

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12TH JANUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	WESTERN HIGH VOLTAGE DIRECT CURRENT (HVDC) LINK PROJECT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	MORETON WEST & SAUGHALL MASSIE, HOYLAKE & MEOLS, GREASBY FRANKBY & IRBY, PENSBY & THINGWALL, HESWALL, CLATTERBRIDGE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR HARRY SMITH, STREETSCENE & TRANSPORT SERVICES CLLR BRIAN KENNY, ENVIRONMENT CLLR CHRIS MEADEN, CULTURE, TOURISM & LEISURE
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the proposed Western High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Link project being promoted by National Grid / Scottish Power and to seek endorsement for the proposed preferred route through the foreshore at Leasowe, under the embankment and Leasowe Common, across a track and agricultural land at Meols, and across Arrowe Park Golf Course.
- 1.2 The report also explains why the route needs to cross Arrowe Park Golf Course on the basis that no other engineering solution avoiding the Park is viable and to seek authority for the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management to appoint a Consultant to negotiate easements across Council land at no cost to the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Note and provide comments on the proposed Western HVDC project to meet the objectives of the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to increase the proportion of UK energy from renewable sources as described in the appendix to this report;
- (2) Endorse the proposed preferred route through Arrowe Park Golf Course on the basis that no other engineering solution avoiding the Park is viable;

- (3) Authorise the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management to appoint a Consultant to negotiate easements through Council land and associated compensation payments, with fees to be met by National Grid;
- (4) Request officers to keep Cabinet informed of future progress in relation to this important project.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to formally advise Members of this major project passing through Wirral.
- 3.2 This report also seeks endorsement for the proposed preferred route passing through Arrowe Park Golf Course on the basis that no other engineering solution avoiding the Park is viable.

4.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The background to the Western HVDC project is set out in the report attached as **Appendix 1** which has the following headings:

Section 1: Purpose of the Report

Section 2: Background to the Project

Section 3: Project Description

Section 4: Development and Assessment of the Underground Cable Route

Section 5: Pinch Points – Arrowe Park and Cable Landfall

Section 6: Next Steps

- 4.2 A copy of the Environmental Appraisal Supporting Report containing more detail in relation to the proposed project has been placed in the Members Room. A suite of key documentation can also be found on the project website at www.westernhvdclink.co.uk
- 4.3 Members are requested to note this information and provide comments on the proposed Western HVDC project to meet the objectives of the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to increase the proportion of UK energy from renewable sources.

5.0 PROPOSED PREFERRED ROUTE THROUGH ARROWE PARK

- 5.1 Initially, two potential options were identified in the vicinity of Arrowe Park; a route through the south of the golf course and an alternative route along Thingwall Road East. Consultation raised concerns regarding ecological and recreational disturbance of the course. Thingwall Road East contains a large number of power, telecom and sewage utilities and was considered to be constrained by space available to install the cables. There would also be significant disturbance to residents and road users caused by road closures during the installation period.
- 5.2 A more detailed technical review has subsequently been undertaken of both options. For Thingwall Road East the review concluded that the footpaths and the carriageway are congested with services which in their current arrangement would not allow safe installation of the cables. There would be an unacceptable

risk for ongoing operations and maintenance. United Utilities (UU) were consulted on the possibility of diverting their services but they confirmed that the route would not be acceptable due to longitudinal clashes with the sewerage network and insufficient room to divert the sewers.

- 5.3 For the golf course route options were considered and an assessment of options and impacts was undertaken. Installing within Arrowe Park could be undertaken utilising Horizontal Directional Drilling to minimise effects on the course and the number of holes required to be closed. Options were identified where only three holes would need to be closed; of the three only one would need to be closed for the duration of the installation - a maximum period of 13 weeks.
- 5.4 Following the assessments it was concluded that installing along Thingwall Road East was not a viable option due to the presence of the other services within the road; this was also confirmed by UU. Arrowe Park offered a viable solution whereby disturbance can be minimised by drilling (where practical) and timing of the installation.
- 5.5 The proposed preferred route through Arrowe Park Golf Course is shown on Figure 3 in the appended report and Cabinet is requested to endorse this route on the basis that no other engineering solution avoiding the Park is viable.

6.0 APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT

- 6.1 The negotiation of cable easements, ancillary compensation payments and the overseeing of accommodation works ideally requires the skills of a specialist in rural estate matters. A local well known and respected qualified firm is Denton Clark which is representing 20 other claimants along the route of the cable through the Wirral. The firm has expressed its willingness to represent the Council at no cost along with its established clients. All fees will be charged direct to National Grid and so it is recommended that Denton Clark be appointed to act for the Council.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Project related risks are managed by the promoter of the project (National Grid/Scottish Power).

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 A rigorous options appraisal process has been undertaken by the promoter of the project to arrive at the proposed preferred route.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 A major consultation strategy/ plan has been developed by the promoter of the project.

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 10.1 There are no implications under this heading.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

11.1 A Western HVDC Project Team has been established consisting of officers from Technical Services; Law, HR & Asset Management; Regeneration, Housing & Planning which meets with senior representatives from Scottish Power/ National Grid on a regular basis. The Project Team is covered from existing resources and there are no other Council staffing or financial implications associated with the management of the project.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken by the promoter of the project.

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no direct implications under this heading.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 This cable laying project is classed as Permitted Development under planning legislation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Western HVDC Link – Project Background Report

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None.	