Hagshaw Energy Cluster – Western Expansion Grid Connection

Consultation Report

11 September 2024

Land & Planning

Prepared for:

SP Energy Networks

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMF	Electro and Magnetic Fields
km	Kilometre
kV	Kilovolt
OHL	Overhead line
SPEN	Scottish Power Energy Networks
SPT	Scottish Power Transmission Plc
VCR	Virtual Consultation Room

1. Introduction

1.1 Document Purpose

Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) proposes to construct the Hagshaw Energy Cluster – Western Expansion Grid Connection (the '**Proposed Development'**) in the Douglas Valley, which will be approximately 23 kilometres (km) in length. The project will comprise a new double circuit, 132 kilovolt (kV) overhead line (OHL) supported by wood poles.

The Proposed Development will connect a proposed mixed renewable energy development called the 'Hagshaw Energy Cluster – Western Expansion (HECWE) Renewable Development' to the electricity transmission system at the proposed Redshaw Substation, South Lanarkshire. The point of connection at the HECWE Renewable Development is located approximately 2.5 km north-east of Muirkirk and approximately 16 km north-east of Cumnock, East Ayrshire.

This Consultation Report includes a summary of the Round One consultation events undertaken to engage with local communities, as well as consultation feedback received. The consultation period ran from 4th June to the 3rd July 2024 and included two public consultation events, as well as a virtual consultation room. Round One consultation related to the process of routeing and the identification of a preferred route option for the OHL. This Consultation Report should be read in conjunction with the Routeing and Consultation Document[1] which sets out the approach to routeing and the findings of the options appraisal work undertaken. A subsequent round of consultation, Round Two, will take place in due course to engage the community on the preliminary route alignment and feedback on the Round One consultation responses received.

1.2 Project Background and Need

SPEN are legally obliged under the Electricity Act 1989, as amended (hereafter '**the Act**'), to provide grid connections to new electricity generating developments and have been approached by the developer for the HECWE Renewable Development to provide a grid connection to the wider electricity transmission network.

Scottish Power Transmission Plc (SPT) is required under the Act and under the terms of its Electricity Supply Licence "*to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission*". Acting on behalf of SPT, SPEN's stated view is that wherever practical, an OHL approach is taken when planning and designing new lines.

As a result, SPEN are proposing to construct a new 132 kV OHL between the HECWE Renewable Development and Redshaw Substation.

[1] Routeing and Consultation Document is available on the project website: https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Spirebush-WF-Grid-Connection_RC-Update_310524.pdf

To note, the title of the Proposed Development has changed from ‘Spirebush Grid Connection’ to the ‘Hagshaw Energy Cluster – Western Expansion Grid Connection’ since the Round One consultation events to mirror the name change of the HECWE Renewable Development.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The remaining sections of this report are structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the overall SPEN approach to routeing;
- Section 3 describes the comments made by stakeholders during the Round One consultation period between June and July 2024 and SPEN’s response to this feedback;
- Section 4 analyses the feedback received from the consultation and explains how this has been incorporated into the development design; and
- Section 5 provides an overview of the development to date and the Section 37 application process.

2. SPEN's Approach to Routeing

2.1 Overview of the Routeing Process

In 2015, as part of a wider industry review involving Government and the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, SPEN reviewed its approach to routeing. This review concluded that the requirement to balance statutory duties and licence obligations comprising economic, technical and environmental factors continues to support the development of an OHL in most circumstances. However, SPEN also concluded that there are certain circumstances in which development of an underground cable should be considered.

SPEN undertook a further review of their approach in 2020 as part of the process to prepare their RIIO-T2[2] Business Plan which reaffirmed these conclusions. As part of the review, SPEN consulted on and published an updated version of 'Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment'[3] which describes their general approach to routeing new electricity transmission infrastructure.

The basic premise of the approach set out by SPEN is that the main effect of an OHL is visual, and that the degree of visual impact can be reduced by careful routeing; for example, by using topography and trees to provide screening and / or background to the OHL and by routeing the OHL at a distance from settlements and roads. In addition, OHL routeing takes into account other environmental and technical considerations and will avoid, wherever possible, the most sensitive and valued natural and man-made features.

2.2 Routeing Strategy Methodology

2.2.1 Overview

The approach to identifying and assessing alternative route options for the grid connection is illustrated below in Figure 2.1. It follows SPEN's approach and draws upon established practice ensuring that the route selection is robust and transparent. It is a systematic and iterative approach in which an increasing level of detail is applied at each step, concluding with the identification of a preferred route option to be subject to consultation.

There are initially three key activities: firstly, defining a routeing strategy specific to the grid connection through steps 1 to 3; secondly applying the routeing strategy in steps 4 to 6 to identify a preferred route option; and then, consulting on the preferred route option through steps 7 to 9. Steps 4 to 9 ensure that

[2] RIIO-T2 is the current price control and runs from April 2021 to March 2026. RIIO stands for 'Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs'. It is a framework used by Ofgem to ensure that network companies, such as SPEN, provide a safe and reliable service, value for money, maximise performance, operate efficiently, innovate and ensure the resilience of their networks for current and future customers.

[3] https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/SPEN_Approach_to_Routeing_Document_2nd_version.pdf

route options are tested and refined, taking account of the routeing strategy, as well as feedback received from consultation with key statutory stakeholders.

