

# SP MANWEB



## **Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network**

Deadline 2 Submission

Application Reference: EN020021

**Agreed Statement of Common Ground between SP  
Manweb and Shropshire Council**

**SP MANWEB**

**Reinforcement to the North Shropshire  
Electricity Distribution Network**

**Statement of Common Ground  
Between SP Manweb PLC and Shropshire Council**

**April 2019  
PINS Reference EN020021**

**QA Box**

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<b>09/04/19</b>	<b>V4</b>		Revised document for discussion with Shropshire Council with further reference to LIR dated 29 March 2019
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of Document

- 1.1.1 This document is submitted to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate (as responsible agency) in relation to the application by SP Manweb Plc ("SP Manweb") for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") for the Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network ("Application"). The DCO would grant powers to construct, operate and maintain a new 22.5 kilometre 132,000 volt (132kV) connection between the existing Oswestry Substation and Wem Substation within the administrative boundary of Shropshire County.
- 1.1.2 This statement of common ground (SOCG) has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development. Guidance about the purpose and possible content of SOCGs is given in paragraphs 58-65 of the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Planning Act 2008: examination of applications for development consent" (March 2015). Paragraph 58, confirms the basic function of SOCGs:
- 'A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence.'*
- 1.1.3 SOCGs are a useful and established means of ensuring that the evidence at the post-application examination focuses on the material differences between the main parties, and so aim to help facilitate a more efficient examination process.

## **1.2 Parties to this SoCG**

- 1.2.1 This SOCG has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development, by SP Manweb, as the applicant and Shropshire Council.
- 1.2.2 To supply and distribute electricity within an area an operator is required to hold an Electricity Distribution Licence. SP Manweb, as the holder of a Distribution Licence for the Cheshire, Merseyside, Shropshire, North and Mid Wales areas and, as the Distribution Network Operator (or DNO) for these areas, must comply with various statutory and licence duties and obligations.
- 1.2.3 Shropshire Council is the relevant local authority of Shropshire (excluding Telford and Wrekin) in England.
- 1.2.4 Section 1.4 provides an overview of consultation to date between SP Manweb and Shropshire Council.
- 1.2.5 Section 1.5 provides a summary of the relevant documents that relate to the information considered in this SOCG.
- 1.2.6 Section 2 provides a summary of areas that have been agreed and areas that have not been agreed.
- 1.2.7 Section 3 provides a record of areas still under discussion.
- 1.2.8 This SOCG has been structured to reflect matters and topics of interest to Shropshire Council in relation to the Proposed Development. Shropshire Council is a party to this SOCG as the Relevant Local Authority and a Statutory and Interested Party for the purposes of the Application.
- 1.2.9 This SOCG relates to the following topics:
- The Proposed Development
  - Policy and Legislative Context
  - Content of the Environmental Statement (ES) being within Shropshire Council's remit:

- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Landscape and Visual
- Historic Environment
- Flood Risk and Water Quality
- Socio-economics and Tourism
- Traffic and Transport
- Emissions
- Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Content of the draft Development Consent Order

1.2.10 This SOCG sets out the matters agreed between the Parties and those that are still outstanding.

1.2.11 Throughout this SOCG:

1.2.12 The “Parties” for the purposes of this SOCG means SP Manweb and Shropshire Council.

1.2.13 Where a sentence begins “It is agreed”, this signifies a matter that has been specifically stated as agreed by SP Manweb and Shropshire Council.

1.2.14 Where a sentence begins “It is not agreed”, this signifies a matter that has been specifically stated as not agreed by SP Manweb and Shropshire Council.

1.2.15 Where a sentence begins “It is under discussion”, this signifies a matter is not yet agreed however is still under discussion by SP Manweb and Shropshire Council.



1.2.16 It is agreed that any matters not specifically mentioned in Section 2 and Section 3 of this SOCG are not of material interest or relevance to the Parties, and therefore have not been the subject of any discussions between the Parties.

