

Delegated Officer Recommendation

Case Officer: **AMB** **Date:** **04 November 2021**
Consults Expiry: **9 June 2021**
Site Notice Expiry: **22 June 2021**
Advert Expiry: **25 June 2021**
Neighbour Expiry:
Expiry Date: **22 October 2021**
Extension of Time: **22 October 2021**
BVPI Category:

WD/2021/0733/MAJ

ERECTION OF NEW SUBSTATION TO INCLUDE NEW 400kV GSP SUBSTATION OPERATED BY NATIONAL GRID, NEW 132kV SUBSTATION OPERATED BY UK POWER NETWORKS, SINGLE-STOREY SUBSTATION AMENITIES BUILDING TO HOUSE WELFARE FACILITIES AND SWITCHING ROOM, AUXILIARY ROOMS, WIDENING OF EXISTING BELLMOUTH TO PROVIDE PERMANENT ACCESS, INTERNAL ACCESS ROAD, ELECTRIC FENCE, PARKING AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING.

LAND TO THE WEST OF CROCKSTEAD FARM, EASTBOURNE ROAD, HALLAND BN8 6PT

Parish: East Hoathly with Halland

LB ref:

Received Complete: 12 May 2021

Cons Area:

Recommendation - Approval

Case Officer **Initials** **Date**

Pre-commencement conditions agreed with applicant?

CIL Liability checked by Officer **Initials** **Date**

CIL Liable **No**

CIL Exemption Claimed **Yes** **No**

Team Leader/Senior **Initials** **Date**

Authority to Delegate Required? **Date**

Fields filled in on Custom screen on Datawright?

Admin

Decision notice checked **Initials** **Date**

CIL Liability Notice Issued

	NO	Date	12/11/2021
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Reason CIL Notice Not Issued:

- Less than 100 m²
- Not Residential
- No increase in floor area
- Other:

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which this permission is granted.
STD4A

REASON: To meet the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2. Notwithstanding approved plans and documents, no development shall commence until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, to demonstrate that an agreement (deed of easement or reliable evidence of sufficient land rights being held to secure the effective surface water drainage of the site) is in place with the relevant landowner to ensure that surface water drainage outfall from the site can be established across third-party land and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure surface water drainage system can connect to the outfall indicated in the application documents, having regard to SPO9, SPO13 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are sought prior to commencement of development to ensure that the surface water drainage, shown on submitted plans as having an outfall beyond the application site area, can be secured with for the lifetime of the development.

3. No development shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage system has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority. The drainage system shall incorporate the following:
 - a. Detailed drawings and hydraulic calculations. The hydraulic calculations shall take into account the connectivity of the different surface water drainage features. The calculations shall demonstrate that surface water flows can be limited to 2 l/s for all rainfall events, including those with a 1 in 100 (plus climate change) annual probability of occurrence.
 - b. The details of the outfall of the proposed drainage system and how it connects into the watercourse shall be submitted as part of a detailed design including cross sections and invert levels.
 - c. The detailed design shall include information on how surface water flows exceeding the capacity of the surface water drainage features will be managed safely.

d. The detailed design of the surface water drainage features (underground tank) shall be informed by findings of groundwater monitoring between autumn and spring at the location of the proposed tank. The design should leave at least 1m unsaturated zone between the base of the drainage structures and the highest recorded groundwater level. If this cannot be achieved, details of measures which will be taken to manage the impacts of high groundwater on the hydraulic capacity and structural integrity of the drainage system should be provided.

REASON: In order to secure a satisfactory standard of development, having regard to SPO9, SPO13 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are sought prior to commencement of development to ensure that detailed surface water drainage is designed for the lifetime of the development and so it can be incorporated into the construction.

4. A maintenance and management plan for the entire drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority, before any construction commences on site to ensure the designed system takes into account design standards of those responsible for maintenance. The management plan shall cover the following:
 - a. This plan should clearly state who will be responsible for managing all aspects of the surface water drainage system, including piped drains.
 - b. Evidence of how these responsibility arrangements will remain in place throughout the lifetime of the development.

The drainage management plan shall remain in place for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure the satisfactory maintenance of un-adopted drainage systems in accordance with SPO9, SPO13 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 167 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are sought prior to commencement of development to ensure that maintenance is incorporated into the detailed drainage designs.

5. No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the County Council Archaeologist. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved written scheme for the programme of archaeological works.

REASON: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with the requirements of SPO2, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 199 - 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are required prior to commencement of development to enable any further evidence from any archaeological evaluation excavations to be assessed and suitable mitigation designed so that construction on site does not damage below ground archaeology.

6. No phase of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post – investigation assessment (including provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition) for that phase has been completed and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the County Archaeologist. The archaeological site investigation and post - investigation assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the programme set out in the written scheme of investigation.

REASON: To enable the recording of any items of historical or archaeological interest, in accordance with the requirements of SPO2, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 199 – 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

7. No development shall commence until a wildlife management has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management plan shall include detailed proposals for the protection of bats, birds, reptiles, great crested newts, hazel dormice and badgers, water voles and otters and measures, including translocation if required, for the mitigation of any harm to them likely to be caused by the development. The works and other measures forming part of that plan shall be carried out in accordance with it.

REASON: To ensure the survival and protection of important species and those protected by legislation that could be adversely affected by the development, having regard to SPO1, SPO2, WCS12 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are required prior to commencement of development so that measures take into account results of additional pre-construction ecology works recommended by the ecology reports submitted with the application.

8. No development shall commence for the development hereby approved until a scheme for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity purposes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with:
- paragraph 4.2 of Water Vole and Otter Report date stamped 19 March 2021
 - paragraph 4.2 of Reptile Report date stamped 19 March 2021
 - paragraph 4.3 of Hazel Dormouse Report date stamped 19 March 2021
 - paragraph 4.2 of Great Crested Newt Survey Report date stamped 19 March 2021
 - paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of Breeding Bird Report date stamped 19 March 2021
 - paragraph 4.3.2 of Badger Survey Report date stamped 19 March 2021
 - paragraphs 5.3.1 – 5.3.4 of Bat Survey Report date stamped 19 March 2021,

Details shall include timescales for implementation and future management. The approved scheme of enhancements shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and thereafter so retained.

REASON: To ensure the survival and protection of important species and those protected by legislation that could be adversely affected by the development, having regard to SPO1, SPO2, WCS12 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are required prior to

commencement of development so that measures take into account results of additional pre-construction ecology works recommended by the ecology reports submitted with the application.

9. Notwithstanding the details in the Stage 1 and 2 Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report date stamped 19 March 2021, before development commences a full Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which shall include numbering and detailing of trees, confirming root protection areas, routing of service trenches, overhead services and carriageway positions and any details of no dig techniques along with associated use of geotextiles and an indication of the methodology for necessary ground treatments to deal with compacted areas of soil. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. TP05(M)

REASON: To preserve trees and hedges to be retained at the site in the interests of visual amenity and the character of the area, having regard to SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy EN12 and EN14 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 130, 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are sought prior to commencement of development so that a detailed arboricultural method statement is compiled once construction details have been provided, having regard to paragraph 5.1.3 of the Stage 1 and 2 Arboricultural Report.

10. Notwithstanding the details of the Construction Management Plan submitted with the planning application, no development shall take place, including any ground works or works of demolition, until a revised detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Local Highway Authority. Thereafter the approved CTMP shall be implemented and adhered to in full throughout the entire construction period. The CTMP shall provide details as appropriate but not be restricted to the following matters:
- the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction including relating to excavation works, which need to avoid peak network times;
 - a pre-construction condition survey of the surrounding highway network for the construction deliveries to the site;
 - the method of access and egress and routing of vehicles during construction, including details for the abnormal loads;
 - the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors and for delivery vehicles;
 - a workers Travel Plan to include measures such as a minibus;
 - the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste;
 - the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development;
 - the erection and maintenance of security hoarding;
 - details for members of public to contact which need displaying on hoarding/close to access point;
 - the provision and utilisation of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders);
 - details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works;
 - details of temporary signage;
 - details of contingency provision should the A22 road need to be closed at any time during construction.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area, having regard to Saved Policies TR3 and EN27 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO12 and SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), and paragraphs 110 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are required prior to commencement of development to ensure that a construction traffic management plan is agreed in advance of works starting in order to provide appropriate controls are known and in place for this phase.

11. Notwithstanding the Outline Construction Environment Management Plan date stamped 19 March 2021, no development shall take place until a revised/detailed Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall provide details as appropriate but not be restricted to the following matters,

- (i) Works to construct temporary hardening and surfacing of the site during construction;
- (ii) The siting and design of the construction compound(s) including any structures/buildings, fencing, vehicle parking and storage, and of any concrete batching plant to be used in the construction of the development;
- (iii) The deposition, grading and finishing (in relation to local landform and habitat) of soil and other natural materials not removed from the site during the construction works;
- (iv) Pollution prevention measures to be adopted during the construction phase to ensure that suitable bunding is used around fuel tanks and that excavation/construction works do not harm local sewerage, groundwater supplies, surface water quality or the quality of subsoil;
- (v) Construction mitigation and post-construction reinstatement measures;
- (vi) Measures to control noise, dust and mud arising from the construction phase of the development, complying with guidance found in BS 5228 `Noise Vibration and Control on Construction and Open Sites` (or any subsequent equivalent guidance);
- (vii) Measures to clean and maintain site entrances, and the adjacent public highway;
- (viii) Temporary site illumination;
- (ix) Arrangements for the disposal of waste and surplus materials;
- (x) Wheel washing facilities;
- (xi) Emergency procedures and pollution response plans;
- (xii) A site environmental management plan with measures to be taken during the construction period to protect wildlife and habitats; and
- (xiii) The timing and phasing of the above elements.
- (xiv) Hours of construction.

