About
SP Energy Networks

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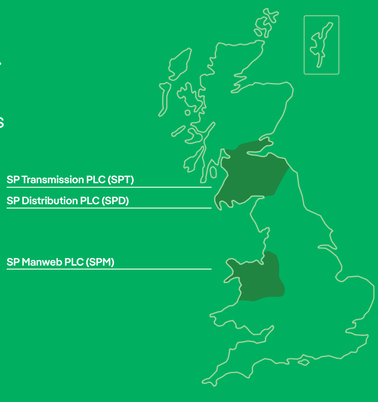
24h

We all expect electricity to be available at the flick of a switch, 24 hours a day.

In southern and central Scotland, the job of making sure that happens belongs to SP Energy Networks (SPEN). In fact, we have a statutory duty to do it.

SPEN operates, maintains and develops the network of cables, overhead lines and substations which transport electricity to homes and businesses in southern and central Scotland, and onwards to where it's needed.



Our three regulated electricity network businesses are:

- SP Transmission PLC (SPT);
- SP Distribution PLC (SPD); and
- SP Manweb PLC (SPM).

These businesses are 'asset-owner' companies holding the regulated assets and Electricity Transmission and Distribution licenses of Scottish Power. As part of this, SP Energy Networks operates, maintains and develops the network of cables, overhead lines and substations which transport electricity to connected homes and businesses in Southern and Central Scotland.

The high-voltage electricity transmission network, which operates at up to 400,000 volts, is managed by SP Transmission plc, a wholly owned subsidiary of SPEN.

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Electricity in our changing world

SP Energy Networks

Scotland is a world leader in the fight against climate change.

Our country has a target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 – meaning that Scotland's contribution to climate change will end, definitively, in one generation.

We are in the middle of a transformation, with the energy we use increasingly coming from cleaner, greener sources, as many new renewable generators replace fossil-fuelled power stations.

At the same time, demand for electricity will grow rapidly over the next few years, with electric vehicles replacing petrol and diesel, and increased electrification of heating, industry and transport networks.

This huge change means we need to upgrade Scotland's electricity transmission network, so we can get this increasing amount of energy from where it's produced – often in different locations – to the homes, businesses, hospitals and public services that need it.

Our network is also crucial to the delivery of wider renewable energy objectives, due to its position in an area of outstanding renewable resources and our geographical location.

We have a unique role in connecting renewable energy and transferring it from Scotland into England and Wales, benefiting stakeholders, society and the fight against climate change.

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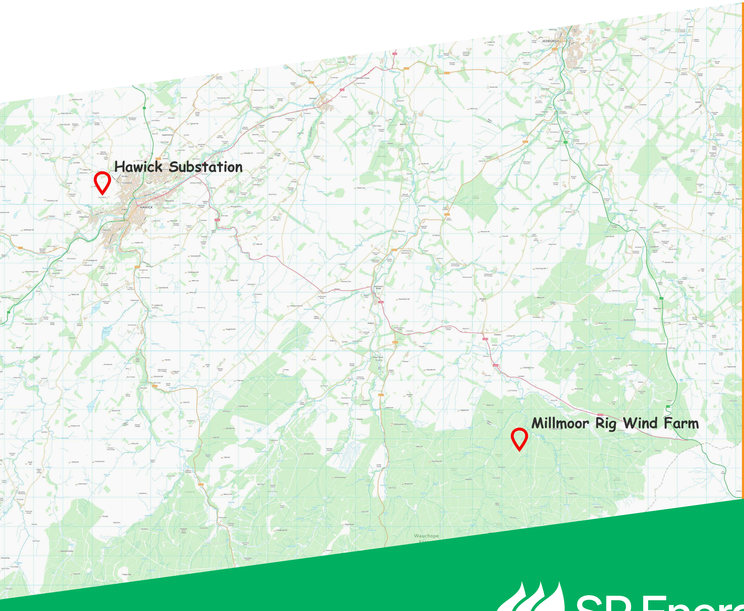
Why do we need a new Transmission Line from Millmoor Rig Wind Farm to the existing Hawick Susbstation?



