

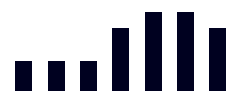


Newburn Haugh

Prepared for
Balance Power Projects Ltd
by CalComms

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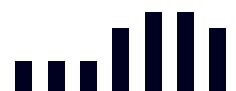
- 1.1.** This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is submitted on behalf of Balance Power Projects Ltd (the applicant). It relates to proposals for a battery storage facility along with a landscaping scheme, suitable access and drainage requirements on land at Newburn Haugh, Lemington (NE15 8SG).
- 1.2.** This Statement outlines the applicant's approach to pre-application consultation and identifies who has been consulted, a summary of the responses received and how the applicant has addressed the main points and issues raised in preparing proposals for the site.
- 1.3.** In addition to discussions with elected Members through the pre-application process, this SCI summarises the engagement with the local community through extensive canvassing which encouraged local residents to fill out a feedback form and to learn more about the application via our dedicated website.
- 1.4.** The consultation process undertaken by the applicant is compliant with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is intended to supplement the formal process that the Council will undertake further to the submission of the application.
- 1.5.** This Statement details the extent of consultation and community engagement that has been undertaken. It describes the planning policy context, consultation findings, how the findings have been implemented into the application, and the rationale for the proposed scheme.
- 1.6.** This Statement has been prepared by CalComms, an independent community and stakeholder consultation company based in London, Wakefield and Coventry. CalComms was instructed by the applicant to undertake the activities as reported in this Statement and to give considered advice.
- 1.7.** CalComms works extensively with applicants across a range of sectors, including residential, mixed use, commercial land and renewable energy. As planning has a quasi-judicial function, CalComms has prepared this Statement to satisfy local, regional and national planning requirements.



- 2.1.** This SCI conforms correctly to the Newcastle City Council's SCI Document (August 2018) which states that 'Community involvement and public consultation has always been an important part of the planning process; Newcastle City Council encourages local people to get involved in the plan making and the planning application process to make their views known and have a say in the future development of Newcastle.'
- 2.2.** However, the above policy does not specifically refer to the pre-application requirements of developers. Instead, it is a guide for how the authority consults on strategic planning matters.
- 2.3.** Government policy and guidance encourage community engagement with the planning system, both in the context of developing local plans and informing specific development applications.
- 2.4.** This section provides a brief overview of key policy and guidance and how this has informed the approach to pre-application community engagement for the purpose of developing the planning application.
- 2.5.** Paragraph 39 of the NPPF (July 2021) states 'Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community'. Although this section does give primary guidance to local planning authorities we consider adhering to this as being best practice as it provides consistency in approach.
- 2.6.** Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states 'Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot'.
- 2.7.** The Localism Act (2011), strengthens the role of local communities in planning by introducing a requirement for developers to consult with local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments (Section 122). This is intended to give local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to proposals.
- 2.8.** Section 122 requires that the accompanying SCI submitted with the application identifies the extent of community consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken to date.
- 2.9.** By delivering this battery storage facility in Newcastle we are helping the Council meet its own renewable energy targets as set out in the Climate emergency declaration (April 2019) which has the target of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030. Furthermore, this application supports many of the policies laid out in both the Council's Climate Change Strategy, and Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan. These include the following:
 - 2.9.1.** Policy CS16 Optimise the use of local renewable or low carbon energy;
 - 2.9.2.** 12.22 The Climate Change Act 2008⁴⁰ requires that the UK reduces its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (from the 1990 baseline) by 2050. Both Gateshead and Newcastle have signed up to the Covenant of Mayors²⁷ commitments on sustainable energy. This is a commitment to go beyond a 20% reduction by 2020.
 - 2.9.3.** 12.23 This policy seeks to encourage the development of low carbon and renewable energy solutions appropriate to the scale and circumstance of the development.
 - 2.9.4.** 12.29 This Plan supports the development of appropriate, commercial-scale energy schemes. In accordance with national planning policy, weight will be given to the wider environmental, social and economic benefits of renewable and low carbon energy generation in considering proposals.

