SP MANWEB

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

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Environmental Statement Chapter 6
Landscape and Visual

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November 2018

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Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

CHAPTER 6
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Environmental Statement

DCO Document 6.6
November 2018
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The Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

Regulation 5(2)(a)

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

Environmental Statement: Chapter 6 – Landscape and Visual

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DCO Document	Document
5.1	Consultation Report
7.5	The Strategic Options Report (May 2016)
7.6	Updated Strategic Options Report (November 2017)

CHAPTER 6: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 This chapter assesses the likely significant environmental effects on the landscape and visual amenity, which could result from the Proposed Development described in Chapter 3 'The Proposed Development' (**DCO Document 6.3**). In particular it considers potential effects on landscape character, views and residential visual amenity.

6.1.2 This chapter describes the methodology used to assess the landscape and visual effects, the baseline conditions that currently exist and any mitigation measures proposed. It considers landscape character within and around the study area (as defined in Section 6.3 of this chapter) and key viewpoint locations that are representative of the receptors and the views experienced.

6.1.3 Further details relating to this chapter including methodology, baseline information and assessment findings are presented in the following appendices and figures:

- Appendix 6.1: Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology (**DCO Document 6.6.1**);
- Appendix 6.2: Landscape Baseline, Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Sheets and Assessment (**DCO Document 6.6.2**);
- Appendix 6.3: Visual Baseline, Viewpoint Sheets and Assessment (**DCO Document 6.6.3**);
- Appendix 6.4: Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact (CLVIA) Assessment (**DCO Document 6.6.4**);
- Appendix 6.5: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (**DCO Document 6.6.5**);
- Appendix 6.6: Photomontages (**DCO Document 6.6.6**);

- Appendix 6.7: Response to the Scoping Opinion (**DCO Document 6.6.7**);
- Figure 6.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Study Area (**DCO Document 6.14**);
- Figure 6.2: Shropshire Landscape Typology (**DCO Document 6.14**);
- Figure 6.3: Landscape Character Areas (**DCO Document 6.14**);
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- Figure 6.5: Public Access (**DCO Document 6.14**);
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- Figure 6.7: Viewpoint Locations (**DCO Document 6.14**);
- Figure 6.8: Residential Visual Amenity (**DCO Document 6.14**); and
- Figure 6.9: Location of Anticipated Tree Works (**DCO Document 6.14**).

6.2 LEGISLATION AND POLICY BACKGROUND

6.2.1 Planning policy considerations are presented in Chapter 5 'Planning Considerations' **(DCO Document 6.5)** and include UK-wide, national and local development plan policies. The following text refers to the key pieces of planning policy and guidance relevant to landscape and visual concerns which provide the context for, and are considered relevant to, the landscape and visual assessment of the Proposed Development.

European Policy

6.2.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international instrument to deal in an integrated manner with the whole landscape. It provides an international context for landscape, placing this important resource alongside biodiversity and cultural heritage. The ELC was signed by the UK government in February 2006, ratified in November 2006 and came into effect in March 2006.

6.2.3 The approach to assessing the sensitivity of the landscape using a criteria-based approach and to considering the impact of the Proposed Development on landscape quality is in line with the aims of the ELC to '*protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole'.*

National Planning Policy

6.2.4 National Policy Statements (NPS) set out Government policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure and are material considerations in decision making for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NPS EN-1[1] and NPS EN-5[2] are relevant to both the Proposed Development and landscape and visual considerations.

NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-5

6.2.5 Section 5.9 of NPS EN-1 recognises that major energy infrastructure projects are likely to result in landscape and visual effects and discusses generic issues relating to such effects and how these should be addressed with reference to compliance with guidance in the Third Edition of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3)[3].

6.2.6 NPS EN-5 sets out a number of specific principles to be followed when routeing overhead lines and developing mitigation proposals. These include guidance on when undergrounding may be an appropriate option.

6.2.7 Para 2.8.2 states that:

> *'….new above ground electricity lines, whether supported by lattice steel towers/pylons or wooden poles, can give rise to adverse landscape and visual impacts, dependent upon their scale, siting, degree of screening and the nature of the landscape and local environment through which they are routed. For the most part these impacts can be mitigated, however at*

[1] Department for Energy and Climate Change (July 2011), Overarching Energy National Policy Statement (EN-1)
[2] Department for Energy and Climate Change (July 2011), National Policy Statement for Electricity Energy Infrastructure (EN-5)
[3] Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, 2013

particularly sensitive locations the potential adverse landscape and visual impacts of an overhead line proposal may make it unacceptable in planning terms, taking account of the specific local environment and context'.

6.2.8 Tables 6.1 and 6.2 provide a summary of how the assessment has complied with the requirements of NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-5.

Table 6.1 – Compliance with NPS EN-1

NPS EN-1 Paragraph	Location in ES
Para 4.5 Energy projects should apply 'good design'. This should ensure sustainable infrastructure which is sensitive to place, efficient in the use of natural resources and energy used in construction and operation, and is also matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetics as far as possible.	The design of the route and the siting of associated infrastructure has been developed within the underlying principle of good design and in accordance with the Holford Rules. This is covered in Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**).
Para 5.9.5 - Landscape assessment should be carried out in accordance with industry standards and include reference to existing landscape character assessments and policies relating to them.	The approach to assessing the existing character of the landscape, its quality, value and sensitivity to change arising from the introduction of a new 132kV overhead line is explained later in this chapter. The results of the assessment are reported in this chapter and Appendix 6.2 (**DCO Document 6.6.2**) of this ES. Reference to landscape character is made in the baseline environment description in this chapter and in Appendix 6.2 **(DCO Document 6.6.2**). A landscape sensitivity appraisal has been undertaken based on the LCAs defined in the Shropshire Landscape Typology, which is itself informed by the Historic Character Assessment for the county. Policies based on these assessments have been considered in preparation of this ES.