1.2.17 Reference in this SOCG to DCO means the draft DCO as submitted.

### **1.3 Proposed Development**

1.3.1 The Proposed Development comprises a new 22.5 km 132kV electrical circuit between the existing SP Manweb Substations at Oswestry and Wem in North Shropshire, together with associated temporary construction works. The circuit would be a combination of underground cables and overhead line. Works are also required at the existing Oswestry and Wem Substations to accommodate the new circuit.

1.3.2 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.

1.3.3 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, one of which at Wem also includes a welfare unit and security cabin, and construction access tracks, vegetation clearance and reinstatement planting.



## 1.4 Consultation

- 1.4.1 Shropshire Council has provided feedback in response to both the non-statutory and statutory stages of consultation and how SP Manweb has had regard to these responses is set out in the Consultation Report (DCO Document 7.2). The statutory consultation feedback from Shropshire Council dated 13th February 2018 refers to the Council's support for the need and design of the proposed development, including the proposed route to the north of Noneley, the Preliminary Environmental Assessment Information and there being no significant matters identified on landscape, heritage, ecology, or access which cannot be mitigated, and that the consultation has been appropriate and followed the Statement of Community Consultation. A copy of the adequacy of the consultation letter is attached to this SOCG.
- 1.4.2 SP Manweb's response to Shropshire Council's comments raised at the statutory consultation stage have been informed by further discussions that it has had with the Council following the close of the consultation.
- 1.4.3 A summary of these further discussions following the statutory consultation that has taken place between SP Manweb ("SPM") and Shropshire Council ("SC") in relation to the Proposed Development is outlined in the table below.

<b>Table 1.1 – Further discussions between SP Manweb and Shropshire Council</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Form of contact or type of correspondence</b>	<b>Summary of that contact and key outcomes and points of discussion</b>
22/05/18	Email from SC to SPM	Confirm that SC has no comments to make to minor changes
16/06/18	Email from SC to SPM	Confirm draft requirements
31/07/18	Meeting Note from SPM to SC	Agreed draft requirements Agreed discharging requirements procedures
28/09/18	Email from SPM to SC	Revised traffic note including reference to construction accesses strategy of avoiding breaching hedgerows.
04/10/16	Email from SPM to	Proposed streetworks to be included in

	SC	Draft DCO Order Approach to traffic management
26/11/1	Letter from SC to Planning Inspectorate	Confirming SC's adequacy of consultation
21/02/19	Email from SPM to SC	Draft SOCG V1 for comment
08/03/19	Email from SPM to SC	Draft SOCG V2 for comment
25/03/19	Email from SPM to SC	Draft SOCG V3 for comment
09/04/19	Email from SPM to SC	Draft SOCG V4 for comment

1.4.4 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key correspondence between SP Manweb and Shropshire Council since the closing of the statutory consultation February 2018 in relation to the matters recorded in Section 2 and 3.

## 1.5 Documents considered within this SOCG

1.5.1 The following documents have been considered with this SOCG:

- Construction Report (**DCO Document 7.2**)
- Environmental Statement (**DCO Volume 6**)
- Updated Traffic and Transport Note (**DCO Document 6.1.1**)
- Noise and Air Quality Technical Note (**DCO Document 6.4.1**)
- Draft DCO (**DCO Document 3.1**)
- Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (**DCO Document 6.3.2**)
- Construction Access Location Plan (new DCO Document)

## 2 MATTERS AGREED AND MATTERS NOT AGREED

### 2.1 The Proposed Development

#### 2.1.1 Matters agreed

**Table 2.1 – Matters agreed**

Ref	Matters agreed
	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE that the Proposed Development is accurately described in Chapter 3 of the ES ( <b>DCO Document 6.2</b> ), Chapter 2 of the Planning Statement ( <b>DCO Document 7.1</b> ) and sections 1.1 of the Statement of Reasons ( <b>DCO Document 4.1</b> ).
	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of the Construction Report ( <b>DCO Document 7.2</b> ): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The need and design of the Proposed Development</li> <li>2. SPM's approach to construction including the use of construction accesses and measures to protect existing field boundary hedgerows, the approach to traffic management on the public highway, and the distribution of construction traffic from the construction compound to the construction sites and temporary laydown areas.</li> </ol>
	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the necessary diversions of existing lower voltage overhead lines are accurately described.</li> <li>b. SP Manweb has given consideration to the environmental effects of the works described above as part of the cumulative assessment undertaken for the Proposed Development. The conclusions of that assessment are agreed as being sound and robust.</li> </ol>

