

SP MANWEB

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network



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Environmental Statement Chapter 1
Introduction

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November 2018

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Electricity Distribution Network**

**CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION**

Environmental Statement

**DCO Document 6.1
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The Planning Act 2008**The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009****Regulations 5(2)(a)****Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network****Environmental Statement: Chapter 1- Introduction**

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Environmental Statement Documents

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT		
DCO Document	Chapter	Document
6.1	1	Introduction
6.2	2	Alternatives and Design Evolution
6.3	3	Proposed Development
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Reference is also made to the following documents:

DCO Document	Document
2.3.0 – 2.3.16	Works Plans
5.5	Other Consents and Licences Report
7.5	The Strategic Options Report (May 2016)
7.6	Updated Strategic Options Report (November 2017)
7.7	Further Updated Strategic Options Report (October 2018)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) accompanies an application by SP Manweb plc (SP Manweb) under the Planning Act 2008 for an Order granting development consent for the Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network (the 'DCO'). The DCO would grant powers to construct, operate and maintain a new 22.5km 132,000 volt (132kV) connection between the existing SP Manweb Substations at Oswestry and Wem within the administrative boundary of Shropshire County (see Figure 1.1 'Location Plan' (**DCO Document 6.14**)).

1.1.2 The ES presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, which has ensured that environmental factors have been considered throughout the design development process and that likely significant environmental effects have been identified and assessed.

1.1.3 The ES has been prepared by Gillespies LLP and a team of specialist environmental consultants on behalf of SP Manweb. The project is being promoted by SP Manweb (see below).

1.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 The Proposed Development includes the following elements:

- Works within the boundary of the existing SP Manweb Substation at Oswestry including underground cable and the installation of electrical switchgear and associated equipment:
- Approximately 1.2km of 132kV underground cable between Oswestry Substation and a 132kV terminal structure at Long Wood (SJ 31132 29877);
- Approximately 21.3km of 132kV of overhead line supported by Trident wood poles from the terminal structure at Long Wood (SJ 31132 29877) to the existing SP Manweb Substation at Wem; and

- Works within the existing SP Manweb Substation at Wem including the installation of a new 132kV to 33kV transformer.

1.2.2 The Proposed Development also includes work to facilitate the new electrical circuit including:

- Undergrounding six short sections of existing SP Manweb lower voltage overhead lines in order to ensure safe electrical clearance for the new overhead line; and
- Temporary works required for the construction of the new overhead line including seven temporary laydown areas, welfare unit, security cabin, access tracks, vegetation clearance and reinstatement planting.

1.2.3 The construction compound for the Proposed Development would be located at the existing SP Manweb depot at Maesbury Road, Oswestry Industrial Estate, where site offices and welfare facilities are already in place. The construction compound would cater for the following:

- Bulk delivery (HGV) and storage of materials, the main components being wood poles, wood baulks, conductor, stay wire, crossarm assemblies and insulators; and
- Storage of construction plant and equipment.

1.2.4 It is anticipated that the construction compound would be utilised for a maximum of 18 months. As the depot already serves as a maintenance and construction compound for other SP Manweb works it is not included within the application for an Order granting development consent. The construction compound was considered in the Transport and Highways Technical Note (October 2018), (Appendix 1.1 (**DCO Document 6.1.1**)). This concluded that construction traffic associated with the Proposed Development would not result in significant effects and therefore could be scoped out of the EIA.

1.2.5 The Proposed Development and its components are shown on Figure 1.2 (**DCO Document 6.14**) and the Works Plans (**DCO Documents 2.3.0 – 2.3.16**).

1.2.6 In developing the scheme, SP Manweb has carried out extensive statutory and non-statutory consultation which has informed the design considered in the EIA.

1.3 THE APPLICANT - SP MANWEB

1.3.1 SP Manweb manages and operates the electricity network at 132kV and below in Cheshire, Merseyside, North Wales and Shropshire. SP Manweb is part of SP Energy Networks which also provides power to central and southern Scotland. SP Energy Networks is dedicated to delivering a safe and reliable electricity supply to:

- 1.5 million customers in Cheshire, Merseyside, North Wales and Shropshire; and
- 2 million customers in central and southern Scotland.

1.3.2 SP Manweb holds the Electricity Distribution Licence (issued under the Electricity Act 1989 (the 'Electricity Act 1989')¹. Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 and Condition 20 of the licence² requires compliance with Code 4 (Distribution Planning and Connection Code) of the Distribution Code³. This code (DPC4.1.2) places a duty on Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to develop and maintain an efficient, secure and co-ordinated system of electricity supply that is both economical and safe.

