

From: Daniel Gotts [mailto:Daniel.Gotts@snh.gov.uk]
Sent: 08 September 2011 16:33
To: Sarah Samuel
Subject: Transmission company business plans - SNH comments

Sarah,

You were in touch with Clive Mitchell about the transmission plans earlier in the summer. I am now leading on SNH's strategic input to transmission grids, so if you wish to discuss this and related issues please do get in touch - my contact details are below.

We have a few comments on the plans.

The one for Scottish Power Transmission looks very general - it is difficult to get a feel for what they are actually proposing to do and where. The maps in Appendix 2 might help - but they are almost illegible, so more clarity and detail is needed.

The plan from SHETL is much more comprehensive. Section 5 is helpful, as it shows where the proposed infrastructure will go (at a coarse scale) and Section 6 discusses how they have taken account of environmental issues. However, we do note that there is no mention of undergrounding as a potential method of minimising environmental impact.

For example in section 6 "Doing our best to look after the environment" there is a heading "Minimising environmental impact during construction" which mentions a few relatively small examples. Under the next heading "What more can we do to minimise the environmental impact of our network" there is mention of siting pylons to minimise visual impacts and landscaping work. However, these techniques may not be adequate in all situations and other impacts, e.g. impacts of collision risk on SPA-qualifying bird species might also favour undergrounding. This is an issue which SNH mentioned in some of our previous responses to SHETL on its evolving business plan.

Moving on to the issue of earlier consultation on the business plans, we met with SHETL in November 2010 to discuss the emerging issues for its business plan. We provided written comments in October 2010, March 2011 and June 2011.

We have had very little or no contact from Scottish Power Transmission on its developing business plan.

The main contact that we have had from National Grid in the last year or so was an invitation to comment on its approach to undergrounding of electricity transmission lines. We provided comments on this consultation in March 2011.

I hope these comments are helpful. Please get in touch to discuss further if you wish. I am away from 9 September to 23 September inclusive, but will be back in the office on 26 September.

Daniel.

Daniel Gotts
Policy & Advice Manager
Scottish Natural Heritage
Silvan House
231 Corstorphine Road
Edinburgh, EH12 7AT

Tel: 0131 316 2674

Email: daniel.gotts@snh.gov.uk

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