#### 2.1.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

## 2.2 Policy and Legislative Context

### 2.2.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE that Chapter 4 and 5 of the Planning Statement ( <b>DCO Document 7.1</b> ) and Chapter 5 of the ES ( <b>DCO Document 6.5</b> ) summarise the applicable development plan policies in respect of the application for development consent and that the Proposed Development is compliant with those policies.
	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE that the consultation detailed in the Consultation Report ( <b>DCO Document 5.1</b> ) was adequate and met the legislative requirements.

### 2.2.2 Matters not agreed

- b. None to report

## 2.3 Content of the ES

### Approach and methodology

#### 2.3.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
4	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of SP Manweb's approach and methodology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>);</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 4.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.4</b>))</li> <li>c) approach to deliverable mitigation (see section 4.6 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.4</b>)); and</li> <li>d) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> </ul>

#### 2.3.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

## 2.4 Ecology and Biodiversity

## 2.4.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
4	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of ecology and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for ecology and biodiversity impacts (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 7 (<b>DCO Document 6.7</b>));</li> <li>d) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 7.5 of the ES (<b>DCO Document 6.7</b>))</li> <li>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 7.6 (<b>DCO Document 6.7</b>) and 7.7(<b>DCO Document 6.7</b>) of the ES);</li> <li>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 7.8 of the ES (<b>DCO Document 6.7</b>)); and</li> <li>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> <li>f) specifically in respect of the following as noted in an email from Shropshire Council dated 24th April 2019 SPM will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) supplement pre-construction surveys referred to in the draft CEMP with undertaking advanced climbing tree surveys of trees with moderate or high bat roost potential and submit the results to the Examination together with any necessary avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures and an assessment of the need for a EPS mitigation licence if bat roosts are found,</li> <li>ii) confirm GIS positioning of veteran trees affected and review micro-siting of poles with proposed LOD limits to avoid where possible</li> </ul> </li> <li>g) include additional woodland planting areas to a level agreed in the draft Habitat Improvement Strategy, a copy of which is appended to this SoCG in Annex A. There will be further consultation between SP Manweb and Shropshire Council to formally agree the final version of the Habitat Improvement Strategy.</li> </ul>

2.4.2 Matters not agreed

- b. None to report

## 2.5 Landscape and Visual

### 2.5.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
7	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of landscape and visual impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for landscape and visual impacts (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 6 (<b>DCO Document 6.6</b>));</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 6.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.6</b>))</li> <li>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 6.6 (<b>DCO document 6.6</b>) and 6.7(<b>DCO document 6.6</b>) of the ES);</li> <li>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 6.8 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.6</b>)); and</li> <li>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> </ul>

### 2.5.2 Matters not agreed

a. None to report

## 2.6 Historic Environment

### 2.6.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
9	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of historic environment impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for historic environment (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 8 (<b>DCO Document 6.8</b>));</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 8.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.8</b>))</li> <li>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 8.6 (<b>DCO document 6.8</b>) and 8.7(<b>DCO document 6.8</b>) of the ES);</li> <li>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 8.8 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.8</b>)); and</li> <li>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> </ul>



2.6.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

## 2.7 Flood Risk and Water Quality

### 2.7.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
12	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of flood risk and water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for flood risk and water quality (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 9 (<b>DCO Document 6.9</b>));</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 9.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.9</b>))</li> <li>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 9.6 (<b>DCO document 6.9</b>) and 9.7(<b>DCO document 6.9</b>) of the ES);</li> <li>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 9.8 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.9</b>)); and</li> <li>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> </ul>