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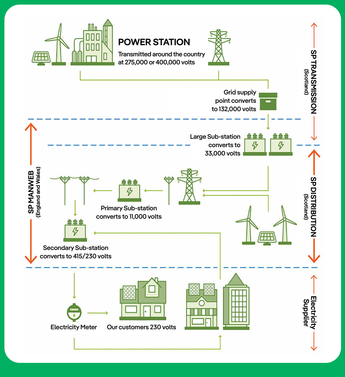
Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) received a request to provide a grid connection to the proposed Millmoor Rig Wind Farm to connect into the electricity network. SPEN has a legal duty to keep its network up-to-date to safeguard electricity supplies. SPEN also has a duty to provide a connection for the new generation to the wider electricity transmission network.

Who are SP Energy Networks?

We are SP Energy Networks. As a Distribution and Transmission Network Operator, we maintain and develop the network of cables, overhead lines and substations which keeps electricity flowing to homes and businesses throughout Central and Southern Scotland, North Wales, Merseyside, Cheshire and North Shropshire.

We take electricity generated from wind farms, power stations and imports, and transport it through our transmission network – over 4000 km of overhead lines, over 600 km of underground cables and more than 150 substations – to local distribution networks, where the voltage is reduced for use in homes and businesses.

Under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, SP Energy Networks has a legal duty to safeguard electricity supplies by keeping its network up to date and enabling new connections for the generation and supply of electricity.



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The Routeing Process

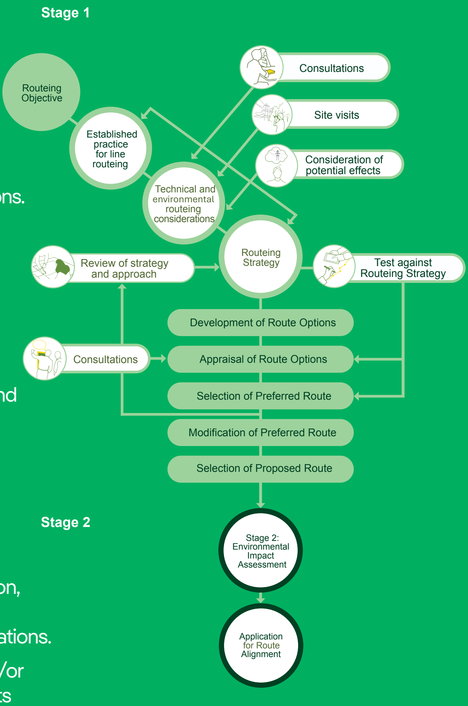
SP Energy Networks has been working to identify potential route options for the Overhead Line (OHL) connection. The project has gone through an iterative routeing process to identify a technically feasible and economically viable single circuit 132 kV OHL grid connection between the proposed Millmoor Rig Wind Farm and the existing Hawick Substation in the Scottish Borders.

This solution causes, on balance, the least disturbance to the environment of the study area and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.

The first step was the identification of a study area and, within this, the identification of routeing considerations. This takes into account areas of the highest or high environmental value or interest, local considerations and likely effects on the environment, including visual amenity and landscape character. The information gathered formed a picture of the different constraints and opportunities within the study area.

Secondly, a routeing strategy was developed to take into account the technical and environmental routeing considerations identified within the study area.

This was followed by the identification, assessment and refinement of route options based on routeing considerations.



For example, those which avoid and/or make best use of routeing constraints and opportunities, such as avoiding designated sites or settlements, or making use of landform or landscape features to prevent sky lining (i.e. where the OHL would be seen above the landform). Through this iterative process, route options may be refined or rejected with the aim of identifying a preferred route option which best meets the project objective.

