunities to do anything further with the road. MF mentioned the example of the short, sharp speed bumps on the road which could cause noise when empty trailers pass over them. He concluded that if National Grid can assist the hospital with anything in that area to smooth the road out and create less noise, they will look to do this, but it will be difficult to control any noise out of hours.

DK picked up a question about 50% access, confirming that National Grid have met with the Director at the hospital and previously shared proposals. He continued that he has been trying to set up a meeting to discuss the opportunity of 2-way traffic and MF's views on how we can improve things down that road and reduce the impact to the neighbours, but they are proving difficult to get hold of them at the moment. DK noted that the hospital has its own concerns about the high number of their own vehicles that use that access, but that he hopes this can be discussed in a meeting and two-way traffic agreed. He reiterated that National Grid is at the hospital's disposal, but positive conversations have been had previously.

JC next asked about the reductions and peaks in HGV movements. MF responded that the initial proposal included the requirements to do spur tunnels as well as shaft sinking and based on best knowledge at the time last July National Grid added leeway due to some uncertainty about how the works would progress. He confirmed that numbers are reassessed as the project team learns more, and figures for the shaft works have been revisited taking into account experiences on the wider LPT project to date where four shafts have already been sunk to a similar depth and scale. National Grid now knows more accurately what type of numbers are required – MF stated that at the moment it's looking like an average of 36 for the shaft construction phase, with the spur tunnel phase disappearing which would have added an additional six months of similar traffic volumes. MF reconfirmed that access both ways through the hospital would improve this even further. The peak vehicle figures is still 60 vehicles with a maximum of 120 movements to allow for peaks, for example if a mass concrete pour was required. MF confirmed National Grid does not expect to go down this methodology route, it's just there if required.

JC followed up with a question from Cllr Thackray on current HGV movements on site, asking what quantity are using Herne Hill Road and what quantity are using Coldharbour Lane. MF answered that he couldn't confirm at the moment which routes HGVs are taking to get to Padfield Road as the construction logistics plan allows for either. He stated there is no more than five or six HGVs per day at the moment – GB clarified this equates to five in to site and five out, and the 36 MF mentioned earlier is 18 in through the hospital and 18 out through Padfield Road. Cllr Thackray followed up asking whether MF could hazard a guess about the route taken due to the ongoing LTN situation. MF replied he believes HGVs are coming into Coldharbour Lane and doing a left-hand turn onto Padfield Road, but that he would check. JC confirmed the team would take the question away and come back with a response.

Tunnel Boring Machine

JC next took a question about the direction of the TBM, where it's coming from and where it will be going to. GB responded that the TBM will travel from the LPT site in New Cross on the Old Kent Road in Southwark and is due on-site next month. It will bore towards the shaft at Bengeworth Road and onto the Kings Avenue site. GB continued that from May, when the TBM arrives on site, it takes several months to erect as the machines are 200m long and are launched in slow motion. The TBM travels west from New Cross to Wimbledon. The spoil exhumed from the ground comes out at Old Kent Road and the concrete that goes into the ground to line the tunnels goes into the site at Old Kent Road. National Grid is not proposing to use Bengeworth Road for any of that activity.

Neighbouring Constructions

JC continued with a question for GG about mitigation and impact related to sites within 500m of Bengeworth Road, noting that as the reports are being worked on at the moment there is only a limited amount of detail to share. GG responded that cumulative impact assessment has been done as part of the impact assessment of all sites within 500m. She continued that liaison between the sites is part of the Council's remit – if it's to talk about HGV movements then it's their transport and planning department. She added that if those conversations are brought to the table National Grid is happy to

attend, and that the latest report will include a detailed cumulative effects section, which should answer any further questions.

Community Engagement

A question from Cllr George raised the point that not every resident is aware of this Zoom meeting or able to attend. She asked how National Grid will make all residents aware of the upcoming consultation period in May so they could comment or object. GG responded that the consultation will be run through the council who will be contacting all interested parties and sharing details of the consultation on their website. She confirmed that National Grid will be sharing a link to this and encouraged residents to pass on to any other interested parties. JC said that this will also be communicated to members of the CLG who are encouraged to pass the details on to neighbours and friends.

Site Layout and Design

GG moved on to discuss substation design, noting the current design is still being worked through and until National Grid knows what kit goes into the annexe building and substation it can't refine the design further. She explained that this is why the prior approval process exists further down the line, confirming that National Grid are actively looking at the design, particularly the appearance, to see whether the height can be reduced – although this depends on the equipment that goes inside it.

A resident followed up, asking how the equipment stored in the annexe or substation could change the design. GG noted that she is not an engineer, but that the design is dependent on what goes in it. She continued that National Grid is doing designs for elements of lots of other buildings at the moment, such as the headhouse, so to make sure its design house is used effectively and efficiently, those conversations about the final look and the façade will happen once there is more information about what needs to go into the buildings.

FN added that the electrical equipment UK Power Networks is looking to put in is at a very high-level stage and still in the design phase, but typically it would be equipment that is allowing electricity to be handled in a safe manner so companies like National Grid and UK Power Networks can distribute out electricity via cables to its customers. FN likened it to a mass scale, engineered version of a fuse box typically going into a building, as well as the transformers you would have on site. These will be similar to the existing transformers on site, just a more modern version. GG confirmed there would be a consultation period around the prior approval process for the community-based design input, with a time frame of towards the end of this year. JC confirmed CLG members would be made aware of any developments here.

JC turned to GG to ask a resident question about realignment and what that means in terms of the above ground set up and prior approval. GG responded that the headhouse is linked to shaft location, and with the realignment moving the shaft location will not move. The prior approval is around the GIS building and the annexe, and from the current design the findings of the environmental assessment are definitive and conclude that there won't be any significant effects. She confirmed that the detail is in the assessment that will be coming through.

GG went on to answer a question about wider enhancement measures, confirming that National Grid is in conversations with the council about enhancement measures in Ruskin Park as part of its commitment to biodiversity net gain. Though there are no significant effects from ecology or a landscape or townscape perspective, as part of National Grid's company net gain it is looking to ensure where that mitigation or enhancement is. GG concluded that National Grid has not yet come to a final decision with the relevant part of the council, but this will be included in communications once confirmed.

JC asked for Priya Shah (PS) to share the presentation slides with the proposed tunnel and transport routes. JC confirmed this would also be added to the website. PS showed slides of the previous and new transport routes, (slides 12 and 13) JC noted the Southwell and Harbour Road as well as the east of Cambria Road are no longer included. One way access to the hospital travels up Cambria, left onto Southwell Road and right out of Padfield Road. JC stated again these maps would all be made available online, with information added to the website as well as the CLG presentation.

A resident asked for the new headhouse location on the map, JC confirmed this is marked with the red circle – this is the shaft location and the headhouse sits above. MF added that this location has not changed, the tunnel alignment has now been re-routed to come through the shaft rather than run under Coldharbour Lane and require spur tunnels. He confirmed that the headhouse is a rectangular building sitting on top of the shaft.

A resident raised the point that a co-op on the map is marked as a public house, JC confirmed he would look into this after the meeting.

Closing remarks

JC ended the meeting by thanking residents and councillors for their time, noting that National Grid will be reviewing the council consultation with interest. He reminded residents that the community email and phonenumber remain open, and that the next CLG will be held once the council consultation is complete.

MEETING ADJOURNED
