

Meeting Note

Our ref 64846/06/HS/EC
Date 22 January 2025
Present Kai Brown (Conrad Energy), Emily Clarke (Lichfields);
Venue Yaxley Synchronous Condenser Site
Issued to Conrad Energy

Subject Yaxley Synchronous Condenser

1.0 Introductions and Purpose of Meeting

- 1.1 Conrad Energy introduced the meeting highlighting issues raised at previous community meetings:
- 1 Noise levels and assessment: Conrad Energy has circulated with the Parish Council the approved planning documentation, including the Noise Assessment prepared by InAcoustic.

2.0 Questions and Answers

- 2.1 **Q:** The capacity of the Sustainable Drainage Systems ('SuDS') was queried considering the downstream environment from the site.
- 2.2 **A:** Conrad Energy confirmed a Verification Report was required to be submitted and approved by Mid-Suffolk District Council to confirm compliance with the approved drainage strategy and previous assessments. An operations manager is to be appointed for maintenance following completion and Siemens' withdrawal from the site.
- 2.3 **Q:** Along the same lines as the above operations manager, it was queried whether there would also be a landscaping contractor appointed.
- 2.4 **A:** Siemens/Conrad Energy will be undertaking a local tendering process to appoint a landscaping contractor. They must be confirmed as an approved contractor. Conrad Energy note that Thrandeston Parish Council would like to recommend a local company to the position.
- 2.5 **Q:** Whether the site would be accessible via the Access Track (temporary) was raised.
- 2.6 **A:** Conrad Energy confirmed it was exploring options and engaging with Mid-Suffolk District Council on a realistic and sustainable solution to forming a permanent access to the site(s), particularly citing delays outside of Conrad Energy's control for the site to become energised.
- 2.7 **Q:** The potential for another substation or additional pylons was queried.
- 2.8 **A:** Conrad Energy understands the existing pylons carry 132kv and are related to UKPN Projects. No additional pylons are required for the synchronous condenser. Recent news

regarding 400kv pylons relates to the Norwich to Tilbury project separate to Conrad Energy's involvement.

- 2.9 **Q:** The potential for Battery Energy Storage Systems ('BESS') to be proposed was queried or whether the synchronous condenser was related to recent proposals by Field Energy.
- 2.10 **A:** Conrad Energy explained that the substation would be expected to draw other energy development proposals to the area, particularly given the open fields forming the surrounding land, thus providing room for connecting assets. These proposals are unrelated to Conrad Energy's involvement at this site. The reinstatement of the Access Road may therefore be reversed should further development to these fields be approved.
- 2.11 **Q:** Noise Performance Testing (and the need for) was queried.
- 2.12 **A:** Conrad Energy confirmed that the approved Noise Assessment(s) were based on the performance of the design, and that a Noise Verification Report will be prepared based on measurements tested against these assumptions. Siemens Energy also requires noise testing prior to its withdrawal from the site. It should be noted this will require a switch-on for testing/reassessment.
- 2.13 **Q:** Whether the synchronous condenser was already running was queried, and was the methodology for the Noise Assessments and the assumptions made.
- 2.14 **A:** Conrad Energy explained that the Noise Assessments approved at the planning permission stage were based on the design and specifications of the equipment assessed against measured baseline background noise levels at the Yaxley site. Therefore the Noise Verification Report will assess whether the equipment once installed and running achieves these modelled levels or if additional mitigation measures will be necessary.
- 2.15 **Q:** Concerns have been raised given reports of construction traffic using the Leys Lane access to the site.
- 2.16 **A:** Conrad Energy and Siemens is aware that this has occurred on a small number of occasions and understands this was based on error by suppliers or those unfamiliar with the area/Access Track, as sat-navs direct traffic to access via this route without knowledge of the temporary access from the A140. However, all complaints are fed to the management team and corrected.
- 2.17 **Q:** A sign at Leys Lane directing construction traffic to the Access Track from the A140 is unclear or too small to be effective.
- 2.18 **A:** Conrad Energy understands this concern, the sign was not an approved detail within the CEMP approved by Mid-Suffolk District Council, however Conrad Energy can review if the sign requires Local Authority consent to be changed.

3.0 General Project Updates

- 3.1 Landscaping works will commence imminently, implemented by Siemens Energy however the company contracted for maintenance once the site is operational will be tendered for

locally, with the tender process managed by the Operations Manager. It is anticipated the maintenance contract will also cover Conrad's Walpole site.

- 3.2 The tender process is expected to start once the construction is completed and Siemens Energy has completed its handover and completion checklist with the Operations Manager. This will require Siemens to confirm that at handover the quality of the planting and any mitigation or replacements required.
- 3.3 The site is currently undergoing 'cold commissioning' to verify that the installation is correct and functional. This is expected to take approximately 3-4 months, the site will then be quiet until the 'hot commissioning' of the site and becomes energised prior to handover to an Operations Manager.
- 3.4 In January (w/c 20.01.25) cable ducting routing will commence. This will facilitate the high voltage cable ('HV cable') to be run to the substation and form the grid connection. The site is currently not connected to water supply or electricity supply.
- 3.5 National Grid have been requested to manage the southwest corner of the site given its delays; National Grid will ensure blending of landscaping is correct and appropriately delivered.
- 3.6 The main transformer is now connected via gas insulated HV cables to the synchronous condensers, the use of gas insulation is no cause for concern, it is used as it has less conductivity than air.

4.0 Looking Ahead

Site Activity

- 4.1 The cabins currently in the southeast of the site will be relocated to within the security fence in due course as there are works required between the site and the substation to enable grid connection.
- 4.2 Conrad Energy presented an overview of the construction principles followed at the site. Conrad Energy is aware the only breach of working hours has been during concrete pouring, as civils was not able to vacate the site until concrete was sufficiently set. The Site Manager contacted local residents via telephone to notify them of this and will inform local residents if this ever needs to happen again.

Deliveries

- 4.3 Equipment deliveries experienced incident due to late teams along the route, however Local Authority overall supportive of the process and support from the County Highways department and Police Force assisted avoiding additional delays. Conrad Energy understands the Police updated the local community on Twitter.
- 4.4 The HV Cable is still to be delivered closer to the operational date, and will not require any road closures or traffic consents, but Highways Authority vehicles will escort the delivery to ensure safety.

- 4.5 Attendees fed back that Facebook is a more useful platform to provide community updates in this area based on greater popularity. Conrad Energy will take this on board for any future deliveries including of the HV Cable.

Supporting the Community

- 4.6 Conrad Energy confirmed it is still its intention to organise an event as part of the project's community outreach programme, however recognises there has been slow progress.
- 4.7 Conrad Energy confirmed awards process was now completed and would like to organise an event to present the outcomes of these awards.

5.0 AOB

- 5.1 No further questions.
- 5.2 There is hope the next meeting could be held inside of the synchronous condenser site to facilitate attendees to see the site from a closer position once confirmed safe.
- 5.3 Next meeting anticipated June 2025 (six months' time).