

Bengeworth Road Community Liaison Group

Minutes of the meeting

Overview

On Tuesday 28 March 2023, the fourteenth Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting was held to discuss the works at Bengeworth Road, as part of National Grid's London Power Tunnels (LPT) project. All residents who previously signed up for the CLG were invited to attend the meeting. Emails were also sent to all ward (Herne Hill and Loughborough Junction) councillors and Helen Hayes MP.

Two residents and Cllr Deepak Sardiwal attended the session. The CLG followed thirteen previous CLG meetings held throughout 2021 and 2022 and three online engagement events in February 2022 on the design options for National Grid's Bengeworth Road substation and headhouse. National Grid also held three public information sessions between 2020 and 2021 about the overall works at Bengeworth Road.

Meeting called by: National Grid

Date: Tuesday 28 March 2023

Time: 6-7pm

Venue / format: Zoom

Speakers and panel members (5)

- Joe Cawley (JC) Director, Grayling (National Grid CR team)
- David Fagan (DF) Stakeholder Engagement, National Grid
- Mark Farmer (MF) Senior Project Manager, National Grid
- Hannah Harris (HH) Stakeholder Engagement Lead, UK Power Networks
- Andrew White (AW) Project Manager, UK Power Networks

Technical Support and notetakers (2)

- Belinda Charlton Grayling (National Grid CR team)
- Tom Cherrill Grayling (National Grid CR team)

Elected representatives (1)

- Cllr Deepak Sardiwal, Herne Hill & Loughborough Junction Ward

Residents and members of the local community (2)

Presentation

Introductions

Chair, Joe Cawley (JC), opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. He introduced himself as Head of Engage at Grayling before handing over to other panellists to introduce themselves.

Following this, JC briefly discussed housekeeping rules, noting that the presentation would be recorded for internal purposes and that the meeting minutes and presentation would be made available on the London Power Tunnels website after the session.

JC then provided a brief overview of what was to be covered in the meeting, which was broken down into the following sections:

- National Grid's construction update
- UK Power Networks' update
- Next steps and contact details
- AOB and questions from attendees

Update on the last few months

MF noted that NG has now received Prior Approval from the council for the substation building. He pointed out that the main changes to note are the size, position and layout of the substation. He also noted that the colour scheme of the substation has changed, including the metal cladding and brickwork which is now more "modern" and reflects some of the local residents' requested changes.

MF explained that headhouse foundation works are underway, including concrete works, drainage works, troughs and break-outs where future cables will come up and out of the shaft. Over the next few months, the headhouse build will be above ground as the steel frame is built. Foundation works for the substation should also start in mid-May, with the build continuing for the rest of the year and into the next. Headhouse works should reach completion by the end of the year, with equipment installation in 2024. Equipment should be fully installed in the substation by mid-2025.

MF showed two pictures, one of two cranes assisting with lifting materials around the shaft and another showing openings formed for the HV cable exits.

UK Power Networks update

AW noted that not much has changed since the last CLG meeting. He explained that the substation Prior Approval application has now been approved and that they are currently finalising internal plans for demolition of the car parks. Once the car parks have been removed and taken down to ground level, it will provide UK Power Networks with a good starting point for the new substation build which is currently going through internal planning. He explained that they are in the process of awarding a contract for the design of the substation to a design consultant. AW noted that they are also in the process of appointing a contractor for demolition works.

Community Grant Programme

JC noted that in December the Community Grant Programme awarded money to Friends of Ruskin Park, which they put towards equipment and upcoming summer events. In addition, JC shared that in light of National Grid's commitment to a biodiversity net gain of 10% or more, 27 trees have been planted in Ruskin Park. JC noted that this follows on from Loughborough Junction Action Group's successful application last year.

Contact details

JC mentioned that phone lines and email addresses are available for anyone who has any queries and that following the new bi-monthly structure, the next CLG meeting will be held in May.

Questions

Please note that we have grouped questions under themes.

Communications

Cllr Sardiwal asked how the adjustments made to the substation have been communicated to residents. JC explained that as there have been no major changes to the substation, National Grid haven't sent out separate communications. He did however explain that the aesthetic changes have been noted at previous CLGs.

