

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Finance and Resources Committee

Does this report require to be approved?  Yes  No

Ref 3081

Date 26/02/25

## Land Surplus to Operational Requirements at Ailsa Road, Coatbridge

**From** James McKinstry, Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement)

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### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek council consent to declare an area of land extending to 37 square metres or thereby surplus to council requirements. The area of land is located at Ailsa Road, Coatbridge and is shown on Cartographic Drawing 48215 at Appendix 1 to this report. Scottish Power Energy Networks have enquired about the possibility of the land being declared surplus to council requirements with a view to leasing the land to them for a new electricity substation. The requirement for a new substation is to ensure the continuity of a reliable electricity supply in this locality in future.

In keeping with council procedure, as there has been an objection from a local councillor to the proposed future use of this land, this paper is presented to committee for determination.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:

- (1) Consider the contents of this report and the local member's objections,
- (2) Agree the proposal to declare the land surplus to council requirements. Thereafter the council's Estates Team can consider future use in keeping with council policy.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
Ambition statement	(3) Maximise the use of our marketable land and assets through improved development in business and industrial infrastructure
Programme of Work	Statutory / corporate / service requirement

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) have indicated that they wish to explore the possibility of the council owned land (37 square metres or thereby) shown on Cartographic Drawing 48215 at Appendix 1 to this report being leased to them for the purpose of installing a new electricity substation.
- 1.2 They have advised that due to the electrical network in the Ailsa Road area being at the end of a long section, it will suffer most from volt drop in future if there is no action taken. The connection of a new substation will also allow for increased capacity for local residents to connect new green technologies in future such as electric car charging and heat pumps. In addition, a new substation will provide additional network security to the area.

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## **2. Report**

- 2.1 The land consists of a section of maintained amenity grass within a larger area of maintained amenity grass and is situated within an established area of primarily privately owned housing in Coatbridge.
- 2.2 In keeping with the council's surplus property procedure for areas of ground that amount to fewer than 50 square metres, the council Holding Service (Housing) have been consulted on the proposal to declare the land surplus to requirements. There have been no objections in principle to the land being declared surplus to their requirements as the land is not considered to be of current or future operational use to Housing.
- 2.3 Owing to the proposed size of the substation being under 29 cubic metres planning permission would not be required as the installation would come under permitted development rights. SPEN have advised that they would seek to engage with the local community throughout the course of the project. As part of the works they would undertake a letter drop in the local area to notify affected customers and explain the purpose of the works to them. Doorstep conversations will take place with customers whose properties will be directly affected by any digging works. Any publicity material used will have a contact from SPEN listed on them, who will be available for customers to contact during working hours. A modern glass reinforced plastic enclosure will be used to ensure that there is minimal visual impact to the area.
- 2.4 Local councillors within the applicable ward have been consulted on the proposal to declare the land surplus to requirements. A meeting was convened between the Council, SPEN and two local members to discuss some concerns. However, the objection from one local member to the proposed substations remains. It should be noted that declaring land/property surplus and the potential future use are two distinct matters. In the ordinary course of things, local councillors are consulted with a view to discovering any objections in principle to council land or property being declared surplus. In the case of Ailsa Road, the proposal to declare the land surplus has been entirely prompted by the interest of Scottish Power in siting a new electricity substation there to ensure continuity of supply in the immediate area. It is therefore difficult to separate the surplus declaration from the proposed future use. The points of objection are outlined below with responses provided by SPEN undernoted.
  1. This piece of land is very close to an end of terrace house and the driveway used for access round the back of the property. It would make very little sense to place

anything so close to such a property - especially considering the noise and safety aspect.

**Response:** The boundary of the substation will sit 3-4 metres to the east of the driveway and will therefore not cause disruption to their access. All of the transformers that SPEN install fall well within the industry standard for noise regulation and are quieter compared to older transformers on the network.

## 2. Concern about fires

**Response:** A standard package substation contains an oil filled transformer, which is protected from fault energy by fuses and circuit breakers. In the event of a fault, the protective equipment on SPEN networks operates to de-energise equipment before disruptive failure occurs. The substation proposed for this site is the same as every other substation up and down the country, in every housing scheme in Britain, and this site is considered no more high risk of fire than any others. SPEN can look at installing a midel filled transformer. Midel is an alternative insulating liquid used in transformers instead of oil in high- risk locations such as substations enclosed within buildings or within basements.

