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Our Ref: ETM404-FC

21st June 2023

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Dear Sir / Madam

The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017
Request for a Screening Opinion
11kV (11,000 Volt) Network Improvement Scheme

Southern Electric Power Distribution Plc (SEPD) are proposing to supplement a third conductor to an additional Two wire high voltage network, across the total of Two spans involving Three poles on its (WGRV) E4L5 11KV circuit as detailed herein and shown on the attached plans (accompanying Form B). This work has been requested from one of our customers for a larger electricity supply at Sturmy House, Savernake Road, Durley, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3AZ.

The adding of the additional wire will fall under Schedule 2 as it will be installed above ground in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)- **impact zone only**. The installation of which (or the keeping installed of which) will require a Section 37 consent but is not Schedule 1 development. Please accept this as a formal request for a screening opinion from the DBEIS / Local Planning Authority regarding our proposals.

Construction

The supplementing of one (1) more additional conductor to be positioned in between the existing Two wires already in situ. With 6 (6) personnel working on the proposed works for no more than 3 days to complete. Interruptions to electricity supplies will be kept to a minimum during this time using generation where suitable. Full consultation will be undertaken with the landowners/occupiers and those with an interest in the land to agree the practicalities of replacing (if required) and construction of an additional wood pole(s), the access thereto and any specific conditions which require to be taken into account.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks is a trading name of: Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution Limited Registered in Scotland No. SC213459; Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213461; Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213460; (all having their Registered Offices at Inveralmond House 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ); and Southern Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in England & Wales No. 04094290 having its Registered Office at No.1 Forbury Place, 43 Forbury Road, Reading, RG1 3JH which are members of the SSE Group www.ssen.co.uk

Environmental Effects and Landscape

The area of the upgrading on the 11kV line are located within a UK designated site – AONB, North Wessex Downs reference number 27, it also falls within the Savernake Forest SSSI impact zone, reference number-1000884. All efforts off mitigation will be employed to protect the designated area as much as possible always keeping damage to a minimum. The additional conductor will be of a construction equivalent to those already in place and will occupy itself in-between the Two already existing position within the landscape.

Population

The additional proposed conductor on this section of overhead network will reinforce the electricity supplies for the customers in the area and the wider network. Care will be taken to install equipment sympathetically keeping mind the practical need to maintain electricity supplies and the need to improve the overall impact on the area. It is not expected that the additional conductor will have any direct impact on the local population other than the presence of our construction teams for the duration of the works. Every endeavor will be made to ensure that disturbance to the working of the land and other economic activity is minimised.

Flora & Fauna

All landowners of the affected properties (route of works) will be consulted about the scheme and until written permissions are in place that ensure they are willing to grant Assent for the works, no works will proceed. The area of the proposed works does fall just outside a middle tier countryside stewardship scheme and every effort will be made with the landowner to find the exact areas of the scheme to ensure we will avoid the area completely. We are happy to work with all landowners and/or Tennants to accommodate as reasonably as possible their requirements and in this regard have agreed specific timings and access routes to minimize disturbance to the aforementioned features. Should any amendment to the method statement for these works be necessary we will maintain an open dialogue with all parties to enable them to make further comment on our proposals.

Should the time of year of when the proposed works are planned to happen fall within nesting bird season then prior checks will be made before any vehicles or work personnel are scheduled to attend the site. Such checks will include the woodland areas to the West of Savernake Road and the entire field of the conductor route if the current crop would suggest nesting birds could be plausible.

Soil

Low ground pressure vehicles such as tracked excavators and Unimogs with pressure adjusting tyres will be used during the works and access will be affected along routes previously agreed with landowners/occupiers to ensure there is minimum disturbance. Existing tracks and access gates will be used wherever possible.

Water

There are not anticipated to be any effects on water courses as a result of these wood pole replacements.

Air and Climatic Factors

The overhead line will have no direct effects on air quality or climatic factors.

Material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage

Review has been undertaken of the proposed area and no Scheduled Monuments have been identified in proximity to our work. Further consultation will be undertaken with the Wiltshire Council prior to the S.37

Consent application being submitted to DBEIS to ensure there are no other known archaeological deposits in proximity to our works which need to be mitigated for.

Landscape

The habitat type is principally arable and grassland. The site has several narrow woodland fringes predominantly for boundary purposes made of principally deciduous trees with a small woodland to the West of the area of works. The soil type in the area varies from shallow lime rich soils to freely draining chalk and limestone, through herb rich downlands and limestone pastures. The site itself is on an East facing slope looking across the fields towards Savernake Road the conductor will be supplemented too.

It is our view that due to the characteristics, location and potential impact of the additional conductor that this does not constitute an EIA development and therefore will not need to be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment. The planning given to this scheme to date along with the consultation afforded to stakeholders means that the works will be undertaken in such a way that the impact of the works on the designated features will be kept to a minimum.

A Form B and accompanying plan of the selected locations of work have also been sent to Wiltshire Council for consideration alongside this EIA Screening Opinion.

I look forward to receiving your comments in due course and confirmation that you are in agreement that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required for this scheme.

Yours faithfully

Farrell Copp
Land Consents officer