

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON
21ST NOVEMBER, 2017**

Present: Councillor E Bell (Chair) and
Councillors R Arthur, Mrs J A Bell,
Mrs G Bleasdale, S P Colborn, Mrs S Forster,
Ms R M Gratton, G N Hepworth,
Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, Mrs S Pratt,
K Shaw, T Shepherd, B Taylor, R Whitehead,
Ms L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, Mrs K Brace,
S Cudlip, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings,

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

2. PRESENTATIONS

Northern Powergrid

Ms Helen Priestley, Stakeholder Manager, Mr Peter Taylor, Delivery Manager, Mr Jim Cummings and Mr Steve Dixon Design Engineers from Northern Powergrid were in attendance at the meeting to give Members an update on the current developments in Seaham. They all gave Members an introduction on their roles within Northern Powergrid.

Ms Priestley stated that Northern Powergrid are responsible for the network that distributes electricity to 8 million customers and 3.9 million homes and businesses across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire. They currently have 63k substations and 60K miles of overhead lines and underground cables spanning 9,560 square miles and they are investing £1m per day to keep the network reliable.

Mr Taylor stated that Northern Powergrid are investing in Seaham and Ryhope to improve the quality and resilience of the electricity supply. In 2017/18 there is £4.7m being invested on upgrading and improving the network in Seaham, Ryhope and the surrounding areas. This investment will ensure that homes and businesses in the area continue to receive a reliable electricity supply for both now and in the future.

Phase 1 of the investment works have been carried out throughout 2017 which has been a cost of £1.3m. Phase 2 to be carried out in 2018 with a cost of £3.4m is to strengthen the network and Phase 3 will consist of Northern Powergrid investigating the feasibility of a new primary substation in the Seaham area.

Across all three phases of work will include the following:

- 13.9 km of high voltage underground cable will be laid
- 4.7 km of low voltage overhead power lines will be replaced
- 21.5 km of fibre optic cable will be installed
- 3.3 km of low voltage underground cable will be laid
- 10 substations to be refurbished
- 18.2 km of extra high voltage network to be refurbished, including 61 support structures
- 1.2 km of high voltage overhead power lines to be replaced
- 71 remote controlled smart switching devices installed at 41 locations this will allow faults to be monitored and repaired via computer.
- 1 new substation

Members were invited to ask any questions:

- (a) A Member questioned whether larger transformers would be put in.

It was noted that they would usually put larger transformers in.

- (b) A Member questioned whether Northern Powergrid have identified any cables in Seaham that have gone down and need replacing?

It was noted that a huge amount of the investment is cable replacement and is part of the 14 km of cables being replaced underground.

- (c) A Member asked why Seaham and Ryhope are connected?

Northern Powergrid stated that they are connected to each other and it has nothing to do with county borders although it was noted that historically they would have been in the same county.

- (d) A Member stated that there has been a lot of upheaval with roads and other utilities being dug up. What guarantees can Northern Powergrid give that they will be put back to the same way they were previously?

Northern Powergrid noted that they work closely with Local Authorities and attend co-ordination meetings. When a road is replaced they have to work to regulations and they are inspected by Highways Inspectors.

- (e) A Member asked if all of the substations in Seaham will be upgraded as he was taken aback by the back switches at the substation next to the Fire Station?

It was noted that the substation next to the Fire Station is to be upgraded along with another 9 substations in Seaham. It was stated that there are 30-40 substations in Seaham.

- (f) A Member questioned whether it would be easier to have a new substation in Seaham?

Northern Powergrid that substations are not cheap and cost approximately £6-£10m.

- (g) A Member noted that there is a lot of proposed new housing developments in Seaham, will there be enough power?

It was noted that there is currently not a lot more capacity available and that is why phase 3 of the improvements is coming in. Northern Powergrid are looking to have a new primary sub-station at East Shore Village which will be 150m away from the houses. It was noted that the land involved is owned by Seaham Town Council and this land will need to be purchased before anything can be taken forward. This would give an extra 24 kw of capacity.

It was noted that capacity does need to be created in this area for new housing and businesses. It was noted that with the new substation the capacity would never run out.

The timeframes for the intended work were discussed. Phase 1 & 2 is 2017/18 and Phase 3 will be over 2020.

In terms of the process it was noted that the sooner the better for the works to be completed but there are a number of steps that Northern Powergrid need to take before this can be done such as the purchase of the land from Seaham Town Council. In the meantime the works they are carrying out will stabilise the electricity supply.

The Chair thanked the Northern Powergrid employees for attending the meeting and updating Members on the current situation and hoped that they would return to a future meeting to discuss future updates.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the information.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 26th SEPTEMBER, 2017

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

4. VISIT COUNTY DURHAM PUBLICATIONS

4.1 Wednesday Grapevine

RECOMMENDED the copies of the Wednesday Grapevines dated from 20th September to 8th November, 2017 which had been published by Visit County Durham, be accepted.

5. FUTURE SPEAKERS

RECOMMENDED that Members were requested to provide details to the Deputy Town Clerk of any future speakers that they would wish to be invited to this Committee for the forthcoming New Year.

6. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the changes to the electrical grid could be put out to press.