

Reinforcement to North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network: 132,000 volt wood pole overhead line from Oswestry to Wem



Plans for supporting local growth in North Shropshire take shape

- Discussions with landowners, occupiers and others with an interest in land affected by the proposed line design
- Proposed Line Route updated following these discussions and our own surveys
- New alternative route option added near the Woodhouse Estate
- Update at Lower Hordley and Noneley

Since our last update, we've been continuing to develop our proposals for a new overhead line between Wem and Oswestry – an important infrastructure project supporting local growth in North Shropshire.

Last November, we published some line route changes, based on feedback at our first stage of consultation, conversations with residents and landowners, and our own assessments.

We've been continuing these discussions since the autumn.

Based on these discussions with landowners and local communities, we have looked again at route options near Lower Hordley and Noneley.

We've also introduced an alternative route to the north of the Woodhouse Estate, based on landowner feedback.

You can find out more about these options inside.

Shropshire Council publishes new planning document

Shropshire Council published its new Draft Economic Growth Strategy in March. This sits alongside its updated Local Plan, which was published for consultation in January.

Both of these documents confirm new housing and employment aims in North Shropshire's market towns.

You can view these documents on Shropshire Council's website.

“ We will work closely with landowners, tenants and utility providers to foster the effective planning of infrastructure investment in Shropshire... We have engaged with Scottish Power Energy Networks in helping to secure significant investment proposals in the north of the County to improve electricity infrastructure by 2021. ”

Shropshire Council Draft Economic Growth Strategy 2017-2021

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Information on the work we've been doing since November 2016
- A look ahead to our autumn 2017 consultation
- Details on how you can give comments on this update. See map page

Your comments and our own assessments

Supporting landowners and farming

Working closely with landowners along the route has helped us better understand how our proposals might affect their land. We've received really helpful suggestions, including slight alterations to the Proposed Line Route to minimise impacts on farming activities and properties.

For example, some landowners have told us which side of a field boundary they would prefer to have the wood poles used in the overhead line, or asked that we minimise crossing open fields as much as possible.

We've looked at ways of achieving this, alongside the engineering and visual requirements we have to consider, and made changes to the Preferred Line Route.



Protecting wildlife and the environment



We need to consider local wildlife and the environment and have carried out walkover species and habitat surveys along the Proposed Line Route. We've studied the ponds, hedges and trees and looked closely at wildlife, including bats, badgers, breeding birds and newts in the area.

Where possible, the Proposed Line Route is avoiding these environmental features. This survey information will be really important as we move towards a detailed design for the route and individual wood pole locations.

Improving the proposals at both substations and our plans for construction

We've looked in further detail at each end of the proposed overhead line. We have confirmed the location of the start of the overhead line near Round Wood and we'll be using underground cables to get there from Oswestry substation.

We have also developed the initial design of Wem substation. We propose undergrounding a section of one of the two existing 33kV overhead lines that run into the substation, in order to facilitate the work required at the substation.

Following discussions with landowners, we have identified possible construction access routes for installing the proposed overhead line. We've also put forward indicative options for the two construction compounds required. We'll use these to help minimise traffic movements in the area.



Updates to our Proposed Line Route

We have carried out more detailed assessment work near Lower Hordley and Noneley. Our work has also identified a possible alternative route near the Woodhouse Estate.

There is more detail on these updates below and a full plan of the Proposed Line Route is inside.

Do you have any comments on these updates?
Please see map page for details

New line route alternative near the Woodhouse Estate

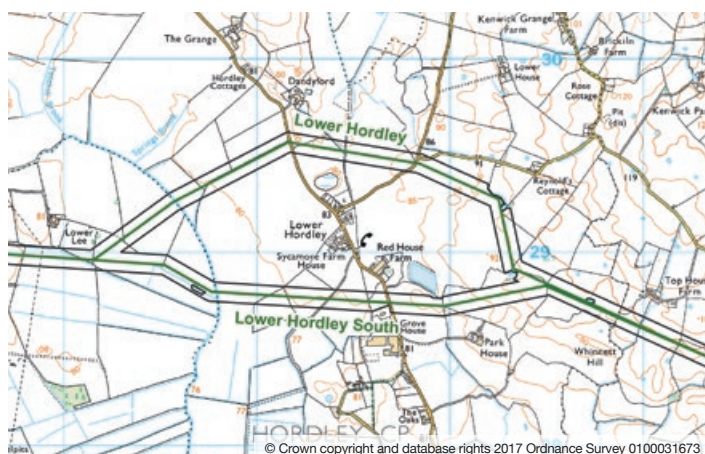
Landowner feedback in Section One has included a suggestion for an alternative route to the north of the Woodhouse Estate.