1.3.3 Condition 24 of the licence and the Distribution Planning and Connection

¹ Electricity Act, HMSO, London. HM Government (1989)

² Gas and Electricity Markets Authority, Electricity Act 1989: Standard conditions of the Electricity Distribution Licence (01 January 2017) <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/licences-industry-codes-and-standards/licences/licence-conditions>

³ Ofgem, Distribution Code (Issue 31 May 2018), <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/licences-industry-codes-and-standards/industry-codes/electricity-codes/distribution-code>

Code (DPC4.2.1) place a responsibility on the company to plan and develop its distribution system to a standard not less than that set out in Engineering Recommendation P2/6 - 'Security of Supply'⁴ (6th revision).

1.3.4 By reinforcing the electricity distribution system through the installation of the Proposed Development SP Manweb would meet its statutory requirements and its conditions under the distribution license.

1.3.5 SP Manweb also has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 (a) of the Electricity Act 1989 to:

- *'have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, conserving flora and fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest, and (b) to do what it reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects'.*

1.3.6 In responding to these duties when building new electricity installations, SP Manweb ensures that the environment is considered right from the start. Every effort is made to identify potential environmental issues at the earliest planning and design stage of a project, and to avoid or minimise any potential harm.

1.4 THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.4.1 National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1⁵ sets out that it is critical that the UK continues to have secure and reliable supplies of electricity as part of the

⁴ Engineering Recommendation P2/6 - 'Security of Supply' is the current distribution network planning standard. Distribution Network Operators have a licence obligation to plan and develop their systems in accordance with ER P2/6. The standard is referenced in the Code 4 of the Distribution Code.

⁵ Department for Energy and Climate Change (July 2011), Overarching Energy National Policy Statement (EN-1)

transition to a low carbon economy. NPS EN-1 also highlights an urgent need for new electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure to be provided. This Proposed Development would help SP Manweb and the UK meet these requirements.

- 1.4.2 The current local electricity distribution network has been distributing electricity to North Shropshire for many years. It is operating at or close to capacity. However, with future growth plans in the region planned up to 2026, there is a need to reinforce the network. This is to provide additional capacity to support development and growth. Reinforcement of the local distribution network is therefore required to ensure that SP Manweb can continue to comply with their various statutory and licence duties and obligations.
- 1.4.3 In addition, enhancing the electricity supply across North Shropshire has been identified by Shropshire Council as a local infrastructure priority to support future growth plans identified in the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2017 – 2021⁶, its Local Plan⁷ and adopted Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan⁸. The planned employment sites at Oswestry will lead to an anticipated increase in electricity load which cannot be met by the existing network. There is therefore an urgent need to substantially increase the capacity of the network if the social and economic plans for the county are to be achieved.

⁶ Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2017 – 2021. Shropshire Council (2017)

⁷ The Local Plan comprises several planning documents, known as Development Plan documents (LDDs). When adopted the policies and guidance contained in these LDDs will play an important role in the assessment of individual planning applications within Shropshire. Further information can be found at <https://shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-planning/>

⁸ Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan. Shropshire Council (2015)

- 1.4.4 Construction of the local infrastructure would safeguard a small number of existing jobs for a contractor as well as indirectly support the growth of the market towns and the rural economy.
- 1.4.5 Following discussions with the Council, installation of a new 132kV electrical circuit was identified by SP Manweb as the best way forward to reinforce the existing 33kV electricity distribution network and provide the required capacity to support development on land allocated for new jobs and homes across North Shropshire.
- 1.4.6 Having considered a number of network design options, as explained in Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Development' (**DCO Document 6.2**), SP Manweb secured investment approvals for an £18m scheme to install a new 132kV electrical circuit from Oswestry Substation to Wem Substation. The option review process which led to this decision is set out in the Strategic Options Report (May 2016)⁹ (**DCO Document 7.5**), the Updated Strategic Options Report (November 2017)¹⁰ (**DCO Document 7.6**) and the Further Updated Strategic Options Report (October 2018)¹¹ (**DCO Document 7.7**).

