

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Cable Route from Land to the East of Warley Substation and Warley Substation

**Prepared by
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London**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by DLP Planning Ltd on behalf of Clearstone Energy Ltd (“the Applicant”) to accompany an application for the proposed underground cable route and associated works between Land to the East of Warley Substation (“the Site”) and the Warley Substation. The proposed development is described as follows:

“Installation of underground cable route and associated works between the Land to the East of Warley Substation and Warley Substation”.

- 1.2 The underground cable route will run from the western boundary of the battery storage facility (ref: P1724.21), at the Land to the East of Warley Substation, Clay Tye Rd, Upminster RM14 3PL to the adjoining Warley Substation. The cable route will stretch approximately 184m.
- 1.3 Utility cable connections like this are normally undertaken by an Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO) which is a statutory undertaker as Permitted Development (GDPO 2015 Part 15 Power related development, Class B; electricity undertakings). However, in order to facilitate the early implementation of the permitted scheme this cable will be installed by an accredited Independent Connection Provider (ICP) to connect the battery storage facility to the transmission network. After the connection is energised, it will be adopted by the battery storage operator.
- 1.4 As such, in the event of consent not being granted, National Grid plc or an IDNO would be able to install the cable under their statutory powers. Consent of this application would assist to speed up the process to provide and install the cable connection.

Background to the Scheme

- 1.5 Planning permission (ref: P1724.21) for the “*construction and operation of a battery storage facility, fencing, landscaping and access road on land to the east of the existing substation*” was granted on the land east of Warley Substation on the 11th November 2021.
- 1.6 The battery storage facility, whilst being granted planning permission, has not commenced with its construction works. A s73 application to vary the duration of the development from 20-years to 25-years has been received by the London Borough of Havering and is currently being determined, however the installation of the proposed cable route, if approved, will be

undertaken at the same time as the construction of the battery storage facility.

- 1.7 The purpose and need for the proposed cable route is to receive and distribute the electricity to and from the battery storage facility and the point of connection into the transmission network at Warley Substation. The Substation is located approximately 20m northwest of the battery storage site and the connection proposed is to be made entirely by underground cable.

Scope of this Planning Application

- 1.8 This Planning, Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the following documents which are submitted as part of this application;
- (i) *Completed Application Form and Certificate B;*
 - (ii) *Site Location and Cable Plan (ref. 0023/CD);*
 - (iii) *Cable Trench Section (ref. Warley_Battery_CTSr1.dwg);*
 - (iv) *Construction Management Plan prepared by DLP Planning Ltd's SDD Team;*
 - (v) *Covering Letter prepared by DLP Planning Ltd;*
 - (vi) *Landscape and Visual Assessment by Weddle Landscape Design Ltd; and*
 - (vii) *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Weddle Landscape Design Ltd*

Document Structure

- 1.9 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is divided into the following sections:
- Section 2.0 (*Site Location and Context*);
 - Section 3.0 (*Site Planning Application History*);
 - Section 4.0 (*The Proposed Development*);
 - Section 5.0 (*Planning Policy Context*);
 - Section 6.0 (*Planning Assessment*);
 - Section 7.0 (*Conclusion*)

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Site is approximately 1.5m northeast of North Ockenden, a small settlement consisting of a limited number of residential dwellings. It is 1km to the east of the M25 and 3.7km east of Upminster, which is classified as a Major District Centre and is approximately 200m from Warley Substation to the northwest.
- 2.2 The current use of the Site is uncultivated grassland within the curtilage of a large industrial scale electricity transmission and network distribution substation: the area has been designated by National Grid for expansion of the existing facility and already contains two 132Kv transmission pylons.
- 2.3 The site is a nationally and locally strategic location for battery storage operation within London, where large quantities of power are used, and little is generated. As previously referenced in Section 1 of this document, planning consent for a battery storage facility was recently approved in November 2021 with construction to occur in due course.
- 2.4 The enclosure, in which the site is located, is bounded by substantial hedgerows to the east and south and by the existing Substation infrastructure. The hedgerows which contain the curtilage of the Substation, including the Site, clearly distinguishes the land from the open countryside beyond, which is predominately in agricultural use, but also contains several agricultural buildings and non-agricultural uses.
- 2.5 The Site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and is covered by the Thames Chase Community Forest Area. The Havering Local Plan Proposals Map also confirms that the Site is not in a Conservation Area; nor is there any landscape designation. The Environment Agency's online mapping records show that the site is located within Flood Zone 1, therefore it is considered to be at low risk of flooding.
- 2.6 The proposed cable will be laid in a trench and following installation the ground surface will be restored to its predevelopment condition. Accordingly, the works required at ground level are temporary and do not require any permanent above ground infrastructure.