### 2.7.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

## 2.8 Socio-economic and Tourism

### 2.8.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
14	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of socio-economic and tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for socio-economic and tourism (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 10 (<b>DCO Document 6.10</b>));</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 10.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.10</b>))</li> <li>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 10.6 (<b>DCO document 6.10</b>) and 10.7(<b>DCO document 6.10</b>) of the ES);</li> <li>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 10.8 of the ES (<b>DCO</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>document 6.10)); and</b>                  e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</p>
	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE that the assessment of the effect of the Proposed Development on the Public Right of Way was appropriate and the conclusions in respect of the level of significance of effect was acceptable.</p>

2.8.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

## 2.9 Traffic and Transport

### 2.9.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
14	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of the Traffic and Transport Note (<b>DCO Document 6.1.1</b>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Levels of construction traffic would have no significant adverse impact on traffic using the local highway network</li> <li>2. Proposed use of construction traffic routes would not require works to the local public highway or to travel through Wem</li> <li>3. That construction traffic can be scoped out for the Proposed Development during construction</li> <li>4. No outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> <li>5. That the Construction Accesses Location Plan adequately shows the construction access locations where construction access is to be taken from the public highway as submitted as a separate DCO Document in Deadline 1.</li> </ol>

### 2.9.2 Matters not agreed

#### a. None to report

## 2.10 Emissions

### 2.10.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
15	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of the Noise and Air Quality Note (<b>DCO Document 6.4.1</b>)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The effects on air quality during construction would not potential for significant effects</li> <li>b) The effects on noise during construction would not potential for significant effects</li> </ol>
16	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of emissions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the baseline;</li> <li>b) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for emissions;</li> <li>c) conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively);</li> <li>d) mitigation; and</li> <li>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue</li> </ol>

	specific hearing.
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2.10.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**2.11 The Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan**

2.11.2 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	<p>SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect of the Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measures to manage noise and air quality within acceptable standards</li> <li>2. Specifically regarding noise at Wem Substation, to note measures in draft CEMP to include monitoring in the event of noise complaints received with associated noise attenuation to be agreed if required</li> <li>3. Measures for managing local public highway and public rights of way during construction</li> <li>4. Measures for managing trees and hedgerows removals and reinstatements</li> <li>5. Draft Traffic Management Plan is amended as follows:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The draft TMP will include details of types and timings of delivery vehicles</li> <li>ii) The draft TMP will include details of the proposed vehicles and timings of delivery and how construction traffic will be managed to avoid impacts on local communities</li> <li>iii) The draft TMP reference to improvement to construction access points is an error and will be amended to delete reference to improvements such that it is the use of the access that requires temporary traffic management</li> <li>iv) The draft TMP will include a programme of works to ensure there is no conflict between other works taking place on the highway nearby, road closures or major events</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## 2.11.3 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**2.12 Content of the draft Development Consent Order**

## 2.12.2 Matters agreed

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Matters agreed</b>
1	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following in respect to the draft DCO: a) The draft requirements in Schedule 6 b) The approach to discharging requirements in Schedule 7
2	SP Manweb and Shropshire Council AGREE the following specific matters in respect to the draft DCO as amended: c) Article 9 (3) d) Article 11 (3) e) Article 37 f) Schedule 3 as amended with reference included to the individual ARoW sheet nos. in relation to the street works listed

## 2.12.3 Matters not agreed

- b. None to report

**3. RECORD OF MATTERS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION**

3.4.2 There are no other matters under discussion between SP Manweb and Shropshire Council.

<b>Table 3.1 – Current discussions</b>			
<b>Ref</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>SP Manweb response</b>	<b>Shropshire Council response</b>

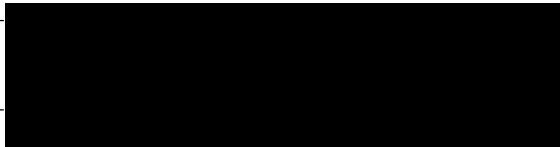


**4. AGREEMENT ON THIS SOCG**

**This Statement of Common Ground has been jointly prepared and agreed by:**

**Name:** Steven Edwards

**Signature:**



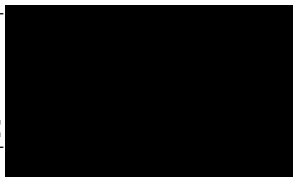
**Position:** Senior Environmental Planner

