



E: norman.ferguson@gov.scot

By email only to:
gmimnagh@spenergynetworks.co.uk

Date: 04 February 2026

Our Reference: ECU00006274
Your Reference:

Dear Mr Mimmagh,

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989

THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

SCREENING OPINION

On 22 October 2025 the Scottish Ministers received a request under regulation 8(1) of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (“the EIA Regulations”) from SP Transmission Plc (“the Applicant”) for an EIA screening opinion to install and operate a new 132 kV overhead line (“OHL”) supported by trident ‘H’ wood poles, between the consented Greenburn Wind Park substation and the existing New Cumnock substation. The proposed Development will be located approximately 5.5 km to the east of New Cumnock, East Ayrshire within the planning authority area of East Ayrshire Council.

Under regulation 9 of the EIA Regulations, the Scottish Ministers are required to adopt a screening opinion for the proposed Development. This letter contains such a screening opinion.

Information Requirements

The EIA Regulations set out (at 8(2)) the information that must accompany any request for a screening opinion. The Applicant submitted a comprehensive description of the infrastructure to be installed and the works to be undertaken; a description of the location, surrounding area and of the area of land on which the proposed Development is to be located, and of environmental sensitivities of such areas; as well as a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be affected. A description of proposed mitigation measures were included in the screening request and taken into account by the Applicant’s own conclusions regarding the potential for significant environmental effects. A plan was submitted outlining the route plan for the proposed Development and plans were also submitted detailing environmental constraints.

The proposed Development will comprise:

- Approximately 6.75 km of new OHL supported by trident H wood poles approximately between 10 and 17 metres in height;
- Two sections of underground cable of approximately 1.7 km in total length;
- Establishment of suitable laydown areas for material and installation of temporary track solutions;
- Upgrades to existing tracks where necessary; and
- Temporary steel matting or timber roadways, and potentially stone tracks

Consultation

Regulation 8(5) of the EIA Regulations sets out that the Scottish Ministers must consult the planning authority as to the planning authority's views on whether the proposed Development is EIA development, unless the planning authority's views have already been conveyed to the Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers consulted East Ayrshire Council on 19 November 2025. The planning authority submitted a response stating its view that the proposed Development does not constitute EIA development.

Scottish Ministers' Screening Opinion

EIA development is defined in the EIA Regulations, in respect of an application for consent under the Electricity Act 1989, as Schedule 1 development or Schedule 2 development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

The proposed Development falls under Schedule 2 development.

In adopting a screening opinion as to whether the proposed Development is EIA development, the Scottish Ministers must in all cases take into account such of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations as are relevant to the proposed Development, and the available results of any relevant assessment.

The Scottish Ministers have taken into account the selection criteria, all of the information submitted in respect of the request for a screening opinion as well as the views of East Ayrshire Council and adopt the opinion that **the proposed Development does not constitute EIA development and any forthcoming application for consent (under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989) does not require to be accompanied by a full Environmental Impact Assessment report.**

East Ayrshire Council's consultation response to the screening consultation is attached to this letter. In accordance with Regulation 7(2), this screening opinion is accompanied by the following written statement with reference to the selection criteria within Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations as are relevant to the proposed Development. In accordance with the EIA Regulations, a copy of the screening opinion has been issued to the planning authority.

Written Statement

Characteristics of the Proposed Development

The proposed Development is as described above which would consist of 6.75 km of OHL. Supported by trident H poles with a nominal height of approximately 10-22 metres, including

insulators which are approximately 1.6 metres in height. The spacing between wood poles will average between 80 metres to 100 metres. The proposed Development is required to connect the consented Greenburn Wind Park substation into the electricity transmission network via the existing New Cumnock substation.

Location of the Proposed Development

The proposed Development will be located approximately 5.5 km to the east of Cumnock, East Ayrshire. It is bound to the north by the consented Greenburn Wind Park substation and to the south by the existing New Cumnock Collector Substation.

A 200 metre wide corridor has been adopted for the proposed development, the final alignment will be subjected to further public and statutory consultation. It generally comprises undulating areas of foothills and broad river valley.

There are no nationally designated landscapes within the route study area. A small portion of the Doon Valley Local Landscape Area lies within the south-western part of the study boundary. The landscape character types present along the route include Southern Uplands with Forest, Foothills, Upland Basin, and Southern Uplands. In relation to designated heritage assets, there are no World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, listed gardens or designed landscapes, nor any historic battlefields within 3 km of the proposed route.