Table 6.1 – Compliance with NPS EN-1	
NPS EN-1 Paragraph	Location in ES
Para 5.9.6 - Include assessment of effects on landscape character and its components during construction and operation.	The approach to assessing the likely landscape effects at different stages in the lifecycle of the Proposed Development is explained in Chapter 4 'Approach and Methodology' (**DCO Document 6.4**) of this ES and the results of the assessment are reported in this chapter.
Para 5.9.7 - Include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and operation and potential impacts on views and visual amenity.	Assessment of visual effects is presented in this chapter and in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.3**), which includes an assessment of the Proposed Development during both construction and operation. Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) describes the development of the scheme and demonstrates that potential impacts on views and visual amenity were a key factor when considering alternatives and routeing options for the Proposed Development.
Para 5.9.8 - Projects should be carefully designed, taking account of the potential impacts on landscape, having regard to siting, operation and other constraints – so as to minimise the harm to the landscape and to provide reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.	The design evolution of the Proposed Development and how it demonstrates good design in terms of the Design Council's guidance for NSIPs is reported in Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) of this ES. The approach to mitigation for this topic is explained in Section 6.9 of this chapter.
5.9.9 National Parks, the Broads and AONBs have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in	The closest designated landscape to the Proposed Development is the Clwydian Range AONB which is 8km to the north-west and is not considered likely to experience any

Table 6.1 – Compliance with NPS EN-1	
NPS EN-1 Paragraph	Location in ES
relation to landscape and scenic beauty.	significant effects on the landscape or scenic beauty.
Para 5.9.12 - For developments outside but close to nationally designated areas, avoid compromising the purposes of the designation.	The closest designated landscape to the Proposed Development is the Clwydian Range AONB which is 8km to the north-west. Due to the distance from the Proposed Development it would not give rise to any significant landscape or visual effects or compromise the purposes of the designation.
Para 5.9.14 - Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally and protected by local designation.	The approach to assessing likely significant effects on local landscape character is explained later in this chapter and the results of the assessment are reported in this chapter and in Appendix 6.2 **(DCO Document 6.6.2)** of the ES.
5.9.16 In reaching a judgement, the IPC should consider whether the adverse impact on the landscape is temporary, such as during construction, and/or whether any adverse impact on the landscape will be capable of being reversed in a timescale that the IPC considers reasonable.	For the purposes of the assessment it is assumed that the operational life of the Proposed Development would be long term and permanent.
Para 5.9.18 - Effects on sensitive receptors, local residents, and visitors should be included in the landscape assessment.	Assessment of landscape effects are reported in this chapter and in Appendix 6.2 **(DCO Document 6.6.2)** of the ES. Assessment of visual effects are reported in this chapter and Appendix 6.3 **(DCO Document 6.6.3)** of the ES. These include an assessment of any likely significant effects on sensitive receptors, local residents and visitors. An assessment of

Table 6.1 – Compliance with NPS EN-1	
NPS EN-1 Paragraph	Location in ES
	residential visual amenity effects is presented in Appendix 6.5 (**DCO Document 6.6.5**). Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) describes the development of the scheme and the factors considered when considering alternatives and routeing options.
5.9.23 Depending on the topography of the surrounding terrain and areas of population it may be appropriate to undertake landscaping off-site. For example, infilling in gaps to existing tree and hedge lines would mitigate the impact when viewed from a more distant vista.	The approach to mitigation is presented in Section 4.6 of Chapter 4 'Approach and General Methodology' **(DCO Document 6.4)** and Section 6.9 of this chapter of the ES. No new landscape planting is proposed within the Proposed Development.

Table 6.2 – Compliance with NPS EN-5	
NPS EN-5 Paragraph	Location in ES
Para 2.8.4 - Set out details of how consideration has been given to the potential costs and benefits of other feasible means of connection, including undergrounding, including where these have not been adopted on grounds of additional cost, how the costs of mitigation have been calculated.	The Strategic Options Report (May 2016) (**DCO Document 7.5**) and the Updated Strategic Options Report (November 2017) (**DCO Document 7.6**) explain how consideration has been given to alternative means of making the connection, including the costs and benefits of those alternatives.
Para 2.8.5 - The Holford Rules (see Appendix 6.2) should form the basis for the approach to routeing new overhead lines.	Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) explains how consideration of the Holford Rules was a major factor when considering alternatives and

Table 6.2 – Compliance with NPS EN-5	
NPS EN-5 Paragraph	Location in ES
	routeing options. Section 2.4 of the chapter explains that the Holford Rules were applied when making judgements on the susceptibility of the landscape to the Proposed Development.
Para 2.8.8 - Where there are serious concerns about the potential adverse landscape and visual effects of a proposed overhead line, the IPC will have to balance these against other relevant factors, including the need for the proposed infrastructure, the availability and cost of alternative sites and routes and methods of installation (including undergrounding).	The Planning Statement (**DCO Document 7.1**) outlines how undergrounding was considered and excluded from the Proposed Development where likely significant adverse landscape and visual effects have been identified. Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) outlines the strategic options considered.
Para 2.8.9 – Each project should be assessed on the basis of its specific circumstances to establish whether an overhead line should be acceptable.	The Planning Statement (**DCO Document 7.1**) outlines how undergrounding was considered and excluded from the Proposed Development. Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) outlines the strategic options considered.
Para 2.8.10 - Demonstrate how consideration has been given to network reinforcement options and selection of the most suitable type and design of support structure in order to minimise visual impact.	Section 2.2 of Chapter 2 'Alternatives and Design Evolution' (**DCO Document 6.2**) outlines the strategic options considered. The Strategic Options Report (**DCO Document 7.5**) and the Updated Strategic Options Report (November 2017) (**DCO Document 7.6**) provide further information.
Para 2.8.11 - Outline specific measures which may be	The approach to mitigation is presented in Section 4.6 of Chapter 4

Table 6.2 – Compliance with NPS EN-5	
NPS EN-5 Paragraph	Location in ES
appropriate to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects, including the use of suitable design, landscaping – comprising of offsite tree and hedgerow planting and screening – comprising of localised planting in the immediate vicinity of residential properties and principal viewpoints to screen or soften the visual effect.	'Approach and General Methodology' **(DCO Document 6.4)** and Section 6.9 of this chapter of the ES.

National Planning Policy Framework

6.2.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides national planning policies to be used in the preparation of development plan documents and determining planning applications. The NPPF does not contain specific policies for NSIPs. However, matters that the decision maker considers 'important and relevant' when making decisions on NSIP applications, (which is equivalent to a material consideration in the Town and Country Planning Act) may include the NPPF itself. When promoting an NSIP, it should be considered, whether the project is compatible with what is set out in the NPPF. Whilst the NPS are the primary policy tools for determination of applications for development consent, the NPPF remains relevant in terms of shaping and guiding the environmental topic assessments.

6.2.10 The revised NPPF[4], published in July 2018, incorporates policy proposals previously consulted on in the Housing White Paper[5] and the 'Planning for the right homes in the right places'[6] consultation. Policies to protect landscape

[4] Revised National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (July 2018)
[5] Housing White Paper, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (February 2017)
[6] Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (Updated March 2018)

which are relevant to the Proposed Development and are included in the NPPF are:

- *Para 127c) – 'planning policies and decisions should ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);'*
- *Para 170 – 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
    - *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
    - *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;'*
- *Para 171 – 'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'*
- *Para 172 – 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*

6.2.11 It is noted, however, that paragraph 172 (referenced above) of the NPPF is not relevant for this Proposed Development as there are no designated landscapes within the study area.

Local Planning Policy

6.2.12 The Local Plan for Shropshire comprises several planning documents.

6.2.13 The two key documents which make up the Shropshire Local Plan are the:

- Core Strategy DPD - adopted 24 February 2011[7]; and
- Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan – adopted 17 December 2015[8].

