

# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR ELECTRICITY NORTH WEST

### Midway Substation, Gosforth Road, Seascale, Cumbria

This Design and Access Statement is provided in conjunction with the Supplementary Information, drawings and supporting material included with this planning application.

## Introduction

The proposed development is an 8m extension to the existing 15m lattice mast. The ground based equipment will remain unchanged. The extended mast will house two additional dish antennas (2 x 600mm and 1 x 1800mm), a relocated 1200mm dish (replaced with smaller 600mm) and a relocated small DMR antenna.

The site location is an established telecommunications site within an operational electricity substation. The site sits on the corner of Gosforth Road and north of the unnamed road that leads to the Sellafield plant to the west. Opposite are industrial and commercial workshop units, a factory to the south on Cross Lanes Road and then some residential properties beyond.

The proposed development site is not within an area at risk of flooding. The site is not within the National Park and does not have any special planning designation.

### **Pre Application Discussions and Negotiations**

No Pre Application Discussions have taken place although the site has been referred to in connection with the Haile Moor proposed mast to which this application is directly related. The Case Officer was Heather Morrison in this respect.

### **Documentation Submitted with Application**

- Plans and elevations
- Technical Justification
- Design and Access Statement
- Photo Montage
- ICNIRP Statement

#### **Design Component**

- Use proposed Telecoms Mast for ENW internal telemetry network, as per supporting Technical Justification.
- Amount in this case an increase in height to 23m is required to enable the necessary Line of Sight to be achieved to link in the proposed Haile Moor site as per the Technical Justification. It is not possible to reliably achieve the required line of sight below this height without increasing the height of the Haile Moor site (which ENW are seeking to minimise). All equipment at ground level will remain the same as existing.
- Layout the layout is simply as existing with the increase in height and antenna details.
- Scale the height increase is considered to be to be visually of limited impact, and additionally the extension is the same gauge and no increase in width or bulk of the mast is required.
- Landscaping There is existing tree screenage around the southern and eastern elevations of the substation that will remain. These trees screen the mast and the substation to a degree



and will continue to grow with time. There are existing taller trees screening the commercial units to the south. This landscape will remain unchanged.

 Appearance – The design proposed is an 8m high extension to the mast. The extension will be by way of seamless steelwork as per the existing. A photo montage has been prepared to illustrate the change in appearance from various viewpoints.

### Access

Access to the substation site can be obtained directly from the highway (as existing), and such access will only be required infrequently.

## **Alternative Site Options**

Given the location and presence of the existing structure it is considered unrealistic and impractical to consider alternative options. Other options would clearly require a new structure of equivalent height elsewhere, and to achieve the operational requirement it would also have to be located close to the existing substation in any case.

There is however a 15m mobile phone mast about 200m away to the north on the road to Sellafield. This mast would similarly require a height increase and a rebuild to a stronger structure in order to accommodate the equipment that ENW require. This installation sits in a more isolated location and does not benefit from the existing quasi industrial location that the subject does. Accordingly, as well as lacking the necessary physical linkage this location is also considered inferior in planning terms to the subject.

## **National Planning Policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework supports high quality communications and acknowledges that such development is essential for social wellbeing. Sites should be kept to a minimum and sympathetically designed. Technical evidence should be provided to justify the proposed development, and the use of existing buildings and structures should be investigated. This proposal complies with this policy.

## **Local Planning Policy**

The following Copeland Local Plan Policies are considered relevant to this application;

## DS2 – Settlement Boundaries

The subject Site lies on the northern edge of Seascale, a designated settlement. It is not therefore in open countryside.

#### DS4 – Development Standards

This Policy seeks to ensure all new development meets high quality design standards which contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of residents. By its nature the proposal is somewhat restricted in terms of the construction and physical appearance – the installation has to be functional in reaching a desired height and the imperative is to house the listed antennas in order to deliver the technical solution. The mast will however continue to be of lattice design to allow a degree of transparency and will be of galvanised steel that will weather to blend in with the wider landscape when viewed against a backdrop of land or sky. The ground based equipment will be unchanged and unseen within the existing substation.

The site will not be public so there are no on site enhancements required to encourage social interaction or wellbeing. Similarly, the site will not use water, create noise or have any additional impact on the local highway network once constructed.



## DS5 – Hard and Soft Landscaping

The proposal does not remove any hedgerows, trees or other wildlife features and the wider natural landscape will therefore remain unchanged. There will be no additional hard landscaping with no change to the existing situation.

