



<b>Overview - Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State</b>	
<b>Project name:</b>	Brechfa Forest Electrical Connection
<b>Address/Location:</b>	c. 40km of overhead line (OHL) in Carmarthenshire, Wales, between Brechfa Forest, c. 20km north-east of Carmarthen (northernmost point) and Llandyfaelog, situated c. 10km south of Carmarthen and 3km east of the River Towy Estuary (southernmost point).
<b>Planning Inspectorate Ref:</b>	EN020016
<b>Date(s) screening undertaken:</b>	First screening: 23 September 2014 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion Second screening: 19 August 2015 following submission of the application documents
<b>EEA States identified for notification:</b>	First screening: None identified Second screening: None identified

<b>FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE</b>	
<b>Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:</b>	'EIA Scoping Report - Brechfa Forest Connection Project [July 2014 - v.01]'. ('the Scoping Report')
<b>Date</b>	23 September 2014
<b>Screening Criteria:</b>	<b>Secretary of State Comments:</b>
<b>Characteristics of the Development</b>	<p>The proposed development would connect two consented wind farms in and adjacent to Brechfa Forest, north of Carmarthen (known as Brechfa Forest West and Brechfa Forest East wind farms) to an electrical connection at existing overhead line (OHL) tower near Llandyfaelog, situated approximately 10km south of Carmarthen. From there the electricity will be routed through the existing OHL network to the Western Power Distribution (WPD) grid substation known as Swansea North. A description of the proposed development site is provided in section 3.1 of the Scoping Report.</p> <p>The connection will require approximately 40 km of 132kV OHL supported by wooden 'H' poles with sections underground. The wooden poles will be approximately 15m above ground level to the highest point (to a maximum of 20m) and have a maximum achievable span of 180m between poles (typical span lengths 100 - 130m). Steel gantries may be used where longer span lengths are required due to topographical, technical or environmental constraints, and these require concrete foundations. Construction of the proposed development would take up to one year.</p> <p>Key infrastructure associated with the proposed development is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wooden 'H' poles (and cable stays) carrying overhead conductor wires, insulators and fibre optic cable;</li> <li>• Steel gantry structures with concrete foundations (no taller than the wooden pole structures);</li> <li>• Foundation structures (only applicable to steel gantry structures) and where necessary;</li> <li>• Underground cabling (where appropriate): by either open</li> </ul>

	<p>cut or horizontal directional drilling (HDD) techniques and terminal poles; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary access roads, laydown areas and construction compounds.</li> </ul>
<b>Geographical area</b>	<p>The Scoping Report does not identify any potential impacts on any area under the jurisdiction of another EEA State, other than stating that (at paragraph 5.4.1):</p> <p><i>'Given the nature of the project, it is considered that there is no possibility of significant transboundary impacts arising and hence they are considered to be scoped out of the EIA'.</i></p>
<b>Location of Development (including existing use)</b>	<p>The proposed development site boundary is illustrated on Figure 1.2 of Appendix A of the Scoping Report, and shows various route corridor alignment options. The alignment is indicative at this stage. Figures 3.1(a-f) of Appendix A of the Scoping Report illustrate the site area and identify environmental features and constraints within the site boundary and surrounding area.</p> <p>The southernmost point of the connection route, as described in paragraph 3.1.2 of the Scoping Report, is a disused section of transmission line near Llandyfaelog (c. 10km to the south of Carmarthen and c. 3km east of the Towy Estuary). From this point, the route aligns northwards for approximately 20kms to the vicinity of Alltwalis, passing to the east of Carmarthen, before turning east for 15-20km to connect to the proposed wind farm sub-stations at Brechfa West and Brechfa East respectively.</p> <p>The surrounding area is mainly rural, apart from the section near to the eastern edges of Carmarthen. The northern part of the proposed development is within the heavily-wooded Brechfa Forest.</p> <p>Existing land uses within the proposed development site predominantly comprise agricultural grazing land of rolling pastoral countryside with hedgerows along small lanes between sparse villages and farmsteads.</p>
<b>Cumulative impacts</b>	<p>Chapter 17 of the Scoping Report states that two types of cumulative impact will be considered in the EIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the interaction of different project impacts on a common receptor (e.g. combined adverse effects of air quality and noise impacts on sensitive receptors)</li> <li>• combined effect of the proposed development with impacts arising from other developments including those that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- under construction;</li> <li>- permitted, but not yet implemented;</li> <li>- submitted (e.g. with extant planning applications), but not yet determined;</li> <li>- on the relevant Local Authority's forward programme of Projects;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The applicant does not define specific projects at this stage, nor</p>

