1. Who are SP Energy Networks? SP Energy Networks is part of the ScottishPower Group. It is responsible for the transmission and distribution of electricity in central and southern Scotland, and, through SP Manweb and SP Electricity North West, the distribution networks in North Wales and North West England. Its role is to maintain, operate and invest in the network to secure a safe, reliable, and economic service for current and future consumers.

2. What statutory obligations does SP Energy Networks have? Statutory obligations are set out in the Electricity Act 1989 and in the transmission licence. It includes a responsibility to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical transmission system in accordance with security and quality of supply standards. An obligation to connect new power generators to the system and, make sure any work carried out keeps disturbance to the natural and built environment and the people who live in it, work in it or enjoy it to a minimum.

3. Who regulates SP Energy Networks? SP Energy Networks is regulated by Ofgem (Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets) the independent national regulatory body.

4. Why is this project needed? This project is needed to make sure we provide a safe, secure and efficient electricity connection. As a regulated utility provider, SPT takes electricity generated from power stations, windfarms and various other utilities and transports it through the transmission network, which comprises over 4000km of overhead lines and 320km of underground cables. The project is required as the existing T Route is coming to the end of its operational life and is no longer fit for purpose. A replacement overhead line is also required to ensure security of supply and increase capacity.

5. What exactly are you proposing? We are proposing to replace a section of the existing 132kV overhead line supported on steel lattice towers (AK and T Routes) between the AK Route near Annan and the National Grid Energy Transmission (NGET) connection in the Solway Firth. The new overhead line will carry a maximum voltage of 132kV and will be supported on wood pole structures of the Trident design, with 4 replacement steel towers. We are also proposing to reconductor the existing AK Route, north of Annan, where the towers do not require replacement.

6. How much will the project cost? It will be funded through our regulated transmission businesses and agreed with the regulator Ofgem.

7. Who will pay for this project? The cost of investment in the electricity system is partly borne by consumers through electricity bills, so we work hard to be economic and efficient in the way we maintain and grow the network. The amount we invest in our networks and the amount we are able to recover is agreed with Ofgem, which is committed to working with industry, governments and consumer groups to deliver a net zero economy at the lowest cost to consumers.

8. Who gives you permission to construct new overhead lines? An application for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to install the proposed overhead lines will be submitted to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit. As such, Scottish Ministers will make the final decision as to whether or not it is granted.

9. When is the project needed by? We plan to have the project in operation by 2028.

10. Will you be consulting local people? Public consultation events were held virtually in 2022 and 2023 to gather feedback on the route.

11. Can you use underground cables? SP Energy Networks is a responsible company and we care about the environment and communities in which we operate. We will work closely with stakeholders and communities to develop a technically feasible and economically viable solution which causes, on balance, the least disturbance to people and the environment.

The UK Government and the electricity industry, including SPEN, constantly review their positions on the use of transmission overhead lines. Wherever practical, we take an overhead line approach when planning and designing new or replacement major infrastructure projects. At the present time, SPEN remain confident that a continuous overhead line solution can be found for the T Route Rebuild Project. However, as set out above, we will continue to review and test this through feedback from consultation and from details emerging as the environmental survey work progresses.

You can find out more about our approaches to both overhead lines and undergrounding in our Approach to Routeing Transmission Infrastructure document https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/SPEN_ Approach_to_Routeing.pdf (opens in a new window).

12. Can you tell me more about Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs)? Wherever electricity is used there will also be electric and magnetic fields. This is inherent in the laws of physics - we can modify the fields to some extent, but if we are going to use electricity, then EMFs are inevitable. Like many other things that we encounter in nature, EMFs can be harmful at high-enough levels. But the fields required, for example, to start interfering with the body's nervous system are much greater than those produced by the UK electricity system. Hundreds of millions of pounds have been spent investigating this issue around the world. Research still continues to seek greater clarity; however, the balance of scientific evidence to date suggests that EMFs do not cause disease. 'Electric and Magnetic Fields – The Facts' is a document produced by the UK electricity industry. This document is available to download on the T Route Rebuild project website