Details in the CEMP shall take into account other details subject to pre-commencement approval required by this planning permission, and the CEMP shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details, for the duration of the construction works, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of protecting existing ecological and hydrological features in and surrounding the site, and in the interests of highway safety and residential amenity having regard to saved Policies EN1, EN27 and TR3 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO1, WCS12 and WCS14 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 and paragraphs 8, 110 - 112, 130, 174 and 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021. Details are required prior to commencement of development

to ensure that a construction management plan is agreed in advance of works starting in order to provide appropriate controls for this phase.

12. Prior to commencement of the development, details of measures to reduce the size of the access onto the C26 Eastbourne Road, post-construction in the form of removable furniture shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The approved details shall be implemented within 3 months of the completion of the development or first use of the substation whichever is sooner.

Reason: Details are sought prior to commencement of development so that measures to reduce the width of the access post-construction are taken into account in detailed construction design, and to ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway upon completion of the development, having regard to Saved Policies EN27 and TR3 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO12 and SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), and paragraphs 110 – 112 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

13. The re-constructed means of access from the C26 Eastbourne Road shall be in the position shown on drawing numbered PDD-33800 -LAY-307 Revision 2 date stamped March 2021. Prior to the construction of the access, details of the layout and specification of the access construction, including details of levels and surface water drainage, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Local Highway Authority.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway, having regard to Saved Policy TR3 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO12 and SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), and paragraphs 110 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

14. Notwithstanding the details of drawings numbered PDD-33800 -LAY-312 (sheet 1 of 2) and PDD-33800 -LAY-312 (sheet 2 of 2), date stamped 20 September 2021, before preparation of any groundworks and foundations on site for the development hereby approved, full details of earthworks shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation (including tree and hedgerow protection measures) and surrounding landform, and including details / elevations of embankment(s)/retaining walls to the northern perimeter of the site. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. LA07(M)

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landform on the interests of visual amenity within the locality in accordance with SPO1, SPO13 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policies EN14 and EN27 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 130, 174 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

15. Notwithstanding the details on drawing number PDD-33800-ELE-304 rev 2 date stamped 19 March 2021, before works above ground to erect electricity substation equipment within the UKPN compound, drawings confirming the height of the 132kV

cable sealing ends, disconnectors and busbars between the north and south ends, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and the interest of securing appropriate finish to the development, having regard to Saved Policy EN27 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy (2013), and the NPPF 2021.

16. Before any substation electricity equipment is erected above ground, details of hard and soft landscaping within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include details of hard surface finishes, existing trees and hedgerows to be retained (and measures for their protection) and the soft landscaping details shall include planting plans, written specifications, schedules of plants (noting species, which should be indigenous), planting sizes and proposed density.

All planting and seeding and/or turfing comprising the approved details landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following either substantial completion of the development or the development first being brought into use, whichever is the sooner.

Any trees, shrubs or plants which within a period of five years of the completion of the development die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

REASON: In the interest of visual amenity and the character of the area and to ensure a satisfactory environment having regard to SPO13 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policies EN14 and EN27 of the Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 130 and 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

17. No part of the development shall be brought into use until visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 80 metres to the south-west and 2.4m by 215m to the north-east have been provided at the proposed site vehicular access onto Eastbourne Road [C26] in accordance with the approved plans. Once provided the splays shall thereafter be maintained and kept free of all obstructions over a height of 800mm.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway, having regard to Saved Policy TR3 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO12 and SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), and paragraphs 110 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

18. A landscape management plan, including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the development being brought into use and the landscape management shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan over the period specified. LA09(M)

REASON: To protect visual amenity and the character of the area and to ensure a satisfactory environment having regard to SPO1, SPO13 and WCS14 to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policies EN14 and EN27 of the Wealden Local

Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraphs 130 and 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

19. The development, post-construction, shall not be brought into use until vehicle parking and turning areas have been provided in accordance with details which have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and the areas shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking and turning of motor vehicles

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway, having regard to Saved Policies TR3 and TR16 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998), SPO12 and SPO13 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), and paragraphs 110 and 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

20. No floodlighting, security lighting or other external means of illumination of the site shall be provided, installed or operated in the development, except in accordance with a detailed scheme which shall provide for lighting that is low level, hooded and directional, and has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter. EL02

REASON: To preserve the rural and residential amenities of the locality having regard to SPO1, SPO13, WCS12 and WCS14 to the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, Saved Policy EN1, EN8 and EN29 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998, coupled with the requirements of paragraph 174, 180 and 185 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

21. This planning decision relates solely to the information contained within the application form, the following plans and documents:

Ref.	Date Stamped.	STN4
DD-33800 -LAY-300 Rev.11	19 March 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-302 Rev.8	15 April 2021	
PDD-33800 -ELE-304 (sheet 1 of 2) Rev.2	19 March 2021	
PDD-33800 -ELE-304 (sheet 2 of 2) Rev.2	19 March 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-305 Rev.1	19 March 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-305 (sheet 1 of 3) Rev.2	15 April 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-305 (sheet 2 of 3) Rev.2	15 April 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-305 (sheet 2 of 3) Rev.2	15 April 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-306 Rev.2	19 March 2021	
PDD-33800 -ELE-311 Rev.0	19 March 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-312 (sheet 1 of 2)	20 September 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-312 (sheet 2 of 2)	20 September 2021	
PDD-33800 -LAY-307	19 March 2021	
P622537_05_02 Rev. A	19 March 2021	
19-984.TC01	20 August 2021	
Planning, Design and Access Statement	15 April 2021	
Ground Investigation Report	15 April 2021	
Revision of Ground Gas Risk Assessment	20 August 2021	
Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment	19 March 2021	
Transport Statement	15 April 2021	

Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	19 March 2021
EMF Assessment for proposed 400kv substation	19 March 2021
Operational Noise Assessment for the Proposed	19 March 2021
Landscape & Visual Appraisal	19 March 2021
Landscape & Visual Appraisal Addendum	26 August 2021
Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy	19 March 2021
Stage 1 and 2 Arboricultural Impact Assessment	19 March 2021
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	15 April 2021
Water Vole and Otter Report	19 March 2021
Reptile Survey Report	19 March 2021
Hazel Dormouse Report	19 March 2021
Great Crested Newt Survey Report	19 March 2021
Breeding Bird Report	19 March 2021
Phase 2 botany and NVC Report	19 March 2021
Bat Survey Report	19 March 2021
Badger Activity Survey Report	19 March 2021
Aquatic Walkover Report	19 March 2021

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt.

The local planning authority's reasons for its decision to grant planning permission are set out in the officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website at www.planning.wealden.gov.uk

NOTE: Should alterations or amendments be required to the approved plans, it will be necessary to apply either under Section 96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for non-material alterations or Section 73 of the Act for minor material alterations. An application must be made using the standard application forms and you should consult with us, to establish the correct type of application to be made.

22. The Local Highway Authority's requirements associated with this development proposal will need to be secured through a 171/278 Legal Agreement between the applicant and East Sussex County Council. The applicant is requested to contact the Transport Development Control Team (01273 482254) to commence this process. The applicant is advised that it is an offence to undertake any works within the highway prior to the agreement being in place.
23. Any damage caused to the highway as a direct consequence of the construction traffic shall be rectified at the applicant's expense. The applicant is advised to enter into a Section 59 Agreement under the Highways Act, 1980 to cover the increase in extraordinary traffic that would result from construction vehicles and to enable the recovery of costs of any potential damage that may result to the public highway as a direct consequence of the construction traffic. The applicant is advised to contact the Transport Development Control Team (01273 482254) to commence this process.
24. NOTE TO APPLICANT: The applicant is advised that the erection of temporary directional signage should be agreed with East Sussex Highways (01345 6080193) prior to any signage being installed.
25. NOTE TO APPLICANT: The applicant will be required to obtain a permit for any highway works in accordance with the requirements of the Traffic Management Act, 2004. The applicant should contact East Sussex Highways (0345 60 80 193) to

commence this process. The applicant is advised that it is an offence to undertake any works within the highway prior to the permit being in place.

Executive Summary

The site is approximately 9.7 hectares in area adjacent to the A22 and Eastbourne Road, and encompasses paddocks to the west of the Crockstead Farm equestrian centre and hotel site. High voltage overhead power lines cross the site and there is a pylon at the northern edge of the site boundary. To the north of the site is woodland in High Cross Park, with Hamilton Palace beyond.

This application seeks planning permission to develop a new 400kV and 132kV Grid Supply Point (GSP) substation. It will have a National Grid substation compound (approximately 180m x 310m) connecting to the overhead power lines and will contain electrical equipment consisting of a series of vertical structures supporting overhead busbars with ancillary equipment and buildings and two super grid transformers. The maximum height of the structures would be approximately 13m. The proposed UKPN compound (approximately 80m x 140m) is to have electrical equipment including 132kV cable sealing ends, disconnectors and busbars. An existing vehicular access point to Eastbourne Road is to be widened for the development.

The proposed development will contribute to maintaining essential infrastructure for electricity supply beyond the boundaries of the District, and thus significant public benefits.

The development will bring significant change to the site and its immediate setting, and there will be some adverse visual effects. New tree and vegetation planting to perimeters of the site will provide longer-term mitigation to address visual effects. The application identifies effects of development on protected species and suitable licensing will be required and mitigation measures to off-set loss of habitat.

The effects of development upon amenities of residents in the vicinity of the site are considered acceptable. Construction works will bring noise and disturbance for a temporary duration, and management plans will assist in this respect. The substation in operation would not have unacceptable effects on residential amenities. A noise report has been assessed by the Council's Pollution Control team and they have not objected to the details.

