

SP MANWEB

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network



Document Reference: 6.6.7
Environmental Statement Appendix 6.7
LVIA Scoping Opinion Responses

PINS Reference: EN020021
Regulation Reference: 5(2)(a)
November 2018

SP MANWEB

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

APPENDIX 6.7

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCOPING OPINION RESPONSES

Environmental Statement

DCO Document 6.6.7

November 2018

PINS Reference EN020021

This page is intentionally blank

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: Appendix 6.7 – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion Responses

Document Reference No.	6.6.7
Regulation No.	Regulation (5)(2)(a)
Author	Gillespies
Date	09 November 2018
Version	V1
Planning Inspectorate Reference No.	EN020021

This page is intentionally blank

APPENDIX 6.7: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT RESPONSE TO SCOPING OPINION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This section provides the response to the landscape and visual assessment comments raised by the Secretary of State (SoS) within the Scoping Opinion¹. The following table lists the issues raised by the SoS within the Scoping Opinion and how these have been addressed in the Environmental Statement (ES).

Table A6.6.1 – Issues Raised and Responses to the SoS Scoping Opinion		
Paragraph	Issue Raised by SoS	Response
Landscape		
3.30	The SoS notes that some of the matters discussed in this topic chapter in the Scoping Report relate to visual rather than landscape considerations. The SoS has commented on those matters under the ‘Visual’ section below.	Noted.
3.31	Reference is made to the landscape and visual assessment in respect of construction impacts at bullet point 3 at paragraph 7.7.31 of the Scoping Report. As the Report topic chapters differentiate between landscape and visual matters, they should be reflected accordingly in the topic chapters of the ES if the ES is structured in this way. The Applicant is referred to the SoS’s comments, made under ‘Environmental Statement Structure’ above, in relation to potentially combining the landscape and visual chapters in the ES.	The ES has combined the landscape and visual assessments within one chapter.
3.32	The SoS notes the proposed use of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment third edition (GLVIA3).	Noted.
3.33	The SoS notes the intention to use local Landscape Character Areas to determine the baseline situation. The Applicant should also give consideration to the effects on national landscape character areas.	The assessment of the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area (NCA 61) is presented in Appendix 6.2 (DCO Document 6.6.2) of the ES.
3.34	It is understood that the study areas as currently described are determined by the location of the overhead line, and no reference is made to the construction compounds, although it is acknowledged that the locations are yet to be	The study areas include the temporary laydown areas and the potential impacts have been assessed, as described in Paragraph 6.3.5 of Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.1).

¹ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN020021/EN020021-000012-Scoping%20Opinion.pdf>

Table A6.6.1 – Issues Raised and Responses to the SoS Scoping Opinion

Paragraph	Issue Raised by SoS	Response
	determined. Once known, these should be included in the study areas and any potential impacts assessed.	
3.35	Paragraph 7.7.42 of the Scoping Report refers to ‘temporary and permanent access arrangements’. Permanent access arrangements are not included in the Proposed Development description. This is of particular concern given the reference in paragraph 7.6.1 to the potential landscape impacts of access tracks ‘...across a grassy hillside or peat moor, creating a visible man-made mark on the landscape’. It is not made clear in the Scoping Report how this will be assessed. All likely significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development should be clearly identified and consistently assessed in all topic chapters.	There would be no new permanent access tracks.
3.36	Paragraph 7.5.12 identifies a number of designated and non-designated sites. It would be helpful if this information was provided on plans in the ES to aid understanding of the features in the area that contribute to landscape character.	This information is presented within Figure 6.4 ‘Landscape Receptors’ (DCO Document 6.14) and Figure 6.6 ‘Public Rights of Way and Areas of Open Access’ (DCO Document 6.14) of the ES.
3.37	The SoS welcomes consideration of how landscapes may alter in future in the absence of the Proposed Development. However, in doing so, the ES must clearly describe the baseline, the future baseline and the potential impacts of the Proposed Development.	The environmental baseline, future baseline and potential impacts are presented in Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6), Appendix 6.2 ‘Landscape Baseline, Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) Sheets and Assessment’ (DCO Document 6.6.2) and Appendix 6.3 ‘Visual Baseline, Viewpoint Sheets and Assessment’ (DCO Document 6.6.3) of this ES.
3.38	It is noted that the criteria for assessing landscape value and susceptibility to change refer to the Holford Rules (Scoping Report Tables 7.1 and 7.2). The SoS considers that it would also be of assistance if the ES contained a summary which directly explained how the Proposed Development accords with the Holford Rules.	Presented in Chapter 2 ‘Alternatives and Design Evolution’ (DCO Document 6.2).
3.39	The Secretary of State welcomes the intention to carry out an assessment of cumulative effects. The SoS recommends that the Applicant consults with Shropshire Council about which other developments should be included in the assessment.	Shropshire Council were consulted on 24 October 2017 and again in 26 February 2018. The Cumulative Effects Assessment is presented in Chapter 12 ‘Cumulative Effects’ (DCO Document 6.12) of the ES.