3.0 SITE PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

3.1 The following planning applications are materially relevant for the purposes of outlining the cable route application that is presented within this statement:

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date
P1724.21	<i>"Construction and operation of a battery storage facility, fencing, landscaping and access road on land to the east of the existing substation".</i>	Approved with Conditions	11 th December 2021
P0510.22	<i>"Variation of Condition No. 2 of Planning Permission Ref: P1724.21 dated 11/11/2021 to extend the permission time period from 20 years to 25 years. (Construction and operation of a battery storage facility, fencing, landscaping and access road on land to the east of the existing substation)."</i>	Undecided	24 th May 2022

4.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed development requires the excavation of a trench to a depth of approximately 1.2m for a distance of 184m between the Customer Substation within the permitted battery storage scheme and the point of connection within the Warley Substation.
- 4.2 The trench will be approximately 1.025 wide (see accompanying scheme drawings) into which will be laid a duct to contain the cable.
- 4.3 Following completion of the duct and cable installation surface material will be backfilled to provide a level surface which will be restored as scrub grass as at present.
- 4.4 Any surplus soil will be transported offsite as necessary.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

- 5.1 As highlighted above, such proposals are normally undertaken as Permitted Development by a Statutory Undertaker. Due to the unusual circumstance that this is being undertaken by an Independent Connection Provider, there is a requirement to obtain planning permission.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) states the planning application should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted development plan documents and policies relevant to the site have been identified which consider the proposed development and the site constraints.
- 5.3 However, due to the underground nature of the proposal, it is considered that many of the development plan policies concerning visual impacts, design, historic environment, and highways impacts are not relevant to be considered for assessment where groundworks are temporary and related only to construction and not to the end use.

Development Plan and Relevant Policies

- 5.4 For the purposes of this Planning, Design and Access Statement and planning application, the development plan and other relevant planning policy comprises of the following:
- London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2008);
 - London Borough of Havering Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (2008); and
 - The London Plan (2021);
- 5.5 Other material considerations include:
- National Planning Policy Framework (2021); and
 - National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 As the Site is located within the designated Metropolitan Green Belt, Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) must immediately be taken into consideration as Paragraph 147 states that *“inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in Very Special Circumstances”*. In addition to this, Paragraphs 148, 149 and 150 of the NPPF outlines and lists different types of development that are not considered to be inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt and with Paragraph 151 also stating that *“elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development”*.
- 6.2 After reviewing the above, the proposed development does not fall within the list outlined in Paragraphs 148, 149 and 150 of the NPPF and as such, is to be considered to constitute inappropriate development within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Very Special Circumstances must be provided, as is reinforced by paragraph 151 of the NPPF which requires for the proposed development to quantify and justify harm to the said Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances

- 6.3 As previously mentioned, paragraph 151 of the NPPF highlights that some elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development, however Very Special Circumstances may exist by including the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.
- 6.4 Substantial weight should be given to these wider environmental benefits, having regard to the local and national planning and energy policy support, for projects that would contribute towards carbon reduction, network resilience and energy security. The proposals clearly contribute to the general thrust of this policy aim.
- 6.5 Considering that 1.) the proposed installation involves the installation of an underground cable and associated works to feed the electricity between the approved battery storage facility on the Site directly to the point of connection into the transmission network at the existing Warley Substation; 2.) the battery storage facility would be part of larger programme to deliver battery storage at electricity substations across the country to assist the National Grid to maintain the required levels of frequency and to balance national electricity supply

and demand, of which the installation of the underground cable route would facilitate, and 3) the works are temporary and the land will be restored on completion of the installation which will have no residual surface infrastructure and will therefore not affect the openness of the Green Belt. It is considered that Very Special Circumstances exist for this proposed development.

- 6.6 The infrastructure benefits of granting planning permission for the underground cable route would enable the battery storage facility to operate and significantly and demonstrably outweigh any potential temporary harm caused by development in the Green Belt.

Quality of Land Lost

- 6.7 As the cable that is to be installed is located under rough grassland between the approved battery storage facility and the existing Warley Substation, the proposed development clearly does not result in the loss of any significant quality of land. The Site is not and cannot be used for agriculture because of its low-quality condition, and considering that the cable route will be underground, it will have no impact to the loss of land let alone quality land.