Following these three initial routeing activities, a route alignment is established, which is used as a basis for more detailed environmental assessment (including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) if required (step 10)), and a second round of consultation is undertaken (see Section 4 'Project Development and Next Steps').

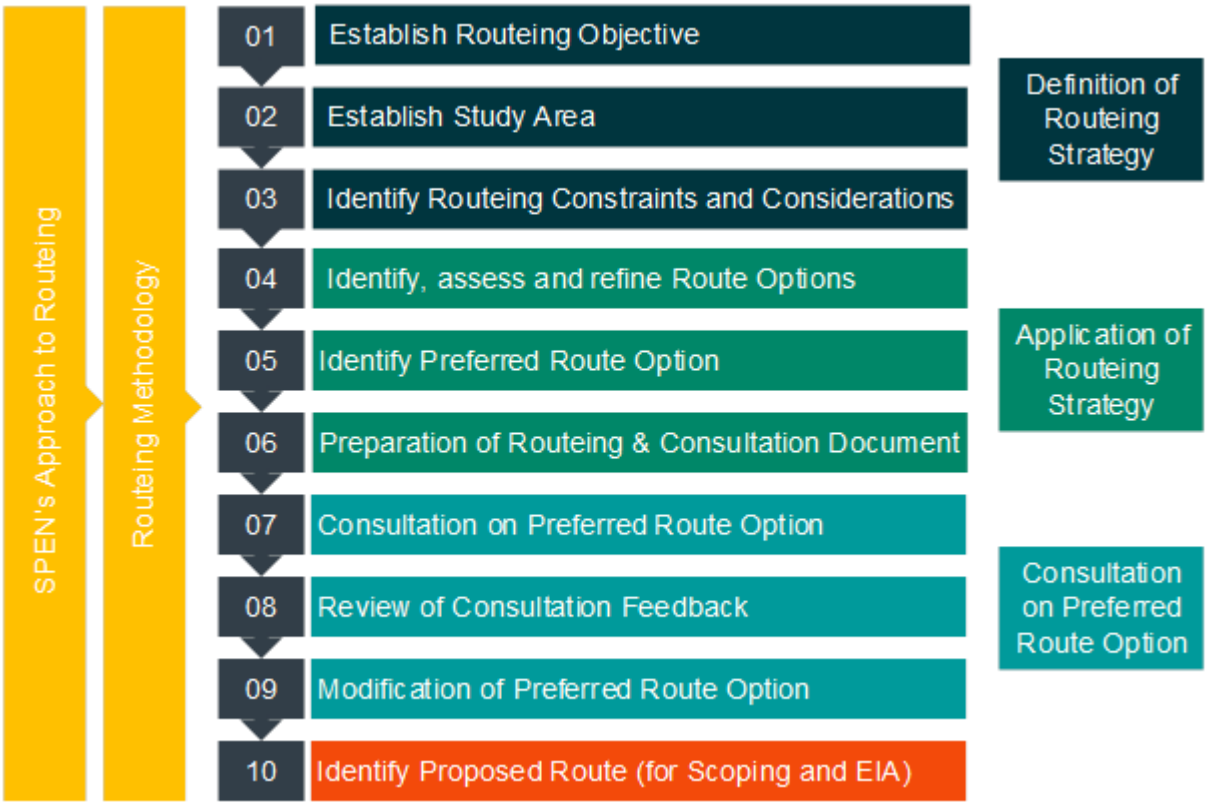

Figure 2.1. Routeing Methodology

2.2.2 Routeing Objective

The objective of the route selection process is to identify a technically feasible and economically viable double circuit 132 kV OHL route, supported on wood poles, between the HECWE Renewable Development and Redshaw Substation. This route must, on balance, cause least disturbance to the environment of the study area and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.

2.2.3 Established Practice for OHL Routeing

In 1959, Lord Holford, then advisor to the Central Electricity Generating Board, developed a series of guidelines with regard to the routeing of high voltage OHLs which have subsequently become known as the "Holford Rules" ('**the Rules**'). It is generally accepted across the industry that the Rules should continue to inform the routeing of high voltage OHLs.

The basic premise of SPEN's general approach draws on the Rules, including avoidance of areas of highest or high amenity value where possible, as well as consideration of landform, topography, and vegetation, in order to reduce landscape and visual effects.

2.2.4 Routeing Considerations

OHLs are linear elements in the landscape. They are likely to affect, to varying degrees, visual and other environmental aspects of the area through which they run. This part of the process predominantly comprises information gathering and consideration of potential effects.

The initial stage is to determine a study area and gather baseline information within this area through desk-based studies, site visits, and consultations to identify potential constraints to, and opportunities for, routeing.

To define a route that meets the requirements of the Act, a balance must be struck between three sets of considerations:

- Economic;
- Technical; and
- Environmental.

In compliance with Schedule 9 of the Act, the routeing objective requires the proposed connection to be economical. This is interpreted by SPEN as meaning that as far as possible, and all other things being equal, the connections should be as direct as possible. Additionally, the route should avoid areas where technical difficulty, such as altitude, slope angle, existing infrastructure and large water bodies or compensatory schemes, would render the connection uneconomical. These technical considerations are not absolute constraints but are a guide to routeing.