The significant change the development will bring will not harm designated heritage assets, archaeology investigations can be secured by appropriate planning conditions, and some harm to setting of a neighbouring non-designated asset does not attract significant weight, and is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Effects on highways from the completed development are considered acceptable and construction phase management plans can provide suitable measures to control temporary impacts. The proposed development suitably address flood risk and surface water drainage.

On balance of considerations, this proposal for a development in the countryside provides public benefits that are not significantly and demonstrably outweighed by other material considerations. Accordingly, approval is recommended.

1. Statutory Bodies and Residents - Responses

1. ESCC - Highway Authority

This is issued in response to amended plans/additional information received from Wealden District Council on 18th August, 24th August and 15th September 2021.

Whilst the Construction Traffic Management Plan [CTMP] is not acceptable in its present form the applicant is willing to submit a revised CTMP through a planning condition which would include contractors parking, delivery times etc. and is therefore acceptable. The applicant is also willing to place removable street furniture post to narrow the access post construction. Thus I do not wish to restrict grant of consent subject to conditions being included in any grant of consent.

Access

The applicant has confirmed that the proposed access onto the C26 will be used [in a limited capacity] by the occupants of Crockstead Farm with keys issued for gates accordingly which is accepted.

Whilst I appreciate that large and/or abnormal loads may be required in the future to use this access the applicant has agreed that the western radius could be reduced post construction. The large 30m radius on the western side of the access would be reduced to 10m by the provision of removable street furniture such as bollards and “stick on” kerbing to allow smaller vehicles to be at a right angle when exiting post construction. This would allow the access construction itself to remain insitu should any abnormal/large loads need to access the site at a later date. These details would need to be submitted and agreed through a condition of any planning permission granted.

No further details have been provided in regard to the existing access onto the A22 to Crockstead Farm. However, it is assumed that as the existing access onto the A22 [to Crockstead Farm] is not within the red site area all traffic to and from this development will be provided from the access onto the C26 [Eastbourne Road] only.

Construction Traffic Management Plan [CTMP]

Whilst the contents of the submitted CTMP is not acceptable this can be revised through a condition of the planning permission. Any revision will need to include further details regarding the abnormal loads and contingency plans should the A22 have to be closed as part of the construction of this development. The applicant should engage at an early date with ESCC’ network management team in order to address the abnormal load deliveries and routing of such vehicles which needs to be agreed well in advance of commencement of development on site.

Parking/turning post construction

The parking and turning areas for vehicles post construction are not clear on the submitted plans. However, this can be agreed through a condition of any planning permission.

Conditions

1. Prior to commencement of development hereby permitted, the reconstructed access onto the C26 [Eastbourne Road] shall be in the position shown and details

of the layout and specification for the construction of the access which shall include details of levels and surface water drainage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority and the use hereby permitted shall not commence until the construction of the access has been completed in accordance with the agreed specification.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

2. No part of the development shall be first occupied until visibility splays of metres by metres have been provided at the proposed site vehicular access onto Eastbourne Road [C26] in accordance with the approved plans. Once provided the splays shall thereafter be maintained and kept free of all obstructions over a height of 800mm.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

3. The development, post construction, shall not be brought into use until parking and turning areas have been provided in accordance with details which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and the areas shall thereafter be retained for that use and shall not be used other than for the parking and turning of motor vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway.

4. No development shall take place, including any ground works or works of demolition, until a revised Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved Plan shall be implemented and adhered to in full throughout the entire construction period. The Plan shall provide details as appropriate but not be restricted to the following matters:

- the anticipated number, frequency and types of vehicles used during construction, these need to avoid peak network times
- the method of access and egress and routeing of vehicles during construction, including details for the abnormal loads
- the parking of vehicles by site operatives and visitors and for delivery vehicles,
- a workers travel plan to include measures such as a minibus
- the loading and unloading of plant, materials and waste,
- the storage of plant and materials used in construction of the development,
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding,
- details for members of public to contact which need displaying on hoarding/close to access point
- the provision and utilisation of wheel washing facilities and other works required to mitigate the impact of construction upon the public highway (including the provision of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders),
- details of public engagement both prior to and during construction works.
- Details of temporary signage
- Details of contingency provision should the A22 need to be closed at any time during construction.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area.

5. No development shall take place, including demolition, on the site until an agreed pre-commencement condition survey of the surrounding highway network has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any damage caused to the highway as a direct consequence of the construction traffic shall be rectified at the applicant's expense.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and the amenities of the area.

6. Prior to commencement of development details of the reduction in size of the access onto the C26 [Eastbourne Road] post construction in the form of removable furniture shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and the works shall be completed upon completion of the construction works.

Reason: To ensure the safety of persons and vehicles entering and leaving the access and proceeding along the highway

Initial ESCC highways comments:

Whilst there would be no highway objection in principle these comments need to be addressed prior to the application being acceptable to the highway authority. Please take this email as my formal response.

1. General

The proposed construction of the development is stated as commencing on 10/1/22 till end of Oct 2023 thus a period of 21 months for construction. The highest number of HGVs is likely to be 564 a week [113 a day] during 4/4/22 – 18/7/22 some 16 weeks, with the total vehicles being quoted as 709 a week or 141 a day during this period. Of these 22 a day would be cars and 7 LGV's. There is no mention of the number of vehicles visiting the site once the development is operational – whilst it is noted that this may be minimal this information should still be provided for clarity.

2. Access

It is noted that the main access to the site is from the existing reconstructed access onto the Eastbourne Road [C26]. The proposed access onto Eastbourne Road is within a 60mph national speed limit whereby the recommended visibility requirements are 2.4m x 215m in both directions.

Visibility to the west, towards the A22, is substandard being only approximately 80 metres. The forward visibility, particularly of drivers turning left from the A22 onto Eastbourne Road, would be slightly less than the 80 metres to be able to see vehicles sitting waiting to turn right into the main access.

However, given that the applicant is proposing mitigation measures to be put in place [such as signage] and bearing in mind the temporary impact of this proposal enabling construction the visibility shortfall is accepted in this instance. The developer/applicant will need to agree with ESCC all appropriate signage/mitigation measures prior to commencement of development.

An access plan has been produced indicating an improved access [plan no. LAY-307] to be 8.1m wide with a 10m radius on the eastern side and a 30m radius on the western side. The access is shown as indicative at this stage as it may need to be altered due to the unknown dimensions of the abnormal load. Therefore the access layout and construction details would need to be submitted to and approved prior to commencement

of development and dealt with through a 171/278 Agreement with ESCC. This access currently also serves Crockstead Farm and the TS states that this access will need to be maintained at all times for the Crockstead Farm/equestrian centre due to previous permissions on the site.

Outline landscape plan Number:- 05_02A indicates a line of new trees to be planted along the route of half the existing internal access currently serving to Crockstead farm/equestrian site. It also shows a new hedge/trees to be planted across this internal access where it abuts the new access on its western radius. The access plan Number LAY-307 also indicates a new post and rail fence across this existing internal access. Furthermore the landscape plan indicates, in yellow, a section of the existing internal track to be used by Crockstead Farm only. The TS clearly states that access for Crockstead Farm needs and would be retained via this access onto the Eastbourne Road. However, this would mean that traffic to Crockstead Farm would have to use the same access route between the contractor's compound and the proposed substation to exit onto the Eastbourne Road both during and after construction.

Clarification is sought on the intention of this route for Crockstead Farm from the applicant.

The application states that the reconstructed access onto the Eastbourne Road would remain following completion of the works. However, I would wish to see the access narrowed down to ensure future drivers exit the site onto the C26 at a right angle to the carriageway, thus the junction radius on the western side should be reinstated to a maximum radius of 10m with the access width narrowed to 6m. Confirmation of the size of vehicles to use the access post development is required to ensure this proposed reduction would be a suitable layout. This aspect could be dealt with through a condition of any planning permission.

The plans also note the existing access onto the A22 serving Crockstead Farm/hotel/equestrian use is indicated on the overall site plan. No detailed layout or plan of this access is given and how this access ties into the development site.

Furthermore, this access onto the A22 and the route to the proposed development is not shown on any plans and is outside both the red and blue site areas. Thus the red line needs to be extended. Vehicle tracking showing swept path of the vehicles to use the whole of the route is also required.

3. CTMP

The CTMP states the access onto the A22 is to be used during busy construction times by LGV's and cars only and that they will enter the site by turning left only into this access [thus from the north] only due to the restrictions of the access. How will this be enforced?

The Eastbourne Road [C26] access is stated to be used by all proposed development HGV's and AIL + egressing for all LGV's [up to 3.5ton] and cars which suggests the LGV's and cars entering the A22 access would exit via the C26 access. However, as mentioned above the A22 access and connection through to the development is not shown. No tracking plans have been given to ensure all vehicles using the A22 access can use this route.

Plans do not show contractors parking but mentions 9 seater minibus for contractors to ship in from elsewhere. More information needed regarding this provision and suggest a workers travel plan is provided together with space for a minibus to park on site.

No turning/unloading areas are shown within the site and no vehicle tracking has been provided for all vehicles turning on site.

No mention of complaints who do public contact? Details also need to be displayed on hoarding/close to access point.

All temporary signs should be setback 450mm (minimum) from the kerb face (section 8.3 refers) – the CTMP wrongly states 300mm.

All HGV delivery times would need to be provided outside AM and PM network peak hours.

Has adequate provision been made if the A22 has to be closed? Whilst the CTMP mentions alternative routes such a route would need to be implemented and suitable for all vehicles to access the site.