6.2.14 Policies within the Local Plan typically seek to protect and enhance the natural environment including individual landscape features.

Policy MD2: Sustainable Development:

'…. for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it is required to:

1. Respond positively to local design aspirations, wherever possible,

2. Contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value by: …

iv. Enhancing, incorporating or recreating natural assets in accordance with MD12. ….and ….

7. Demonstrate how good standards of sustainable design and construction have been employed …'

6.2.15 The explanation to this policy states that:

'To respond effectively to local character and distinctiveness, development

[7] Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (February 2011) [available at: https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/8534/core-strategy.pdf]

[8] Shropshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2020

should not have a detrimental impact on existing amenity value but respond appropriately to the context in which it is set. As such, new development should respect the existing pattern of development, both visually and in relation to the function of spaces, retain and enhance important views and landmarks and respond appropriately to local environmental and historic assets….'.

6.2.16 The approach to understanding and assessing the sensitivity of the landscape, including features and areas of locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value, and to using that information to guide the routeing and design of the Proposed Development is in line with the aims of the Local Plan to protect and enhance the natural environment including individual landscape features.

Policy MD8: Infrastructure Provision:

'3. Applications for new strategic energy, transport, water management and telecommunications infrastructure will be supported in order to help deliver national priorities and locally identified requirements, where its contribution to agreed objectives outweighs the potential for adverse impacts. Particular consideration will be given to the potential for adverse impacts on:

I. Residential and other sensitive neighbouring land uses;

ii. Visual amenity;

iii. Landscape character and sensitivity, including impacts on sensitive skylines;

iv. Natural and heritage assets;

v. The visitor and tourism economy including long distance footpaths, cycle tracks and bridleways'.

6.2.17 The explanation to this policy states that:

'This policy supplements national guidance and Core Strategy Policy CS8 by identifying criteria which are intended to be used as a benchmark against

which to assess applications for specific types of strategic infrastructure'.

6.2.18 This chapter reports on the assessment of likely significant effects on sensitive landscapes (including landscape character and skylines), sensitive visual receptors (including residents living with 200m of the Proposed Development) and users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and long distance routes. The assessment was undertaken in a robust and methodical manner using a descriptive landscape and visual baseline as a benchmark.

6.3 METHODOLOGY, SCOPE, ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Methodology

6.3.1 The detailed methodology, as agreed with Shropshire Council, for the landscape and visual assessment (LVIA) is presented in Appendix 6.1 **(DCO Document 6.1.1)**. It is based on best practice and information in GLVIA3, which is the established best practice guidance for landscape and visual impact assessment.

Scope – Study Area

6.3.2 The study area for the landscape and visual assessment was agreed with Shropshire Council and in the Scoping Opinion and extends up to 1km from the Order Limits of the overhead line (see Figure 6.1 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Study Area' (**DCO Document 6.14**)). This is because at a distance of 1km, a Trident wood pole, which on average would be 12m high above ground including the conductor, would appear approximately 7mm high in the view, which is highly unlikely to give rise to significant effects. In addition, throughout much of the study area the layering effect of intervening mature trees on field boundaries, together with generally low-lying landform, would reduce the wider visibility of a wood pole line.

6.3.3 Although it is considered unlikely that a wood pole overhead line could have a significant landscape or visual effects on locations more than 1km from the line, there are rare occasions where longer distance views of a wood pole overhead line may result in significant visual effects, particularly where the

poles are seen above the horizon – i.e. on the skyline. Therefore, as agreed with Shropshire Council and explained in the Scoping Report[9], to ensure that any such effects were identified a wider survey area up to 5km from the Order Limits was considered, as shown on Figure 6.1 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Study Area' (**DCO Document 6.14**).

6.3.4 The substations, 132kV underground cable, access routes (excluding the one at Berrywood Farm), temporary laydown areas and lower voltage diversions fall totally within the 1km study area. However the 1km study area extends from the Order Limits for the 132kV overhead line only i.e. it does not extend from the Order Limits for the substations, 132kV underground cable, access routes, temporary laydown areas and lower voltage diversions. This is because the potential visual effects resulting from the Proposed Development in these locations would only be related to relatively minor construction works and would be transient and/or very short term in duration.

6.3.5 The study area for the residential visual amenity assessment extends to 200m from the Order Limits and is shown on Figure 6.8 'Residential Visual Amenity' (**DCO Document 6.14**). This is because at a distance of 200m a 12m Trident wood pole would appear approximately 3.66cm high in the view, which would not create a significant visual effect that would materially harm residential amenity or living conditions. Greater detail on the methodology of the residential visual amenity assessment is provided in Section 1.4 of Appendix 6.1 (**DCO Document 6.6.1**).

Surveys

6.3.6 Site survey work for the landscape and visual impact assessments, including the residential visual amenity assessment, commenced in February 2017 and continued through to March 2018.

6.3.7 A series of viewpoint photographic surveys was undertaken to represent the

[9] https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020021/EN020021-000027-Scoping%20Report.pdf

views experienced and the character of the local landscape within the 1km study area and the wider area up to 5km. Viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 6.7 'Viewpoint Locations' (**DCO Document 6.14**). Further detail on the viewpoints, including how they were selected and what they represent, is provided in Appendix 6.3 **(DCO Document 6.6.3)**.

6.3.8 As well as surveying the viewpoint locations and views from individual residential properties, the site survey work considered views from settlements within the wider 5km survey area and sequential views along local roads and PRoW.

6.3.9 Site and viewpoint surveys were used to obtain baseline photographs and gain further understanding and appreciation of the landscape and visual experience within the study area.

Assumptions and Limitations

6.3.10 A number of assumptions and limitations were made in relation to the information presented in this chapter:

- All assessment work applied a precautionary principle and a realistic worst-case scenario was assessed e.g. effects on visual amenity were considered during winter months following the autumn leaf fall (except for the 76 selected viewpoint locations where both winter and summer views were considered);
- A lighting assessment was not prepared because there is no requirement for night-time lighting during construction or operation, with the exception of short term night time work relating to erecting and removing scaffold netting over the railway near Babbinswood;
- Given the type of development being proposed it is assumed that predicted effects would be adverse (negative) unless otherwise stated;

- The assessment considered the geographical and temporal flexibility allowed for within the DCO[10]. For assessment purposes indicative locations have been shown for each of the wood poles, however during construction the poles may have to be slightly relocated to allow for localised ground conditions or landowner requirements. Similarly there is the flexibility for the proposed height of a wood pole structure to increase by up to 2m if required. This flexibility for micro-siting and height would be within the Order Limits and unless otherwise stated in the assessment would not affect the outcome of the assessment, which is based on a worst case scenario; and
- The curtilage of private residential properties was not accessed during site survey work, therefore the assessment of potential effects on the visual amenity of residents was undertaken from nearby roads and footpaths.