**On behalf of:** SP Manweb Plc

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019

**Name:** Ian Kilby

**Signature:**



**Position:** Planning Services Manager

**On behalf of:** Shropshire Council

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019



**Shropshire**  
Wildlife Trust

Habitat Improvement Scheme

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# Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

## Outline Habitat Improvement Scheme

February 2019

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 This Outline Habitat Improvement Scheme relates to SP Manweb's proposals to install a new 22.5 kilometre 132,000 Volt (132kV) circuit from the existing Oswestry Substation to Wem Substation within the administrative boundary of Shropshire County. This is referred to as the Proposed Development.

1.1.2 The Scheme outlines a targeted enhancement project to be delivered in partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) and builds on SP Manweb working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) as corporate partners for more than 30 years. The partnership recognises that in order to halt biodiversity loss and introduce more people to experiences with nature, it is vital to work with a broad range of partners on a variety of initiatives. This strategy will be further refined by SWT in collaboration with SP Manweb as part of a detailed implementation plan.

1.1.3 The Scheme allies with national initiatives on biodiversity and the environment, including the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, (NPPF2)<sup>1</sup>, the National Pollinator Strategy<sup>2</sup> and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan 'Our Green Future'<sup>3</sup>, delivering net biodiversity gain.

1.1.4 The Scheme builds on similar improvement schemes brought forward by SP

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-2014-to-2024-implementation-plan>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>



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**Manweb.** In 2014, SP Manweb funded SWT to deliver a 15 month survey and monitoring project linked to the nationally-important Meres & Mosses Nature Improvement Area programme and their Legacy-Oswestry line upgrade. Following progress to the next stage of infrastructure development in this area, the reinforcement to the North Shropshire electricity distribution network, SP Manweb has once again approached Shropshire Wildlife Trust to deliver associated environmentally-beneficial works. SP Manweb and SWT, along with other partners as appropriate, will work together as part of this Habitat Improvement Scheme to deliver a variety of biodiversity initiatives allied with the Proposed Development; including targeting key invertebrate and mammal species in Shropshire through data gathering and practical habitat enhancements.

- 1.1.5 The Proposed Development has made the retention and protection of hedgerows one of the key elements of the evolving design, recognising their importance for biodiversity and habitat connectivity, and as key features in the landscape. During the construction phase, a number of accesses are required across agricultural land. These have been specifically routed (and extended in places) to avoid the need to cross or remove sections of hedgerow, instead utilising existing gaps or field entrances. As a result of this strategic approach to the design, hedgerow losses along the 22.5 km proposed route are negligible.

## **1.2 PRIORITIES FOR HABITAT IMPROVEMENT – MAKING CONNECTIONS**

- 1.2.1 Habitat loss and, importantly, the loss of connectivity between remaining habitats and populations of threatened species is a key biodiversity concern. SP Manweb believes that significant infrastructure projects such as this provide an opportunity to deliver real biodiversity benefits through strengthening habitat and species connection.



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- 1.2.2 In addition to the measures taken to protect habitats and species during construction of the power line, SP Manweb and SWT in March 2018 agreed to develop a habitat connectivity project focusing on the obvious links between improving the connectivity of the power supply and the benefits of enhancing ecological networks and connectivity. This has been refined in consultation with the Environment Agency's Biodiversity Advisor.
- 1.2.3 Habitat connectivity in the landscape has been gradually lost with the intensification of agriculture and, to some extent, commercial development, such that many habitats of value to threatened, rare or notable species become increasingly isolated from one another, thereby endangering the future viability of local populations of such species. Good links between habitats (both aquatic and terrestrial) allows species to disperse more easily between locations, making them more resilient to localised (e.g. flash flooding) and landscape-scale (e.g. climate change) disturbance.
- 1.2.4 In addition to the above, individual species can also benefit from more 'macro-level' connectivity interventions. The habitat improvement scheme to be delivered by the collaborative partnership between SP Energy Networks and SWT in consultation with the Environment Agency will deliver habitat connectivity improvements for Nationally Significant Invertebrates and enhanced water vole and otter habitat, while also helping to support biodiversity research and educational initiatives. Through discussing the strategy with Shropshire Council, the strategy also proposes to include woodland management.
- 1.2.5 The proposed project area is generally focused on a 2.5km buffer area around the route of the Proposed Development, however enhancement works may extend beyond this where opportunities arise to collaborate with landowners in the wider area.