Summary

- 2.10.** Community participation is a key objective of Government policy and is reflected through discussions with Newcastle City Council's elected Members and the local MP.
- 2.11.** The following sections of this Statement provide details of the scope of consultation and community engagement undertaken prior to submission of the application and in accordance with the Government's requirements for pre-application community involvement on major planning applications.
- 2.12.** This SCI conforms to the requirements as set out in primary legislation (Localism Act 2011) and the national planning framework (NPPF 2021).



Background

- 3.1.** The applicant is committed to engaging with the community in developing proposals for the site. The applicant understands the value of engaging with the community early in the process and the benefit it has for the development project as well as the benefit to the overall planning process. The applicant has a history and track record of working with key stakeholders and local residents throughout the delivery of their national portfolio of energy projects. Community consultation provides the applicant with a platform for interested parties to be kept informed of the proposals and provides the opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions and give feedback.

Consultation objectives

- 3.2.** Prior to engaging with stakeholders and the local community the applicant engaged closely with elected Members to inform the approach taken and to scope the interested groups/individuals affected by the proposal.
- 3.3.** The consultation objectives are as follows:
- 3.3.1.** To understand the community's views on the location for development;
- 3.3.2.** To allow adequate opportunity for the community to consider, understand and comment on the detail of the proposals;
- 3.3.3.** To promote understanding of the proposals, as well as constraints and opportunities for the site;
- 3.3.4.** To allow the early resolution and solutions to any issues or concerns raised; and
- 3.3.5.** To ensure the community and key stakeholders are kept informed of the progress of proposals for the site where necessary.

Consultation strategy

- 3.4.** Throughout the application process, the applicant has sought to actively engage with a variety of stakeholders and the local community and, where possible, respond positively to the comments and consultation responses received.
- 3.5.** To date, the consultation process has involved:
- 3.5.1.** Opened a dialogue with political representatives from Newcastle City Council. This included approaching local ward

councillors, Strategic Council members, such as Council Leader, Cabinet Member for a Dynamic City and Cabinet Member for a Connected, Clean City.

- 3.5.2.** Engaged with the local MP by providing a written briefing outlining the application, the technology and the nature of battery storage and inviting the MP to further briefings if desired.
- 3.5.3.** Undertaking an extensive canvassing operation to engage with local residents, inviting them to provide us with their feedback;
- 3.5.4.** Creation of a dedicated microsite published in full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).
- 3.6.** Further details of this approach are set out below:

Meetings with interested parties

- 3.7.** Aside from on-going discussions with Newcastle City Council the applicant, through their consultation team, has engaged through written updates with Local Ward Councillors and Council Leadership such as the Leader and the Planning Committee Chair.
- 3.8.** The applicant, through their consultant team, has kept an open dialogue with the parties to keep them updated as to the progress of the proposals. Where further information on the scheme has been requested by stakeholders, it has been supplied in an easy-to-understand way, which included follow up letters.
- 3.9.** Additionally, the applicant has offered to meet with local residents to discuss details of the site and how, through landscaping concerns regarding sound would be mitigated.

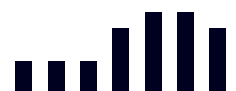
Public canvassing exercise

- 3.10.** To widen understanding of this application, the applicant has undertaken an extensive canvassing operation, distributing flyers amongst local residents and businesses. These flyers provide stakeholders with information about the proposed site and directs them, via a QR code, to find out more through our dedicated project website. This website (www.newburnhaughbatterystorage.co.uk) offers greater in-depth information about the application, and invites residents to provide feedback on the proposal. A number of screenshots can be found in Appendix W.