Traffic movements on the A22 will also be monitored by Network management as the proposed volumes do have the potential to cause congestion and therefore HGV delivery times would have to be adjusted to off peak periods accordingly.

The most suitable abnormal load route will be confirmed by Network management

I would wish to be re-consulted following the applicants response to the above comments.

2. Southern Water Services NO OBJECTION

Environment Agency shall be consulted directly regarding the use of a septic tank drainage which disposes of effluent to sub-soil irrigation.

The Council's technical staff and the relevant authority for land drainage should comment on the adequacy of the proposals to discharge surface water to the local watercourse.

It is possible that a sewer now deemed to be public could be crossing the development site. Therefore, should any sewer be found during construction works, an investigation of the sewer will be required to ascertain its ownership before any further works commence on site.

3. WDC - Conservation and Design Officer NO OBJECTION

I have considered the contents of the Desk Based Assessment and have no argument with the conclusions in respect of heritage matters impacting on the historic built environment. I have no further observations to make.

4. WDC - Arboriculture and Landscape Officer
Comments not received.

5. Fire & Rescue Service

Comments not received.

6. ESCC - County Archaeologist

NO OBJECTION

This application is accompanied by a thorough desk – based archaeological assessment that places the site within an archaeological and historic context. This desk – based assessment concludes that the potential of the site to contain buried archaeological remains dating to the prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval periods is low. However, it is judged that the potential of the site to contain buried archaeological remains of post-medieval origin is high. I broadly concur with these conclusions, but note that evidence of prehistoric activity (including humanly–struck flint and at least one pit) was discovered at Bentley Solar Farm, located c.550m to the south-west of the site under current consideration.

In light of the potential for impacts to heritage assets with archaeological interest resulting from the proposed development, the area affected by the proposals should be the subject of a programme of archaeological works. This will enable any archaeological deposits and features that would be disturbed by the proposed works to be either preserved in situ, or where this cannot be achieved, adequately recorded in advance of their loss. These recommendations are in line with the requirements given in the NPPF.

In furtherance of this recommendation, we shall be available to advise the applicant on how they can best fulfil any archaeological condition that is applied to their planning permission and to provide a brief setting out the scope of the programme of works.

The written scheme of investigation, referred to in the recommended condition, will set out the contracted archaeologist's detailed approach to undertake the programme of works and accord with the relevant sections of the Sussex Archaeological Standards (2019).

Recommended conditions:

- i) No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*
- ii) No phase of the development hereby permitted shall be brought into use until the archaeological site investigation and post – investigation assessment (including provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition) for that phase has been completed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The archaeological site investigation and post - investigation assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the programme set out in the written scheme of investigation.*

7. Environment Agency (Solent and South Downs Area)

Comments not received.

8. WDC-Rother - Pollution Control

NO OBJECTION (following additional

information).

Latest comments:

Further to the comments outlined below, satisfactory answers have been provided by the applicants (sent to Environmental Health by email on 24/8/2021 by the Planning Officer). Therefore, Environmental Health can recommend approval.

Conditions have not been stated as it is assumed that the noise mitigation measures (e.g. enclosures) and gas protection measures (e.g. prefabricated steel buildings either on stilts or concrete bases) as outlined by the applicants are part of the plans and shall be installed.

First comments:

Potentially Contaminated Land

The Ground investigation Report, undertaken by ATKINS, dated 12 August 2020, Ref 20190464-GEO-007-2 has been considered.

Overall, the investigation is satisfactory. However, with respect to the assessment of ground gases (7.2.4) whereby it was determined:

“This GSV is associated with a low risk scenario typical of natural soils with a high organic content and would fall within a Characteristic Situation for the site of CS2 where gas protection measures may be required to be implemented for new structures”.

Acknowledging that this situation seems to be caused by natural, organic rich soils, are the consultants confirming that gas protection will be needed for the building on site?

Noise

Potentially Contaminated Land

The Operational Noise Assessment for the Proposed Little Horsted 400 kV Substation, undertaken by Richard Morris (National Grid), dated 16/03/21, ref, EEN/412/NOTE2021 Issue 1.1, has been considered for this application.

Assuming that the proposed acoustic enclosures, with the outlined insertion loss specification of 20dB loss at 100Hz, will be installed around the Super Grid Transformers, the assessment appears to be satisfactory.

However, could it please be clarified how often the crackle will occur from the other substation equipment (bus bars, conductors, down droppers etc.) and whether this crackle will be audible at nearby receptors? Should this noise source be incorporated into the modelling?

Overall Recommendation

Insufficient information: could answers to the questions please be provided.

9. WDC Drainage-Footpaths Officer

NO OBJECTION

Flood Risk

The site is stated to be wholly within EA Flood Zone 1. Therefore the sequential test is met and the exception test will not be required. The site does not appear to be at risk from general tidal or sea flooding or from failure of a drainage asset such as a canal or reservoir. The majority of the site is not at risk from fluvial flooding with the possible exception of the area along the northern boundary.

The majority of the site at very low risk of flooding from surface water. However, there is a low risk, south to north surface water flowpath running through the centre of the site and the pond just outside the site to the north, where it joins a medium to high risk flowpath following the route of the ordinary watercourse.

There is an ordinary watercourse (the Ridgewood Stream) abutting the northern boundary of the application site. There are no ponds within the application site, but there is one immediately outside the northern boundary and others in the vicinity of the site.

There are no records of flooding at this location within this Council's land drainage database.

The Geological Map states that the southern part of the site is on the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation of siltstones, mudstones and sandstones and the northern part is on the Wadhurst formation of mudstones. There are superficial Alluvial Deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel around the watercourse on the northern boundary of the site.

Surface Water Drainage

There are no adopted, public surface water sewers in the vicinity of this site, so this method of surface water disposal is unavailable.

Infiltration is the first recommended drainage method in the SUDS hierarchy but the underlying mapped geology of the site and the ground investigation suggest limited soakage potential in this area.

The solution proposed is for the majority of the site to be loosely covered in gravel and to drain as the undeveloped site does at present, by a mixture of infiltration and run-off into the ordinary watercourse. Those hard-surfaced areas at risk of producing contaminants and pollution are to be contained by bunds and drained via oil interceptors to attenuation tanks which in turn discharge via a hydrobrake into the Ridgewood Stream. The connections to the stream are shown facing against the direction of flow on the drainage strategy plan. This plan shows two parallel surface water systems serving the two parts of the site. This may be needed for operation reasons but there is no drainage reason why the two systems could not be combined with a consequent small saving in construction costs.

The Council's Environmental Health Department may wish to comment on the pollution control measures.

In considering the drainage principles proposed for the site, the Lead Local Flood Authority, ESCC, will require full detail in the drainage calculations used to design the system and Wealden, as the planning authority, would support this request. The calculations should prove that the final design can accommodate the site runoff rates for the standard 1 in 100 year rainfall event plus 40% climate change allowance.

There is no prospect of such a system being adopted and it will need to be maintained by the two companies (or their successors) for the lifetime of the development. The Council would expect to see details of a site specific maintenance plan in due course when a surface water drainage scheme is finalised with particular attention paid to maintaining the pollution control elements in good condition.

Any new connection from the attenuation tanks to the existing watercourse would require an ordinary watercourse consent from the Lead Local Flood Authority over and above any planning permission which may be granted.

*In my opinion, the information provided within this application is adequate for this application. Should you be minded to allow planning permission, I would wish to see **conditions** applied (No development shall take place until full details of the surface water drainage scheme, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority).*

10. ESCC - Rights of Way (Footpaths)

Comments not received.

11. ESCC - SUDS & Flood Management

NO OBJECTION

“We previously objected to the proposed development as discharging to the nearby watercourse would require crossing third-party land. The applicant has submitted evidence that third-party landowners agree, in principle, to establishing an outfall across their land. We are therefore satisfied that it will be possible to manage surface water runoff from the development and that the proposed development will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

We request that the applicant submits a deed of easement at the detailed design stage, signed by all landowners, to allow an outfall can be established to the watercourse and ensures the continued maintenance of the outfall over the lifetime of the development.

Any works affecting the watercourse adjacent to the development site will have to be discussed and agreed to by the County Council. The applicant should approach the LLFA for discussions once the nature of these works is known on watercourse.consenting@eastsussex.gov.uk

Initial groundwater monitoring has been carried out and this indicates that there is the potential for shallow groundwater across the site. We request that further groundwater monitoring is carried out using data loggers between November and April when groundwater levels are at their highest to give a detailed understanding of groundwater levels beneath the site.

If the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning permission, the LLFA requests the following comments act as a basis for conditions to ensure surface water runoff from the development is managed safely.

1. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed surface water drainage system shall be submitted in support to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage system shall incorporate the following:

a. Detailed drawings and hydraulic calculations. The hydraulic calculations shall take into account the connectivity of the different surface water drainage features. The calculations shall demonstrate that surface water flows can be limited to 2 l/s for all rainfall events, including those with a 1 in 100 (plus climate change) annual probability of occurrence.

b. The details of the outfall of the proposed drainage system and how it connects into the watercourse shall be submitted as part of a detailed design including cross sections and invert levels.

c. The detailed design shall include information on how surface water flows exceeding the capacity of the surface water drainage features will be managed safely.

d. The detailed design of the surface water drainage features (underground tank) shall be informed by findings of groundwater monitoring between autumn and spring at the location of the proposed tank. The design should leave at least 1m unsaturated zone between the base of the drainage structures and the highest recorded groundwater level. If this cannot be achieved, details of measures which will be taken to manage the impacts of high groundwater on the hydraulic capacity and structural integrity of the drainage system should be provided.