We think this could be a viable alternative, so we are carrying out further assessments before we confirm the proposed route.

We would welcome any comments on this update and we will consider these alongside our ongoing assessments.



Line route at Lower Hordley

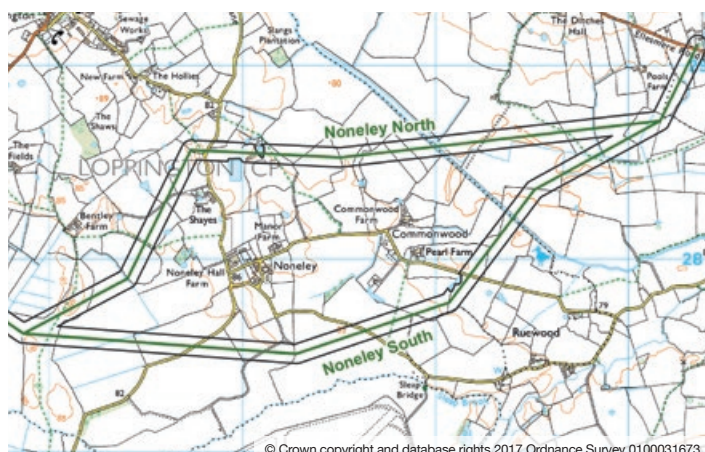


In this section, we assessed the likely landscape and visual, heritage and ecological impacts alongside those on the farming operations.

This found that the Lower Hordley south option would result in slightly fewer environmental impacts, although the new more northerly option has less impact on specific local farming activities and has more support from affected landowners.

We need to carry out further design work and more consultation with local people and landowners, as well as considering our assessments near the Woodhouse Estate before making a final decision.

Line route at Noneley



Further work involved environmental and engineering experts designing a route running north of Noneley and assessing likely landscape and visual, historic and ecological impacts, including listed buildings in the area.

So far, this work has shown no overall environmental preference for an option north of Noneley. Affected landowners have expressed support and concerns for both routes, although there is a slight preference for a southerly option, as previously proposed.

Consultation with local people and landowners is still ongoing and we will keep those who have expressed interest in this section informed.

Assessing environmental impact

Our Environmental Scoping Report explains where the project might have environmental impacts, such as on the landscape and views, ecology and heritage, flooding, and land use. We've discussed the report with bodies such as Shropshire Council, the Environment Agency and the Planning Inspectorate so they can advise us on our ongoing environmental assessments and be confident we're assessing all of the potential impacts.

We received some useful comments from these stakeholders and the Planning Inspectorate has accepted that the main environmental impacts are more likely during construction than when the line is installed. We're now continuing our environmental surveys and the initial assessments will be presented in the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report, which we'll publish at our statutory consultation in the autumn.

We have also recently notified the Planning Inspectorate of our intention to seek consent for the new line, and we are now included in the projects section on its website:
www.infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/