2.2.5 Environmental Considerations

Statutory duties imposed by Schedule 9 of the Act require licence holders to seek to preserve features of natural and cultural heritage interest and mitigate any adverse effects which a development may have where possible. Experience across the electricity industry shows that an overhead transmission line is likely to affect to varying degrees the following:

- Landscape and visual amenity;
- Ecology, ornithology and nature conservation;
- Geology, hydrogeology and hydrology;
- Cultural heritage; and
- Forestry and woodland.

Other considerations which may affect routeing to a greater or lesser degree include:

- Planning allocations and major applications;
- Noise;
- Traffic (including access for construction);
- Land use; and
- Socio-economics (tourism and recreation).

2.3 Study Area and Routeing Considerations

2.3.1 Study Area

The extents of the study area have been informed by a combination of desk and field-based analysis, coupled with an understanding of the need to balance potential adverse environmental effects with technical feasibility and economic viability.

The study area has largely been defined by the location of the HECWE Renewable Development to the west and the length of the route (approximately 23 km) to Redshaw Substation to the east. The study area lies within the Local Authority areas of East Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire.

2.3.2 Key Routeing Considerations

Key routeing considerations are those that have informed the development of route options. These typically comprise designated sites of international or national importance, as well as larger settlements or areas of existing development which are considered areas of the highest or high environmental value within the study area, or areas where routeing is not technically feasible.

Initial surveys identified the following environmental features / designations within the study area for the Proposed Development:

- The Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands Special Protection Area and Muirkirk Special Site of Scientific Interest are located within the study area. Some adjacent pockets of woodland are also found within the study area, as noted on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.
- Settlements such as Muirkirk and Douglas fall within the study area.
- The St Bride's Chapel, a scheduled monument and Category A listed building, is also present within the study area.
- Land to the south of the A70 between Muirkirk and Douglas is designated as a Local Landscape Area and falls within the study area.
- Various geological conservation review sites are also located within the study area, such as the Ree Burn – Glenbuck Loch which falls within the proposed route options.

Further details regarding key routeing considerations can be found in the Routeing and Consultation Document (May 2024)[4] and Addendum (August 2024)[5].

[4] https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Spirebush-WF-Grid-Connection_RC-Update_310524.pdf
[5] Spirebush Renewable Energy Project – Grid Connection - SP Energy Networks

3. Route Consultation

3.1 Public Consultations

In line with the ECU Good Practice Guidance (2022), SPEN propose to carry out two rounds of consultation with stakeholders and the public prior to submitting any future planning application. Whilst these ECU guidelines on public consultation are relevant to EIA developments, they will still be followed in the instance that the Proposed Development is determined not to require EIA (which is yet to be confirmed once a request for an EIA Screening Opinion has been submitted to the ECU in Q3 2024).

The Round One consultation events were held in Douglas in June 2024 to present and consult on the preferred route option. Prior to these events, a letter was sent to landowners and residents within 1 km of the preferred route option notifying them of the development and inviting them to attend and comment (see Appendix A). The events were advertised in the following local newspapers:

- Cumnock Chronicle on the 29th May and on their website for 31 days;
- Ayrshire Post and Carrick on the 29th May;
- Kilmarnock Standard on the 29th May;
- Irvine Herald on the 29th May; and
- Carluke and Lanark Gazette in print and online on the 29th May.

Figure 3.1 shows the advertisement that was published in the local newspapers and online. The published advert within the Cumnock Chronicle is shown in Figure 3.2.

Notice of Public Consultation Event – Spirebush Renewable Energy Project Grid Connection

SP Transmission is holding public consultation events to invite members of the local community and other interested parties to find out more about its proposal to construct an overhead line for a length of approximately 20 km from the proposed Spirebush Renewable Energy Project to the proposed Redshaw Substation.

A public consultation event will be held on the 11th June between 11am and 5pm at the St Brides Community Centre

A second in-person event is planned on the 12th June between 3pm and 7.30pm at the St Brides Community Centre

At both events interested parties will have the opportunity to learn more about the Project and provide feedback to SP Transmission. Interested parties wishing to make a comment can do so from Tuesday 4th June and Wednesday 3rd July by the following:

- Email: **spirebushprojectmanager@spenergynetworks.co.uk**
- Web address: **spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/Spirebush.aspx**
- Post: **Spirebush Renewable Energy Project, Land and Planning Team, SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA**
- Telephone: **07516 461129**

For those unable to attend these events in person, a Virtual Consultation Room will be available online from Tuesday 4th June to Wednesday 3rd July at: **https://spirebush.consultation.ai/**

Please be aware that comments made to SP Transmission are not representations to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU). When the application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make representation to the Energy Consents Unit as part of the planning process.

Figure 3.1. Newspaper advert text

Wednesday May 29, 2024 Cumnock Chronicle 37

LOCAL LISTINGS

PUBLIC NOTICES

To advertise telephone: 01294 464321 or email: advertising@ardrossanherald.co.uk

Planning | Traffic & Roads | Goods Vehicle Licensing | Statutory | Alcohol & Licensing | Probate & Trustee | Contract & Tender | Other

OTHER

COMMUNITY INVITATION

brockwell energy

PROPOSAL : WIND FARM AT BREEZY HILL, RANKINSTON, EAST AYRSHIRE

Breezy Hill Energy Limited ('BHEL') invites you to attend a public exhibition for a proposed wind farm and potential associated battery storage facility. The BHEL site is directly adjacent to, and west of, the North Kyle Energy Project.

The central grid reference for the BHEL site is NS 48092 12583.