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## 2 SP MANWEB'S OUTLINE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

### 2.1 THE NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INVERTEBRATES PROJECT – A NEW 'NSIP FROM NSIP' INITIATIVE

- 2.1.1 The UK and its diverse habitats support nearly 40,000 invertebrate species. They are vital to our lives, underpinning the ecosystem services which provide us with food, fertile soils and clean water, and the wildlife-rich habitats which we all enjoy. However, invertebrates are declining in response to widespread habitat loss and fragmentation, urbanisation, changing agricultural and land management practices, environmental pollution, non-native invasive species and many other factors. SP Manweb in collaboration with SWT has identified opportunities for implementing the Nationally Significant Invertebrate Project, including significant places for the conservation of invertebrates and the habitats upon which they rely. This simple and collaborative approach is one that has potential to be incorporated into other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects right across the UK; effectively combining NSIPs with NSIPs.
- 2.1.2 SP Manweb's Nationally Significant Invertebrates Project has used the important invertebrate list and Important Invertebrate Areas map developed by Buglife as a focus. These Areas have been selected where they support a nationally significant assemblage of species or support an endangered species. The North Shropshire Reinforcement Project lies adjacent to the 'North East Wales Important Invertebrate Area'<sup>4</sup> and hence the Habitat Improvement Scheme will gather important additional information and help

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.buglife.org.uk/important-invertebrate-areas-0>

deliver habitat gains best suited to target threatened and endangered invertebrate species.

2.1.3 Analysis of existing species records produced a list of 13 nationally significant invertebrate species that have been recorded in that area within the last 15 years. This was refined to a shortlist of 6 species which could benefit from increased survey attention and also from practical interventions in the landscape. These species are:

- the water beetle *Acilius canaliculatus*
- beetle species *Anaglyptus mysticus*
- bee species *Andrena apicata*
- bee species *Bombus rupestris*
- moth species *Stathmopoda pedella*
- crane fly *Tipula peliostigma*



