

FAO Iain MacLeod
Oifis na h-Ard Oifigear
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Rathad Shannabhaig
Steornabhag
HS1

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Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc
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22/05/24

Dear Iain,

SSEN Transmission consultation response to planning application 24/00123/PPW – Erection of 3no. replacement wind turbines (86m to tip) with associated infrastructure at Monan Wind Farm, Ardhasaig, Isle of Harris.

Background

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc who, operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission), own, operate and develop the high voltage electricity transmission network of 132kV and above in the north of Scotland. The network includes overhead and undergrounded electricity transmission lines as well as associated substations, all of which are critical national infrastructure required to enable greater home-grown energy security and deliver a network for Net Zero in Scotland. SSEN Transmission's infrastructure is classified as 'National Development' within National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), therefore its need and importance is supported and clearly defined at a national level by the Scottish Government.

Policy position

NPF4 was formally adopted in February 2023 and is the long-term spatial planning policy framework for Scotland which puts tackling the global climate emergency and the delivery of Net Zero at the forefront of the Scottish Government's ambitions. NPF4 now forms part of the 'statutory development plan' alongside local development plans (LDPs), and as such directly influences planning decisions. Policy 1 (Global Climate and Nature Crisis) in NPF4 intends to encourage, promote and facilitate development that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change. The existing and future transmission network is critical to enabling the development of low carbon electricity generation. Policies 11 (Energy) and 18 (Infrastructure First), directly support new transmission infrastructure and recognise the significance of Scotland's transmission network as a platform for delivering Net Zero. These policies demonstrate that the protection of existing transmission assets from new development is of critical importance and should be a strong material consideration in the determination of planning applications which have potential to impact on the existing and future operation of our infrastructure.

We prioritise the safe and reliable transmission of high voltage electricity over long distances to communities, and both the Planning Act (Scotland) 2019 and NPF4 provide for planning decisions to be made in the long-term public interest. Subsequently, SSEN Transmission welcomes Comhairle nan Eilean Siar giving due consideration to its comments in reaching a decision over planning applications.

Prime View, Unit 11, Prime Four Business Park, Kingswells AB15 8PU www.ssen.co.uk

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Comments

Thank you for consulting us on this application. Our high-voltage 132kV (132,000 volt) Harris to Stornoway overhead line (OHL) runs past the site to the south-east, which is critical national infrastructure. Given the significance of our asset to providing the supply of electricity to those living and working on the Isle of Harris and Isle of Lewis, we have the following comments to make:

Impact on existing overhead line

The proposed nearest replacement wind turbine would be sited c. 370m away from our existing overhead line. Subsequently, this would be sufficient separation from our existing overhead 132kV overhead line to mitigate any adverse operational impacts on our critical national infrastructure, allowing us to maintain a safe and reliable supply of electricity to all those that require across the Outer Hebrides.

Impact on proposed replacement overhead line

We obtained Section 37 (under the Electricity Act 1989) consent (ref: ECU00004490) for a replacement 132kV overhead line (OHL) from Scottish Ministers in February this year and work on implementing this consent is intended to commence before the end of 2024. Given our replacement line would most likely be located further away from the proposed wind turbines than our existing OHL, there would be sufficient separation to between the two developments to mitigate any adverse 'wake' effects on our future infrastructure, ensuring we can maintain a safe and reliable supply of electricity to local communities.

Delivery of wind turbines to site

Should the Council be minded to approve this application, transportation of the wind turbines to site would appear likely to take place underneath our overhead transmission line. To ensure that no conflict with our line takes place, we recommend the developer contact our Asset Management team at Transmission.Asset.Management@sse.com at least 30 days prior to delivery to ensure that appropriate safety measures will be put in place to manage this risk. Subsequently, if this application is approved, we ask that this recommendation is added as an informative to the decision notice.

Conclusion

To conclude, SSEN Transmission have no concerns with the proximity of the proposed replacement larger wind turbines relative to the location of our existing and proposed critical national infrastructure from an operational perspective. Should this application be approved, however, we ask the Council to attach our recommended informative on the planning consent to ensure that delivery of the proposed wind turbines would not present any conflict with our overhead transmission line.

We trust this letter is helpful and should you have any queries about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Leadbeater MRTPI
Senior Town & Country Planner
SSEN Transmission – Land Team

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