With regard to potential sensitive receptors along the route, there are no statutory designated sites within 1 km of the route and one non-statutory designation (Glaisnock Moss/Carnivan Hill).

The landscape is characterised by commercial forestry (of varying maturity) and opencast coal mining and restoration. The main habitats within the survey area are woodlands in the south and very north and grassland habitats between. There are a wide range of other habitats present including bogs, swamps, flushes, scrub and standing water.

The River Nith and one of its main tributaries, the Beoch Lane watercourse, pass through the Survey Area, and both are recognised as priority habitats on the Scottish Biodiversity List.

Characteristics of the Potential Impact

Glaisnock Moss/Carnivan Hill Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) is located in the very northern part of the Survey Area, aerial imagery suggests a hydrological link between the proposed Development and the LNCS via an unnamed tributary of the Linn Burn. Mitigation such as maintaining watercourse buffers through design and minimising the number crossings will be followed to reduce the potential impact on this LNCS.

Regarding hydrology and flood risk, the route design has been modified to lessen potential hydrological effects and to avoid, as far as possible, placing poles within the River Nith floodplain. The design will continue to evolve to incorporate information on private water supplies, and best practice measures would be implemented during construction to minimise sediment release and the risk of pollution entering existing watercourses.

The grid connection project will need to be assessed cumulatively alongside any consented developments and those that are the subject of valid applications. This may include consideration of other similar infrastructure projects where they have the potential to give rise to combined or incremental effects.

Commercial coniferous woodland is located at the southern end of the survey area. The potential removal of this forestry forms part of the project development description. Efforts will be taken through the detailed alignment design to minimise forestry removal unless it is unavoidable due to other balancing environmental factors.

The proposed route mostly crosses mineral soils with no peat, although the peat survey data indicates small peat areas exist at the northern and southern ends. Construction of the underground cable (UGC) in these areas will require some peat excavation, but the material is expected to be reused onsite to backfill the trench, resulting in no significant impact. Major excavation for access tracks is not anticipated because low ground pressure vehicles or temporary matting will be used, minimising effects on peat.

The production of waste is anticipated to be of low volume, pollution and nuisances beyond emissions associated with construction can be controlled through applied mitigation. The risk of major accidents and disasters along with risk to human health are considered to be low.

The proposed Development is located in a remote rural area, with no nearby settlements apart from a small number of dispersed individual dwellings and farmhouses along the B741 to the south of the route corridor, and one to the north. As a result, the potential for impacts on residential amenity would be limited and minimised.

The Scottish Ministers therefore conclude that the effects of the proposed Development are not likely to be significant and therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment report shall not be required.

Proposed Mitigation Measures to Avoid or Prevent Significant Adverse Effects:

The Company have proposed the following mitigation measures in order to prevent or avoid any significant adverse effects:

- Species Protection Plan (“SPP”);
- Bird Protection Plan;
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (“CEMP”);
- Desk Based Archaeological Assessment;
- Construction Traffic Management Plan (“CTMP”);
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment (“CMRA”);
- Maintaining watercourse buffers, minimising river crossings;
- Compensatory planting for the full area of tree loss;
- Site Waste Management Plan (“SWMP”); and
- Enhancement and then compensation will be undertaken for any priority habitats impacted

This screening opinion does not constitute pre-application advice and is provided without prejudice to the assessment of any future application under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Yours sincerely

Norman Ferguson
Energy Consents Unit
A member of the staff of the Scottish Ministers

SP Transmission Plc
Per The Scottish Government
Scottish Government
Energy Consents Unit

Direct Line: Graham Westwater

Our Ref: 25/0001/S37SCR

Date: 11th December 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION NO.: 25/0001/S37SCR
PROPOSAL: Screening Request for New 132 (KV) Overhead Line (OHL)
ADDRESS: Greenburn 132KV Connection Project, 5.5km to the East of Cumnock, East Ayrshire

I write in connection with the recent consultation sent by the Scottish Government to East Ayrshire Council, as Planning Authority, in respect of the above which seeks the Council's views on whether the proposed development is EIA development, as required by Regulation 8 of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

EIA development is defined in the Regulations, in respect of an application, as a proposed development which is either Schedule 1 development, or Schedule 2 development which is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

With due regard to the selection criteria of Schedule 3 for screening Schedule 2 development set out within the above Regulations, the Council is of the view that **this development is not EIA development**. A brief overview of the reasons for this is set out below.