SPEN substations are housed within a glass reinforced plastic housing. To prevent against vandalism, SPEN substation enclosures have a fireproof rating compliant with BS 467-7. According to SPEN Specification for Prefabricated Glass Reinforced Plastic Enclosures: "The Enclosure shall be treated to reduce flammability. Sources of ignition include internal equipment failure, careless handling of propane gas torches and deliberate acts of vandalism. The resin shall comply with BS 476-7 Class 2 for external and internal fire rating, regarding surface spread of flame."

To prevent unauthorised access to equipment, the enclosure doors are fitted with padlocks that can only be opened by staff authorised by Scottish Power. If it is deemed necessary SPEN can install a fence around the substation to increase security.

## 3. Concern about access for work to maintain the substation.

**Response:** Equipment installed in a modern substation is considered to be maintenance free. Access to this substation would generally only be required to carry out restoration of power in the event of a power cut, or to carry out switching operations to reconfigure the network for routine work. Switching operations only require one person to gain access for 10-15 minutes at a time. As this is a brand new substation, it will be fitted with tele-control facilities which will allow SPEN's control room to carry out switching operations remotely, thereby reducing the frequency for staff to gain access. The SPEN maintenance department carries out annual inspections of all substations to ensure that they remain safe, tidy and to catch any potential problems before they arise. Any issues flagged up during an inspection are dealt with as soon as possible.

## 4. Concern about local children playing near the substation.

**Response:** The substation would sit within a glass reinforced plastic enclosure, which is securely locked and can only be accessed by trained SPEN operatives. Further to this, within the enclosure there is no exposed live electrical equipment. All electrical equipment inside the enclosure is locked inside cabinets, which can only be opened by authorised SPEN staff. Because of this, the danger to children playing near the substation is considered to be minimal.

5. I also believe this is something the local community would wholly object to.

**Response:** As part of any future works, SPEN will carry out a letter drop to inform residents of the benefits of the new substation and to inform them of work before this takes place.

6. The land would also require preparation due to the hill on the middle of it and I fear this would cause further disruption in the locale where traffic is already at high volume.

**Response:** This piece of land does not require any extra preparation compared to standard ground works for a package substation. Local residents will be informed of works before they take place and doorstep conversations will take place to ensure work will have minimal disruption for residents in the area.

7. I do not believe this piece of land to be appropriate to build on for any purpose.

**Response:** This piece of land is considered the most appropriate location for SPEN to install the new substation. The area around Ailsa Road has been identified as an area of high predicted load growth and this patch of land provides SPEN with a central location to distribute the required power to the area. The new substation is required to keep up with the predicted load growth and will benefit the residents of the area by providing a greater security of supply, greater capacity to keep up with the increasing uptake in low carbon technologies and ensure that electrical supplies remain within their statutory limits in future.

2.5 The land at this location has been identified by SPEN as the best location to ensure security of the supply in this area and provide for anticipated future needs. The Council owns limited amounts of land with the immediate locality and therefore this site is considered the most suitable to meet SPEN's requirements.

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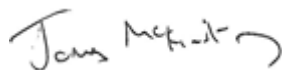
### 3. Measures of success

3.1 If the land is declared surplus to council requirements, then future development of the ground for the proposed substation will help ensure resilience and continuity of supply within the local electricity network. The Council will also obtain a capital receipt for the lease of the ground.

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### 4. Supporting documentation

Appendix 1 – Cartographic Drawing 48215



**James McKinstry**  
**Chief Officer (Assets and Procurement)**

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## 5. Impacts

<p><b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk">dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p><b>5.6</b></p>	<p><b>Technology / Digital impact</b>  Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.7</b></p>	<p><b>Environmental / Carbon impact</b>  Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.8</b></p>	<p><b>Communications impact</b>  Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.9</b></p>	<p><b>Risk impact</b>  Is there a risk impact?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p><b>5.10</b></p>	<p><b>Armed Forces Covenant Duty</b>  Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p><b>5.11</b></p>	<p><b>Children's rights and wellbeing impact</b>  Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