- The first consultation event will be on **THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024, from 1pm until 7pm,** at Rankinston Community Education Centre, Littlers Place, Rankinston, East Ayrshire KA6 7HB. Tea, coffee and refreshments will be available for all.
- Staff will be on hand to guide you through the exhibition and to answer any questions that you might have regarding the proposed development. A series of exhibition boards will be displayed to assist understanding of the proposed development and its location.
- Further information can be found regarding the proposal on the BHEL website at https://www.brockwellenergy.com/projects/southoswald/breezyhill along with a digital copy of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report.
- Persons wishing to make comments to the Applicant relating to the proposal may do so as follows:
  - **In person,** at the public exhibition
  - **By email,** to breezyhill@brockwellenergy.co.uk
  - **By post,** to Breezy Hill Energy Limited, c/o Brockwell Energy, The Eagle Building - Third Floor, 19 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PR.
  - **By phone,** for feedback and comments: 0808 281 5551
  - **Via feedback form** at https://www.brockwellenergy.com/projects/southoswald/breezyhill
- If you wish to make comments on the proposal, please submit them to BHEL by **27 JUNE 2024,** using the above contact details.
- Please note that comments made to BHEL are not representations to the Scottish Ministers, and if BHEL submits an application there will be an opportunity to make representations on that application to the Scottish Ministers.

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SP Transmission is holding public consultation events to invite members of the local community and other interested parties to find out more about its proposal to construct an overhead line for a length of approximately 20 km from the proposed Spirebush Renewable Energy Project to the proposed Redshaw Substation.

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At both events interested parties will have the opportunity to learn more about the Project and provide feedback to SP Transmission. Interested parties wishing to make a comment can do so from Tuesday 4th June to Wednesday 3rd July by the following:

- Email **spirebushprojectmanager@spenergynetworks.co.uk**
- Web address: **spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/Spirebush.aspx**
- Post: **Spirebush Renewable Energy Project, Land and Planning Team, SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA**
- Telephone: **07516 461129**

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Please be aware that comments made to SP Transmission are not representations to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU). When the application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make representation to the Energy Consents Unit as part of the planning process.

ExchangeandMart www.exchangeandmart.co.uk

PLANNING

Governance

Town And Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (As Amended)

Publicity for Applications

Site to South-West of Craighead Farm by Crossroads & Associated With 'Bargower Riding School, Kilmarnock - 24/0168/PP - Proposed New Dwellinghouse

Muirkirk Road Depot, Furnace Road, Kames, Muirkirk, KA18 3RE - 24/0222/PP - Erection of a steel portal framed storage building

Deadline: 15/06/2024

For those applications which have been the subject of Pre-Application Consultation between the Applicant and the Community (and which are indicated as "PAC"), persons wishing to make representations in respect of the application should do so to the Planning Authority in the manner indicated.

All applications can be viewed online via the Council website (www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning). Written comments and electronic representations may be made to the Chief Governance Officer via submitcplanning@east-ayrshire.gov.uk before the appropriate deadline.

Please note that comments received outwith the specified period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances which will be a question of fact in each case.

Publication Date: 31st May 2024

East Ayrshire Council

David Mitchell, Chief Governance Officer, Governance Services, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 7BU

Figure 3.2. Advert as included in the Cumnock Chronicle

An email was also sent to local councils and, where contact information could be obtained, community councils to notify them of the consultation events. This included South Lanarkshire Local Authority, East Ayrshire Local Authority, Muirkirk Community Council and Douglas Community Council.

The public consultation events were held at the St Brides Centre in Douglas on the following dates and times:

- 11th June 11.00 – 17.00
- 12th June 15.00 – 19.30

At these events, there were eight information boards providing details on the Proposed Development, the approach to routeing and the rationale behind the preferred route option. Figure 3.3 shows two of the boards presented at the consultation events. The events were also attended by members of the project team who introduced the grid connection and answered questions relating to the routeing approach and the preferred route option, see Figure 3.4. Attendees were able to express their views and provide feedback on the grid connection using the feedback forms available at the consultation events, or they were directed to the various methods available to submit their opinions and feedback in their own time.

It was possible to comment on the grid connection via email, the project website, post, phone to the SPEN Project Consultation Contact Centre, or via the Virtual Consultation Room (VCR). The VCR was live from 4th June until 3rd July 2024. The deadline for all feedback was at 17.00 on the 3rd July 2024.