Right to Light surveys

Cllr Sardiwal asked for an update on the UK Power Networks' Right to Light surveys. HH clarified that the Rights to Light surveys are currently ongoing and are being undertaken on a case by case basis. She explained that UK Power Networks are in the process of gaining access to these properties to carry out surveys. Cllr Sardiwal asked how many properties are being assessed. HH explained that she didn't have the exact numbers to hand but will come back to Cllr Sardiwal separately with the confirmed numbers.

Demolition of UK Power Networks' car park

Cllr Sardiwal asked if there is any historical or heritage value to the car park site that needs to be taken into account or documented ahead of demolition works.

AW noted that the car park is not a listed building and that regarding heritage, it has been documented in a book on-site that lists changes over the years, including old drawings, photos and names of those who have worked on the site. He asked if there is anything else Cllr Sardiwal would like to see in regards to how this is documented and if he would like to review the aforementioned book. Cllr Sardiwal noted that the approach to documenting changes in the book seemed a sensible and supported the later suggestion to make a digital version of the book.

Community Grant Programme

Cllr Sardiwal noted that he is pleased Friends of Ruskin Park has secured CGP funding. Cllr Sardiwal asked if the 27 trees planted in Ruskin Park hits the 10% target JC mentioned earlier. He noted that he would like to see support for the next planting season, as there is scope for more planting in Ruskin Park. He celebrated Loughborough Junction Action Group's securing of CGP funding and explained that he would be keen to see more local organisations benefit from the programme and expressed a desire to further promote the fund. He noted that existing communications regarding the programme have been helpful.

JC explained there is a 12 month gap between funding applications for individual applicants. A resident noted that information about the CGP has been distributed quite widely and explained that these communications have directly led to local residents raising information on the CGP directly to Loughborough Junction Action Group. The resident explained that the money secured from the CGP was used to pay the salary of a special educational needs worker of the Grove Adventure Playground and to pay a worker to run sessions at Brixton Orchard. The resident noted that it is nice to know that they can apply again in the summer.

JC noted that the tree planting currently outweighs National Grid's 10% commitment to biodiversity. JC noted that National Grid and contractor HMJV also facilitate volunteer days. In regards to providing further funds, JC noted that this cannot go to the local authority and has to go to Friends of Ruskin Park instead.

Cllr Sardiwal noted that National Grid's contribution for tree planting was "relatively modest", but delivered 27 trees. He wondered if it is possible to tap into this fund further next year. JC noted that organisations should get in touch if they have further ideas as to how the CGP can be further publicised and that there is no limit on the number of organisations that can apply – as long as they are not-for-profit.

History of the site

One resident expressed interest in the history of the site, having recently discovered there used to be a power station on-site. AW noted that he has a physical copy of the book detailing the history of the site and will look to see if it can be scanned in and sent over. Cllr Sardiwal noted that it could be timely to revisit the history of the site for local amenity groups Brixton Society and Herne Hill Society. The resident noted that the Brixton Society was likely to include an article in their April newsletter on the history of the site, based on their own research.

UK Power Networks community funding

One resident asked if UK Power Networks can also provide funding for community projects during the LPT construction phase. HH confirmed that UK Power Networks has various funds and more will be released this summer. HH noted she will look to see if any can be matched to this project. She also explained that UK Power Networks may be able to volunteer labour to potential projects. She asked for the resident to get in touch and she will investigate what UK Power Networks can do. The resident asked what is available right now, HH promised to send over information as soon as she can.

Works and traffic management

Cllr Sardiwal asked about substation works and if this will cause any additional disruption, such as a change in working hours, increased noise pollution etc.

AW confirmed that UK Power Networks will abide by the same on-site rules as National Grid and that there will be no change to the working hours and that from a HGV traffic perspective, this will remain stable with traffic continuing to move through the hospital to Cold Harbour Lane to reduce impact on local residents.

Closing remarks

JC drew proceedings to a close and thanked everyone for their time. He confirmed that the meeting minutes will be written up and circulated to attendees. Following this, the minutes and presentation will also be uploaded to the Bengeworth Road website. He reminded attendees that the next CLG meeting will be scheduled for the end of May, though if anyone has any queries in the meantime, to contact the team via the usual channels.

MEETING ADJOURNED

28 March 2023