*Acilius canaliculatus*



*Anaglyptus mysticus*





*Andrena apicata*



*Bombus rupestris*

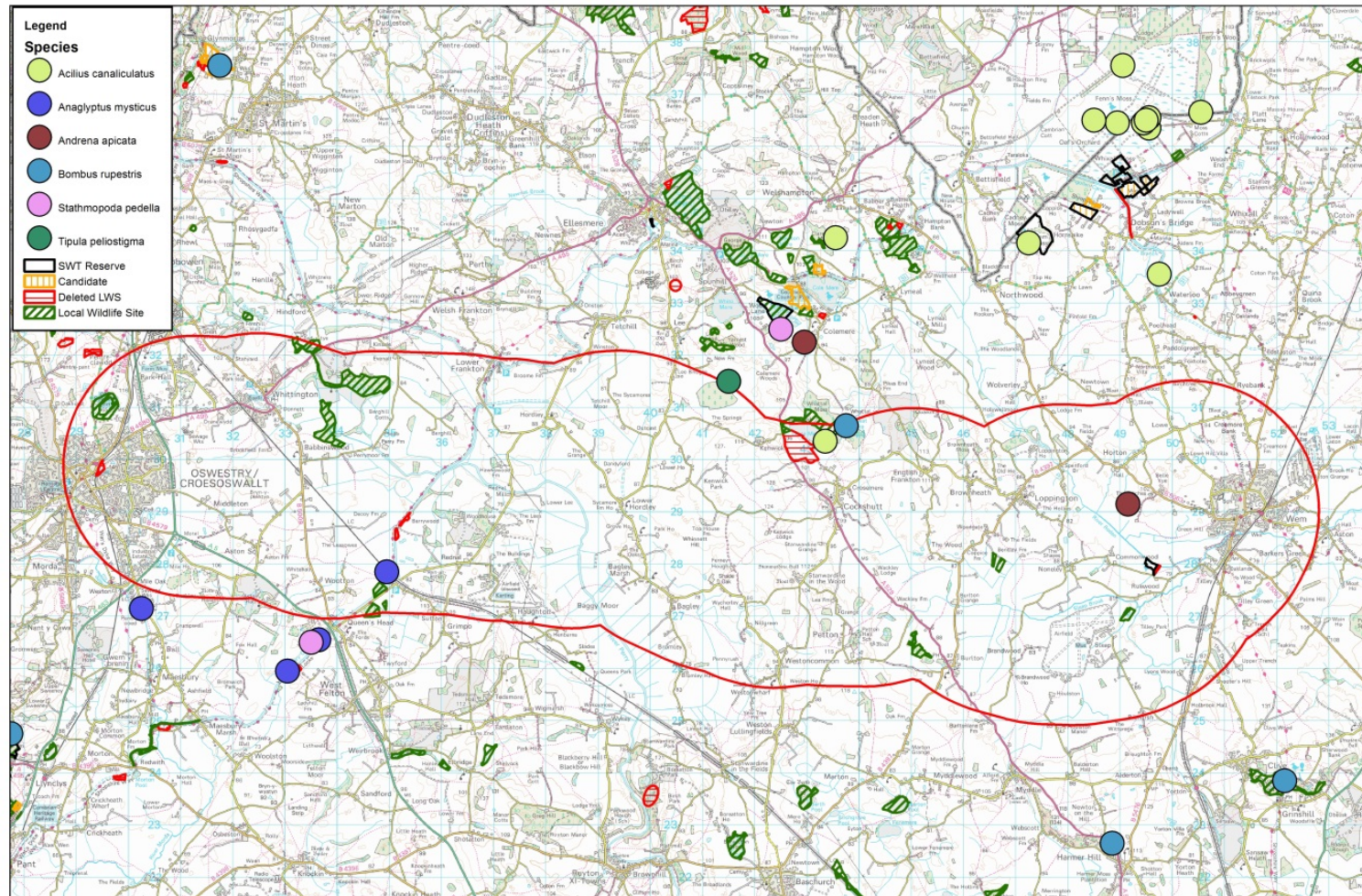


*Stathmopoda pedella*



*Tipula peliostigma*





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Top 6 Species, LWS and SWT Reserves

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- 2.1.4 One of the proposed target species, the beetle *Anaglyptus mysticus* requires deadwood (ideally in hedgerow bottoms) to complete its life cycle, whilst the larvae of the moth *Stathmopoda pedella* feed exclusively on alder. ‘Macro-level’ interventions through this project could therefore include management plans for landowners that allow for the retention of deadwood and/or planting of alder where appropriate to benefit both of these target species whilst also looking at generally improving the habitat along and adjacent to hedgerows (e.g. the retention of grass buffer strips) to simultaneously benefit a wider range of species.
- 2.1.5 The project will focus on education and research alongside practical habitat management and enhancement measures designed to benefit these target invertebrate species, while also delivering wider biodiversity benefits in this part of Shropshire.
- 2.1.6 The key measures will include (but are not limited to):

*Hedgerow planting and restoration*

Hedgerow restoration (e.g. hedgelaying), hedgerow planting (including complete reinstatement and ‘gapping’ up) and hedgerow management plans (e.g. retention of deadwood) will be beneficial to link habitats and species populations with strengthened connectivity in the landscape. These interventions will benefit both the target beetle species *Anaglyptus mysticus* as well as the two target bee species *Andrena apicata* and *Bombus rupestris* where flowering shrubs such as hawthorn and fruit trees are included in hedgerow planting. These measures complement the approach to the construction of the Proposed Development, which has actively sought to avoid habitat loss or fragmentation by extending accesses to pass around rather than through hedgerows.

*Pond and ditch creation and restoration*

Through a review of existing information, further field survey and consultation with landowners, locations where pond restoration and

management or new pond creation could benefit the water beetle *Acilius canaliculatus*, will be identified. This will also benefit water voles, amphibians and aquatic plant diversity for the area.

