

**Report to Area Plans Sub-Committee  
West**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Date of meeting: 9 January 2013.**

**Subject: Proposed National Grid (North London Reinforcement Project) running between Waltham Cross and Tottenham substations – Application for a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate (Ref: EN020009) to upgrade overhead power lines from 275kV to 400kV, including an extension to the substation at Waltham Cross to provide a new 400kV Gas Insulated Switch Gear (GIS) substation, one new and two replacement pylons.**

**Responsible Officer: Nigel Richardson (01992 564110)**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)**

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**Recommendation(s):**

**(1) That the justification, as set out in the National Grid's letter of 19 December 2012, for retaining the hard standing area currently occupied by the existing Waltham Cross substation, as part of the application for a Development Consent Order for the proposed North London Reinforcement Project be accepted; and**

**(2) That, on consideration of the Officer's response to the Development Consent Order, the Director of Planning and Economic Development be authorised to submit a response of No Objection subject to details of planting around the site being agreed by Epping Forest District and that the Environmental Impact Assessment consider the possible contamination of the area.**

**Report:**

Introduction

1. At the last meeting of this Committee on 7 November 2012, it was reported that National Grid had made an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State to upgrade one of two existing 275kV overhead power lines running between Waltham Cross (in Epping Forest District) and Tottenham substations (via Brimsdown substations) to operate at a higher voltage (400kV). This covers an overhead electricity line of about 14 km in length. National Grid has signed a number of contracts to connect new sources of low carbon electricity generation connecting onshore and offshore (wind farms). The upgrade is required to facilitate the increased flow of electricity into and through London and meet its growing demand for power.

2. The existing "Waltham Cross" substation lies between Seventy Acres Lake and Holyfield Lake within the Lee Valley Recreational Park, at Fishers Green, north of Waltham Abbey. Part of the path network in the park runs past the substation.

3. The project is defined as a "Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project" (NSIP). Such projects are not decided by the local planning authority, but by The Secretary of State via The Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Project

under the Planning Act 2008, who, after consultation and assessment, decide whether to issue a Development Consent Order (DCO's).

4. The Committee at their last meeting held on 7 November 2012, agreed with the Officers recommendation and concluded the following:

*“That on consideration of the Officers response to the Development Consent Order, the Director of Planning and Economic Development be authorised to submit a response of No Objection but express (forcefully) disappointment that part of what appears to be redundant hard surfaced area in the decommissioned existing substation area is remaining when there is an opportunity here to provide planting and thereby reduce the overall footprint of the proposed substation area and ask that the Environmental Impact Assessment consider the possible contamination of the area.”*

5. These comments have been submitted and resulted in a response back from National Grid with a copy of their letter is attached.

6. Whilst as understood previously that there is an uprating of power on one (the ZBC line) of the current two overhead lines running from the Waltham Cross substation to Tottenham along the Lee Valley, the other line (ZBD), whilst not being uprated from 275 kV, is also to be retained for transmitting power. Therefore, the current control building and 50% of the high voltage equipment on the existing hard surface will still be required as well as site a new pylon (as reported previously). What this means is that not only is the substation extension to be extended northwards (as previously reported and not objected against) but the current substation hard standing area is to be retained as operational land by National Grid.

7. The Committee expressed disappointment to what appeared at the time to both Members and Officers to be an unnecessary retention of the current hard surfaced area when instead it could be broken up and landscaped.

8. The details of the proposal as it affects Epping Forest District was previously reported as follows:

*“The changes to the pylons will require the existing wires to be removed and replaced with ones of a higher capacity but of a similar diameter. These works will principally utilise the existing pylons with a few minor changes to the design of their insulators. Access to all pylons is required and replacement of wires is carried out by winching from tension pylons, representing the main construction sites along the route. It is scheduled to take place during 2015 and 2016.*

*A new substation building (Gas Insulated Switchgear station - GIS) will extend the existing substation in a slightly new position immediately north of the existing site to provide a new 400kV power substation. The area of the new substation is currently covered with existing mature vegetation and land will need to be acquired from the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. The eastern part of the existing substation will be decommissioned and its equipment removed, although it appears the existing hard surfaced area will be retained. The GIS building will consist of a steel portal building measuring approximately 70m x 15m x 13m clad in green finished steel profiled sheeting above a darker green 2.4m cement fibre board. It will be of a mono-pitched roof design. A number of smaller ancillary prefabricated buildings will be dark green. A 2.4m green high palisade fence will surround the new and existing*

*substation area. Any external lighting will be designed to minimise visual intrusion.*

*Some 2395 square metres is to be acquired here permanently from the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority ("LVRPA") for the substation extension. Another open grassed area of 22500 square metres is to be possessed temporarily from LVRPA, south of here, off Stubbins Hall Lane for use as a laydown area for materials storage, site cabins and construction vehicle parking."*

*To connect the overhead line to the new substation, two pylons will be replaced in different positions and one additional pylon will be built. The construction of the new substation and the decommissioning of part of the existing equipment would take approximately 3 years to complete but scheduled to be operational by autumn 2016. Numerous measures would be put in place to minimise the effects of the construction works on the Lee Valley Regional Park and its users."*

9. It was also reported that National Grid will be providing a sum of £85,000 to fund local nature conservation projects for established organisations within 1km of the proposed working area. of the development. In their recent letter they also draw attention to a number of landscaping initiatives around the site to compensate for the impact of the new development, which, if the DCO is approved, the details will be agreed with Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA).

#### Summary

10. Compensatory work for loss of vegetation and some adverse impact on the local wildlife site was previously reported and accepted because it was outweighed by biodiversity offsetting measures and some replacement tree planting. The overall need to secure and increase the supply of electricity in the future for London was accepted as being of significant importance.

11. Now that there is a justification for retaining the current hard standing and some of its equipment to continue to transmit power down the existing line, Officers recommendation now is that this should no longer be a concern and required to be broken up and planted, subject to the details of any landscaping here being agreed by the Council as well as LVRPA. The "no objection" is therefore reiterated together with the Members previous suggested confirmation that the environmental impact assessment considers the possible contamination in the area.