- 3.11.** The project team prepared an A5 flyer (see Appendix X) to advertise the website and the broader promotion. The one kilometre distribution area can be found in Appendix Y. 600 flyers were circulated around the local area inviting them to discuss any thoughts or concerns with the applicant's project team.
- 3.12.** There were eight set questions with additional opportunity for attendees to record their comments. A dedicated email address set up for residents to contact the project team. The questions were:
- 3.12.1.** Are you aware of the proposed development site?
- 3.12.2.** Have you heard of Balance Power?
- 3.12.3.** How close do you live to the site?
- 3.12.4.** What have you heard, if anything, about these proposals?
- 3.12.5.** Would you like to know more about the science and technology of Battery Storage facilities?
- 3.12.6.** Have you any comments about the design and layout of this application? (for example, would you like to see planting and landscaping)
- 3.12.7.** We would like you to support our application. If you do not, what could we do to change your mind?
- 3.12.8.** Having learnt more about the project, how likely are you to support the application?
- 3.13.** Finally, the applicant prepared a bespoke letter inviting residents closest to the site to an individual briefing sessions either in person or via remote videoconferencing software.
- 3.15.** The applicant provided an opportunity for the key stakeholders and elected members to engage in the planning process.
- 3.16.** The applicant provided residents with the opportunity to register their feedback. This was presented in a feedback form on the website in the three weeks the website has been live it has generated a significant response from local residents attracting over 500 individual impressions.
- 3.17.** The feedback provided to respondents can be found below in section 4:

Summary

- 3.14.** The pre-application consultation methodology fully accords with the requirements of the NPPF (2021) and the Localism Act (2011).

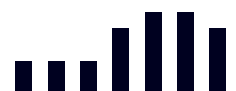



4 Responses to feedback form


- 4.1. The applicant received little negative feedback to their public consultation exercise, on the sole occasion where negative feedback was received no contact details were provided to allow the applicant to address concerns.
- 4.2. Other comments to the feedback form
- 4.3. The feedback forms have raised numerous questions from members of the public about the proposals. The table below sets out the responses to the questions raised by local residents.



- 5.1.** The consultation strategy has been inclusive and takes account of the different interests in the proposal for the site, whilst taking account of any limitations and scope for change through the process. CalComms is confident that the level of consultation with the local community as a whole has exceeded the requirements of national and local policy.
- 5.2.** A key aim of the applicant is to continue to involve the community at all stages of the planning and development process. Following the submission of the application, Balance Power Projects Ltd will monitor any responses which are made to Newcastle City Council during the statutory consultation process and will continue in their efforts to address these where possible.
- 5.3.** In engaging with the public, as well as locally elected representatives, Balance Power Projects Ltd were able to better understand issues and concerns. Balance Power has also included a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section of the microsite which seeks to address any broader questions that residents may have. A full copy of these FAQ's can be found in Appendix Z.




NEWBURN HAUGH



BALANCE POWER - BALANCING OUR EVOLVING POWER NEEDS WITH INNOVATIVE CLEAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS

[GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK](#)

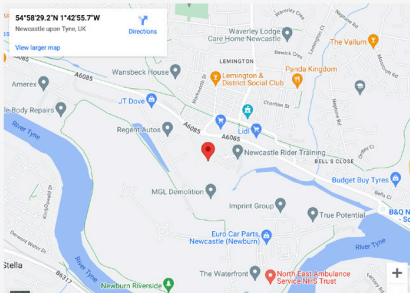
Welcome to our website. This will provide local residents and stakeholders with information regarding the new planning application for a battery storage facility on the land to the South East of Lemington Road, Lemington. We hope this gives you all the information you need, however, if you require further detail please do contact us, either through the feedback form or by getting in touch with the team by emailing askus@newburnhaughbatterystorage.co.uk or calling 0203 813 5559.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

The application seeks consent to develop a **battery energy storage system**. The project has zero emissions and will be used to assist the UK's transition to zero carbon energy.

Balance Power has considerable expertise in the development of energy projects and local distribution network infrastructure requirements.


[GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK](#)



SITE LOCATION DETAILS

The site is situated at NETS 856 in the heart of a busy industrial estate and is approximately 250 metres to the south of the busy A6085 (Lemington Road). The site is located next to both a timber and demolition yard.

[GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK](#)



Indicative plans and outlines

We are keen to ensure that local residents and stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide feedback for this high-quality clean energy project.

GET IN TOUCH

We are keen to ensure that local residents and stakeholders are given the opportunity to express support in this high quality project, which will help lower bills over time and improve energy security for the local area.

For more information please visit our website: <https://www.balancepower.co.uk/>

QUICK LINKS

- [HOME](#)
- [ABOUT BALANCE POWER](#)
- [WHAT ARE WE PROPOSING AT NEWBURN HAUGH?](#)
- [WHY IS BATTERY STORAGE GOOD FOR NEWCASTLE?](#)
- [FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS](#)
- [FEEDBACK FORM](#)






The Layout, when completed

The development site and proposed access.

Application for a new battery storage facility at Newburn Haugh

The Balance Power team is interested in hearing your views and opinions

We are Balance Power and we care about delivering high-quality clean energy projects which will help the transition to net-zero by 2050. We are immensely proud of our experience in providing communities with a carbon-free future. This note is to introduce us and our proposed planning application to you.

We are proposing to develop a new battery storage facility, which will include a landscaping scheme, suitable access and drainage requirements. Land off the A6085 at the Newburn Haugh Industrial Estate, a 2.5-acre site in Lemington, has been identified by Balance Power as an ideal location to deliver this project given its proximity to the point of connection and surrounding industrial uses. This site has already received consent for an existing gas peaking scheme, therefore there is planning precedent on the site for energy development. This application would replace the consented gas peaker with a battery storage facility which helps to stabilise the grid and encourage the transition to renewable energy.

Balance Power is a leading independent developer of renewable energy projects within the UK. Our key objective is to help work closely with local authorities to help them meet their renewable energy objectives and contribute towards the UK's net zero ambitions by 2050. This site, when completed, will feed stored electricity into the local distribution network at peak and other determed times. **We are also contributing towards achieving the UK's target to fully decarbonise the electricity system by 2035.**



Please turn over for more information

Scan this QR code with your phone to take our survey, here you can view the rest of the site to get more information.

For more information please visit our website: <https://newburnhaughbatterystorage.co.uk>

To date, we have been active in over 30 specific energy projects nationwide and our ambitions are to deliver over 1.5GW of new clean and stored energy within the next few years.

Application Summary

Battery storage sites are becoming increasingly important in the fight against climate change, and help to deliver better energy security and contribute towards keeping domestic energy bills down.

By delivering this storage facility, we are helping Newcastle City Council meet its renewable energy targets by supporting many of the policies set out in the Newcastle Climate Change Plan.

In addition, our plans help in the following ways:

- **Reduces the UK's reliance on foreign imported energy** to meet any peak demand.
- Improving air quality by reducing the reliance on fossil-fuel facilities to generate electricity.
- Provide a secure and stable energy supply to the local network during times when renewable energy sources are inconsistent (sun not shining and wind not blowing).
- By fully integrating battery storage into the network the National Grid estimates that a **potential cost saving of over £40billion** could be made in the medium to long term.
- This will be an important contribution to **delivering lower fuel and domestic energy bills.**



Balance Power in the UK

In short, the site can be delivered with minimal (if any) impact on local residents and meets all of the Council's policy objectives regarding renewable energy.

Understanding your interest

If you have time to do so, **please scan the QR code** with your smart phone to visit our website to get more information, and to fill in our survey. It should only take five minutes but will be invaluable in helping us make a good case to the Council.

Should you wish to speak with us about this you can do so by emailing askus@newburnhaughbatterystorage.co.uk or by filling out our feedback form at www.newburnhaughbatterystorage.co.uk





FAQ:

What is Battery Storage and Why is it needed?