Determining the Significance of Effects

6.3.11 As explained further in Appendix 6.1 **(DCO Document 6.6.1),** and in accordance with GLVIA3, to determine the overall significance of each identified landscape or visual effect, the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect were combined to allow a final judgement to be made about the level of importance of the overall effect and whether or not the effect should be considered significant. This involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessment and the application of professional judgement.

6.3.12 The relationship between receptors and effects is not typically a linear one and there are no hard or fast rules about what makes an effect significant. However, as explained in Section 4.7 of Chapter 4 'Approach and General Methodology' (**DCO Document 6.4**) effects identified as moderate are

[10] An explanation of the geographical and temporal flexibility within the draft DCO is set out in Chapter 4 'Approach and General Methodology (**DCO Document 6.4**)

considered to be significant. This is a precautionary approach to ensure all likely significant effects are categorised as such, as only deeming major effects as significant could result in a significant effect being categorised as non-significant. The rationale in support of the assessment is set out for each receptor so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

6.3.13 In terms of landscape effects, paragraph 5.56 of GLVIA3 notes that at opposite ends of the spectrum:

- *'Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance; and*
- *Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to, but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value, are likely to be of the least significance and may, depending on the circumstances, be judged as not significant.*'

6.3.14 In terms of visual effects, paragraph 6.44 of GLVIA3 notes the following:

- *'Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant;*
- *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant; and,*
- *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features which are already present within the view.'*

6.3.15 The determining of significant residential visual amenity effects follows broadly the same methodology and approach as that for visual effects. As explained in greater detail in Section 1.4 of Appendix 6.1 (**DCO Document**

6.6.1) a significant residential visual amenity effect does not necessarily equate to an effect that is considered as materially harming residential amenity or living conditions. Whilst the decision on whether a change in the view would materially harm residential amenity or living conditions is ultimately a planning decision, a judgement is needed from a landscape architect to inform the planning decision. The residential visual amenity assessment provides this judgment, by combining information on the sensitivity of the receptor (high), with the predicted magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development. This gives an overall level of effect or significance.

6.3.16 Identified effects for the landscape, visual and residential amenity assessment have been categorised as major, moderate, minor or negligible. Each of these four categories covers a broad range of effects and represents a continuum or sliding scale. Any effect judged to be major or moderate is deemed to be significant.

6.4 CONSULTATION

6.4.1 To inform the preparation of the application for an Order granting development consent, SP Manweb undertook a thorough pre-application consultation process, which included publication of the following documents:

- Scoping Report submitted to the PINS (9th March 2017);
- Scoping Opinion[11] received from the Secretary of State (25th April 2017); and
- Statutory consultation (in accordance with sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and the EIA Regs 2009) on a Preliminary Environmental Information Report[12] (PEIR) (November 2017).

6.4.2 Detailed responses to the points raised in the Scoping Opinion is provided in

[11] https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020021/EN020021-000012-Scoping%20Opinion.pdf
[12] https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/SPM_NSRP_PEIR.pdf

Appendix 6.6 (**DCO Document 6.6.6**).

6.4.3 Information on the statutory and non-statutory consultation is provided in the Consultation Report **(DCO Document 5.1)**.

6.4.4 Consultation on the scope and content of this chapter involved agreement on methodology, study areas, viewpoints and photomontages, as outlined in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 – Summary of EIA Relevant Consultation Responses

Date	Summary of Discussion	Response
Shropshire Council		
12/04/2016 Initial stakeholder meeting	Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	Agreed ZTVs not appropriate for a wood pole overhead line because they are not very informative.
12/04/2016 Initial stakeholder meeting	Construction and temporary laydown areas	Agreed to indicate locations of proposed construction areas and compounds as part of the June 2016 consultation documentation.
12/04/2016 Initial stakeholder meeting	Red and blue route corridors	Agreed that the focus of the next phase of work and the June 2016 consultation should be on the red and blue corridors identified in the (then) draft Route Corridor Report.
21/09/2016 Stakeholder meeting	Landscape sensitivity methodology	Agreed to include a sensitivity methodology in the Scoping Report and reference Shropshire's Historic Landscape Character Assessment and Shropshire Landscape Typology.
21/09/2016	General support for the	Noted general support for the

Table 6.3 – Summary of EIA Relevant Consultation Responses		
Date	Summary of Discussion	Response
Stakeholder meeting	proposals	line route and options under consideration.
23/11/2016 Stakeholder meeting	Discussion of LVIA study area and methodology	Agreed initial survey area of 5km, sensitivity methodology and inclusion of a residential visual amenity assessment. Agreed methodology etc., to be written up and issued to Shropshire Council for agreement.
02/02/2017 Email from Shropshire Council landscape officer	Response to LVIA scoping chapters	Proposed methodology etc. agreed by the landscape officer, who noted that, 'The methodologies are comprehensive, clear, plainly written and appropriate to the latest guidance. I am happy with the choice of landscape and visual receptors and the group receptor viewpoints.'
30/05/2017 Stakeholder meeting	Approach to mitigation	Agreed that the approach to mitigation and need to share with each discipline should be included within the ES.
26/07/2017 Email to Shropshire Council Principal Planning Officer	Cumulative assessment	Information shared and approval sought for the cumulative developments to be considered in the assessment, as well as the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) allocations and National Grid proposals near Babbinswood. Follow up emails sent on 26/07/2017 and 26/02/2018. No further comment made.

Table 6.3 – Summary of EIA Relevant Consultation Responses		
Date	Summary of Discussion	Response
11/01/2018 & 15/01/2018 Emails to/from Shropshire Council landscape officer	Photomontages	Location of seven proposed photomontages agreed. Selected photomontages are presented in Appendix 6.6 (**DCO Document 6.6.6**).
Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership		
25/08/2016 Email to Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership	Request for comments on the information provided in the consultation.	Feedback to be fed into the response from the RSPB and Shropshire Wildlife Trust (refer to Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (**DCO Document 6.7**)).
Forestry Commission		
25/08/2016 Email to Forestry Commission	Request for comments on the information provided in the consultation.	No objections to the scheme were received.
Canal and Rivers Trust		
06/04/2017 Email to PINS in response to Scoping Report	Emphasised the need to give full consideration to the baseline, receptors and amenity value, including views from Woodhouse, in the EIA. Also to ensure careful siting of poles.	Points noted and meeting arranged.
09/05/2017 Meeting with CRT representatives	Additional viewpoints requested along Montgomery Canal. Feasibility of undergrounding or more direct crossing of the	Additional viewpoint agreed at the Perry Aqueduct. More direct route across the canal established, and poles 37, 38 and 39 moved to increase the pole distance from the

Table 6.3 – Summary of EIA Relevant Consultation Responses		
Date	Summary of Discussion	Response
	canal.	canal.
30/01/2018 Email to Canal and Rivers Trust (C&RT)	Photomontages	At their request the draft viewpoint sheets and the proposed location of a photomontage were sent to the C&RT for comment. However, no response was received.