# Appendix 1 – Cartographic Drawing 48215

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## LOCATION PLAN - For Information Only

Title: Ailsa Road

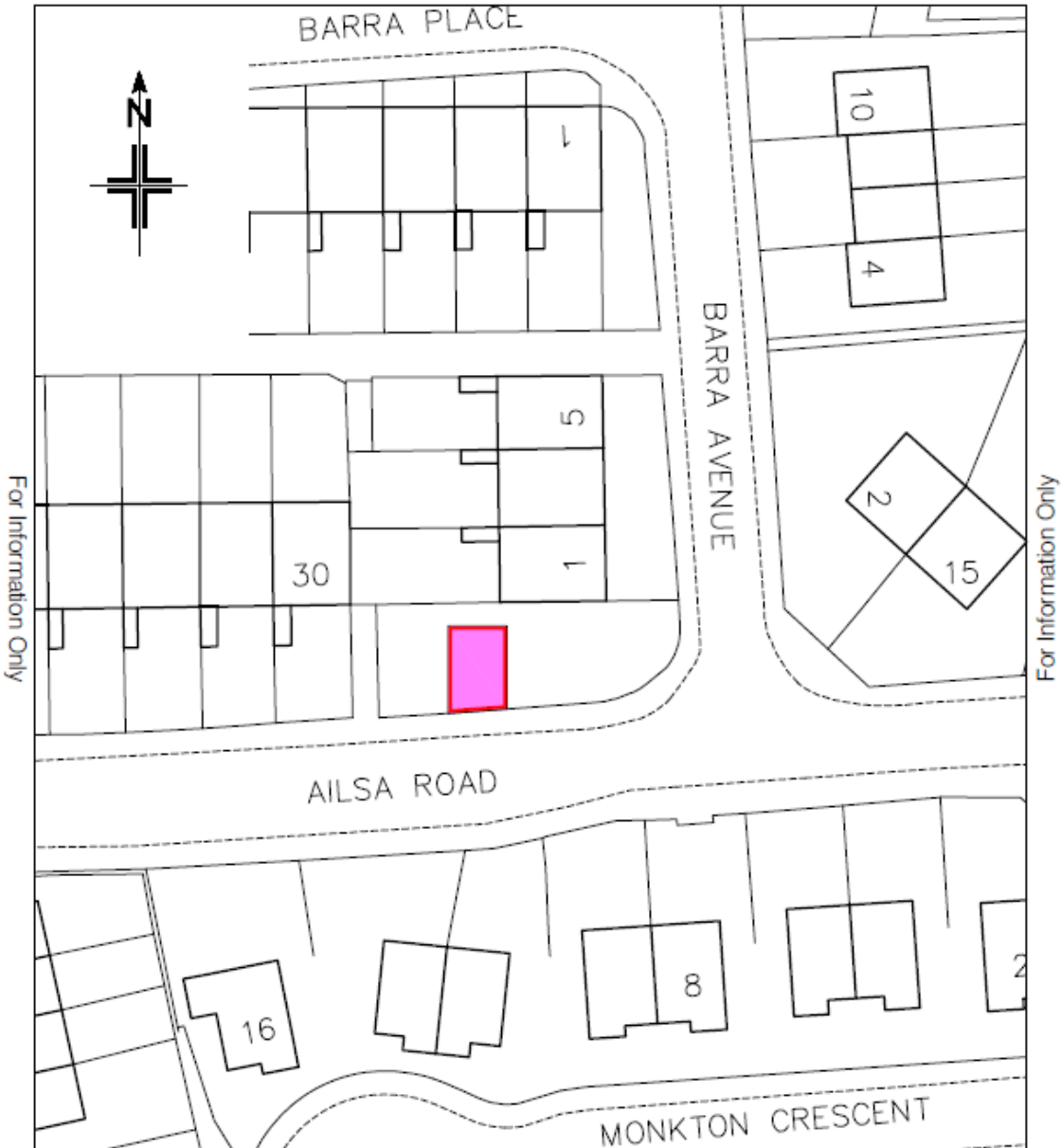
Scale 1:NTS



Town: Coatbridge

Date: 23/01/24

### ENTERPRISE & COMMUNITIES



### CARTOGRAPHIC & MAPPING SERVICES

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