

**CABINET  
12 JANUARY 2021**

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**NORTHERN POWERGRID INVESTMENT IN DARLINGTON**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Andy Keir  
Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Ian Williams  
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise Members of a significant investment programme by Northern Powergrid (NPg) in the central and northern parts of Darlington.

**Summary**

2. Northern Powergrid (NPg) are commencing a £9m investment programme to provide extra capacity to meet the town's future needs, but also to improve reliability and resilience for existing customers. The upgrade will also ready the network as more people move to electric vehicle technology.
3. This is not just good news for our residents and businesses but also helps with our aspirations for Economic Growth; having the infrastructure in place will be attractive for business wanting to set-up in Darlington to bring more jobs into the town.
4. Key features of the programme are:
  - (a) £9 million of investment over five phases that will take two to three years to complete.
  - (b) Replacement of 48km of an old 6kV network to a new 11kV network that will almost double the capacity in the Central and Northern parts of Darlington to match the 11kV capacity that already exists in the south of the town.
  - (c) The existing network dates back to the 1950s and is increasingly difficult to repair, so the new network will provide more reliability for customers.
  - (d) This upgrade has been in the NPg planning stages for a number of years and needed for existing customers growth.
  - (e) It is not anticipated there will be any power outages as part of these works so resident and business supply should not be affected.

**Communications and Management of the Programme**

5. To ensure residents, business and members are kept fully up to speed ahead of any works the Council and NPg have worked in partnership on a comprehensive communications, engagement and project management programme.

6. The key features are:

- (a) An all Member briefing has been provided to outline the details of the scheme and all Members have received the presentation.
- (b) This was the launch of the comprehensive communication plan to ensure residents, business and members are kept up to date and informed as the investment programme continues through the various delivery phases.
- (c) NPg will be working directly with residents and business to advise them ahead of any works planned and will provide contact information to ensure any issues are resolved effectively and efficiently.
- (d) Monthly updates provided to Members and formal quarterly review meetings with Council to manage performance.
- (e) Application of targeted communications as phases progress to effected customers in advance.
- (f) Contact details provided to ensure people can discuss issues.

### **Social Legacy and Community Investment**

- 7. NPg recognise that these works will have an impact whilst they are undertaken and are keen to ensure the project provides some social legacy and are planning to invest in the community.
- 8. NPg provided examples of commitment to carbon offsetting and potential contributions to tree planting schemes, and contributions to other community and educational activity. Members were invited to provide ideas and the Council would then work with NPg to prioritise the most appropriate areas for this investment.

### **Recommendation**

- 9. It is recommended that Members note this report.

### **Reasons**

- 10. The recommendations is supported to ensure members are aware of the programme and have the information to manage and direct any issues in their wards

**Ian Williams**  
**Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

### **Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

DW : Extension 6618  
LC