Landscape and Visual Value

- 6.8 The planning application for the battery storage facility was accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Value Impact Assessment produced by Weddle Landscape Design which concluded that the proposed development of a battery storage facility would be acceptable subject to the proposed landscaping measures it recommended. The consent was granted on that basis. Commencement of planting in accordance with the Landscape Masterplan has already taken place.
- 6.9 This application results in no permanent impacts at or above ground level. Accordingly, there can be no landscape objection to the cable proposal which will not adversely affect important landscape features, valued landscape or conservation areas or visual character. The application is therefore in accordance with related planning policy.

Impact on Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.10 The site in question is currently rough grassland of 0.41 hectares to the southeast of Warley Substation. The condition of the site is considered to be poor and low value as it has not been grazed or managed for some time and has been subject to previous disturbance when

used as a compound and material storage area for other ongoing works at the Electricity Substation.

- 6.11 However, the site is self-contained and clearly distinguishable from the main vegetation patterns in the surrounding landscape which are predominantly arable farmland, with hedgerows, intermittent trees, tree belts or copses which divide the fields. There are larger woodlands to the north, Clay Tye Wood, and west, Thames Chase Forest Centre with 4 types of Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) designations within a 1km radius.
- 6.12 The site itself has no designations. The closest to the site are two areas of 'PHI – Deciduous Woodland' and 'PHI – Traditional Orchard' that are approximately 250m to the north and north-west of the site, respectively. There are additional areas over 600m to the west. Approximately 550m to the north of the site there is a patch of woodland designated as 'Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland' which is Clay Tye Wood.
- 6.13 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) accompanies the application. It identifies that there are no overriding ecological constraints or impacts that would arise from the construction works.
- 6.14 The PEA confirms from a walkover survey that there are a small number of identified ecological constraints to which the document sets out specific avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures. These measures, such as the protection of hedgerows and trees adjacent to the southern and eastern boundaries and the commencement of construction taking place outside of wildlife breeding seasons of March to August are to ensure no habitat is disturbed as a result of the development.

Impact on Transport and Access

- 6.1 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that "Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."
- 6.2 This application is supported with a Construction Management Plan (CMP) prepared by DLP Planning Ltd's SDD Team to provide further details of the cable route's construction and its impact on the public highway.
- 6.3 The Construction Management Plan explains how the development will be undertaken,

describes the phasing of the works and the methodologies that will be used. The temporary impacts that may arise on the visual character and amenity during construction would be minimised by ensuring that the construction works are undertaken in accordance with relevant guidance and legislation. Hours of operation are regulated, and the appropriate safeguards will be incorporated where the works affect the highways. For the most part the works to construct the trench will differ little from normal agricultural operations in, for instance, drainage maintenance or similar operations.

- 6.4 Overall, the construction works will be of limited temporary impact and will have no direct impact on any residential properties nor result in any permanent damage to the assets such as hedges, trees, woodland or ecology and archaeology.
- 6.5 It follows that the scheme is not in conflict with development plan policies, including the Neighbourhood Plan, because the effects are temporary and there is no residual permanent impact.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Planning Design and Access Statement has been prepared by DLP Planning Ltd on behalf of Clearstone Energy Ltd to accompany and support an application for the “installation of underground cable route and associated works” between the battery storage facility that is to be located on the Land to the East of Warley Substation and Warley Substation itself.
- 7.2 The proposal seeks permission to dig a 1.2m x 1.025m trench and install ducting, through which a cable will be pulled to form a connection between the renewable energy battery storage facility at Land to the East of Warley Substation and into the transmission network at Warley Substation.
- 7.3 The permission sought is one which, if being carried out by a statutory undertaker, would be considered to be Permitted Development. This application is necessary because the installation will be carried out by an ICP Contractor in order to facilitate early implementation of the permitted battery storage scheme.
- 7.4 The ICP Contractor will be a specialist and licensed subcontractor appointed following a tender process. It will be subject to the mitigation and monitoring requirements set out in the accompanying Construction Management Plan.
- 7.5 The cable route will be installed under rough grassland between the approved battery storage facility and the existing Warley Substation and will not result in any detrimental impacts to the land use, ecology or generate any residual impacts following the completion of construction. The proposal is entirely underground and as a result:
- will not have permanent impact on road or their verges;
 - will not result in any loss of agricultural land;
 - will not impact important habitats; and
 - there will be no visual impact as a result of the proposals.
- 7.6 To conclude, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with the development plan and NPPF and should be found acceptable in relation to Green Belt where there is no residual above ground effects and no impact upon the openness of the land following completion of the temporary construction works.

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