



## MEETING NOTE

<b>File reference</b>	<b>Electricity Networks Meeting</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>Steffan Jones</b>

<b>Meeting with</b>	Scottish Power Energy Networks/ SP Manweb/ (SPEN)
<b>Meeting date</b>	26 February 2013
<b>Attendees (Planning Inspectorate)</b>	Kathryn Powell – Senior Case Manager Steffan Jones – Case Officer Andrew Luke – Senior EIA Advisor
<b>Attendees (non Planning Inspectorate)</b>	Steven Edwards – SPEN Claire Duffy – SPEN
<b>Location</b>	Room 4/07, Temple Quay House, Bristol

<b>Meeting purpose</b>	Update on SPEN's proposed projects for the Mid Wales Electricity Connections and North Wales Wind Farms Connection.
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<b>Summary of key points discussed and advice given</b>	<p>The Planning Inspectorate explained the openness policy (that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the planning portal website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) (PA 2008) and that any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely).</p> <p>Where this note states 'the applicant' it refers to SPEN.</p> <p>The applicant asked about the availability of a pre-application Examining Inspector to attend meetings for these projects; the Planning Inspectorate informed the applicant that the requirement for a pre-application Inspector is assessed on a case by case basis.</p> <p>The Planning Inspectorate advised the applicant to provide advance warning with regard to submissions and deadlines; this ensures the Planning Inspectorate can manage its resources efficiently.</p> <p><b><u>Mid Wales Connections Project</u></b></p> <p>The applicant informed the Planning Inspectorate that consultation events had taken place in the community throughout August, September and October 2012 regarding</p>
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the above proposal. The applicant has collected and processed feedback from the consultees who attended these events; the feedback has led to the changing of some proposed route corridors within the proposal.

Written feedback on the second stage of consultation which dealt with the preferred route corridors and revised project details will be published in a report. The applicant informed the Planning Inspectorate that it plans to hold four stages of consultation in total.

The applicant is currently looking at using mostly wood pole supports with less visual impact. The applicant is also considering the possibility of undergrounding some sections of the lines, if and where there is scope to do so within the scope of the guidance set out in EN-5.

The Planning Inspectorate asked for clarification on the proposed project, in particular on how many electric lines in total are proposed. The applicant confirmed that there would be three lines connecting to the proposed substation at Cefn Coch; two wooden pole lines and one combined wood pole/tower connection. The applicant also confirmed that this had been conveyed to the public clearly during the consultation phase in order to inform their understanding.

Feedback on the latest stage of consultation will be collated into a written report by the applicant; the report will focus on the methodology of choosing the proposed line options and highlight issues regarding landscape and tourism which arose during the consultation period.

The Planning Inspectorate asked the applicant when they planned to carry out statutory s.42 consultation and whether the timing has been discussed with the local authorities. The applicant confirmed they plan to carry this out in Autumn 2013, which would be stage four of their consultation. The Planning Inspectorate advised the applicant to inform and work with the local authorities on the timing of their consultation.

The Planning Inspectorate again reminded the applicant that notification of dates and deadlines to the Planning Inspectorate and the public is extremely helpful to avoid confusion, especially as there are a number of proposals based in this area.

The applicant expressed a concern regarding the submission of redacted feedback to the Planning Inspectorate; the applicant stated a preference for sending correspondence to the Inspectorate under Regulation 5(5) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 at the time of the application submission. The Planning Inspectorate informed the applicant that it is not

its aim to always request the responses for each project, but if there are any uncertainties or lack of clarity then this is the only power that can be used at this stage to request such evidence. The applicant stated they would therefore prepare for this situation just in case the situation may occur where all responses are requested.

The Planning Inspectorate discussed the applicant's Statement Of Community Consultation (SOCC) and queried if their early SOCC would reflect consultation on the proposal to be submitted, or has the proposal changed since this consultation? The applicant informed the Planning Inspectorate that it plans to consult in accordance with a further statutory SOCC in the summer of 2013.

The Planning Inspectorate advised that, whilst recognising that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an iterative process, the applicant should carefully consider the timing of the submission of their request for a scoping opinion so that there is sufficient information on the scheme available for consultees to be able to usefully comment on the scope of the EIA. If the request is submitted on the basis of high level route options, the understanding of the project and the environment likely to be affected is limited, and therefore there is a risk that the scoping exercise is of limited value in informing the scope of the EIA.

The applicant is proposing to submit their application in Autumn 2014; however there is the possibility that this could be brought forward to Summer 2014.

The Planning Inspectorate asked the applicant about their survey methodology, the question was asked as to whether the same amount of survey work will be done on all route corridor options within the proposed application. The applicant explained that past methods have been to survey the centre line of the proposed corridor for flexibility purposes.

The applicant stated they may not apply under s.52 and s.53 of the PA 2008 to obtain information about interests in land and to acquire rights of entry on to land; as they may be able to implement Schedule 4 of the Electricity Act to access land if they wish to do so. The Planning Inspectorate advised that it is at the applicant's own discretion whether they implement this and that they must be satisfied that Schedule 4 of the Electricity Act applies to their proposal needs.

### **North Wales Wind Farms Connection**

The applicant explained to the Planning Inspectorate that the proposed project currently has three identified broad route corridors. Five consultation events for the press, groups and the community were held in June 2012, however some

consultees felt they hadn't been made properly aware of these events and therefore an additional event was held after Christmas by the applicant. For this particular event the applicant had sent out 7,500 invites in all, around 300 people attended.

The applicant has been holding talks with Cadw, Forestry Commission and Countryside Council Wales who have fed into the methodology process and assisted in the shaping of the proposed route corridors; and CCW have provided formal comments on the proposals.

A technical report on the preferred broad route corridor option is likely to be completed in March 2013; this will be followed by work to identify detailed line route options within the broad route corridors, the applicant stressed to the Planning Inspectorate that the broad route corridors are up to 2km wide in some areas.

The applicant plans to carry out statutory consultation under s.42 & s.47 in September 2013, giving a minimum of 6 weeks for receipt of comments on the proposed project before submitting the application to the Planning Inspectorate at the end of 2013.

The applicant was advised that a decision on whether or not to accept an application is taken within 28 days of submission. Therefore, the onus is on the applicant to resolve any issues during the pre-application stage. Applicants should reserve as much time as possible before submission in preparing their application documents.

The applicant informed the Planning Inspectorate that they will not hold any consultation events during the summer holidays, due to the availability of consultees during this time.

The applicant intends to submit its Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate at the beginning of summer 2013. The applicant indicated that discussions have been held with a number of consultees in relation to the scope of the assessment and of survey work required. The Planning Inspectorate advised that where agreement has been reached, it should be stated in the scoping report with the written correspondence (evidence) provided.

The Planning Inspectorate was made aware by the applicant that they intend to implement Schedule 4 of the Electricity Act in order to request access to land rather than use powers under s.52 and s.53 of the Planning Act 2008.

<b>Specific decisions/ follow up required?</b>	
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<b>Circulation List</b>	Attendees