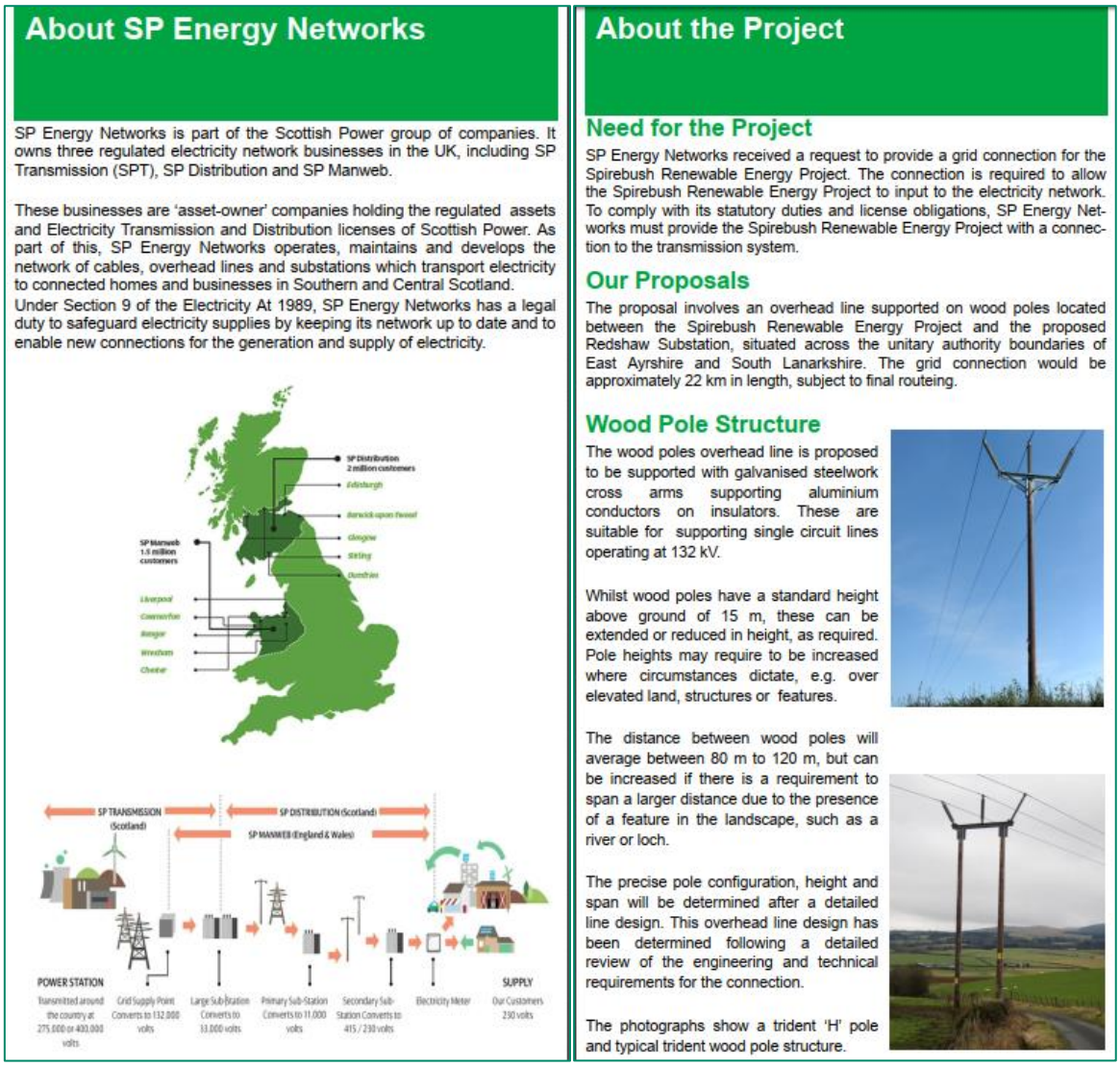

Figure 3.3. Example consultation boards from public consultation events

Figure 3.4. Photo from the public consultation events at the St Brides Centre

3.2 Virtual Consultation Room

A VCR was set up for members of the public who were unable to attend the public consultation events. The VCR displayed an online version of the consultation boards used in the St Brides Centre, see Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6. Access to the Routeing and Consultation Document (May 2024) and associated figures was also available via the VCR, along with a link to the online feedback form.