2. A deed of easement shall be submitted to the planning authority, demonstrating that an agreement is in place with the relevant landowners, to ensure an outfall can be established across third-party land and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

3. A maintenance and management plan for the entire drainage system shall be submitted to the planning authority before any construction commences on site to ensure the designed system takes into account design standards of those responsible for maintenance. The management plan shall cover the following:

a. This plan should clearly state who will be responsible for managing all aspects of the surface water drainage system, including piped drains.

b. Evidence of how these responsibility arrangements will remain in place throughout the lifetime of the development

These details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall thereafter remain in place for the lifetime of the development.

4. The applicant should detail measures to manage flood risk, both on and off the site, during the construction phase. This may take the form of a standalone document or incorporated into the Construction Management Plan for the development.

5. Prior to occupation of the development evidence (including photographs) should be submitted showing that the drainage system has been constructed as per the final agreed detailed drainage designs.”

NOTE: The LLFA's first comments did not raise objection to the application, and recommended conditions. The LLFA re-issued comments when aware that proposal for surface water drainage include a connection beyond the application site and across a third party's land. The third set of comments – those above – address additional information sought when the objection was raised).

12. WDC - Bio-diversity Officer

The protected species survey reports are deemed to have been undertaken to best practice standards. The mitigation and compensation measures proposed for protected species are deemed suitable.

I note the District Level Licencing Scheme for great crested newt is due to be live in East Sussex later this month, and the applicants may wish to also consider this as one

option with regard to GCN mitigation. East Sussex now has a local Newt Officer who the consultants may wish to discuss the matter with.

With regard to biodiversity net-gain, I note proposals state: "In accordance with National Grid's policy, a scheme for biodiversity net gain (BNG) will be developed. To offset the loss of habitat for all bird species recorded on the site, green space should be retained and / or created at the site as part of the final scheme design. This may include the retention of as much of the woodland and hedgerows as reasonably possible on the site, as well as the creation of new habitat such as ponds to provide greater habitat diversity" (Breeding Bird Report January 2021).

And:

"Opportunities for net biodiversity gain should also be considered early in the design process to meet National Planning Policy requirements. This may include enhancement of the woodland pond; woodland habitat management; hedgerow enhancement (to create a more diverse hedgerow than is currently present), and the planting of a new hedgerow; translocation of dead wood on site and use of arisings (tree roots and stems) to provide important habitats for saproxylic invertebrates and reptiles; and wildflower meadow planting. Nest boxes for bats, birds, dormice and hedgehogs would also increase the habitat potential within the adjacent woodland." (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, November 2019).

A biodiversity enhancement condition has been recommended.

The boundaries of the site have been identified as having importance for foraging bats and a lighting strategy is recommended in the bat survey report. A suitable condition has been recommended below.

No ecological objection, subject to the following recommended conditions:

NC08 - Nature Conservation - Wildlife Management Plan

Before preparation of ground levels for development approved a wildlife management plan shall be submitted and approved, to include as appropriate detailed proposals for the protection of bats, birds, reptiles, great crested newts, hazel dormice and badgers, and measures for the mitigation of any harm to them likely to be caused by the development. The works and other measures forming part of that plan shall be carried out in accordance with it.

NC09 - Nature Conservation - Implementation of biodiversity enhancement as in Ecological Survey Reports.

Prior to preparation of ground levels for the construction of the development hereby approved, a scheme for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity purposes, in accordance with paragraph ##### of the submitted #####, dated #####, to include timescales for implementation and future management, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme of enhancements shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and thereafter so retained.

EL02 - External Lighting - No Floodlighting (B)

No floodlighting, security lighting or other external means of illumination of the site shall be provided, installed or operated in the development, except in accordance with a detailed scheme which shall provide for lighting that is low level, hooded and directional, and has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter. EL02

13. East Hoathly & Halland Parish Council NO OBJECTION

“No objection but regret there being no financial or electricity supply benefit to the community.”

14. Framfield Parish Council SUPPORT

“The Parish Council supports this application but would like reassurance from the applicant and WDC that the environmental and ecological mitigations are given due weight and implemented to ensure as much protection is given to the fauna that have been identified on and around this site. This needs to be done during the construction and in perpetuity of its operation.”

15. Little Horsted Parish Council COMMENT

Residents understand the need for a reliable and stable electricity system in the area to allow for additional and existing homes. They would like to highlight that this is a very large project and the impact on those few residents who live close by will be substantial. The site is set on a ridge making it highly visible. They would like to see increased landscaping from that in the proposal of a mature nature to help mitigate this impact and consideration of materials which are sympathetic to the natural landscape if possible. Given the disruption and substantial road closures to residents on Bradfords Lane in order to remove pylons from the area (South Downs National Park), residents are disappointed to have an additional pylon installed at this site.

Other third party responses (including local residents)

Six representations (from five households) have been received objecting to the application: -

- The substation will alter the beautiful landscape and be a permanent eyesore; pylons will obscure views of the South Downs.
- Major concern about noise from the super grid transformer, which will be a constant, non-stop low frequency hum.
- Close proximity low frequency has more impact, particularly at night when there is less ambient noise; this type of noise can blight people’s lives.
- This rural area is extremely quiet at night; noise mitigation proposed does not satisfactorily protect nearby houses from potential noise/vibration the substation will generate.
- The noise report is misleading and should not be given any weight - using British Standards BS4142 which are not applicable to low frequency noise; low frequency noise and assessment is given in NANR45 [1, 2].
- National Grid has not sufficiently prioritised and protected the local residents from the noise the new substations and new pylon will generate.
- There had been no independent noise impact survey.
- The WHO advises special concern with low frequency noise and lower criteria applicable; the WHO guidelines do not apply to industrial sources.

- The noise that pylons generate when there is moisture in the air is significant and will have an adverse effect on the quality of lives of residents; noise levels for two pylons is not known.
- National Grid has not sufficiently prioritised and protected the local residents from the noise the new substations and new pylon will generate.
- Noise protection should be above and beyond the standard protection, and area stay quiet at night.
- not convinced that we will not hear a hum if the wind direction is adverse, when our windows may be open, or outside in our garden.
- There had been no independent noise impact survey.
- Destruction of local Flora, fauna and wildlife habitat.
- The bat survey reports 12 bat species were detected at this site, demonstrating it is a rich habitat for these species.
- The development will devastate sites for breeding birds.
- If this development goes ahead, that native, local specific trees, wildflowers, meadows, ponds etc. are planted/created to help mitigate damage to the local ecology.
- An Environmental Impact Assessment should be required.
- Noise and nuisance during construction with 12-hour days (and potentially at night) over a two year period;
- There should be limitations on construction working hours to ensure local residents are protected from site noise and ambient light; no night time or weekend working.
- The volume of site traffic will have a negative effect in area and junction of Eastbourne Road and the A22 T-junction and has not been given satisfactory consideration and potential road traffic accidents at the junction.
- Construction traffic will add to traffic jams Eastbourne Rd/A22.
- The outline landscaping plan appears to show no planting on the North West boundary, leaving the site exposed; existing hedge and trees will not effectively screen the site.
- Concerned that soil will be removed from the site to others parts of Crockstead Farm and could affect neighbouring land.

2. Other Relevant Responses/Issues

Pre-Application Matters

The applicant has met with officers to discuss the scheme. The potential effects of the development upon the Low Weald landscape character, biodiversity, heritage assets, highways impacts and amenities residents in the vicinity were discussed and that assessment would inform the planning application.

The applicant has also undertaken consultation exercises with local parish councils and residents as part of community engagement.

3. Relevant Planning History

Application No.	Description	Decision and Date
WD/2020/6506/SO	Request for screening opinion for proposed substation and pylon work	Not EIA 31/07/2020
WD/2021/0837/OH	Proposed relocation of two sections of the 4vm overhead line.	No objection 11/05/2021

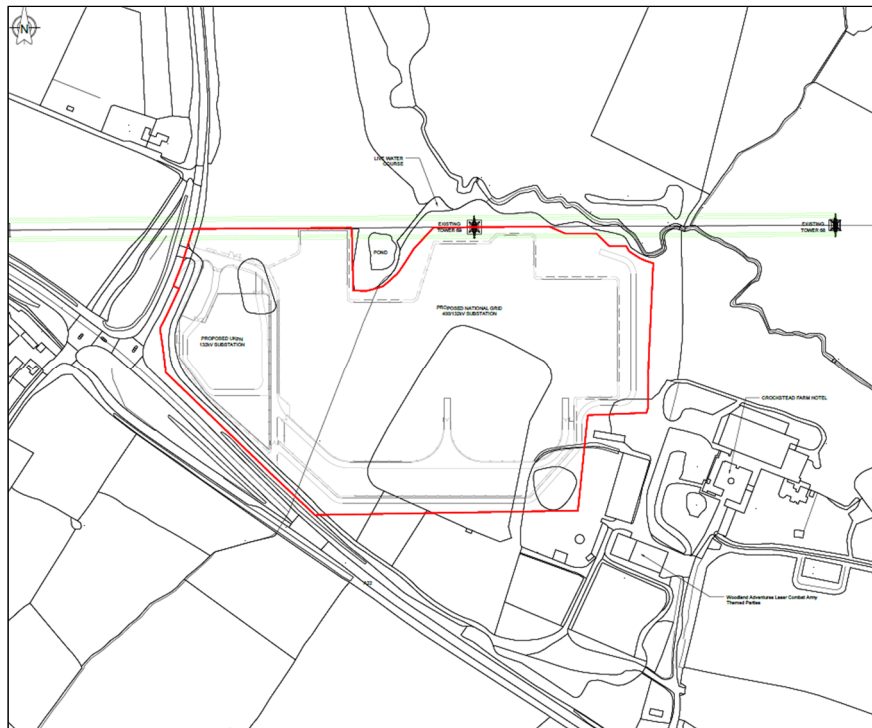
Application No.	Description	Decision and Date
WD/2021/6500/SO	Request for a screening opinion in respect of the proposed 400/132kv grid supply point substation, 132kv substation, temporary diversion of the existing overhead line and associated works, including two new pylons and the removal of an existing pylon.	Not EIA 27/01/2021

4. Details of Case

The Application Site

The application site is located to the north-east of the A22, and east of the C26 (Eastbourne Road), approximately midway between Halland village and Uckfield town.