	<p>the spatial extent of the study area within which cumulative development schemes will be considered. These will be defined in consultation with Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) during the EIA process.</p>
<b>Carrier</b>	<p>Potential impact pathways include the transmission of pollutants by air, land or water, primarily during the construction phase as a result of, for example, excavation activity, disturbance of watercourses, or construction traffic.</p>
<b>Environmental Importance</b>	<p><u>Ecology and Nature Conservation</u></p> <p>The route alignment options cross through the following designated sites; Rhosydd Llanpumsaint Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); River Towy SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and Gwan Pibwr Stream Section SSSI. Scoping Opinion for the Brechfa Forest Connection Project</p> <p><u>Heritage Assets</u></p> <p>Within 3km of the proposed development site boundary, there are no world Heritage sites, but there are a number of Scheduled Monuments; Listed Buildings; part of the Towy Valley Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens; and Conservation Areas. Designated and non-designated heritage features are described in section 9.6, Table 9.2 and Figure 9.1 of the Scoping Report.</p> <p><u>Landscape</u></p> <p>There are no nationally designated landscapes within the vicinity (including National Parks and AONB's). Two Special Landscape Areas (SLA's) locally designated by CCC could be affected by the proposed development: Towy Valley SLA and Cothi Valley SLA.</p>
<b>Extent</b>	<p>Not identified in the Scoping Report. No significant effects have been identified which could impact on another EEA Member State.</p>
<b>Magnitude</b>	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>
<b>Probability</b>	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>
<b>Duration</b>	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>
<b>Frequency</b>	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the environment of another EEA State.</p>
<b>Reversibility</b>	<p>At this stage, no potential effects have been identified which would be likely to result in significant effects on the</p>

environment of another EEA State.

### **Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State**

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Secretary of State is of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

**Action:** No further action required at this stage.

**Date:** 23 September 2014

**Note:** The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

### **SECOND TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

#### **Document used for transboundary Screening:**

Environmental Statement (ES) May 2015  
Habitats Regulations Assessment No Significant Effects Report (NSER) May 2015  
Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) May 2015

#### **Date**

19 August 2015

### **Transboundary re-screening undertaken by the Secretary of State**

Following submission of the DCO application (29 May 2015), which included the applicant's ES and NSER, the Secretary of State has reconsidered the transboundary screening decision undertaken on 23 September 2014.

The Secretary of State has identified the following matters that differ from those considered at the time of the previous transboundary screening decision:

- change in the description of the proposed development

#### **Change in the description of the proposed development**

The description of the proposed development in the applicant's EIA Scoping Report (July 2014) stated that the proposed development would connect two consented wind farms in and adjacent to Brechfa Forest, north of Carmarthen (known as the Brechfa Forest West and Brechfa Forest East wind farms).

In the submitted DCO documents (May 2015), Chapter 1 (Introduction) to the ES states that the proposed development would connect one consented wind farm, the Brechfa Forest West wind farm. The ES states that the connection to Brechfa Forest East wind farm has not been included as part of the proposed development and that if and when RWE require a connection to Brechfa Forest East wind farm, a separate consent would be sought.

The applicant's EIA Scoping Report described the length of the proposed development as c.40km; the current description in ES Chapters 1 and 2 (Project Description) describe the

length of the proposed development as c.28.6km. Of this length, c.25.3km would be supported by wooden poles and c.3.3km would be underground. ES Figures 1.1 and 2.1 present the route alignment for the proposed development.

The EIA Scoping Report described the poles conveying the overhead lines as wooden 'H' poles. The ES section 2.5 of Chapter 2 describes these only as "wooden pole structures". Various proposed configurations for the poles are presented in Figures 2.8 to 2.16 (Volume 6.3) to the ES and also described in Section 2.5 of ES Chapter 2.

The EIA Scoping Report described the wooden poles as c.15m above ground level (to a maximum of 20m). ES Chapter 2 states that the lengths of the wooden poles would vary between 10 and 20m. The draft DCO submitted with the application confirms that the maximum height of the poles would be 20m.

The EIA Scoping Report described a maximum span of 180m between poles, with typical span lengths of 100m to 130m. ES Chapter 2 states that span distance between poles would be up to c.190m.

### **Secretary of State's Conclusion**

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the applicant, there is no change to the previous conclusion, and the Secretary of State remains of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation) and taken into account the information currently supplied by the applicant.

### **Action:**

No further action required at this stage

**Date** 19 August 2015

**Note:** The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process

### Note:

1. The Secretary of State's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in Annex 4 to Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 12 available on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>