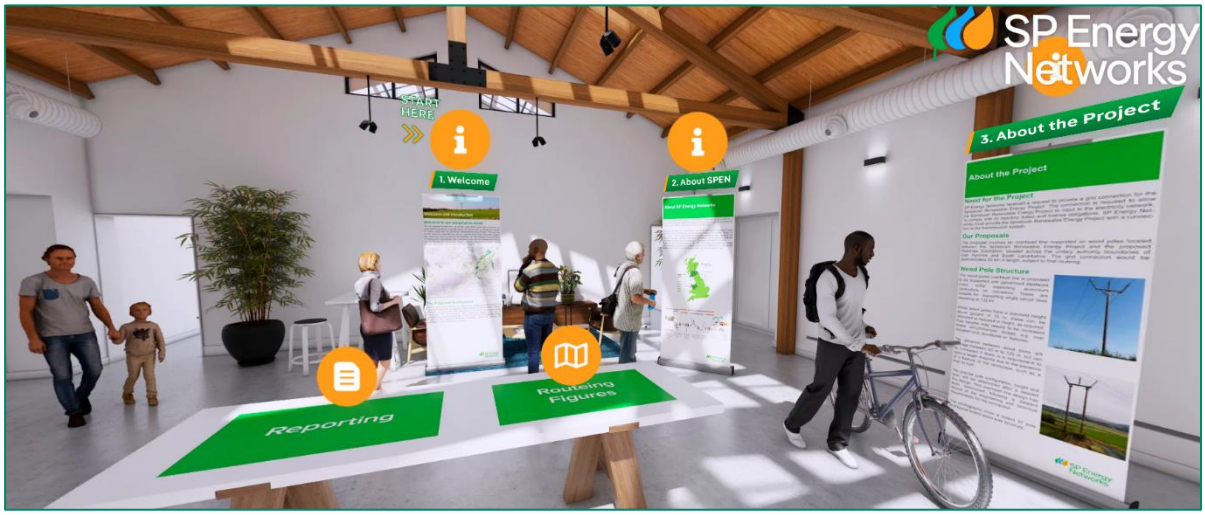

Figure 3.5. Virtual consultation room

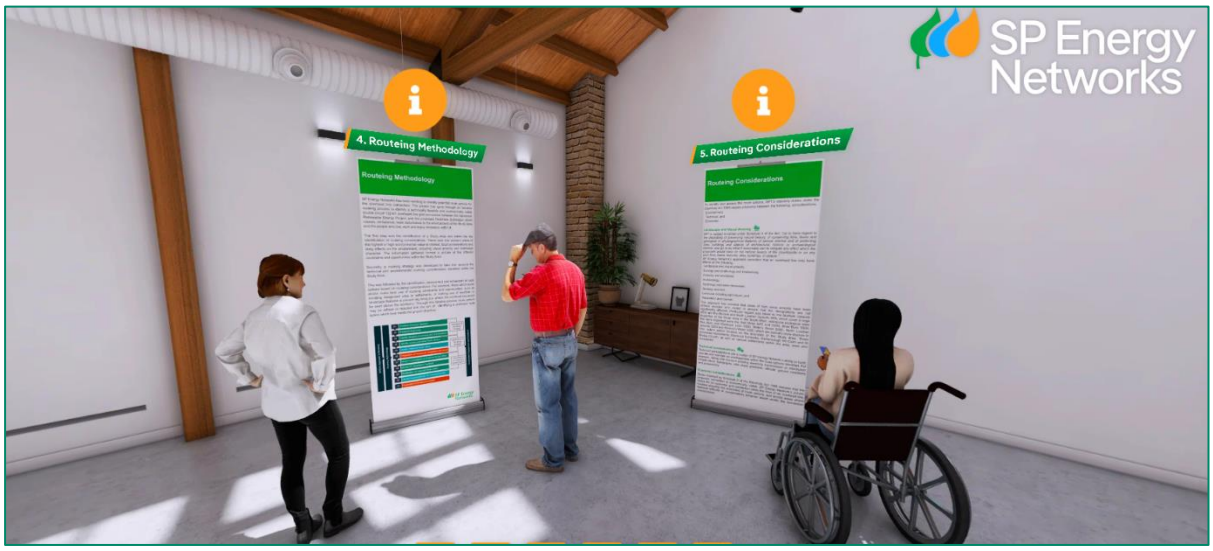

Figure 3.6. Virtual consultation room

3.3 Public Consultation Comments

3.3.1 Feedback form

All attendees to the exhibitions were encouraged to complete a feedback form. This form was available as a hard copy at the public consultation events, and via the project website and the VCR for completing online. Below is an overview of the questions that were included.

Question 1:

'Do you have any comments on our preferred route for the overhead line or alternatives we considered?'

Question 2:

'Any other factors you would like us to consider?'

Question 3:

'How did you find out about the project and the consultation?'

Question 4:

'Please give us your views about the consultation process.'

3.3.2 Email Response

One email response was received regarding the Proposed Development. A query was raised within this email regarding the health impacts of the OHL's electro and magnetic fields (EMF) and whether the installation may lead to an increased risk of cancer in individuals located in close proximity to it.

The project team provided the respondent with a copy of the Energy Networks Association's 'The Facts' (September 2017) publication. This sets out research conducted into the impact of EMFs upon human health. This publication notes that the UK Government policy is that there are no restrictions on EMF grounds on building homes. The statutory high-voltage safety clearance distances must be followed; however, the only EMF requirement is compliance with the exposure guidelines, which all power lines in the UK meet.

3.3.3 Online Response

One online response was received via the VCR platform, which reiterated concerns that had been raised by the same consultees (two people living at the same address) at the event on June 11th in the St Bride's Centre. The consultees raised concerns over the preferred route corridor and the potential adverse environmental impacts of the Proposed Development's installation upon local biodiversity. The consultees encouraged the consideration of two alternative route corridors to Route Option 1-A which the consultees explained would have minimal impact upon local wildlife, ancient grassland, the River Greenock and its flood plain.

SPEN provided a detailed email reply setting out their legal duty to develop and maintain a technically feasible and economically viable transmission and distribution system and reassured the consultees that the upcoming environmental assessments would consider potential impacts upon the environment, with mitigation measures identified where any significant adverse effects were likely.

Further to this email reply, the alternative routes suggested by the consultees were considered. The first of the alternative routes proposed by the consultees involves replacing an existing single pylon with a larger pylon to provide for both the existing line and the HECWE Renewable Development. This is not technically feasible and so has not been considered further.

The second option (to route to the south side of Black Hill instead of the north) was formally assessed following this feedback (now titled 'Route Option 1-B'), with the assessment included as an Addendum to the Routeing and Consultation Document (August 2024). This Addendum will be published on the project website and sent to the consultees who provided the online response.

The Addendum presents a summary of the assessment of Route Option 1-B. Route Option 1-B would start to the south of the Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands Special Protection Area and travel in a south easterly direction, crossing a small patch of native woodland, Greenock Water and the B743, before passing to the south of Black Hill and joining up with Route Option 1-A. The assessment concludes that, on balance, Route Option 1-A of the original preferred route corridor remains the most viable option due to the likely impact that Route Option 1-B would have on native woodland, as well as its proximity to the settlement of Muirkirk.