6.5 BASELINE DESCRIPTION

6.5.1 The following text summarises the landscape and visual baseline for the study area. A more detailed description of the study area and its wider surroundings is provided in Appendix 6.2 **(DCO Document 6.6.2)** and Appendix 6.3 **(DCO Document 6.6.3)**.

Existing Landscape Baseline

6.5.2 The landscape is mostly arable with some areas of pasture. Although almost entirely agricultural the landscape does display some differing characteristics, with areas of settled farmland located alongside estate farmland and lower lying floodplains. There are occasional small pockets of industry, for instance near Babbinswood and Rednal.

6.5.3 The identification of local landscape character areas within the study area was established based on reference to published characterisation studies, including Natural England's National Character Areas[13] and The Shropshire Landscape Typology[14], which integrates Shropshire Council's landscape character assessment work and Historic Landscape Character Assessment.

[13] A National Character Area (NCA) is a natural subdivision of England based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity. There are 159 National Character Areas and they follow natural, rather than administrative, boundaries. They are defined by Natural England, the UK government's advisors on the natural environment.
[14] Shropshire County Council, The Shropshire Landscape Typology, September 2006.

Site survey work further informed the classification of the landscape.

6.5.4 The Proposed Development would be located entirely within the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area (NCA 61) (see Figure 6.2 'Landscape Character Areas' (**DCO Document 6.14**)).

6.5.5 Within the 1km study area 11 separate landscape areas were identified based on the classification from the Shropshire Landscape Typology (see Figure 6.3 'Shropshire Landscape Typology' (**DCO Document 6.14**)) and then further refined using the results of the site surveys. The 11 landscape areas, from west to east, are:

- LCA 1 Urban: Oswestry
- LCA 2 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Middleton to Babbinswood
- LCA 3 Principal Timbered Farmlands: Halston Hall
- LCA 4 Estate Farmlands: Woodhouse
- LCA 5 Lowland Moors: River Perry
- LCA 6 Estate Farmlands (Semi-Industrial): Lower Hordley and Bagley
- LCA 7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge
- LCA 8 Lowland Moors: Wackley Brook to River Roden
- LCA 9 Principal Settled Farmlands: Cockshutt to Ruewood
- LCA 10 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Wem Fringe
- LCA 11 Urban: Wem

6.5.6 More detail on these local landscape character areas is provided in Appendix 6.2 (**DCO Document 6.6.2**).

6.5.7 There are no nationally important designated landscapes within the study area. Designated sites (landscape related) within or close to the study area (see Figure 6.4 'Landscape Receptors' (**DCO Document 6.14**)) include:

SSSIs:

- Gravenhall Ancient Woodland: east of Babbinswood, 750m north of the Proposed Development at its closest point;
- Montgomery Canal, Aston Locks – Keepers Bridge SSSI: west of Rednal, the northern end of the SSSI is 870m south of the Proposed Development (or 1.1km along the path of the canal); and
- Ruewood Pastures Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): east of Commonwood, 260m south of the Proposed Development at its closest point.

Conservation areas[15]:

- The southern boundary of the Whittington Conservation Area is approximately 960m from the Proposed Development. Almost the entire conservation area is outside the study area;
- Approximately the southern third of Loppington Conservation Area lies within the north of study area and its southern boundary is approximately 900m north-west of the Proposed Development; and
- Approximately the western half of Wem Conservation Area is within the study area and its western boundary is approximately 650m east of the Proposed Development.

Listed Buildings (Grade II* unless stated):

- Church of St Michael, Loppington, Grade I listed – 880m north-west of the Proposed Development;
- Woodhouse Hall (and adjacent stable block), Rednal – 650m south of the Proposed Development;

[15] People living within conservation areas and in listed buildings are included in the LVIA as sensitive receptors.

- Stanwardine Hall, Stanwardine-in-the-Wood – 360m south of the Proposed Development;
- The Ditches Hall, nr Wem – 740m west of the Proposed Development;
- Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wem – 900m east of the Proposed Development; and
- Tilley Hall, Tilley – 950m south-east of the Proposed Development.

6.5.8 SSSIs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings all contribute to the baseline of the landscape as they help to inform a landscapes character, value and susceptibility to change. Landscape and visual impact assessments of these areas are provided within Appendix 6.2 and 6.3 (**DCO Documents 6.6.2** and **6.6.3**), if relevant.

6.5.9 The following settlements (listed west to east) lie at least partially within the 1km study area:

- Oswestry;
- Whittington;
- Middleton;
- Babbinswood;
- Lower Hordley;
- Cockshutt;
- Loppington;
- Noneley and Commonwood;
- Ruewood;
- Tilley; and
- Wem.

6.5.10 In addition to the settlements, the farmland is also characterised by a

dispersed pattern of farmhouses and individual properties.

6.5.11 Other key landscape features within the study area are:

- The Shrewsbury-Chester railway line which crosses the western section of the study area to the south of Middleton;
- The Shropshire Way: a long distance regionally promoted trail which crosses the study area from north-to-south along the route of the Montgomery Canal 5km east of Oswestry and again at the eastern end of the study area, where the trail passes through the south and west of Wem;
- The Montgomery Canal;
- The privately owned Woodhouse Estate;
- The River Perry through the centre of the study area, and the River Roden within the eastern part of the study area;
- A-class roads within the study area are limited to the A5(T) adjacent to the eastern edge of the Oswestry; the A495 between Oswestry and Whittington on the northern edge of the study area; and the A528 between Ellesmere and Shrewsbury which runs north-to-south through the centre of the study area between Cockshutt and Burlton; and
- Small-scale industrial facilities at Babbinswood, Rednal and Lower Hordley.

6.5.12 The Proposed Development passes either directly under or adjacent to the following PRoW (see Figure 6.5 'Public Access' (**DCO Document 6.14**)):

- PRoW 0313/41/1 east of Oswestry (The PRoW runs north to south between pole nos. 6 and 7);
- PRoW 0313/44/2 Berghill Lane (The PRoW runs north to south between pole nos. 26 and 27);

- PRoW 0207/1413 near Kenwick Oak (The PRoW runs north to south directly past pole no. 93 (see viewpoint 14));
- PRoW 0207/15/1 south of Kenwick Lodge (The PRoW runs north-east to south-west directly past pole no. 97, which is an angle pole);
- PRoW0217/4/2 near Malt Kiln Farm (The PRoW runs north-east to south-west directly past pole no. 125 (see viewpoint 23));
- PRoW 0217/5/1 east of Malt Kiln Farm (Pole 128 is located directly adjacent to the northern end of this PRoW);
- PRoW 0217/10/1 south of Bentley Farm (The PRoW runs north to south between pole nos. 139 and 140);
- PRoW 0217/11/1 east of Bentley Farm (The PRoW runs east to west near to pole no. 145);
- PRoW 0217/12/1 north of the Shayes (The southern end of this PRoW finishes between pole nos. 150 (an angle pole) and 151 (see viewpoint 72);
- PRoW 0217/13/1 north of Noneley (The PRoW runs north-west to south-east between pole nos. 153 and 154); and
- PRoW 0230/47/1 west of Wem (The PRoW runs east to west between pole nos. 168 and 169).

