

Minutes - EGL1 community liaison group (CLG)

Date	19 November 2024
Time	6pm – 7pm
Location	The Robin Todd Centre, Front St, South Hetton, Durham DH6 2TH
Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tom Hall, CLG Chair, EGL1 community relations team - Tom Beckford (TB), External Affairs Manager, EGL1 - Graham Law (GL), Lead Project Manager – Converter station, EGL1 - Cllr Gillian Rodgers, Chair, South Hetton Parish Council - Cllr Carol Charters, South Hetton Parish Council - Cllr Julie Griffiths, Durham County Council - Cllr Paul Penman, Murton Parish Council - Alex Puddick, Senior Active Travel Officer, Durham County Council

Agenda items:

1. Welcome

- The Chair welcomed all those present

2. Introductions

- The Chair asked those present to introduce themselves, with members of EGL1 team explaining their individual roles and responsibilities

3. Recap on EGL1 in the area

- Tom Beckford (TB) and Graham Law (GL) provided an update on the project to the CLG, which included: a recap on works taking place in area, what the key infrastructure is involved and what main works contractors are on the project
- A public interactive map is currently being explored for the project website
- **ACTION: Send PDF of CLG presentation to EGL1 CLG – COMPLETE**

4. Upcoming works

- TB and GL gave an update on future works:

Converter station

- Converter station land acquired, including Coop House Wood. The wood will remain as woodland, with the project exploring a woodland management plan for its future
- Early 2025 will see additional archaeology surveys and establishment of site compounds
- March 2025 will see main construction works start

Onshore and offshore cables

- Detailed design underway and will take until 2025 to complete
- Early-2025 will see surveys of habitats, ground investigations and archaeology surveys to commence
- **ACTION: List of contractors working on EGL1 to be sent to CLG group so that they can identify those working on the project or other projects**

- **ACTION: Contractor list to be incorporated into website overhaul**

Substation and connection works



- Additional vegetation clearance planned for bridleway diversion. The project is aiming to keep clearance to a minimum, with the last vegetation clearance completed to a minimal extent, allowing these additional works to be targeted
- Haul road and new bridleway construction is expected to commence in Q1 2025 with works weather permitting. The bridleway diversion will see a three-metre-wide tarmacked surface installed with drainage. The first 100 metres of the haul road will serve as permanent access to converter station, but the rest will be temporary, and reinstatement carried out once works have been completed.
- Permissive paths around the existing substation will become inaccessible for safety reasons, with the bridleway remaining open throughout construction. Signage will be installed to advise users on the diversion. CLG members stated that this is understandable but will need to be communicated to users in advance
- **ACTION: Detail on permissive path closure associated with substation works to be shared with CLG so that they can communicate it to local communities.**
- **ACTION: Next community newsletter to be shared with CLG as two JPEGs so that they can share on Murton and South Hetton community Facebook groups.**
- CLG members stated that there have been issues with non-EGL1 related contractors leaving footpaths in poor conditions stopping people in South Hetton being able to get to work at Dalton Park Shopping Centre. They added that many locals are unsure what is happening at site.
- **ACTION: If issues with works occur again, CLG members are encouraged to contact EGL1 community relations team who will help work out what has happened and who is responsible.**
- Northern Powergrid works at Hawthorn Pit have seen overhead lines and pylons removed to accommodate EGL1's infrastructure. They have been replaced with underground cables
- High level timeline of EGL1 in local area:
 - o Spring 2025 – Converter station site establishment
 - o Q3 2025 to Q3 2027: Converter station main construction
 - o Q3 to Q4 2026: Landfall cable installation
 - o Q2 2026 to Q4 2027: Onshore cable installation
 - o Q4 2026 to Q3 2028: Converter station electrical installation
 - o Q3 to Q4 2028: Power transmission testing
 - o Early 2029: Operation begins

5. Community benefits

- £20k and £16k awarded to the Glebe Centre and South Hetton Community Association respectively from National Grid's Community Grant Fund
- **ACTION: Murton CLG members and Project to arrange photography and local news story when works start on Glebe Centre's roof in February 2025**
- Ofgem approved specific EGL1 Community Benefit Funding on 15th November. Initial research done to enable discussion on high level ideas with appropriate stakeholders, such as parish councils and Durham County Council. The project is keen to work with communities and regional stakeholders, including CLG, to understand priorities and aspirations.
- Whilst funding has been approved, the project is still awaiting the publication of Government guidance on community benefits. Until this is published, the exact timelines for delivery of community benefits and governance of how funds will be distributed (e.g. grants, partnerships with existing organisations and programmes) cannot be confirmed.
- National Grid is assessing whether its current Community Grant Programme will be rearranged following the provision by Ofgem of funds for community benefit on EGL1 and other transmission projects. Outcome will be shared with the CLG.

- - **ACTION: TB to explore whether funding for 5-a-side pitch in South Hetton could be included in community funding initiatives even if South Hetton Parish Council is not registered as a charity.**

 - **ACTION: Provide CLG members with a link to more information on the community grant programme**
 - Project exploring the potential for a dedicated visitor centre at its Hawthorn Pit site that would be used to host meetings and STEM workshops with schools.
- 6. Next meeting of CLG**
- In Q1 2025, date TBC