4. Project Development and Next Steps

4.1 Overview of Development to Date

In line with their statutory duties and obligations, following receipt of a request to connect the proposed HECWE Renewable Development to the electricity transmission system, SPEN (on behalf of SPT) have identified and assessed a number of possible route options for the grid connection to the proposed Redshaw Substation. This process has aligned with SPEN's Approach to Routeing and follows the Holford Rules of best practice to avoid areas of highest or high amenity value where possible. Moreover, this process considers existing landform, topography and vegetation in order to reduce landscape and visual effects.

Through the identification and assessment process, a preferred route option has been identified and presented to members of the public with feedback requested on the process and outcomes. The feedback, as reported within this Consultation Report, will be fed into the ongoing design development process. This design development will also be informed by further surveys, assessments and consultation.

4.2 EIA Screening

A request for a Screening Opinion from the ECU will be the next step for the Proposed Development. The response from the ECU will confirm whether or not an EIA is required to support the future Section 37 application for consent (see Section 4.3).

Whether or not an EIA is required, environmental surveys will be undertaken to support the Section 37 application. If an EIA is a requirement for the Proposed Development, a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion will be submitted to the ECU, which will agree the extent and method of surveys and assessments to identify and assess the potential effect of the Proposed Development on the surrounding natural, physical and built environment. This process includes the engagement of statutory consultees, such as local councils, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and NatureScot. If the ECU determines that an EIA is not required, this consultation and agreement to methodology will take place as necessary outside of the formal EIA Scoping Opinion process.

Surveys that will be undertaken are likely to include, but not be limited to, ecology (flora and fauna) surveys, heritage surveys, as well as visual, noise, ground condition and transport assessments to better understand the potential impacts the Proposed Development may have on the surrounding environment. These surveys, along with technical assessments, engagement with landowners and statutory bodies, will feed into the refinement of the preferred route option to develop a preliminary route alignment.

4.3 Round Two Consultation & Section 37 Application

After the identification of a preliminary route alignment, public consultation Round Two will be undertaken. This will provide an opportunity to present the preliminary route alignment to the wider public and seek feedback on the surveys and assessments undertaken to date. As with Round One, Round Two will be held both virtually and in person and will be advertised through similar channels.

Feedback from the Round Two consultation events will be reviewed by the project team and revisions to the preliminary alignment made where applicable. This will be done in line with the finalisation of the EIA if it is required, or supporting environmental assessments if not, before submission of the Section 37 application to the ECU.

SPEN will be applying to the ECU for consent under Section 37 of the Act to install, and keep installed, the Proposed Development. Documents which will accompany the application for Section 37 consent include the EIA Report if required, or other supporting environmental assessments if not; a Planning Statement; and a Consultation Report (which will include an outline of consultee responses to consultation Rounds One and Two). With the Section 37 application, SPEN will also apply for deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, for the grid connection including ancillary development. As part of the determination process, the ECU will consult with key statutory stakeholders and members of the public.

5. References

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Appendix A : Landowner and Resident Letter

Spirebush Renewable Energy Project

Introduction

The Scottish Government has set a target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, meaning that Scotland's contribution to climate change would end, definitively, in one generation.

This huge change means we need to upgrade Scotland's electricity transmission network.

Our upgrade work includes a new transmission line which will provide a grid connection for the proposed Spirebush Renewable Energy Project. To comply with its statutory and license obligations, SP Energy Networks must provide the Spirebush Renewable Energy Project with a connection to the transmission system.

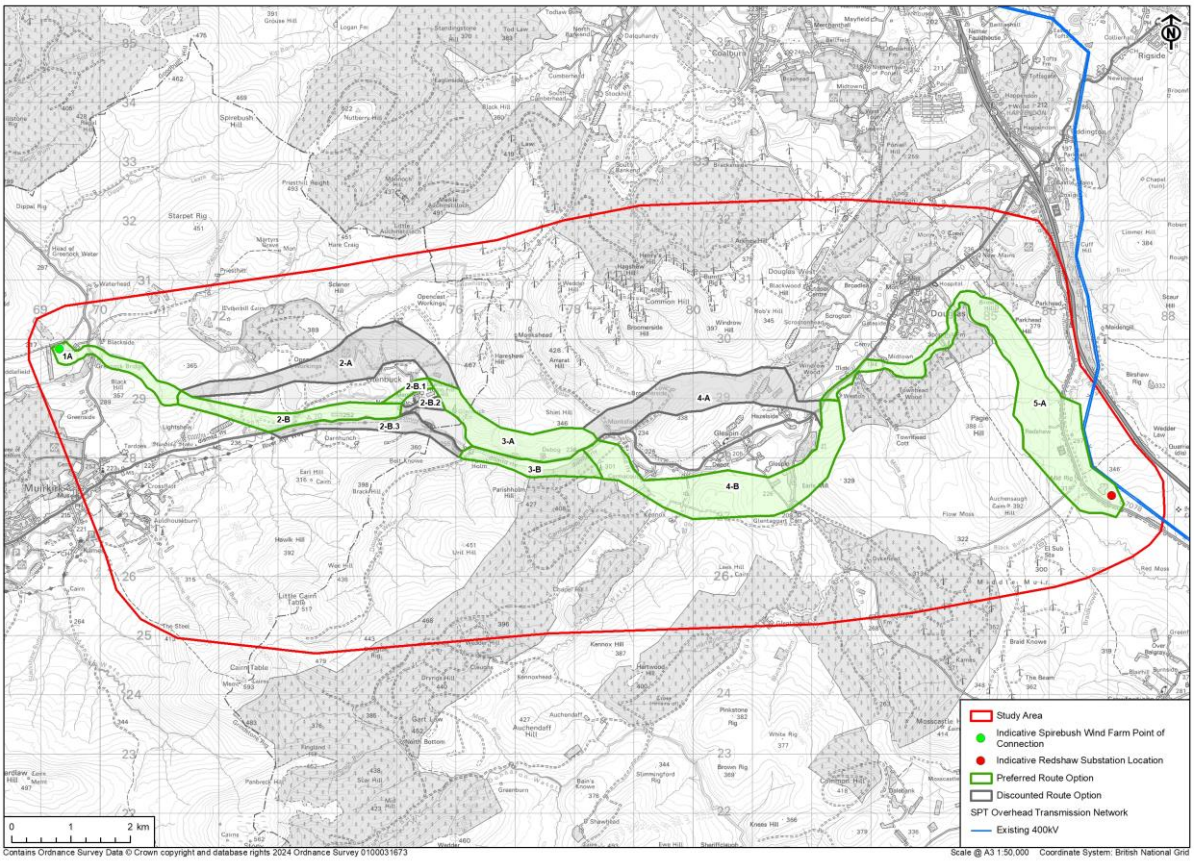
We are now undertaking consultation as part of the engineering and environmental review of potential route options. A preferred route has been identified (see map below) and the route selection process, documented in a Routing Consultation Report, is available to download from our website: **https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/spirebush.aspx**

