

Mid Wales (Powys) Conjoined Wind Farms Public Inquiry

Application dated 2 December 2009 for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to install and keep installed a 132kV overhead electric line from the proposed Llandinam Wind Farm to Welshpool Substation

SP Manweb plc

Representation on Conjoined Public Inquiry programme

and other issues

1. The following note sets out the representations of SP Manweb plc (SPM), the applicant for the above application, on the structure of the Conjoined Public Inquiry ('the CPI'). It also represents SPM's views as an interested party in relation to the other applications to be considered at the CPI.
2. In providing this note, SPM has had regard to the matters raised in the Meeting Note of the Preliminary Pre-Inquiry meeting on 28th November 2012 ('the PPIM'). In particular, SPM has noted that the CPI is programmed to last between June 2013 and June 2014.
3. SPM's view is outlined below in the order of the matters raised at the PPIM.

Provisional timetable – from Pre-Inquiry Meeting (PIM) to opening of the CPI

4. SPM shares the general view expressed at the PPIM that the arrangements for the PIM, which is programmed for 18th February 2013, and (possibly) 25th February 2013, are challenging. With this in mind, SPM will want to work with other parties in the pre-inquiry period to help make the running of the inquiry as efficient as possible.
5. SPM noted at the PPIM that the Inspector suggested that full Statements of Case and Proofs of Evidence could be submitted on a rolling programme rather than expecting these to be submitted all at the same time before the start of the CPI. SPM noted the comments made by the local authority and CCW of the demand on them to respond to a number of documents at the same time. For everyone's benefit, SPM supports the proposal for a rolling programme approach and addresses this point further below.

Preliminary view on arrangements for the PIM

6. SPM would support the view that Llandrindod Wells is a suitable location for the PIM.

Preliminary view on arrangements for the Inquiry

7. Discussion under this item involved reference to cumulative impacts as one of a number of overarching topics which could be best considered jointly between all the applicants involved and third parties. SPM shares this view and in working with all parties involved to achieve the optimum outcome from this approach would refer to its involvement in the Inquiry as applicant for the Section 37 Consent application relating to the s36 application for the Llandinam wind farm and as an interested party in the other wind farms, being the statutory licence holder of the distribution network and a promoter of the SP Mid Wales Connection Project, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008, which is related to these and other wind farm applications.
8. As far as inquiry programming is concerned, SPM would like to make the following representations.

Section 37 Application for the Llandinam 132kV connection ('the Llandinam connection')

9. SPM's Llandinam connection is the distribution network connection for CeltPower Limited's proposed 126MW wind turbine generating station at Llandinam.
10. In relation to the Llandinam connection, SPM has noted the comments raised by the Countryside Council for Wales in its letter dated 24 October 2012 and the reasons stated by Powys Council in its Form B response dated 30 October 2012 concerning the need and design for the proposed overhead line. SPM is currently assessing the technical implications of bringing forward suggested design changes. The outcome of this technical assessment will not be concluded until February 2013.
11. As stated above, in the event that SPM changes the design, this is likely to require additional environmental assessment and the production of Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI). This would need to be presented in accordance with relevant EIA regulations. In terms of timescale, SPM considers that the additional assessment would be completed by late Summer 2013 with the SEI being submitted during Autumn 2013.
12. In addition, the CCW consultation response produced on 24th October 2012, immediately prior to the committee meeting on 25th October 2012, also raised issues that SPM will want to address by producing supplementary environmental information. SPM proposes that this be produced as part of the SEI referred to above.

Other wind farms and SPM's Mid Wales Connections Project

13. The four other (i.e. not Llandinam) wind turbine generating stations to be considered at the CPI are to be connected to the distribution network by an SPM project, the SP Mid Wales Connections ('the Mid Wales connection'). The Mid Wales connection will be the subject-matter of an application for development consent under the Planning Act 2008.

14. SPM is currently only part of the way through its pre-application consultation process regarding the Mid Wales connection, having announced in July 2012 three preferred route corridors for the proposed 132kV connections. More detailed line route options will be presented for consultation during spring 2013 and SPM expects to identify its preferred line route options in autumn 2013. It is currently anticipated that an application for development consent for the proposed scheme will be made in early 2014.
15. To the extent, therefore, that it may be necessary for the wind farm applicants at the CPI to consider any cumulative effects of their proposals with the SP Mid Wales connection, SPM will not be able to inform the CPI with details of its preferred line route until Autumn 2013 and will not have selected a proposed line route until after that. In this context, SPM notes the advice in NPS EN-1 paras 4.9.2/3.

Inquiry programme

16. It follows that:
- a. As the need for the Llandinam connection is driven by the proposal for the Llandinam wind farm, the consideration of the application for the Llandinam connection should not come before the Llandinam wind farm proposal;
 - b. There is clear merit in having the five wind farm applications heard together (i.e. consecutively) and, therefore, before the Llandinam connection application;
 - c. The Llandinam connection part of the CPI should not be heard until SPM has been able to produce its SEI and that that has been considered and taken into account by other parties; and
 - d. That, insofar as it is necessary for SPM to provide evidence to the CPI on the Mid Wales connection, that evidence is not likely to be available until the end of 2013, at the earliest.
17. In addition, SPM has yet to make applications for any compulsory land rights in connection with the Llandinam connection. In relation to this connection these are likely to be compulsory easements, insofar, that is, that SPM has not been able to acquire such rights voluntarily. It is, furthermore, axiomatic that any easement can only be identified when SPM has undertaken any review of the line, and in particular pole positions, in connection with the possible redesign.
18. In consequence of the above, SPM submits that:
- a. Its evidence should be programmed towards the end of the CPI; and
 - b. In any event, its part of the CPI should not be programmed to start before early 2014.

Draft Statement of Matters

19. In response to the copies of the Draft Statement of Matters, which were handed out at the meeting and the suggestion that any comments should be provided with this note, SPM has noted a reference in paragraph 7(a) that it would like to clarify. Paragraph 7(a) refers to landscape and visual impacts, including impact on the Vale of Montgomery Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales. SPM would suggest this issue should be considered under 7(d) which deals with cultural heritage.