

Broad Oak Preservation Society
Richborough Connection
Examining Authority's ISH 29.07.16
Post Hearing Comments

Having listened to the whole of the discussion at the Issue Specific Hearing on 29th July, which concerned the impact of the Applicant's proposals on South East Water's long term plans for the Broad Oak Reservoir, I would like to submit the following comments for consideration by the Examination Panel.

1. One of the Applicant's experts referred to the adverse impact of the visual perception of the proposed OHL from Broad Oak as being "moderate", but there was no explanation given as to how this assessment had been arrived at. Given the proximity of the proposed new OHL to Broad Oak village, we cannot understand what it would take for the visual impact to be assessed as major or severe. We have not been able to find the Applicant's methodology in the myriad of documents which the Applicant has submitted. From informal comments we think their assessment of the visual impact from any given location in part depends on whether there are other OHLs visible from that location. It is true that there are two existing OHLs visible on the western horizon from Broad Oak. The nearer is a 132kV line on 30m pylons which is on average over 500m distant from the village. The further one is a 400kV line on 50m pylons located roughly 1.5km from the village. Neither of these is a significant feature of the landscape, but we do not accept that because an existing OHL is visible, the impact of a much nearer line is thereby reduced. We would request that, in the next written questions, the ExA ask the Applicant to provide a full explanation of their methodology and justification for their assessment of the visual impact of the proposed new line.

2. Much of the discussion at the ISH concerned the under-planting which would be permitted beneath the proposed new line and whether this would provide adequate screening for the new river corridor where SEW propose to divert the Sarre-Penn stream. The Applicant produced pretty diagrams showing mature trees with nicely rounded crowns beneath the proposed OHL. Local experience suggests this is not how the land beneath power lines is managed in practice. From what can be seen around Canterbury the electricity distributors follow a "scorched earth" policy, as shown in the following photographs.

Figs. 1 & 2 show a 400kV line owned by the Applicant running north-west from Canterbury towards Cleve Hill. This line is the one which can be seen in the distance from Broad Oak, which terminates in the Canterbury North sub-station close to the point visited during the ASI on 25 July. The photographs were taken from a public footpath where the line passes through Clowes Wood near

Chestfield, about 3 miles north of Canterbury. Clowes Wood is part of the historically important Blean Woods, which are in part ancient woodland. The woods comprise a mixture of broadleaf and evergreen trees, and are managed by the Forestry Commission. As can be seen nothing apart from grass is allowed to grow beneath the line.

Fig. 3 shows the 132kV line passing through Dengrove Woods within Broad Oak village alongside the Bluebell Woods residential caravan park. The photograph was taken from the footpath which was traversed by the ASI on 25 July, running up from the railway crossing to Shalloak Road near to Goose Farm. The land beneath the OHL has been cleared of all trees and shrubs, allowing just 1.5m thistles to flourish. This line is the PX line which will eventually be removed, if the new connection goes ahead, and is owned and managed by UK Power Networks. We have no reason to think that their management policies are any different to those followed by the Applicant.

Alan Holden
Chairman
Broad Oak Preservation Society



Fig 1: 400kV OHL passing through Clowes Wood looking south-east



Fig 2: 400kV OHL passing through Clowes Wood looking north-west



Fig 3: 132kV PX OHL passing through Dengrove Wood looking west