The site is approximately 9.7 hectares in area, and encompasses paddocks to the west of the Crockstead Farm equestrian centre and hotel site. High voltage overhead power lines cross the site and there is a pylon at the northern edge of the site boundary. The site has sloping topography, dropping in northerly direction towards a stream. To the north of the site is woodland in High Cross Park, and Hamilton Palace is approximately 430m from the existing pylon and the ground levels rise up to the north in the direction of Palehouse Common.







The Development Proposals

This application seeks to develop a new 400kV and 132kV Grid Supply Point (GSP) substations.

The proposed National Grid substation compound (approximately 180m x 310m) is proposed to contain electrical equipment consisting of a series of vertical structures supporting overhead busbars with ancillary equipment; two super grid transformer bays including surge arrestors, disconnectors, circuit breakers and earth switches; two 400kV/132kV 240MVA super grid transformers including cooler banks; two 132kV bays including surge arrestors, disconnectors, circuit breakers and earth switches; and two 132kV cable sealing ends. The maximum height of the structures would be approximately 13m.

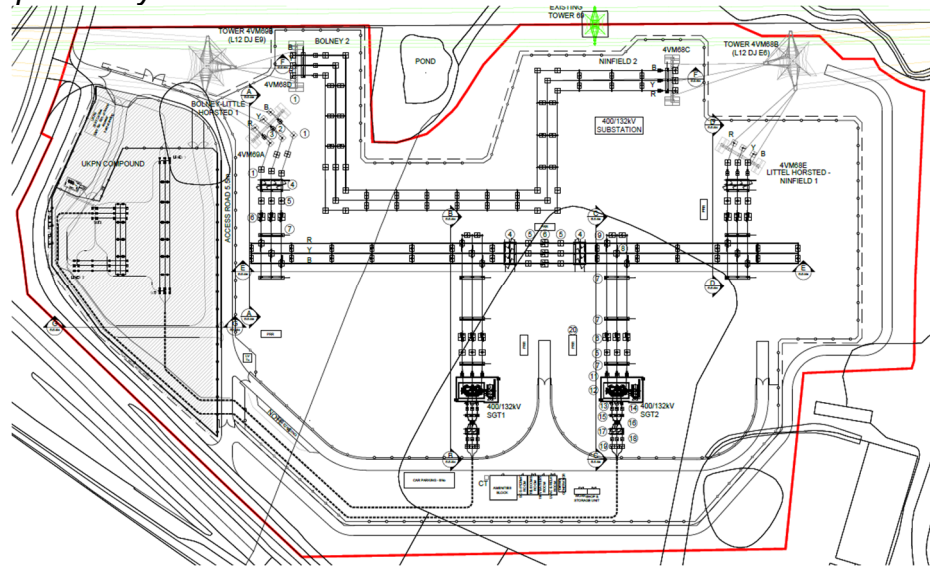
The NG substation will also include amenities buildings for welfare facilities and switchgear, portable building for accommodating to accommodate protection and control and low voltage AC supplies. The compound will be enclosed with fencing and gates.

The proposed UKPN compound (approximately 80m x 140m) is to have electrical equipment including 132kV cable sealing ends, disconnectors and busbars, auxiliary room, and perimeter fencing.

The Design & Access Statement reports that onwards connection to the UKPN distribution network would be made via underground 132kV cables and that not part of the application.

It is proposed to widen the existing vehicular access to Eastbourne Road at the western end of the site, and roads internal to the site will be formed to access the compounds.

Proposed layout of site:



Visual of east end (year 1 without perimeter planting):



Outline landscaping proposal:



Policy Framework

The up-to-date approved 'development plan' for Wealden District Council comprises the following documents:

- The Wealden District Council (incorporating part of the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy Local Plan (adopted 19th February 2013)
- The Wealden Local Plan (adopted December 1998) (Saved Policies).
- The East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Waste Local Plan (adopted February 2006) (Saved Policies).
- East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton and Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan (adopted February 2013).
- The Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan (May 2016)

On 28 March 2013 an application was made to the High Court under Section 113 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 challenging the validity of the Core Strategy on the grounds that it failed to comply with the requirements of Directive 2001/43/EC on the Assessment and Effect of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment and the implementing Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. This was dismissed by Order dated 21 February 2014. However, an appeal on 3 grounds was made to the Court of Appeal. On 7 October 2014, the Court of Appeal dismissed Grounds 1 and 2 relating to the housing numbers in the Core Strategy (original ruling was upheld).

Ground 3 related to whether the Council had considered reasonable alternatives to the use of a 7 km zone in relation to the provision of SANGS. On 9 July 2015 in response to a Court of Appeal decision, the Council has made changes to its Core Strategy Policy WCS 12 relating to Ashdown Forest.

Prior to the Court of Appeal Judgement Policy WCS12 provided that any net increase in residential development between 400m and 7km would be required to mitigate its recreational impact through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) and on-site visitor management measures. The reference to the 7km zone of influence and the specific mitigation identified in this policy has now been removed. However all planning applications will continue to be subject to the Habitat Regulations which protect the Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA).

The rest of the Core Strategy is unaffected therefore remains intact as part of the adopted development plan for the purposes of this application.

Certain policies of the Wealden Local Plan (1998) have been 'saved' via Direction of the Secretary of State dated 25 September 2007, under the provisions of Paragraph 1(3), Schedule 8 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Annex 1 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that these 'saved' policies still form part of the development plan.

Under 'saved' policies EN1 (sustainable development) and EN27 (layout and design) of the Wealden Local Plan 1998, the Council has also formally adopted the Wealden Design Guide, November 2008, as a Supplementary Planning Document. Some 'saved' policies and the design guide continue to have material weight where they are in compliance with the NPPF and CSLP (having regard to paragraph 216 of the NPPF).

The Council had proposed a new Local Plan. This was submitted for independent examination on the 18 January 2019. Following the Stage 1 hearing sessions into the Examination, the Inspector wrote to the Council advising that the Plan was unsound, could not proceed and should be withdrawn.

Relevant Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in force from July 2021 is a material planning consideration when assessing and determining planning applications. Due regard has been had to any relevant national policy guidance, in particular paragraphs 8, 11, 14, 25, 26, (73), 81, 82, 104, 110, 111, 112, 119, 120, 126, 130, 134, 152, 159, 161, 167, 169, 174, 175, 180, 183, 184, 185, 194, 195, 197, 199, 200 – 205, 218 and 219 of the NPPF.

Transitional provisions of the NPPF confirm that policies within the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998 saved under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 continue to form part of the Local Plan.

- Saved Policies GD2, EN1, EN8, EN12, EN14, EN27, EN29, TR3, TR16 and CS2 of the adopted Wealden Local Plan 1998.
- Spatial Objectives SPO1, SPO2, SPO12, SPO13, SPO15 and Policies WCS7, WCS12, WCS13 and WCS14 of the adopted Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan 2013.

National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

Principles of Development

The application site is located outside defined development boundaries and is in the Low Weald landscape character area. The site is close to a listed building (Totease Farm, approximately 170m to the south west). A public right of way passes to the east of the application site.

Main Issues / Policy Issues

Local Policy & Guidance:

The Core Strategy Local Plan seeks successful accommodation of growth to meet future needs whilst protecting and enhancing the essential rural character and high quality environment and promoting the countryside as a resource for recreation and tourism. The distribution of development has sought to avoid protected landscapes and the Core Strategy sets out, albeit with regard to housing development, that the views from the South Downs do form a constraint to development.

Saved Policies of the Adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) are more detailed in nature, setting criteria against which development will be considered. Saved Policy GD2 states outside defined development boundaries, development will be resisted unless it is in accordance with specific policies in the Plan. The 1998 Local Plan does not contain specific policies for electricity infrastructure.

Development within the Low Weald will only be permitted if it conserves the low rolling agricultural character of the landscape. In considering any proposal, particular regard will be had to:-

- (1) areas of unspoilt and remote countryside;

- (2) the setting of settlements;
- (3) areas on the fringe of adjacent statutorily designated landscapes;
- (4) the retention of woods, boundary trees and hedges;
- (5) attractive vernacular buildings and groups of buildings

The Wealden Climate Change Policy and Action Plan outlines how the Council plans to work to further reduce emissions. A target is to develop a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on sustainability and climate change, subject to the Local Development Scheme. Related to this, the Wealden Sustainability Strategy provides a framework to ensure sustainability is included in all the Council's strategies, plans, policies and actions.

National Policy & Guidance

Core principles of National Policy are set out in the NPPF which include encouraging the use of renewable resources, reducing greenhouse gas, addressing climate change issues and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The NPPF also provides that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, including giving great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of National Parks, which have the highest status of protection.

Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states *“where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

Paragraph 81 of the NPPF sets out that planning decisions should help create the conditions which business can invest. Significant weight should be placed the need to support economic growth, and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1): -

The overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-1) is part of a suite of NPSs issued by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. It sets out the Government's policy for delivery of major energy infrastructure. Paragraph 2.1.2 recognises that 'energy is vital to economic prosperity and social well-being and so it is important to ensure that the UK has secure and affordable energy. Producing the energy the UK requires and getting it to where it is needed necessitates a significant amount of infrastructure, both large and small scale'.