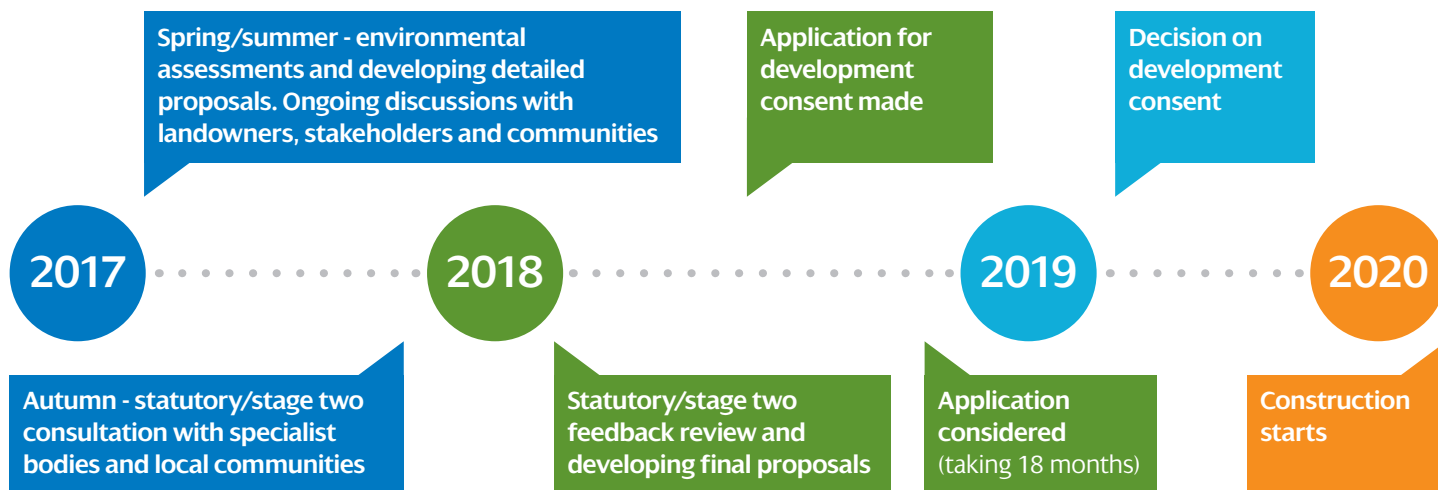
Autumn consultation – your opportunity to influence the design of the wood pole line

This autumn we'll hold a statutory consultation – this takes place in line with formal planning requirements when the proposals have reached a detailed stage.

We'll provide people living near the proposed route with information on our work including where we're proposing to place the wooden poles and the areas we need for construction. We will also consult specialist bodies responsible for the environment, heritage, ecology and other important considerations. We will send out a newsletter, our website will be updated and we'll hold events so you can talk to our team.

We anticipate this will be our last consultation and the final opportunity to influence the proposals before we make an application for consent. If you have comments on our detailed proposals it will be important to take part so your views can be considered.

Project timeline



Contact us:

Email us: enquiries@spennorthshropshire.co.uk

Visit our website: www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/north_shropshire

Give us a call: 0800 804 4666

Write to us: FREEPOST SPEN NSR

We're sending a copy of this newsletter to residents, businesses and landowners and occupiers in the consultation area. We're also sending it to local parish councils.

If you'd like any further copies or would like a large print version, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Do you have an interest in land near the proposed overhead line?

We really appreciate the positive approach from those who own, occupy or have another interest in land affected by the proposals, and their willingness to work with us to reach agreements. We'll be progressing with formal agreements with these landowners in the summer and early autumn 2017.

Where no agreement is reached, we will seek to use the statutory powers granted to us under the relevant legislation. In such cases, we will continue to negotiate agreements, which is our preferred approach and for which the majority of landowners have indicated a preference.

Requests For Information

Anyone with an interest in land affected by the project will be notified at our statutory consultation (later this year). To ensure we write to all relevant people we want to obtain the correct information on land ownerships, tenancies and any other interests.

To make sure we have all of the information we need, we will be writing to those we understand to have a land interest to find out about any interests relevant to their land.

This will be through a 'Request for Information' which landowners will receive over the next couple of months. Please let us know as soon as possible if you have any questions about this.

Do you have any comments on the Proposed Line Route in Lower Hordley, Noneley or the Woodhouse Estate?

You can give us your views on the Proposed Line Route in Lower Hordley, Noneley or the Woodhouse Estate by email at enquiries@spennorthshropshire.co.uk or write to **FREEPOST SPEN NSR**.

We'll also be holding another stage of consultation in autumn 2017, where local communities will be able to comment on the Proposed Line Route and detailed plans for the overhead line, such as individual wood pole positions.

This will be a statutory consultation – more detail on what this means and why it's important is on the back page.