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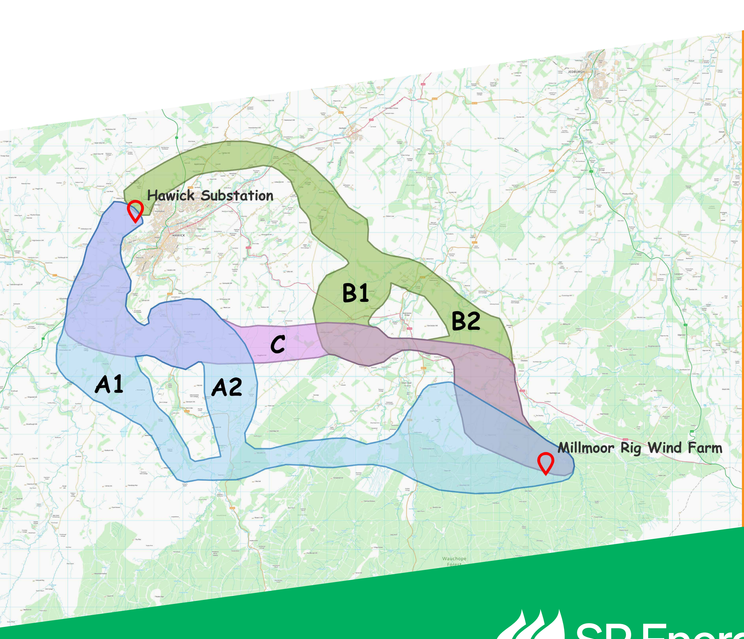
How was the preferred Route selected?



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A routeing study was carried out with the objective of identifying an optimal route that is technically feasible and economically viable, whilst causing as little disturbance as possible to the environment and the people experiencing it.

First, a study area was defined, and a desktop review and mapping of existing environmental constraints was undertaken.

- Length of broad route, noting that only significant variance (minimum 5km) could be relevant;
- Landscape & Visual Amenity;
- Biodiversity;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Forestry & Woodland;
- Hydrology;
- Geology (Peat);
- Land Use (cumulative developments such as wind farms); and
- Technical considerations (topography, slope).

Once all the above constraints were identified, three viable potential routes were identified as listed below:

- Route A with options A1 & A2;
- Route B with options B1 & B2; and
- Route C.

Each route option was appraised against environmental and technical considerations, and Route A1 was identified as the preferred option.

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The Routeing Considerations

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Technical Considerations

Technical considerations are a matter of SP Energy Network's ability to build, operate and maintain an OHL within the route options identified. For example, taking into account existing electricity transmission or distribution infrastructure, topography, side slope gradients, altitude, ground conditions and accessibility.

Environmental considerations

SPT is subject to duties under Schedule 9 of the Act:

"(a) to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and (b) to do what is reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings, or objects."

When considering environmental factors, the approach to routeing is sequential in that the most important environmental constraints are considered first, followed by those of lesser, and reducing, importance.

The range of environmental factors considered includes the following:

- Landscape & Visual Amenity;
- Biodiversity;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Forestry & Woodland;
- Ornithology;
- Hydrology;
- Geology (Peat);
- Recreation and Tourism; and
- Traffic and Transport.

Taking this approach has ensured that areas of high-value amenity have been entirely avoided and are not significantly affected. In this case, the area to the north and east of both locations was discounted due to the complex landscape of the area and the presence of the Teviot Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA). The preferred route is to the south and west, as shown in the figure above.

The next step in the process is to define the exact route of the Overhead Line (OHL) through detailed studies and investigations.

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We want to hear your views

SP Energy Networks

This consultation period will end at midnight on 30th September 2025.

SPEN attaches great importance to the effect our work may have on the environment and local communities. We want to hear what local people think about our plans, to help us develop the Millmoor Rig WF OHL connection in the best way.

Please give us your views on the proposals and anything you would like us to take into account – such as site access – to help us develop our plans.

You can find more information, project documents and an online feedback form at our project website:

www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/millmoor_rig_wind_farm_connection/aspx

You can also contact us to ask any questions or give us your comments:

Email: MillmoorRigProject@spenergynetworks.co.uk

Post: Millmoor Rig Wind Farm Connection Project, Land and Planning Team, SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA.

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What happens next?

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

We will carry out environmental surveys and reports, and hold a second round of public consultation, so that people can give us their views on detailed route alignments.

After considering the feedback received in the second round of consultation, we will finalise our project proposals and submit consent applications to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (SGECU) for consideration by Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers will then undertake a final round of statutory consultation before making any decision on our application.

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