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14/11/2024

Our Reference: LT234 – Glen Strathfarrar VISTA

Dear Ms Khataza

Proposal: Glen Strathfarrar (LT234) - Removal of approximately 3.75 km of 132 kV / 33k V single circuit, overhead lines (OHL) and associated towers, followed by the installation of a section of underground cable approximately 3.75 km in length; installation of a single sealing end tower, compound and associated access track.

Address: Land directly East of Deanie Hydro-electric Power Station (see Figure 1.1 - Glen Strathfarrar Proposed Development).

Electricity Act (Scotland) 1989

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992

1. Background and Project Description

The wider context of the proposed development is that it forms part of a VISTA (Visual Impact of Scottish Transmission Assets) Scheme; a fund made available by Ofgem for electricity transmission owners to mitigate the impact of existing electricity infrastructure on the visual amenity of nationally designated landscapes.

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc have identified a section of overhead line (Glen Strathfarrar (LT234)), which runs from NH 32269 39853 to NH 28926 38626. The proposed development described above offers the opportunity to deliver visual impact enhancement, while meeting with the other core principles of Project VISTA, namely to limit negative socioeconomic and environmental impacts and offer best value for money. The proposed development has also been deemed technically suitable from a networks operation perspective, ensuring that network reliability and security of supply will not be constrained if the proposed development is successful in obtaining regulatory funding from Ofgem.

An Environmental Appraisal has been produced as a non-statutory appraisal to allow appropriate environmental management and mitigation measures to be identified in support of the “necessary approvals”¹. The Environmental Appraisal assesses all element of the proposed development, including the decommissioning and removal of the existing overhead line between the existing Deanie Substation and Tower 12 (approximately 3.5 km of 132 kV and 33 kV OHL) and the decommissioning and removal of the associated towers (Towers 1 – 12).

2. Proposed Development

For clarity, each element of the proposed development has been categorised according to the specific approval it relates to. The proposed development consists of the following elements:

ELECTRICITY ACT (SCOTLAND) 1989 (Section 37)

- the construction and operation of a new CSE compound to house both Transmission (132 kV) and Distribution (33 kV) elements; approximately 350 m east of Deanie Lodge;
- the construction and operation of a new terminal tower (Tower 13R) within the CSE compound to replace the existing Tower 13;
- the construction and operation of the access track and associated temporary laydown / compound area to serve the new terminal tower and compound; and
- the installation of a replacement section of overhead line between Tower 13R and the existing Tower 14, approximately 180 m in length.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (SCOTLAND) ORDER 1992

- the installation of a 132 kV underground cable, approximately 3.75 km in length between the proposed CSE compound and the proposed Deanie Substation; and
- the installation of a 33 kV underground cable, approximately 3.35 km in length between the proposed CSE compound and the existing distribution network.

3. Planning Position

ELECTRICITY ACT (SCOTLAND) 1989 (Section 37)

A steel lattice sealing end tower (T13R) is proposed as a replacement for Tower 13 on the land to the east of Deanie Lodge. The proposed T13R is to be installed approximately 40 m to the east of the existing Tower 13. The purpose of this tower is to transfer the remaining overhead line to the proposed underground cable. The tower will be situated within the CSE compound. The tower and compound will be accessed via a permanent access track running north from Glenstrathfarrar Road. Additionally, a replacement section of OHL will be required from T13R to Tower 14.

The proposed development is located in European Site designations (Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA)), Glen Strathfarrar Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of

¹ In this context “necessary approvals” is taken to be the various consents and permissions required to construct and operate the project.

Conservation (Strathglass Complex SAC) and National Scenic Area (Glen Strathfarrar) and as such under Regulation 3(1)(e)(ii) The Overhead Lines (Exemption) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 do not apply. Therefore, consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act (Scotland) 1998 is required.

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (SCOTLAND) ORDER 1992

The 132 kV and 33 kV underground cables will benefit from permitted development rights under Class 40 1(a). The installation of the underground cables does not therefore require planning consent.

4. Environmental Appraisal

An Environmental Appraisal covering all elements aforementioned has been prepared and submitted in November 2024. The following topics are covered within the Environmental Appraisal, with the relevant surveys being undertaken as required:

- Landscape and Visual;
- Ecology and Ornithology;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Hydrology.

The Environmental Appraisal concluded that there will be no significant environmental effects.

The VISTA project has been designed to reduce and minimise the existing impact of overhead transmission lines within NSAs and National Parks. The works proposed are deemed to enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the landscape whilst avoiding unwanted economic and environmental impacts.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,
sent electronically

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