Table A6.6.1 – Issues Raised and Responses to the SoS Scoping Opinion		
Paragraph	Issue Raised by SoS	Response
3.40	The Applicant’s attention is drawn to the comments made by Natural England, contained in Appendix 3 of this Opinion, in respect of both landscape and visual matters.	Natural England’s comments are noted and have been fully considered within the landscape and visual assessment presented in Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6).
Visual		
3.41	The SoS notes that some of the matters discussed in this topic chapter in the Scoping Report relate to landscape rather than visual considerations. The SoS has commented on those matters under the ‘Landscape’ section above. The Applicant is referred to the SoS’s comments, made under ‘Environmental Statement Structure’ above, in relation to potentially combining the landscape and visual chapters in the ES.	The ES has combined the landscape and visual assessments within one chapter, Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6).
3.42	The SoS generally welcomes the approach to the assessment of visual effects described in this chapter of the Scoping Report, particularly the agreement on the groups of visual receptors and the choice of viewpoints with Shropshire Council.	Noted.
3.43	The Scoping Report identifies that the same 1km and 5km study areas are to be used for the landscape and the visual assessments. A number of references are made in the Landscape topic chapter to the study area, however it is not always clear whether the reference is to the 1km or the 5km study area. This should be explicit in the ES.	The study areas are defined in Section 6.3 of Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6) and illustrated on Figure 6.1 ‘LVIA Study Areas’ (DCO Document 6.14) of the ES.
3.44	The Landscape topic chapter of the Scoping Report explains the reasoning for defining a 1km and 5km study area from the proposed overhead line route (paragraphs 7.7.7 – 7.7.8). While the explanation for the choice of the 1km study area is understood by the SoS it is not clear why 5km is considered an adequate distance in which to capture long-distance views. The Applicant may find it helpful to refer to the zone of visual influence (ZVI) of the proposed development when defining the study area in the ES.	The study areas are defined in Section 6.3 of Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6) and illustrated on Figure 6.1 ‘LVIA Study Areas’ (DCO Document 6.14) of the ES.

Table A6.6.1 – Issues Raised and Responses to the SoS Scoping Opinion

Paragraph	Issue Raised by SoS	Response
3.45	The Scoping Report states at paragraph 8.7.4 that a computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) will not be used for the Proposed Development as it cannot take tree cover into account and would therefore produce a much larger zone of visibility than would result in reality. It is noted that an extensive field survey will be undertaken in its place. The SoS acknowledges that this is a legitimate approach; however, the ES must clearly explain how the likely extent of visibility of the project has been determined and provide the evidence used to support that. Ideally, the approach should be agreed with Shropshire Council.	The extent of visibility for the project was determined by site survey work as explained in Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6) and Appendix 6.3 ‘Visual Baseline, Viewpoint Sheets and Assessment’ (DCO Document 6.6.3) of this ES.
3.46	Paragraph 7.5.11 of the Landscape topic chapter notes that the nearest Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the Clwydian Range (Bryniau Clwyd), which is 8km northwest of the Proposed Development. The Applicant should ensure that the study area for this topic is sufficiently broad to encompass any AONBs (or other relevant features) which could be affected by the Proposed Development, or that the reasoning is provided in the ES for excluding any such features.	The Clwydian Range AONB will not be affected by the Proposed Development. The study areas are defined in Section 6.3 of Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6) and illustrated on Figure 6.1 ‘LVIA Study Areas’ (DCO Document 6.14) of the ES.
3.47	In addition to the study areas referred to above, paragraph 8.7.24 notes that a residential amenity assessment will be undertaken with a 200m study area either side of the overhead line. The study area should extend from the limits of deviation of the route corridor. This study area does not appear to be depicted on a plan. Such a plan would assist the reader, and it would also be helpful if the selected viewpoints were depicted, especially where particular exceptions have been made and the study area broadened.	The study areas do extend from the Order Limits and are all presented on Figure 6.1 ‘LVIA Study Areas’ (DCO Document 6.14). All viewpoints are presented on Figure 6.8 ‘Viewpoint Locations’ (DCO Document 6.14) and also on Figure 6.5 ‘Topography – Elevation’ (DCO Document 6.14).
3.48	It is noted that no lighting would be required for the operation of the line. In relation to impacts on landscape character, the Applicant should also consider potential night time impacts from the lighting, if required, of construction compounds.	No new construction compound is proposed and the temporary laydown areas will not have lighting.
3.49	The Secretary of State welcomes the information provided in the Scoping Report on the assessment of cumulative visual effects. The SoS recommends that the	Shropshire Council were consulted on 24 October 2017 and again in 26 February 2018. The Cumulative Effects Assessment is presented in Chapter 12 ‘Cumulative Effects’

Table A6.6.1 – Issues Raised and Responses to the SoS Scoping Opinion		
Paragraph	Issue Raised by SoS	Response
	Applicant consults with Shropshire Council about which other developments should be included in the assessment.	(DCO Document 6.12) of the ES.
3.50	The SoS recommends that the ES cross-refers to other relevant assessments and chapters in the ES such as, for example, in relation to the consideration of potential impacts of landscape mitigation on ecological receptors.	Where relevant cross-reference to other assessments has been included within the ES.
3.51	The Applicant’s attention is drawn to the comments of the Canal and River Trust, contained in Appendix 3 of this Opinion, particularly in respect of potential impacts on the Montgomery Canal and its structures.	All comments have been noted and considered, for instance impacts on the Montgomery Canal have been fully considered and three separate viewpoints and a verifiable photomontage were located on the canal path. Chapter 6 ‘Landscape and Visual’ (DCO Document 6.6) and its associated appendices present all potential landscape and visual impacts from the Proposed Development including on Montgomery Canal and its structures.