1.5 THE PLANNING ACT 2008

- 1.5.1 The Proposed Development is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) by the Planning Act 2008¹².
- 1.5.2 In accordance with Sections 14(1)(b) and 16 of the Planning Act, overhead lines installed above ground with a nominal voltage of greater than, or equal to, 132kV and over 2km are considered Nationally Significant Infrastructure

⁹ Strategic Options Report. SP Manweb (May 2016) (**DCO Document 7.5**)

¹⁰ Updated Strategic Options Report. SP Manweb (November 2017) (**DCO Document 7.6**)

¹¹ Further Updated Strategic Options Report. SP Manweb (October 2018) (**DCO Document 7.7**)

¹² Planning Act. HMSO, London. HM Government (2008)

Projects (NSIPs), to be determined by the Secretary of State (SoS) in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

- 1.5.3 The SoS is required by S.104 of the Planning Act to have regard to any National Policy Statement (NPS) which has effect in relation to development of the description to which the application relates. Those relevant to the Proposed Development are the Overarching National Energy Infrastructure Policy (NPS EN-1) and Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5)¹³ (which must be read in conjunction with NPS EN-1).
- 1.5.4 As the Proposed Development is an NSIP SP Manweb is submitting an application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for an order granting development consent to construct, operate and maintain the Proposed Development.
- 1.5.5 SP Manweb is including in its application for an Order granting development consent the power, where appropriate, to compulsorily acquire land. Information on the other consents that SP Manweb intends to or may need to obtain to allow the construction, operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development are set out in the 'Other Consents and Licences Report' (**DCO Document 5.5**).

1.6 NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 1.6.1 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 as amended (the EIA Regulations) impose requirements, in particular, in respect of the carrying out of EIA in relation to applications for DCOs. Development in Schedule 2 (Schedule 2 development) requires EIA if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The definition of Schedule 2 development includes transmission of electrical energy by overhead cables (Schedule 2 (3)(b)).

¹³ Department for Energy and Climate Change (July 2011), National Policy Statement for Electricity Energy Infrastructure (EN-5)

- 1.6.2 SP Manweb considered that due to its scale and potential for significant environmental effects an EIA was required for the new 132kV electrical circuit. In the Scoping Request, March 2017, SP Manweb notified the SoS under regulation 6(1) (b) of the EIA Regulations that it proposed to provide an ES in respect of the Proposed Development. This document is that ES. SP Manweb then requested a Scoping Opinion under regulation 8 of the EIA Regulations.
- 1.6.3 The EIA has been carried out in line with the EIA Regulations, guidance set out in NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-5, and in accordance with current applicable good practice and guidance. An explanation as to why the EIA is not being submitted under the 2017 EIA regulations is provided in Chapter 4 'Approach and General Methodology' (**DCO Document 6.4**).
- 1.6.4 A Scoping Report¹⁴ was submitted to PINS in March 2017 and a Scoping Opinion¹⁵ was received from the SoS in April 2017. Section 4.4 'Scope of the Assessment' in Chapter 4 'Approach and General Methodology' (**DCO Document Ref 6.4**) explains what is excluded from the ES and why.

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 1.7.1 The purpose of this ES is to provide the SoS with the results of the environmental assessment undertaken, detailing temporary and permanent, direct and indirect, impacts resulting from the Proposed Development and details of any mitigation measures recommended to avoid or minimise the identified impacts. The ES:

- Describes the Proposed Development, including temporary construction details and timescales and alternatives considered;

¹⁴ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020021/EN020021-000027-Scoping%20Report.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020021/EN020021-000012-Scoping%20Opinion.pdf>

- Describes the consultation process undertaken throughout the design and pre-application process;
- Describes the environmental data collection and survey work undertaken;
- Describes the existing environment based on the information collected; and
- Provides an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

1.8.1 The structure of the ES is outlined in Table 1.1. Each topic chapter provides a summary of the key information for that topic and details of likely significant effects, if applicable. Each chapter is accompanied by illustrative figures and the topic chapters are also accompanied by appendices which provide a detailed methodology, environmental baseline and greater detail on the assessments undertaken and receptors considered. In addition, a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) (**DCO Document 6.15**) provides a summary of the matters set out in Schedule 4¹⁶ of the EIA Regulations and the main findings reported in the ES.

Table 1.1 - The structure of the ES	
Chapter No.	Title
1	Introduction
2	Alternatives and Design Evolution
3	Proposed Development
4	Approach and General Methodology

¹⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/schedule/4/made>

Table 1.1 - The structure of the ES	
Chapter No.	Title
5	Planning Considerations
6	Landscape and Visual
7	Ecology and Biodiversity
8	Historic Environment
9	Flood Risk, Water Quality and Water Resources
10	Socio-Economics
11	Land Use and Agriculture
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1.8.2 The ES forms DCO Documents 6.1 – 6.16 of the application for an Order granting development consent.