6.5.13 Formal recreation areas within the study area include school playing fields within Oswestry and Wem, Wem Sports and Social Club and Whittington Cricket Club, where views of the site are screened by buildings and/or vegetation. The only campsite within the study area is The Acorns, near English Frankton. There are no golf courses within the 1km study area.

6.5.14 Most of the study area comprises level or gently undulating arable farmland and pastures, with fields of varying sizes bounded by hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, creating a scenic rural landscape. A slightly higher ridge of

land runs through the centre of the study area between the settlements of Lower Hordley and Cockshutt (see Figure 6.6 'Topography – Elevation (**DCO Document 6.14**)). The large properties of Stanwardine Hall and Kenwick Lodge are located on this low ridgeline. Most field boundaries comprise maintained hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Individual and small groups of trees, and some small woodlands are scattered throughout the landscape. There are also occasional ponds which are often surrounded by vegetation.

Existing Visual Baseline

6.5.15 The study area for the visual assessment is the same as that described for the landscape assessment (see Figure 6.1 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Study Area' (**DCO Document 6.14**)).

6.5.16 The visual baseline (existing views and visual amenity) forms the basis for the identification and description of the likely significant visual effects. It establishes the areas from where the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the Proposed Development, the locations or viewpoints where they would be affected and the nature of the views at those locations.

6.5.17 The visual baseline is informed by the landscape baseline. Throughout the study area the generally level but occasionally undulating agricultural landscape with its many hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland belts, creates a layered visual effect with foreground views often merging seamlessly into the middle and far distance. Due to the roadside hedgerows it is often only possible to appreciate wider views through field gates or other occasional gaps in the vegetation. Views from PRoW which cross the farmland are often contained to within one or two fields due to the screening effect of hedgerows and woodland belts.

6.5.18 Within the study area the areas of higher ground and larger-scale (and therefore more open) fields afford some long west and north-westerly views towards the Berwyn Mountains in north-east Wales, and south and south-

westerly views towards the Shropshire Hills as they extend into the Welsh borders and the Cambrian Mountains. A higher ridge of ground located approximately 5km to the south and east of the eastern end of the Proposed Development and comprising Lee Hills and Grinshill Hill, forms a low lying backdrop to the view when looking to the east and south-east. Within the study area itself there are no notable focal points.

6.5.19 The relatively level landform and intervening vegetation means that views towards the Proposed Development from settlements notably Oswestry, Cockshutt, Loppington and Wem would only be possible from the edges of the built development or from occasional higher vantage point within the settlement.

6.5.20 No protected views were identified within the study area.

6.5.21 Whilst establishing the visual baseline (see Section 1.2 of Appendix 6.2 (DCO Document 6.6.2)) various receptors were identified (see Table A6.3.1 of Appendix 6.2 (DCO Document 6.6.2)) as locations to potentially assess the effects on visual receptors. Within the initial 5km survey area 76 viewpoints were identified, all of which have been surveyed and considered in relation to the Proposed Development. The viewpoints are primarily associated with settlements, PRoW, recreational landscapes or roads. The viewpoints were agreed with the landscape officers at Shropshire Council. Of these 76 viewpoints 40 are within the final 1km study area (see Figure 6.7 'Viewpoint Locations' (**DCO Document 6.14**)). A full schedule of the 76 viewpoints is provided within Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**). All viewpoints where a visual effect of minor adverse or greater was identified are accompanied by a descriptive viewpoint sheet in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**).

6.5.22 The area is characterised by a dispersed pattern of farmhouses and individual properties, 23 of which are within 200m of the Order Limits for the proposed overhead line (see Figure 6.8 'Residential Visual Amenity' (**DCO Document 6.14**)).

6.5.23 A more detailed visual baseline is presented in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**).

Future Baseline

6.5.24 All landscapes can be dynamic and influenced by social, economic, technological and climatic changes, all of which can influence patterns of land use, land cover and land management. As such, the baseline for the landscape and visual assessment is constantly evolving which is why known changes to the landscape which may arise in the future have to be taken into account.

6.5.25 The baseline landscape along the route of the Proposed Development is mainly influenced by established agricultural management practices, which influence patterns of land use, cover and vegetation diversity. The effects of climate change and natural succession (for example the gradual silting up of unmanaged ponds, or encroachment of scrub) may also occur.

6.5.26 The SAMDev Plan does not allocate land anywhere within the Order Limits of the Proposed Development for potential development or new purposes.

6.5.27 It is therefore not anticipated that the future baseline would differ noticeably from the existing baseline.

6.6 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

6.6.1 This section presents the assessment of the likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development as described in Chapter 3 'The Proposed Development' (**DCO Document 6.3**).

6.6.2 An assessment of all identified landscape and visual effects (significant and non-significant) is provided in Appendix 6.2 and Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Documents 6.6.2** and **6.6.3**).

Effects during Construction

Sources of Construction Effects

6.6.3 Construction of high voltage electricity connections can give rise to the following construction effects:

- Landscape pattern can be affected by the felling[16] of individual mature trees, woodland, shelterbelts or screen planting as these often provide the landscape with a distinctive character or local identity;
- The removal of hedgerows may be required to provide access for construction and or maintenance;
- Where possible existing farm and field tracks would be used for access. Dependent on weather and ground conditions, some tracks could need temporary improvement, such as a temporary trackway. Where improvements are required, potential landscape effects may occur when a straight access track is routed across a grassy hillside or moor, creating a visible man-made mark on the landscape. Such temporary improvements would be removed following construction;
- The visual intrusion and contrast within an agricultural landscape, created by temporary laydown areas, compounds and the movement of construction vehicles and machinery; and
- The digging of trenches and other works associated with installation of underground cables and substation equipment.

6.6.4 With this type of development construction effects relating to landform are unlikely since no noticeable earthworks are required to accommodate the Proposed Development.

[16] The process of felling individual trees or an area of woodland is considered to be a short-term construction effect. The longer term effects of tree removal are considered under operational effects.

Landscape Assessment

6.6.5 Although construction works can often be highly visible within the landscape all potential effects are temporary and short term, for instance it is anticipated that the entire project would be constructed within 12 months and the construction period for individual pole structures would generally be 1 to 2 days. In the case of the Proposed Development there would be no likely significant landscape effects during construction.

