



Department for  
Energy Security  
& Net Zero

Mr Jon Maloney  
SP Manweb PLC  
Electricity House  
Wrexham Road  
Pentry Bychan  
Wrexham  
LL14 4DU

**Energy Infrastructure Planning**

Level 3, Victoria 1  
1 Victoria Street,  
London  
SW1H 0ET

**Email:**

S37consents@energysecurity.gov.uk

**Website:** [www.gov.uk/beis](http://www.gov.uk/beis)

Our ref: 1448U  
Your ref: JM/E78123

2 August 2023

Dear Mr Maloney,

**SCREENING DECISION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER THE  
ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)  
(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2017 (“THE 2017  
REGULATIONS”)**

**NAME OF SCHEME: Llanbedrog – Botwnnog/Edern 11KV Rebuild**

Screening decision for a proposal to rebuild an 11KV overhead electricity line of approximately 7,290 metres. The proposal will involve the removal of the existing wooden poles and the installation of new poles of similar structure and size in close proximity to the route of the existing overhead electricity line (the “proposed development”).

The proposed development requires Section 37 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 and are subject to the 2017 Regulations.

The Secretary of State has considered the factors set out in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations, together with the information within the supplied documentation (“the Application”) by SP Manweb PLC (“the Applicant”) in relation to the impacts on the environment of the proposed development and the views of Gwynedd Council (“the LPA”). In particular, in reaching his decision the Secretary of State notes the following factors:

1. The Development does not fall within Schedule 1 (mandatory EIA);



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2. The Development falls under Schedule 2 of the 2017 Regulations as the electricity line is to be installed above ground in a sensitive area;
3. The Development is to replace 87 poles of similar structure and size along a route in close proximity to the path of the current overhead electricity line;
4. It is noted that the LPA have assessed the Development under the requirements of the 2017 Regulations and have commented that as this is a replacement for an existing line in the same location, the impacts are likely to be minimal. (Form B dated 5 July 2021, ref. C21/0305/33/TR);
5. The existing line and the Development are located within the Cors Geirch Site of Special Scientific Interest (“the SSSI”), Corsydd Llyn / Lleun Fens Special Area of Conservation (“the SAC”) and the Anglesey and Llyn Fens Ramsar site (“the Ramsar Site”). The SSSI is designated for the internationally important valley mire communities which support a range of nationally rare plants and invertebrates. Other habitats and species are also found within the SSSI. The primary reason for the SAC is the presence of alkaline fens as well as the Desmoulin’s whorl snail *Vertigo Moulinsiana*. Finally, the Ramsar site is designated for:
  - Base-Rich, calcareous fens which is a rare habitat type within the United Kingdom’s biogeographical zone, and;
  - Diverse flora and fauna with associated rare species and is of the special value for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of the region.
6. The application included a letter to the applicant from Natural Resource Wales (“NRW”) dated 20 April 2021. In this letter NRW had no objections to the application but they did make comments that the current assent has expired and NRW cannot provide assurances that there will not be any impacts on the SAC. Furthermore, there is no suggestion that the applicant has sought up to date surveys along the route of the line. In her letter, the Senior Biodiversity Officer at Gwynedd Council recommends that an ecologist carries out checks to the sites prior to the work commencing and provide guidance to workers to avoid harm to nature and wildlife. The Secretary of State considers that, in the absence of recent ecological surveys, having an ecologist on site will mitigate the potential risks of the development on the SSSI, SAC and RAMSAR sites.
7. The development also passes through Llŷn AONB. The development will replace poles of a similar design and size and will be placed at the same locations as the current poles. On the Form B, the LPA commented that ‘as this is a replacement for an existing line, the visual impact of the proposal is likely to be minimal.’ Therefore, due to the



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temporary and minor nature of the construction works, the development is not expected to be a detriment to the AONB.

8. The applicant had consultations with Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS). The archaeologist informed the LPA that there are scheduled monuments within the vicinity of the line's route, including Garn Bodaun which is located approximately 500m north of the line. Further, the archaeologist made comments that the line goes through areas which could be of archaeological interest. It was recommended to that applicant that a formal archaeological pre-determination is carried out as well as recommending that an archaeologist carries out a walk through to compliment the pre-determination. The application did not submit any evidence that a pre-determination or walk through took place. The Secretary of State considers that the applicant should engage with GAPS once the pre-determination and walk through is complete to pass them the results of the studies.

Taking account of the abovementioned factors and information received, the Secretary of State concludes that the proposed works are not EIA development under the 2017 Regulations and do not require a statutory EIA as they are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment due to their nature, location and size. A copy of this letter has been sent to the LPA for information.

Yours sincerely,

*John McKenna*  
Head of Network Consents  
Energy Infrastructure Planning