Battery storage facilities are developments that store electricity, at times of high generation and low demand, and release this energy back onto the grid system in times of high demand. As heavily polluting but reliable and controllable coal and gas are removed from the grid and replaced by renewable sources (e.g: wind and solar) it is critical we maintain a resilient energy network. Battery storage is vitally important to the grid system because they are able to provide power to homes and businesses when renewable energy supply is inconsistent: wind not blowing and the sun not shining, therefore stabilising the grid system reducing blackouts and aiming at keeping electricity prices low.

The UK Government has set a target to be Net-Zero by 2050, alongside a strategic objective that all electricity should come from clean energy sources by 2035. In order for these targets to be achieved, there must be an increase in the number of solar and wind farms. This means that more battery facilities are required to support the transition. This will allow existing fossil-fuel facilities to be decommissioned over time and still maintain security of supply.

Where and how do you source the materials used in battery storage?

The sourcing of lithium and cobalt has been the subject of concern regarding some environmental and social impacts of mining and shipping. Despite these materials being widely used in all smart phones as well as, increasingly, in electric vehicles, we recognise such concerns exist and that people want to ensure high standards of such sourcing.

It is important to note that Balance Power do not manufacture our own batteries for use in developments such as this. Instead we procure our materials from reputable suppliers. These suppliers are internationally recognised as being leading supporters of many new organisations and groups established to ensure materials are sourced ethically and responsibly. Balance Power is absolutely committed to increased ethical sourcing of lithium and cobalt.

What will it take to run a Net Zero energy system?

Electricity is one of the most reliable aspects of modern life. We have come to trust it so much that when we flick a switch we expect the lights come on or your phone to start charging. If you plug your phone in and it doesn't start charging you're more likely to check the connection rather than worry the power simply isn't there. The level of sophistication to achieve this is far from simple but it was built on the reliability of burning fossil fuels. More in, equalled more out so supply and demand could be met accurately with little waste.

Most people are not aware that electricity is consumed in real time, there is no electricity waiting around to be used later (but we're working on that!) The market for electricity is real time pricing based on every half hour. Simply put the more energy available in a particular half hour the cheaper the price. Businesses and homeowners generally pay an average of all of these half hours. There are some very expensive ones and some very cheap ones.

Battery storage facilities aim to charge through the night when power is cheap, there is little demand as people are in bed and wind turbines are still spinning and some other power generating facilities such as nuclear do not shut down as it is not cost effective to do so.

Electrify.....Everything!

The availability of electricity and our ability to clean up production means homes are switching to electric boilers and heat pumps, cars from petrol to electric so now we need more electricity than ever to meet our needs. People choosing this switch will only happen if the cost of electricity is low when compared to other fuels and people can continue to trust that the electricity for their car will be there when they need it. The mere mention of a petrol shortage causes chaos with people's perception of ready access to the fuel they need for their cars. We want to avoid at all costs a situation where electricity is rationed because there isn't enough surplus to ensure cars can be charged between 4 and 8pm!

How will these proposals benefit me?

Energy bills are continuing to rise. The repercussions on homeowners and businesses are widely reported and the UK is facing a cost of living crisis. The UK is currently too reliant on international gas pricing. Even though less than 5% of UK gas comes from Russia, international events such as the war in Ukraine impact on energy security and fossil-fuel prices across the globe. There is an undisputed need to increase the amount of renewable energy and increasing pressure to make the switch to renewable energy, to ensure a cheap and secure supply of energy to meet current and future demand.

What other benefits do batteries provide?

Other benefits that battery storage facilities provide include the element of decarbonising and decentralising the power network. The more storage capacity that exists means fewer fossil-fuelled plants will be in operation which improves air quality, both locally and nationally, and consequential improvements in people's health and quality of life. Decentralising the power network means that by having battery storage operating in the network, less power is wasted because travel transmission distances are reduced, which in turn means that local communities and businesses can benefit from a reliable supply of energy.