6.6.6 Construction of the Proposed Development would require the removal of some individual trees and a few small groups of trees along the route. This is to allow sufficient space to accommodate the Proposed Development (and to provide the necessary safety clearances for the overhead line during operation). The locations of trees which would be removed are identified in in Figure 6.9 (**DCO Document 6.14**). When considered within the context of the LCAs across the study area, most of which are well-treed, the effects are not considered significant.

6.6.7 Construction of the works to the Oswestry and Wem Substations would take place within the existing substation boundary. At Oswestry and Wem Substations, given the nature of the existing substation infrastructure and the short duration of the works, the construction work is unlikely to give rise to any significant landscape effects.

Visual Assessment

6.6.8 As explained in the landscape character and viewpoint assessments in Appendix 6.2 and 6.3 **(DCO Document 6.2** and **6.3) n**o receptors identified in section 6.5 of this chapter would experience significant visual effects during construction. During construction users of PRoW close to the Proposed Development would not experience significant visual effects as any effects experienced would be transient and of very short duration. The works at Oswestry Substation would not give rise to any significant effects as they would be short term and undertaken within an existing bay in the substation

boundary where views would be merged with, and screened by, the existing infrastructure. The works at Wem Substation would not give to any significant effects as they would be short term and heavily screened by the existing vegetation around the boundary of the substation.

Residential Visual Amenity

6.6.9 No significant residential visual amenity effects during construction were identified.

Effects during Operation

Sources of Operational Effects

6.6.10 The likely effects on landscape and visual receptors during operation would arise from the presence of additional man-made structures in the landscape, i.e. the wood pole structures, associated conductors, steelwork on top of the poles, stays and the substation equipment. As with any external material, wood poles are susceptible to weathering and consequent colour variations. The colour of the poles at the time of construction would be dark brown but this would fade over time to a noticeably lighter silver-grey. The rate of colour change would depend on the prevailing weather conditions and to some degree on the type of timber and timber treatment that were used. Over time these changes would tend to reduce the perceptibility of elements viewed above the skyline, but may increase the visibility of structures when viewed against a dark background such as coniferous plantation. The metal bracing and the conductors would be constructed from aluminium, which is initially shiny but tends to dull over time to dark matt silver.

6.6.11 The Proposed Development would add to the structures already present in the landscape but would not be uncharacteristic features as wood pole overhead lines are already present as is substation infrastructure.

6.6.12 To allow for seasonal variations in leaf cover and potential screening, consideration has been given to likely significant effects at Year 1 during both summer and winter and at Year 15. Whilst at Year 15, there is potential for a

slight reduction in any effects, for example, as a result of additional vegetation growth and maturing areas of natural regeneration, it is considered that the effects would remain within the same category of significance as at Year 1.

6.6.13 The removal of woodland/tree cover may cause the opening up of the landscape and reduce the sense of enclosure, thereby allowing views into other landscape spaces beyond. Where felling has occurred for an overhead line or underground cable through a wooded area, the linear nature of the felling could be visually intrusive.

Landscape Assessment

6.6.14 There are no landscape receptors likely to experience significant direct or indirect effects during operation as explained in detail in section 1.4 (the individual Landscape Character Assessment Sheets), Table A6.2.1, section 1.5 and Table A6.2.2 of Appendix 6.2 (**DCO Document 6.6.2**).

Visual Assessment

6.6.15 Section 1.5 and Table A6.3.5 of Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.3**) detail the level of effects identified for all visual receptors.

6.6.16 Receptors in the settlements identified in section 6.5 would not experience significant visual effects during operation as explained in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.3**). Users of PRoW, with one exception (see section 6.8 below) would not experience significant visual effects except for localised significant effects where the Proposed Development would pass directly over or adjacent to the PRoW identified and listed in section 6.5 above. For users of these PRoW the localised significant visual effects would quickly diminish as the user moved away from the overhead line. Due to the limited extent over which the significant effect is experienced in relation to the entirety of the length of the PRoW, the overall effects on these PRoW are not considered significant.

6.6.17 PRoW 0217/5/1 is a 205m long PRoW adjacent to the B4397 to the east of Malt Kiln Farm. The western end of this PRoW is approximately 100m south of wood pole no. 127, and the PRoW runs south-west to north-east across a

single arable field, with the eastern end of the PRoW directly adjacent to wood pole no. 128. There would be clear unobstructed views of the overhead line for the full length of this PRoW at a maximum distance of 100m. It is noted, however, that this is a minor PRoW (Shropshire Council Category D) that is unlikely to be walked by tourists or visitors to the area. The magnitude of change in the visual amenity would be medium and the overall level of effects moderate adverse (**significant**).

6.6.18 Sequential visual effects occur when a receptor is moving and where a development can be seen regularly in views and with short time lapses between each instance. It therefore follows, that users of PRoW could experience sequential visual effects where a PRoW crosses the alignment of an overhead line in more than one location over a short period of time, or a PRoW runs on the same alignment as the Proposed Development. The PRoW in the study area which cross the overhead line only do so once. Although there would be occasional glimpsed views of the overhead line from more than one location for some PRoW, none would be considered a significant sequential visual effect. This is due to factors which contribute to the visual experience in this landscape, including the intervening distance between the footpath user and the proposed overhead line, screening by intervening trees and hedgerows, the height and scale of the overhead line which is no greater than some of the mature trees in this landscape, the spacing of the Trident wood poles, and the generally low-lying landform of the landscape in the study area. No significant sequential effects have therefore been identified.

6.6.19 Greater detail of the PRoW within the 1km study area, and the likely visual impacts experienced, is provided in Table A6.3.5 of Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**).

6.6.20 Of the 76 identified viewpoints only four were assessed as experiencing significant visual effects. These are detailed in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 – Viewpoints assessed as experiencing operational phase significant visual effects	
76 viewpoints were identified as being representative of the range of likely effects, viewing experiences and viewers within the 1km study area and up to 5km from the Order Limits for the overhead line. From the 76 viewpoints four were considered as likely to experience significant visual effects.	
Viewpoint 14: PRoW 0207/14/13 near Kenwick Oak	**Medium-high sensitivity (PRoW)** People using a local PRoW are normally considered to be a medium sensitivity receptor. However the existing view is considered to be of a medium-high quality which therefore elevates the overall sensitivity of the receptor.
View south from a slightly elevated location on a ProW looking out across attractive arable farmland, with expansive views across neighbouring landscapes and beyond to the distant hills along the Welsh border. Up to eight new poles would be visible from the viewpoint extending from the near to middle distance. Poles 92 to 95 would be visible on the skyline, but the remainder would be seen against a backdrop of landform and vegetation which would reduce their perceptibility. Although a single turbine is present within the view, the introduction of the new overhead line would bring a new and contrasting feature into the landscape. It is anticipated that the magnitude of change in the view would be medium and the level of effect **moderate adverse (significant)**.	
Viewpoint 23: PRoW 0217/4/2 near Malt Kiln Farm (listed building)	**High sensitivity (residential and PRoW)**
View north from PRoW near residential properties. Poles 123-125 would be close to the viewpoint. Pole 124 would be particularly noticeable as it would be situated on the rising ground to the west of the viewpoint where it would be seen on the skyline. Other poles, although visible, would be mostly screened by intervening vegetation in the summer months but potentially visible (although not prominent) during the winter months. The new overhead line would bring a new and contrasting feature into the landscape. It is anticipated that the magnitude of change in the view would be medium and the level of effect **moderate adverse (significant)**.	
Viewpoint 70: Dandyford Farm, Lower	**High sensitivity (residential)**