#### DS6 - Reducing Flood Risk and DS7 - Sustainable Drainage

The site is not within an area at risk of flooding and lies in Flood Zone 1. Accordingly, it has a low risk of flooding. The Flood risk in reflection of the above will remain unchanged as there is no ground based development.

Strategic Policies NU1 - Supporting the Development of the Nuclear Sector, NU3 - General Nuclear Energy and associated development and Infrastructure, NU4 – Nuclear and associated development at Sellafield

With respect to nuclear development the proposal is required as a result of direct and indirect consequences. The indirect consequences are covered in detail in the Technical Justification in that the "Cumbria Ring" requires upgrading to allow for clean energy development in the Sellafield/Moorside area. Essentially this will increase the capacity of the electricity network to cater for the potential increase in nuclear power generation as well as other new technologies and green energy sources.

It is the upgrade of this network of pylons that has created the need for the subject site in that the existing fibre links thereon (that provide the current network remote switching resilience) will be removed. Without an alternative solution for this connectivity much of the wider local network will be at risk.

The direct consequence of the proposed installation is therefore the continued reliability and improvement of the local electricity network. This is imperative for energy producers putting electricity into the grid, and also for electricity users who require the energy for their operations. In this respect a nuclear energy development is both a producer and a user.

The proposal is therefore a constituent part of the wider improvements in the local electricity network that are required in order for economic development and employment in the area. This is in a large part to support the potential for nuclear development in accordance with policy NU1 and NU3.

N1 – Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity, N3 – Biodiversity Net Gain As the development does not include any land take the biodiversity and geodiversity will be unchanged. The applicant is committed to retaining and improving bio diversity and all nearby existing trees and vegetation in their control will be retained.

#### N6 – Landscape Protection

This policy seeks to protect all landscapes from inappropriate change as a result of the development. The subject application is by its nature necessarily 23m high which is unavoidable – a height below this would have a converse effect on the Haile Moor site which would then have to be higher by at least the same proportion. It is considered that the impact of a higher mast here is significantly less than would be the case at Haile Moor– and ENW are committed to keeping the Haile Moor mast height to a minimum in line with feedback from the pre consultations with the Planning Officer.

This is evidenced from the photo montages that show an element of vegetation screenage at lower levels from the nearer views. There are also multiple other vertical structures here as the wider network of wood single and H pole electric lines converge into the substation which gives the area a natural home for power infrastructure. The site is also close to the Sellafield plant which dominates the landscape in this location when viewed from longer distances and from within the National Park.



In light of the above, any minor visual landscape harm is considered to be outweighed by the need for the site and more importantly the consequential height limitation at Haile Moor.

### N14 Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

No existing trees or hedgerows will be removed, pruned or damaged as a result of the proposal. Accordingly the proposal is compliant with this policy.

#### BE1 – Heritage Assets

The subject site is not within close proximity of any Heritage Assets. Clearly the Lake District National Park is visible to the East but is not considered to be impacted in terms of its significance or character. Similarly, the Heritage Coast is realistically unaffected by the proposal.

## CO1 - Telecommunication and Digital Connectivity

This policy is supportive of improvements in digital technology across the borough albeit this is mainly aimed at the accessibility of 5G services and full fibre technology for personal and business use. The proposal is not a direct contributor to this element of connectivity but of course they all require a reliable electricity supply to operate. In this respect, the proposal will without doubt result in fewer power outages and less down time.

In line with this policy, the site is remote from important heritage assets, and sites of high biodiversity value. The Landscape impact has also been kept to a minimum in the context of the need for the 23m height.

### **Residential Amenity**

There are residential properties in this locality, on Cross Lanes and Gosforth Road, the nearest being about 75m away on Cross Lanes. These properties do not have a direct outlook onto the substation which is also screened by trees from these directions. It should be considered that the mast is not a new feature, it has been in situ within the substation for many years. The additional impact of the extension is considered to have only a very marginal impact on these residential properties above the existing substation, mast and wood poles in the same vicinity.

#### Summary

The visual impact of the proposal in this case is considered to be very marginal – this is due to the presence of the existing structure, the limited height increase, and the seamless extension. Additionally, the roadside location, presence of the existing substation and tree screenage limit any detrimental impact that this development will have on the surrounding area. Importantly the height increase here needs to be balanced against the ability of this proposal to limit the height of the proposal at Haile Moor – and the overall planning benefit of this.

The Electricity Network in this area should also be continually improved for the benefit of customers and the rural economy. This is currently only possible if ENW can develop the communication network described in this application. On this basis it is considered that the planning balance should be in favour of this development in the context of the slight impact that the mast extension may have on the local environment.