Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION

Appendix 9.2 – Compensatory Planting Management Strategy

Contents:

Introduction

This Appendix presents information relevant to the 132 kV single circuit overhead line (OHL) connection between Rothes III Wind Farm and Blackhillock substation, referred to as 'the Proposed Development.' It also includes the underground cable connection between Rothes III Windfarm and pole 1. This appendix should be read in conjunction with the Elchies (Rothes III) Wind Farm Grid Connection Works: Environmental Appraisal (EA), specifically **Chapter 9: Forestry**.

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc ("the Applicant") who, operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission ("SSEN Transmission"), own, operate and develop the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands. In this Appendix the Applicant and SSEN Transmission are used interchangeably unless the context requires otherwise.

The Applicant is applying for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct and operate a new 24.3 kilometre (km) single circuit 132 kV OHL. The majority of the connection would be supported on a trident wood pole between a new Cable Sealing End ("CSE") structure approximately 450 m southeast of Rothes III Wind Farm (Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference 322434,847882) and a new CSE structure approximately 900 m north-west of Blackhillock substation (OS grid reference 342233,848695). Ancillary works would also be required to facilitate the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, including tree felling and vegetation clearance, temporary measures to protect road and water crossings, upgrades to existing access tracks and existing access points, new permanent and temporary access routes (i.e. Trackway, where required), permanent stone hardstanding areas and associated working areas around infrastructure to facilitate construction. The location of the Proposed Development is shown in Figure 9.1 (EA). Deemed planning permission under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 for the new OHL and ancillary infrastructure is also sought.

As detailed in the EA, **Chapter 9: Forestry**, the Proposed Development impacts a total area of 54.67 ha of woodland. An additional area of 1.91ha is required to be removed for the underground construction, which is under Permitted Development. This area has been identified as the maximum area for woodland removal within the operational corridor. A greater area of native woodland retention may be achievable prior to the Proposed Development's construction phase. This in-turn would potentially reduce the total area of woodland removal required for the Proposed Development. At this stage it is anticipated that any increase in woodland retention area would be nominal.

In-line with the Applicant's commitment to achieve no net loss of woodland for new development projects, the area of woodland removal for the Proposed Development, will be replanted through the application of this Compensatory Planting Management Strategy.

Purpose of the Strategy

This Appendix explains the management strategy that will be undertaken by the Applicant prior to and during the Proposed and Permitted Development's construction phase, to implement the replanting of the total area of woodland removed.

Woodland Planting Management Constraint

The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002 (ESQCR, 2002)[1] specify safety standards to protect the general public and consumers from danger of overhead electricity powerlines. These standards outline minimum safety clearances and the Distribution Network Operator's (DNO's) duty to maintain these safety clearances.

The regulations also contain requirements on quality and continuity of electricity supply to ensure an efficient and economic service to customers and consumers.

Further legislation arrived in 2006 with the ESQCR, 2006; Amendment[2] which extended the above duties of the DNO to make their overhead powerlines resilient to the effect of major storms. This includes reducing the risk of falling trees and branchwood of hitting the electricity network.

[1] Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002 (ESQCR, 2002) URL: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2665/contents/made
[2] Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (ESQCR, 2006) URL: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1521/made

The result of this legislation is that the DNOs in addition to maintaining the vegetation to minimum safety clearances, now must seek to achieve further clearances for trees which may be affected by storm weather conditions.

Due to the requirements of the ESQCR it is generally not feasible to replant woodland within the operational areas of the Development. Therefore, in order to replant the woodland removal area of the Development, 'off-site'[3] woodland planting must be achieved.

Compensatory Planting Scheme

The Applicant will implement the required woodland planting through the management of a Compensatory Planting Scheme. This management process is based on liaising and securing agreements with landowners that are located within the same Local Authority area as the Proposed and Permitted Developments for woodland planting of suitable bare land by the Applicant.

The Applicant is and will continue to undertake liaison with:

- Landowners who own the land where the Proposed Development , as well as the Permitted Development is to be located.
- 'Not for Profit' Organisations e.g. Community Trusts, who own or have rights to areas of land and wish to plant woodland.
- Landowners within the Local Authority area of the Proposed Development, who wish to plant woodland.

Through liaison with these landowners, areas of bare land suitable for woodland planting will be identified and whereby they would enter into a Compensatory Planting Scheme agreement with the Applicant. The total area of bare land secured for woodland planting would meet the total area of woodland removal of both the Proposed and Permitted Developments.

On agreement with the landowner a formal woodland planting scheme design will be produced and submitted to Scottish Forestry[4] for consultation and approval.

Following completion of the approval process, the Applicant will undertake the woodland planting as per the scheme design and will maintain the newly planted area for the required period in-line with forestry industry best practice to ensure successful woodland establishment is achieved.

Reporting

After planting scheme approval is received from Scottish Forestry, the Applicant will formally report to the Planning Authority that the required woodland planting area has been achieved to meet the total woodland removal area of the Proposed and Permitted Development, and has secured no net loss of woodland.

[3] 'off-site' meaning alternative bare land areas suitable for woodland planting out-with the Development's operational area.

[4] Scottish Forestry - the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulations. URL: www.forestry.gov.scot