Table 6.4 – Viewpoints assessed as experiencing operational phase significant visual effects	
Hordley	
View across level and relatively open farmland across neighbouring landscapes including the slightly elevated Woodhouse Estate and the elevated wooded hill at Tedsmore, and beyond to more distant uplands. Up to eight new poles would be visible from this viewpoint, most of which would be visible on the skyline. All the poles would benefit, to a varying degree, from some level of screening and/or be backdropped by landform and vegetation. The overhead line would be visible within the context of the existing baseline which includes a telegraph pole line, wind turbines and in the distance a 400kV pylon line. An existing lower voltage line within the view would be removed as an element of the Proposed Development. Views from within Dandyford Farm would benefit from greater screening than the actual viewpoint. It is anticipated that the magnitude of change in the view would be medium and the level of effect **moderate adverse (significant)**.	
Viewpoint 72: PRoW 0217/12/1 near The Shayes (listed building)	**Medium sensitivity (PRoW)**
In views south and east from this PRoW the overhead line would be visible across the view and on the skyline, particularly between poles 150 and 151. To the east, poles 152-154 would be partially visible through the intervening vegetation. To the south-west, angle pole 150 would be prominent and appear noticeably taller than the existing 33kV and 11kV wood pole lines currently present within the view. Wood poles 149-146 would also be visible heading away from the viewpoint, where multiple poles would be seen 'stacked' behind one another, which increases their perceptibility. It is anticipated that the magnitude of change in the view would be medium and the level of effect **moderate adverse (significant)**.	

6.6.21 Details of the assessment for individual viewpoints is provided in Table A6.3.4 of Appendix 6.3 **(DCO Document 6.6.3)**. An individual viewpoint sheet is provided in section 1.4 of Appendix 6.3 **(DCO Document 6.6.3)**, with detailed assessment information, for all of the viewpoints assessed as experiencing a minor effect or greater. Viewpoint assessment sheets are not provided for those viewpoints assessed as experiencing either a 'negligible effect' or 'no

view'.

Residential Visual Amenity

6.6.22 The residential visual amenity assessment identified 23 properties within 200m of the Order Limits for the overhead line. Of these 23 properties one was identified as experiencing significant effects on their visual amenity, as detailed in Table 6.5. The detailed residential visual amenity assessment for all 23 properties is presented in Table A6.5.1 of Appendix 6.5 **(DCO Document 6.6.5).**

Table 6.5 – Residential visual amenity likely significant effects	
Of the 23 individual properties identified within 200m of the Order Limits for the overhead line, one was assessed as likely to experience significant visual effects.	
Residential Amenity: Lower Lees	**High sensitivity (residential)**
Occupants of Lower Lees would have open northerly views from the front of the property and its eastern garden, where the overhead line and closest two wood poles would be approximately 100m from the building. The Proposed Development would be visible across the view heading east to west and at least eight wood poles would be visible in the foreground and middle distance, although not all within the same view. Whilst existing overhead line structures are an accepted element in views in this location, the addition of another line could result in significant effects on the residential visual amenity of Lower Lees, particularly as the overhead line would introduce a new feature into the agricultural field within which the property is located and from the main outlook of the property (although steel pylons are close to the property they are at an oblique angle to the property). Views towards the Proposed Development would be open with limited or no screening, although hedgerows in the distance may provide a partial backdrop. The introduction of the Proposed Development would mean that the property would be almost encircled by overhead lines. The magnitude of change would be medium, as such the effects are considered to be **moderate adverse (significant)**.	

6.7 CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

6.7.1 There are no developments (please refer to those identified in Chapter 4

'Approach and General Methodology' (**DCO Document 6.4**)) which would give rise to significant cumulative inter-project landscape or visual effects during the construction or operational phase of the Proposed Development. This is primarily due to the distance between the Proposed Development and the developments considered in the cumulative assessment, and the differing nature and scale of the developments.

6.7.2 Section 1.5 in 'Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology' Appendix 6.1 (**DCO Document 6.6.1**) and the 'Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Appendix 6.4 (**DCO Document 6.6.4**) provide further detail of the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment.

6.7.3 Table A6.4.1 of Appendix 6.4 (**DCO Document 6.6.4**) details all the projects considered, their location, distance from the Proposed Development (the closest of which to the proposed overhead line is an application for 25 properties in Wem, approximately 715m from the Order Limits), whether or not cumulative effects are likely and the rationale for the assessment.

6.8 MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS

6.8.1 As explained in Chapter 3 'The Proposed Development' **(DCO Document 6.3)** and Section 4.6 of Chapter 4 'Approach and General Methodology' **(DCO Document 6.4)**, the main strategy for minimising any adverse environmental effects of the Proposed Development has been avoidance through careful planning, design and routeing in accordance with the Holford Rules. This has led to the Proposed Development which is the subject of this ES and the application for an Order granting development consent.

6.8.2 Given the level of work undertaken to identify the final route of the Proposed Development and number and level of identified significant effects, SP Manweb do not consider that any further mitigation measures, for example new planting, are necessary to mitigate effects of the overhead line and would not reduce any identified 'significant' effect to 'not significant'.

6.8.3 Therefore the residual significant effects are as per the significant effects

reported above in Section 6.6 of this chapter.

6.9 SUMMARY

Landscape

6.9.1 There would be no significant landscape effects during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

Visual

6.9.2 There would be no significant visual effects during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

6.9.3 The assessment of effects during operation identified some localised significant visual effects at the locations where the Proposed Development either crosses or is directly adjacent to a PRoW (listed in section 6.5 of this chapter) and at:

- Viewpoint 14 (near Kenwick Oak);
- Viewpoint 23 (near Malt Kiln Farm);
- Viewpoint 70 (near Dandyford Farm);
- Viewpoint 72 (near The Shayes); and
- PRoW 0217/5/1 (east of Malt Kiln Farm)

Residential Visual Amenity

6.9.4 There would be no significant residential visual amenity effects during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

6.9.5 The assessment of effects during operation on residential visual amenity identified significant effects on residents at one property, Lower Lees Farm near Rednal. As explained in greater detail in Appendix 6.1 and 6.5 (**DCO Document 6.6.1** and **6.6.5**) this visual effect was not assessed as being a major visual effect and therefore the Proposed Development is not considered to materially harm residential amenity or living conditions.