
Core Document
CD1.9

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16 March 2023

Barton Wilmore (now Stantec)
The Pearl
New Bridge Street
Newcastle
NE1 8AQ

FAO: Michelle Robinson

Dear Michelle,

Request for Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended in 2018 and 2020)

Our reference: 23/00628/EIA

EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) Screening opinion request for replacement cables and associated development

Electricity Cables Between Wincobank And Templeborough Substations, Via Newhall Road, Brightside Lane, Meadowhall Road, River Don, St Lawrence Road And Highgate

This letter represents a formal Screening Opinion by Sheffield City Council (SCC) under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended in 2018 and 2020). A Screening Opinion is a written statement of the opinion of the relevant planning authority as to whether the development is EIA development. This opinion is issued in response to your Screening Request, including all documents supplied, which were published on the Council's website on 23 and 24 February 2023.

Location and Proposal

The proposal relates to three below ground cables which pass beneath various sites within the urban area of Sheffield, extending to a small area which is within the jurisdiction of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

It is understood that the oil filled cables were commission in 1968 and are coming to the end of their life. National Grid Electricity Transmission plc are looking to decommission electricity cables between substations at Pitsmoor, Wincobank and Templeborough and to install new cables between Pitsmoor and Templeborough substations.

The transmission cables are known as 'the Sheffield Ring' and follow the railway track from Brightside Junction to the A6109, following the road down to the River Don crossing. Here there are two cable bridges which pass over the River Don and the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal. The cable then continues north-east along Sheffield Road. The cable diverts south-east at Ferrars Road towards Templeborough substation. Apart from where the cables cross the river and the canal they are located underground.

Screening

The development does not fall within the definition of 'Schedule 1 development'.

The development is not listed as 'Schedule 2 development' as described in Regulation 2(1) of the 2017 EIA Regulations. However, given the scale of the proposal it could be considered to fall within section 10 Infrastructure projects (b) urban development projects.

The relevant threshold is (i) development which includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development.

The site is not within a sensitive area or particularly close to such an area as defined in the EIA regulations, passing through residential, commercial and industrial land.

When screening Schedule 2 projects the Local Planning Authority is obliged to consider the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, which includes:

- The characteristics of the development;
- Location of the development (with regard to specific matters which have to be considered in relation to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development); and
- Type and characteristics of the potential impact.

The NPPG provides further advice on EIA screening. A set of indicative thresholds and criteria have been produced to aid local planning authorities to determine whether a project is likely to have significant environmental effects. The guidance also gives an indication of the types of impact that are most likely to be significant for specific types of development. However, each development is considered on its own merits. The guidance makes it clear that developments above the indicative threshold should not be presumed to always require assessment, or those falling below could never give rise to significant effects, especially where the development is in an environmentally sensitive location.

The comprehensive EIA Impact Assessment Screening Report (February 2023) that has been submitted sets out that the development would have no significant

environmental impacts upon natural resources. Trenches would need to be dug to remove / replace sections of cable; however, these would be backfilled (and any contaminated material that is encountered would be removed and disposed of properly). Where encountered, trees would be protected as far as is practical using approved methods. A section of cabling would pass beneath the River Don and would also run alongside the river for a distance of 20 metres.

Once the development has taken place the land will appear little different with the original topography re-instated. The construction of the development and its operational phase are not expected to have any unusual environmental impacts on the use of natural resources.

It is acknowledged that there may be a degree of waste created through the course of the development and, during construction, there is the possibility that pollution (through construction vehicles), noise, dust, vibrations and general disturbance may be likely to occur; however, the development will be phased and managed through the implementation of a CEMP (Constructional Environmental Management Plan). Oil from the decommissioned cables will be disposed of in a responsible manner; again, covered by a CEMP.

The development is within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. A flood risk note has been prepared. It is considered to be unlikely that ground water will impact upon the operation of the development. Surface water and foul water will be managed through a CEMP during the construction phase of the development.

The site is within the City-wide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A Construction Traffic Management Plan would be implemented and this alongside the CEMP would seek to limit air pollution.

The scheme is not considered to affect the setting of any designated or non-designated heritage assets or scheduled ancient monuments once completed. Whilst the site runs between two listed structures on Brightside Lane, associated with the Forgemasters steelworks complex (Vickers Building and Roadside Wall), a Heritage Statement has been submitted which appropriately records and references these assets and notes that work needs to be undertaken with caution to ensure that there are no physical impacts on these buildings during the construction phase. Other listed buildings are separated from the route by intervening uses such that no impacts on these assets are envisaged. It is confirmed in the Statement that further consultation with South Yorkshire Archaeology Service will also be undertaken to ascertain the need for any more extensive archaeological investigation along the route, although this is considered unlikely. On this basis it is concluded that the heritage impacts in this case are not significant.