Battery storage provides several environmental benefits. They are carbon zero in their operation and commonly include a rich landscaping scheme included as part of the development, which contributes towards a biodiversity net gain. Battery storage facilities also have a high energy: density ratio, this means that for the amount of energy that the batteries can generate compared to the amount of space which is taken, is low. This is especially relevant in comparison to say solar farms, which require a much greater amount of land take for an equivalent amount of power provided.

Will this create traffic congestion?

A Traffic Management Plan will be submitted as part of the planning application. This will determine the most efficient routes and access points for the site. It will set out a strategy that addresses road noise, safety, congestion and manages the amount of vehicles accessing the site at different times of the day/week.

Are there any pollution risks?

Batteries are a clean form of technology; no air pollution is associated with the development and measures are taken to completely avoid any risk of leakage into the environment.

What do batteries look like?

Battery storage facilities are similar in appearance to shipping containers. The design and siting of battery developments are tailored to minimise visual impact by reducing height and locating them adjacent to existing infrastructure (e.g.: substations, electricity pylons). By doing this the development is able to blend into the existing environment, whilst reducing adverse visual amenities.

Are batteries noisy?

There is a low level of noise emitted from batteries, however we make sure that this level is no louder than existing level of background noise. During hotter temperatures noise will mainly come from the air conditioning systems which keep the batteries at their required temperature. However even during these hotter periods, the development is designed to make sure that the noise disturbance will not disturb local amenities. An acoustic study will be submitted with the planning application and the standards of noise will be kept to British Standard 4142:2014+A1:2019. This will have to be demonstrated before the battery storage facility becomes operational.

Why are you not developing on brownfield land?

Battery Storage facilities are required to be close to suitable grid connections. Once a grid connection point is obtained, brownfield sites will be sought if available and these are prioritised over greenfield land. However, where a suitable brownfield site is unavailable, we carry out an alternative site assessment to choose the next best site.

How long will the battery be in operation and what will happen to the land afterwards?

The site will be decommissioned at the end of its life, potentially up to 40 years, with all equipment removed and the land returned to how it was before development started.

The area I live in is very dark at night, will batteries increase light pollution?

If the proposed development is situated in one of these areas, a full lighting strategy will be provided and submitted as part of the planning application. This will minimise disturbance from light spill.

The area around the site floods a lot, won't batteries increase this impact?

All battery sites will as part of the planning application process have a detailed drainage strategy in place and where required, a flood risk assessment to remove any risk of flooding.

Do batteries cause increases in electromagnetic radiation?

Batteries do not cause electromagnetic radiation. There are elements of the proposed installation such as transformers and overhead cables that will produce some electromagnetic radiation. These elements are part and parcel of all electrical substations across the UK. They are designed in accordance with stringent directives and codes (such as the EMC (electromagnetic compatibility) directive and the IEC (International Electrical Commission) codes which ensure that any electromagnetic emissions are kept to safe levels.

What will I be able to see once the site is completed?

Our proposals incorporate a substantial area for planting around the perimeter of the site. This helps to screen the equipment and creates new habitats.

A full landscape strategy/planting scheme will be submitted as part of the planning application, alongside a landscape visual impact assessment.

Why have you chosen this particular site?

These developments have to be close to a point of connection to the grid with sufficient capacity to charge the batteries and then exporting power back to the grid. The site chosen is considered to be the optimal location to meet these requirements.

How can you be sure the batteries are storing renewable energy?

We can't be sure but one day they will be.

Battery storage will store the excess amount of energy that is being generated on the grid no matter where that comes from. If more of the energy on the grid comes from solar and wind, then batteries will store these forms of renewable energy. Therefore, over time as more renewable energy becomes operational, there will be a greater store of 'clean' energy. Equally, as more solar and wind farms are developed, there will be a greater surplus of renewable power in the network and therefore more batteries will be required to store the additional power.