This leaflet is to provide some information on the project and how you can give us your views, either by attending one of our consultation events, visiting our virtual consultation room or contacting us directly.

The Proposal

The proposal involves the construction of a double circuit 132 kilovolt (kV) overhead line carried on Trident wood poles with galvanised steelwork cross-arms supporting aluminium conductors on insulators. The line will connect the Spirebush Renewable Energy Project to the proposed Redshaw Substation and will provide a connection to the transmission network.

The overhead line would be situated across the authority boundaries of East Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire and would be approximately 22km in length.



Route Options

Various route options have been identified and assessed with environmental, technical and economic factors considered. SP Energy Networks have adopted an approach which ensures that areas of high value amenity have been avoided to ensure that any local designations are not significantly affected. Particular regard was taken to the Muirkirk Uplands Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Muirkirk and North Lowther Uplands Special Protection Area, which cover a large proportion of the Study Area in the south-west, as well as a number of other designated ecological sites, scheduled monuments and various settlements in the area.

Our preferred route

The preferred route is identified as the route which is technically feasible and economically viable, whilst causing least disturbance to the environment and to people.

The preferred route avoids the majority of constraints associated within the study area and limits a significant amount of woodland clearance to accommodate the overhead line alignment associated with the other route options.

The preferred route is shown in green above.

What would it look like?

The wood poles overhead line is proposed to be supported with galvanised steelwork cross arms supporting aluminium conductors on insulators. These are suitable for supporting single circuit lines operating at 132 kV.

Whilst the wood poles have a standard height above ground of 15m, these can be extended or reduced in height, as required.

The distance between wood poles will average between 80m to 120m but can be increased if there is a requirement to span a larger distance due to the presence of a feature in the landscape, such as a river or loch.

We want to hear your views

SP Energy Networks attaches great importance to the effect our work may have on the environment and local communities. We value community engagement and are always keen to listen to what people have to say, as this feedback often plays an important part in the design evolution of a project. We want to hear what local people think about our plans, to help us develop the project in the best way possible.

Please come along to one of our public exhibitions, where you can see our plans in more detail and ask questions of the project team.

Date	Location	Website
Tuesday 11th June 2024, 11am to 5pm	St Brides Centre, Braehead, Douglas ML11 0PT	www.stbridescentre.co.uk
Wednesday 12th June 2024, 3pm to 7:30pm	St Brides Centre, Braehead, Douglas ML11 0PT	www.stbridescentre.co.uk

Please note that any comments made during this Consultation Stage are not representations to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit, which will determine any subsequent application for consent. Following the submission of the Section 37 application, interested parties will have the opportunity to make representations to the Scottish Government on this proposal.

Can't make it?

We will also have a virtual consultation room, allowing you the opportunity to view all of the material provided at the public exhibitions and feed back to us. This will be live from Tuesday 4th June to Wednesday 3rd July 2024 and available at: **https://spirebush.consultation.ai/**

How to contact us

Email: **spirebushprojectmanager@spenergynetworks.co.uk**

Telephone: **07516461129**

Write to postal address at: **Spirebush Renewable Energy Project, Land and Planning Team, SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA**

Fill in the feedback form on the virtual consultation room web page at: **https://spirebush.consultation.ai/**

What happens next?

Following this first round of consultation, we will develop a detailed design and alignment for the new overhead line, including locations for towers, access routes and working areas. We will publish a report summarising the feedback received in this round of consultation and how this has influenced our proposal.

We will then carry out a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment and hold a second round of public consultation so that people can give us their views on the detailed route alignment.

After considering feedback received in the second round of consultation, we will finalise our proposal and submit a consent application to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit, for consideration by the Scottish Ministers.

The Scottish Ministers will then undertake a final round of statutory consultation before making any decision on our application.


SP Energy
Networks