#### *Wetland creation*

Works aimed at increasing the amount of wetland (e.g. wet grassland) in the project area will create more breeding areas for the target crane fly *Tipula peliostigma*. These will be especially targeted at parts of the project area close to where this species has previously been recorded. Wetland creation will also benefit wading birds.

#### *Wildflower meadow creation*

The project will encourage wildflower meadow creation, including pollinator options for agri-environment schemes. Increasing the amount of wildflower-rich habitat in the project area will create more foraging habitat for invertebrates in general and specifically for the two target bee species *Andrena apicata* and *Bombus rupestris*, also encouraging pollinator species.

#### *Target food plant reintroduction*

With the support of landowners, locations with appropriate ground conditions will be identified where alder *Alnus glutinosa* can be planted. This native tree species benefits the target moth species *Stathmopoda pedella*.

## 2.2 WATER VOLE AND OTTER HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS

- 2.2.1 North Shropshire is recognised as a stronghold for water voles which, like otter, rely upon suitable connected habitat to disperse and thrive. The key measures involved in this Scheme, namely gathering baseline survey data and targeted works to enhance habitat connectivity and create and restore ponds and ditches will also be employed to benefit water voles and otters.
- 2.2.2 Work will be undertaken to gather valuable data to better understand the distribution of otters and water voles in the area, and to identify the local barriers to successful breeding and dispersal in collaboration with the



Environment Agency who hold valuable species data. This information will be used to guide practical watercourse and wetland habitat improvements by SWT in collaboration with landowners and the Environment Agency, such as:

- installing coir rolls on ‘engineered’ watercourse banks where habitat suitability is low;
- creating artificial holts and installing fencing to provide undisturbed bankside areas for otters, and other wildlife;
- carrying out selective scrub removal to open up overgrown and heavily shaded banks, enhancing habitat connectivity along watercourses and removing obstacles to water vole dispersal;
- fencing banks and providing substitute water supplies to keep stock away from the watercourse and protect bank stability; and
- creation of new ponds designed for water vole and linking them to watercourses via ditches and hedgerows, thereby diversifying the network of connected habitats.

## 2.3 WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

2.3.1 Woodland management can be provided through SWT’s project officer(s) on the ground promoting woodland creation to landowners at the same time as the targets already submitted for those projects. From STW’s experience of working on landowner advice projects such as this, there would be interest from some landowners to take up this offer over more than 0.5ha of planting opportunities. In addition, SP Manweb will continue to work with landowners as part of voluntary land agreements to agree sites for additional planting. As a fall back, STW’s recent purchase of the land at Fenn’s Scrapyrd just under 4 miles to the east of Wem at the Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses National Nature Reserve provides a substantial parcel of land on which to deliver the planting if needed.

### 3 DELIVERY PLAN

- 3.1.1 Delivery of this strategy will be via funding from the North Shropshire Reinforcement project to SWT. SP Manweb and SWT are currently working together to develop the outline strategy into a deliverable management plan with funding and programme details. Working with landowners in the project area, SWT will design and deliver a targeted programme to establish an accurate baseline for these target species, using the highly experienced network of recorders in Shropshire (with whom SWT have a strong relationship), the existing data framework provided by the Shropshire Ecological Data Network (SEDN)<sup>5</sup>, along with additional field surveys where required. This baseline will help to inform the habitat management and enhancement initiatives described above.
- 3.1.2 This baseline will contribute to wider understanding of these species in this part of Shropshire and contribute to ongoing research and educational work. It will also help direct habitat management and enhancement measures to those locations where they will have the greatest benefits.
- 3.1.3 Results and learning points from the Scheme will be shared with key partners including Natural England, Environment Agency and Shropshire Council to help ensure that benefits derived can be sustained through mechanisms, such as agri-environment scheme and Water Framework Directive targeted funding. SWT will also present the results of this project to the Local Nature Partnership and a written report will be produced and circulated. Wider opportunities for other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects seeking to deliver strategic net biodiversity gain for nationally significant invertebrates will also be shared by SP Manweb.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.shropshireecology.co.uk>