Para 2.2.20 notes that it is critical that the UK continues to have secure and reliable supplies of electricity as we transition to a low carbon economy and notes that to manage the risks to achieving security of supply we need sufficient electricity capacity to meet demand at all times and that electricity demand must be simultaneously and continuously met by its supply.

Para 2.2.22 states that pathways [for meeting targets of cutting greenhouse gas emissions] by 2050 show that the need to electrify large parts of the industrial and domestic heat and transport sectors could double demand for electricity. Electricity can be used for a wide range of activities (often with better efficiency than other fuels) and can, to a large extent, be scaled up to meet demand.

Para 3.7.2 states that both demand and supply of electricity will increase in the coming decades and that existing transmission networks will have to evolve and adapt to handle increases in demand. Para 3.7.4 states that new electricity infrastructure projects will add to the reliability of the national energy supply provide crucial national benefits which are shared by all users of the system. Para 3.7.10 develops this point noting that there is an 'urgent need for new electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure to be provided'.

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5): -

The National Policy Statement on Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) paragraph 2.2.2 states that the general location of electricity network projects is often determined by the location, or anticipated location, of a particular generating station and the existing network infrastructure taking electricity to centres of energy use. This gives a locationally specific beginning and end to a line.

Para 2.8.2 states new substations, sealing end compounds and other above ground installations that form connection, switching and voltage transformation points on the electricity networks can also give rise to landscape and visual impacts.

Listed Buildings

The Council has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). This requirement is reinforced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which at Chapter 16, sets the national agenda for 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. This, in particular requires the significance of any heritage asset to be identified and assessed that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) and for this to inform future change in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Sustainable development

The NPPF at part 2 seeks to achieve sustainable development. The NPPF sets out at paragraph 8 that there are 3 overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development within the planning system an economic objective, social objective and environmental objective. Paragraph 11 makes clear that Council's should approve development proposals without delay if there are no relevant development plan policies unless the impact of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the frame work as a whole. Saved Policy EN1 states that the Council will pursue sustainable development and refers to renewable energy.

Site selection/Development boundary/Need for Development

Saved Policy GD2 does specify that development outside of development boundaries will be resisted unless it is in accordance with specific policies in this plan. It is noted that some of the policies within the 1998 plan which are relative to this development have not been saved. Nonetheless, it is clear that the site for this development is

outside of the development boundary. Any development here would need to be justified.

The submissions state that the National Grid has a duty to efficiently operate the national electricity transmission system and ensure that the network adequately reflects the needs of its users including power generators, the regional DNOs, and the industrial, domestic and business users which rely on its supply.

The network needs continual renewal and adaptation incorporating both the maintenance and replacement of existing equipment and the development of new infrastructure to reflect changing patterns of power supply and demand.

The application sets out that there is a need for a new GSP: UK Power Networks, responsible for the operation of the 132kV network in the South-East, has identified the need to reinforce the existing network in the Lewes area, is due to increased demand arising from new development and need resilience in the existing 132kV network.

Submissions state that the applicant has undertaken studies of potential sites along the 400kV overhead power lines to identify potential sites for new GSP sufficiently close to the Lewes substation. The applicant advises that environmental and planning constraints were considered for identifying locations within the study area where a sufficient area of unconstrained land was available to potentially accommodate the proposed development, and the application site is the applicant's preferred means of meeting a new connection request from UKPN.

Design / Effect on Landscape Character

The development of a large scale electricity substation will result in significant change to the fields/paddocks. The site is visible from various public vantage points, with views from the A22 as the road drops in down from the east before rising slightly at the junction with Eastbourne Rd; and views from the public right of way at the east as it wends its way past Crockstead Farm and from the field rising up north of Ridgewood Stream.

There is also views within the Crockstead Farm holding that are semi-public with an access track and car parking area providing views across the expanse of the application site and its bowl-like topography.

The electrical equipment / apparatus proposed is functional, and the appearance of new industrial infrastructure into the undeveloped site will be in a stark contrast to undeveloped, open countryside. Excavation of ground is proposed, setting development lower into the existing topography, which will require embankments and retaining walls to be constructed at the edges of the substation layout. The most significant excavations are to the western end of the site with drawings showing cutting-in by up to 3.3m. The perimeters of both the National Grid and the UKPN substation will be enclosed with mesh fencing (2.4m high, and in the case of the National Grid substation, fencing will have an additional 1m of electrified fencing).

The development proposal has reliance on new tree and vegetation planting to create some visual screening and lessen visual effect of the large electrical structures and equipment. Structures will be visible above the hedgerows which border the site,

although from a number of viewpoints, the development would be viewed against a background of adjoining woodland and trees.

The application's Landscape Visual Impact Assessment quotes from a 2014 landscape character assessment that the local landscape area is a "*gently undulating, treed landscape, with views to wooded skylines contributing to recognisable sense of place. The overall sense of remoteness and tranquillity is diminished by noise and movement associated with the A22 main road corridor in the south and the residential edges of Uckfield in the northwest.*"

The LVIA considers the site is to be of 'medium' landscape value, and has medium susceptibility to the proposed change that would result from the development. The site is not within, or adjacent to, any designated landscapes and is bordered by a busy A-road to the south and existing 400 kV overhead electricity line and pylon to the north.

View from Eastbourne Road to the west and from the A22 to the south will tend to be transient for users of the roads passing by the site. Views of the substation electrical equipment and utilitarian character being brief for those travelling along the roads.

Change in landscape will arise due to the loss of some openness and the loss of mature trees and small areas of hedgerows located within the site and along the western boundary

The greatest level of visual change would be associated with views from the public rights of way passing to the east of the site (and views from the same right of way further north where it is on higher ground), land at Crockstead Farm. The views of the development from the public right of way will generally be of a transient nature – the development being highly visible along relatively short length of the footpath, and the closest views from the east being in positions near built form at Crockstead Farm.

The development in operation will be long term and permanent, although tree / vegetation planting mitigation measures can mature and reduce visual effects over time. The LVIA considers landscape effects on the immediate site during the first year of operation of the development will be moderate adverse, and that the magnitude of effects at year eight onwards, would remain as medium. With the sensitivity of the site assessed as medium, the overall level of landscape effects, from year eight and onwards, on the site is assessed as moderate adverse.

The LVIA asserts that visual effects on occupants of properties to the west of the site would be minor adverse. Nearby properties would have partially screened oblique views of the proposed development, particularly during winter months.

The LVIA proposes new tree planting, with a mix of small native trees and evergreen pines, the west, south and east of the site to provide an additional layer of visual filter towards the site, and proposed new hedgerow of mature species to allow some degree of screening during the first year of operation.

The development will result in visual changes, with development having localised landscape and visual effects, but not prominent changes to the characteristics of the wider landscape.

Consideration of Heritage Assets

The application's Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment provides a suitable assessment of heritage assets, identifying designated and non-designated heritage assets for consideration.

There is a grade II listed building, Totease Farmhouse, approximately 165m from the western corner of the application site. Its significance lies in its architectural and historic interest as a well-preserved example of post-medieval local vernacular. The proposed development is not located within the farm's operational hinterland, and the listed building is appreciated from its immediate vicinity, and immediately surrounding farmland is its setting. Existing screening along the A22 will reduce inter-visibility between the proposed development and the listed building. Accordingly, the development would have a neutral effect on the setting of the listed building.

There is potential for the site to contain buried archaeological remains. The County Archaeologist response is that a suitable worded planning condition can secure a scheme of archaeological works for investigation and recording.

The application's Assessment asserts that development would have an adverse impact on the historic setting of Crockstead Farmstead, which the assessments reports is a non-designated asset. The harm would not be substantial. New tree and vegetation planting will provide some visual screening.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The less than substantial adverse effect on non-designated Crockstead Farmstead does not outweigh the public benefits of the proposed development.

Impact on Neighbours / Local Area

As covered in the heading "Design / Effect on Landscape Character" the LVIA asserts that visual effects on occupants of properties to the west of the site would be minor adverse. Nearby properties would have partially screened oblique views of the proposed development, particularly during winter months. Given the separation distance between the proposed development and the nearest dwellings, immediate outlook and privacy for occupants would not be adversely effected.

The application's "Operational Noise Assessment" asserts that noise from equipment at the proposed substation would not result in adverse noise effects on dwellings in the near vicinity, even during the night time period which is more noise sensitive. This is on the basis of proposed acoustic enclosures around the Super Grid Transformers.

The noise assessment has been considered by the Council's Pollution Control team, and they do not raise objection or adverse comments.

EMFs:

The National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) includes policy on exposure to electric and magnetic fields (EMFs). NPS-EN5 states where it can be shown that there is compliance with the current public exposure guidelines and the policy on phasing, no further mitigation should be necessary.

Submissions include a statement that constitutes evidence issues relating to EMF exposure from the proposed substation. NPS-EN5 includes a “Simplified Route Map for dealing with EMFs” which the application submissions follow.

The assessment presented is that the maximum fields produced by the proposed substations, including the associated overhead line would be compliant with and significantly below the relevant exposure limits. It is therefore considered submission are compliant with the NPS-EN5 on this factor.

Construction works

The construction phase will be bring with it a significant level of activity at the site. It is inevitable that construction will result in noise and disturbance and that there will be coming and going of deliveries. Generally in planning, considerations of such transitory effects are discounted. A Construction Traffic Management Plan and Construction Environmental Management plan could be agreed pursuant to conditions which would allow control over the construction operations.

Ecology

A suite of ecological and habitat assessments have been undertaken to inform the application proposals. The site is dominated by rough semi-improved grassland, arable fields, broadleaved woodland, dense and scatted scrub and hedgerows, and there is a pond located immediately to the north of the site boundary.