The following statement gives the full reasons for this conclusion:

Characteristics of development

The proposed development comprises an Overhead Line (OHL) connection as part of the Greenburn 132KV Connection Project, 5.5km to the East of Cumnock, East Ayrshire. The OHL is required to connect the new substation at Greenburn Wind Farm to the existing electrical substation at New Cumnock. It will involve the construction of a double circuit 132 KV OHL carried on Trident wooden poles with galvanised steelwork cross-arms supporting aluminium conductors on insulators. The standard height of wood poles varies between 10m to 22m, with the requirement for this development to be between 10m to 17m in height, as required. The distance between wood poles will average between 80m to 100m but can be increased if there is a requirement to span a larger distance due to the presence of a feature in the landscape, such as a river or loch.

Location of the development

The Proposed Development would be approximately 23km in length between the substations. Currently a 200m wide corridor has been identified for the proposed route, which will be refined as the design develops.

In terms of landscape designations, there are no national landscape designations along the route study area. A small section of the Doon Valley Local Landscape Area falls within part of the south-western study area. The landscape character types along the route study area comprise Southern Uplands with Forrest, Foothills, Upland Basin and Southern Uplands.

With regards designated heritage assets there are no World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings/gardens or designed landscapes, or historic battlefields within 3km of the proposed route.

In terms of potential sensitive receptors along the route, there are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the route and one non-statutory designation (Glaisnock Moss/Carnivan Hill).

The site is characterised by commercial forestry (of varying maturity), opencast coal mine restoration grasslands and numerous areas of bog, scrub and standing water.

Characteristics of potential impacts

The Proposed Development is required to be screened for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as it is considered a Schedule 2 development in the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations'). This is under Part 2 (a) for an electric line installed above ground with a voltage of 132kVs or more.

The Applicant has provided an assessment of the proposals against the relevant EIA regulations. They have concluded that the impact would not trigger an EIA under Part 2 (a) of regulations. Preliminary Landscape and Ecological assessments have been carried out, with the intention of developing these further as the design and scope of the project develops. The initial assessments do not anticipate any significant impacts in regards to these matters and given the nature of the development, the Council would agree with this view.

The proposal is situated in a remote, rural area, with no settlements in close proximity, with the exception of scattered single dwellings and farmhouses along the B741, to the south of the route corridor and one to the north. This would limit and minimise the likelihood of any impacts in terms of residential amenity.

In terms of hydrology and flood risk, the route design has been adapted to reduce any potential hydrological impacts and minimise the siting of the poles within the River Nith flood plain. The design is also intended to evolve to factor in private water supplies and best practice would be used during site management of the construction works to minimise sediment and any potential pollution into existing watercourses.

A full schedule of mitigation measures which would cover all the above subjects, will be devised, (again as the scope and design of the project is developed) and would be submitted in support of the formal application to the ECU. It is agreed that such

mitigation is likely to further reduce potential impacts and subject to that additional mitigation and appropriate refinement of the development upon further information being gathered, the development is unlikely to result in significant effects.

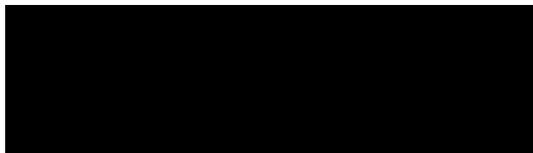
Conclusions

Based on the submitted information with regards the proposed scope of development anticipated, it is unlikely that there would be any significant impacts likely as a result of the proposed development across a range of different subject matters, including landscape and visual impacts, other environmental impacts including ornithological, hydrology, heritage and archaeological, noise, traffic impacts and residential amenity impacts.

The Council, having considered the selection criteria of Schedule 3, the information submitted by the Applicant in respect of their screening request, together with the above assessment, considers that the proposed development **does not constitute EIA development**. Therefore, it is the view of the Council that any subsequent application submitted for this proposal is not required to be accompanied by an EIA Report. Nevertheless, the various impacts will be expected to be assessed in full and details of any necessary mitigation measures to address impacts would be expected to be set out in the detailed supporting information submitted with the application.

I trust the above is helpful. If you would like to discuss anything or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

David Wilson
Development Management Manager