The site has some ecological interest, with evidence of use by a range of protected and non-protected species. Mitigation measures, some of them subject to protected species licences, are proposed to ensure that any residual impacts on species and habitats are not caused.

The Council’s biodiversity officer consultation response advises that the protected species survey reports are deemed to have been undertaken to best practice standards, and the mitigation and the compensation measures proposed are deemed suitable.

Badger

A badger report has been provided (made confidential due its identification of badger locations). Construction works for the development proposed by this full application are not expected to require a licence for sett closure or disturbance. Proposed development will lead to the loss of foraging habitat, but the main areas of activity are to be retained post-development. The habitat creation works proposed in delivery of the proposed development are expected to provide for badgers by offsetting the adverse effect of the loss of foraging habitat.

Bats

A preliminary assessment of buildings, structures and trees located within the site boundary identified buildings and several trees as having potential for bat roosting habitat, with buildings discovered to support roosting bats.

Up to 12 different species of bat have been recorded commuting and foraging on and in proximity to the site. Two of these species are of high conservation importance, with one designated under Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive (Schedule 2) of the Habitats Regulations, 2017 (as amended)), and another UK rarest species, grey long eared (*Plecotus austriacus*) bat. Three buildings / structures identified immediately

adjacent to the site as having moderate or high suitability for roosting bats, with two confirmed as bat roosts during emergence / re-entry surveys, with results indicative of day roosts occupied infrequently by low numbers or individual common species.

The habitats on site include a variety of woodland types, including wet woodland, and waterbodies; ideal habitats for bat foraging. These are concentrated along the northern part of the site, which also functions as a commuting route.

The development proposal will result in the loss of semi-improved grassland and two pockets of tree groups, and development will result in effects from lighting, noise and vibration. Therefore a mitigation strategy will require implementing as part of any works, and the bat survey report includes an outline strategy.

Great Crested Newt

Surveys indicate presence of GCN in four of eight ponds surveyed in the area, including Pond 1. The numbers recorded represent a 'low' population with evidence of breeding recorded in 3 ponds, with the proposed works within 10m of one the breeding ponds. There will also be permanent loss of terrestrial habitat. A European Protected Species Mitigation Licence will be required to allow activities to proceed. This will ensure that site works are completed in a compliant and lawful manner.

Habitat creation works will also be required under the licence in order to allow the works to proceed without a negative impact on GCN. Submissions state the applicant is working to determine the effective options for mitigation.

Hazel Dormice

Dormouse nests were found along the edge of the woodland to the north of the site. The reports state new substation and associated infrastructure construction works or operational activities will not result in the loss of habitat suitable for hazel dormice.

Works to be undertaken under National Grid's permitted development rights (separate to the planning application for the substation) for the electrical overhead line will incur the loss of a small area of woodland around the existing pylon. Habitat will be reinstated following the removal of the pylon, and scrub and hedge along the stream will be managed to allow new cables to be strung between the existing and new towers.

Reptiles

Reptiles are identified as present at the site and population estimate of Slow-worm, Grass Snake and Common Lizard each correspond to 'low' in accordance with the relevant guidance. Submissions state that trapping and trans-location of reptiles ahead of site clearance will be required, to comply with relevant protected species legislation. The habitat creation measures proposed for GCN are also expected offer benefit to reptile species.

Otters and Water Voles

No otter or water vole field signs were recorded during surveys. Watercourses to the north of the proposed development site offer very limited suitable habitat. Pre-work checks will be required for any works within 5m of the pond or stream to the north of the site to ensure there are no signs of these species.

Breeding Bird

The surveys report 32 species were recorded, with 23 breeding, probable breeding or possible breeding species, and an assemblage important at a local level. Identified bird species at the site predominantly generalist species and are widespread across habitats in the UK, and predominantly using woodland, scrub and hedgerows, with the grassland and ephemeral vegetation in the site's centre of lesser value. The survey did identify several nationally declining species at the site, and the report states there have been and sightings of barn owl in the local landscape and an owl box in a building adjacent the application site boundary.

There is protection against disturbance of nesting barn owls, and noisy construction can be disturbing to birds. The report recommends the barn adjacent to the site be re-surveyed prior to construction – appropriate mitigation will be required if owls are nesting or roosting.

The bird survey report recommends green space be retained / or created at the site, and could include retention of as much woodland and hedgerow as reasonably possible. Installation of a variety of nest boxes on the site would provide additional nesting opportunities for a range of species including.

Traffic Impact and Access

The application proposes to make the existing access point at the Eastbourne Road end of the site significantly wider. This is primarily required to enable large, abnormal-sized vehicles to enter the site during the construction phase.

During the construction phase, there will be a significant amount of vehicular activity. The applicant has put forward a construction traffic management plan. Finer detail can be secured by planning condition prior to construction.

The ESCC highways officer comments that the Eastbourne Rd access visibility (in one direction) is below the standard 215m for a 60mph speed. That 80m visibility is towards the T-junction and vehicles travel from that direction will be at lower speed from negotiating the turn. During the construction phase the applicant is proposing mitigation to be put in place, such as signage, and the ESCC highways officer states the visibility shortfall is accepted in this instance.

The proposed National Grid and UKPN substation, when operational, would not generate significant daily vehicular activity. Additional information from the applicant states that it is expected that approximate vehicle movement will be two visits per week (light van or car) for inspections and minor maintenance; 2 HGV visits per year (in relation to foul water cesspit); maintenance work on electrical equipment or buildings once every two to five years (that could include daily visits of five to ten light goods vehicle over a period of up to eight week, and 3-6 HGV visits). There is also possibility of attendance at all hours to cater for emergencies.

The modified access (and the roads internal to the site) will provide entrance for vehicles entering for events at the Equestrian Centre at Crockstead Farm. It is stated that the Equestrian Centre hosts three events per week, and the equestrian event vehicles already use the Eastbourne entrance. The anticipated level of vehicular movements for the completed development would not result in adverse highways on highways on top of the existing the access and its current use by vehicles to Crockstead Equestrian Centre.

Tree and Landscaping Proposals

The removal of 40 trees and 4 groups of trees is required to facilitate the proposed development, and a small section of one hedgerow will be removed. The tree removal mostly focusses on separate blocks of trees, including a copse in the western section of the site a linear belt of trees along the south-western edge of the site and part of a copse in the eastern section of the site, along with a small number of scattered trees and low quality tree groups.

There will be a localised effect on landscape with the removal of the trees, as they contribute to landscape and have some visual prominence from roads adjacent to the site. The loss of trees is also discussed in the application's LVIA.

New planting of trees and vegetation is proposed, this provides some off-setting for the identified.

Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is in flood risk zone 1, with a low probability of flooding for land use planning. Flood risk zone 2 and 3 are close to parts of the northern perimeter but the application site is wholly in flood risk zone 1 and essential infrastructure in this location is acceptable in respect of flood risk.

The application's Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy considers the surface water flooding/drainage. There are some small pockets of land in the site that have a low probability of surface flooding concentrated within the existing valley line through the site and the existing pond feature just outside the northern boundary.

Proposals include earthworks to create a ground for the construction of the proposed substation, with ground profile broadly following existing topography. With a granular surface within the substation, is expected to reduce the depth of surface water flooding that could occur and minimise the risk to critical infrastructure.

The cutting into the existing ground levels in some areas will result in embankment slopes and run-off will need to be intercepted to manage the surface water flood risk within the development.

All surface water from the Proposed Development will be discharged into the Ridgewood Stream immediately to the north of the site. The Lead Local Flood Authority has not objected to the proposed drainage surface water drainage strategy. A drainage connection to Ridgewood Stream requires a pipework/outlet on land outside the application site. The applicant has provided information that the third-party landowner agrees in principle to an outfall across their land and access for continued maintenance of the outfall. A Grampian-style condition can secure details of the off-site drainage connection. Detailed drainage calculations and design are also appropriate for planning conditions.

Potentially Contaminated Land

The application submissions include a "Ground Investigation Report." Following consultation with the Council's Pollution Control team, and an addendum was also provided to address question regarding ground gas. The Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment of soil, soil-leachate and groundwater investigations to assess the risks to identified receptors, and a conceptual model does not identify unacceptable risks.

Pollution Control have not raised objection to the assessment, on the basis of gas protection measures formed by the bases of the proposed buildings.

5. Conclusion

The NPPF makes clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In accordance with paragraph 81 significant weight is afforded to the development of this site, which would directly contribute to the Government Industrial Strategy.

The proposed development will contribute to maintaining essential infrastructure for electricity supply beyond the boundaries of the District, and thus significant public benefits.

The development will bring significant change to the site and its immediate setting, and there will be some adverse visual effects. New tree and vegetation planting to perimeters of the site will provide longer-term mitigation to address visual effects. The application identifies effects of development on protected species and suitable licensing will be required and mitigation measures to off-set loss of habitat.

The effects of development upon amenities of residents in the vicinity of the site are considered acceptable. Construction works will bring noise and disturbance for a temporary duration, and management plans will assist in this respect. The substation in operation would not have unacceptable effects on residential amenities.

The significant change the development will bring will not harm designated heritage assets, archaeology investigations can be secured by appropriate planning conditions, and some harm to setting of a neighbouring non-designated asset does not attract significant weight, and is outweighed by the scheme's public benefits.

Effects on highways from the completed development are considered acceptable and construction phase management plans can provide suitable measures to control temporary impacts. And the proposed development suitably address flood risk and surface water drainage.

On balance of considerations, this development proposal in the countryside provides public benefits that are not significantly and demonstrable outweighed by other material considerations. Accordingly, approval is recommended.