There is no reason to conclude that there would be a significant change or increase in the risks associated with the development. The development is not identified as a major hazard and does not lie within the consultation zone of any major hazards.

The most significant risks to health are from noise, air quality and contamination, through the spillage of oil from the decommissioned pipes. These can be adequately dealt with through a CEMP. Any impacts would be localised and for a short period of

time and the Impact Assessment sets out that the hours that the operations would be carried out would be limited.

It is not expected that the cumulative impacts with other permitted development within the locality of the site would have significant environmental effects.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence available it is concluded that the proposed impacts are likely to be localised and the effect would not be significant in EIA terms. An Environmental Statement is therefore not required.

The development would not require planning permission, being permitted development, as set out under Schedule 2, Part 15, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 (Development by statutory undertakers for the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity for the purposes of their undertaking).

I can confirm that I have the delegated authority to issue this opinion.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Bond', followed by a period.

Lucy Bond
Central Area and Major Projects Team Leader

Planning Services, City Futures Department

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24 November 2023

Stantec
Rotterdam House
116 Quayside
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NE1 3DY

FAO: Michelle Robinson

Dear Michelle,

Request for Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Our reference: 23/03573/EIA

EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) Screening opinion request for replacement cables and associated development

Electricity Cables Between Wincobank And Templeborough Substations, Via Newhall Road, Brightside Lane, Meadowhall Road, River Don, St Lawrence Road And Highgate

This letter represents a formal Screening Opinion by Sheffield City Council (SCC) under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). A Screening Opinion is a written statement of the opinion of the relevant planning authority as to whether the development is EIA development. This opinion is issued in response to your Screening Request, including all documents supplied, which were published on the Council's website on 23 and 24 February 2023.

Previous Screening Opinion

The Council previously adopted a screening opinion for the same project (but with a different cable route) on 16 March 2023, confirming that the development was not EIA development. This further screening request has been submitted following further detailed design work which has resulted in changes to the cable route. Five

parts of the proposed route are affected; however the primary change relates to the easternmost part of route where the proposed new cable location has moved close to the rear gardens of properties on Ferrars Road (although a significant stand off would still be retained). Through this further screening request the applicant is seeking confirmation that the revised scheme is still not EIA development.

Location and Proposal

The project is a National Grid project with Stantec acting on their behalf. The proposal is essentially to remove and replace a series of life expired existing underground electricity transmission cables connecting to 3 sub-stations between Sheffield and Rotherham. The new cables would run along a different alignment but would connect to the same substations.

The works would take place within the existing heavily urbanised Don Valley area, with the route running through commercial, industrial and residential areas. The proposed works would be undertaken in stages (with potentially multiple stages underway simultaneously) and would primarily (but not exclusively) affect land under the existing public highway, which would be managed through street works permits. The project is expected to start in May 2024 and to be completed in early 2027.

The applicant considers the works to be Permitted Development under Part 15 Class B of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) (as amended) and is not therefore intending to apply for planning permission for the works. This is subject to confirmation being provided that the works do not constitute EIA development – EIA applications do not benefit from Permitted Development rights. The majority of the works would take place within the administrative boundary of Sheffield City Council (with a small part in Rotherham) and therefore the applicant has submitted the Screening Request to SCC. Further details are included below:

Existing Cables

The existing cables to be removed comprise three below ground 275kilovolt (kV) transmission electricity cables which form part of what is known as the 'Sheffield Ring'. The cables are Pirelli 275kV oil filled, lead sheathed cables, commissioned in 1968. The applicant has advised that the cables have an anticipated lifetime of 50 years, with a maximum of 80 years.

The current route (west to east) follows the railway track from Brightside Junction to the A6109, where it diverts south east following the alignment of the road down to the River Don crossing. At this point, the cable passes over two existing cable bridges, one across the River Don and the other across the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal, before continuing north east along Sheffield Road. It diverts south east at Ferrars Road, towards Templeborough substation.

Cable Removal Works

Prior to the works commencing a construction compound would be established on open land adjacent to a steel works opposite Magna on Sheffield Road within the Rotherham administrative boundary. The existing cables would be excavated, with

the excavation spoil stored, managed and tested on-site and re-used to backfill the excavations where possible. Oil will be purged out of the existing cables and stored in double lined skips for disposal. The purged cables will then be re-buried. The existing cable bridges of the River Don and Sheffield and Tinsley Canal will also be dismantled and removed.

Replacement Cable Works

The applicant has indicated that the trenches required to lay the new cables would be typically 1.2m deep and 750mm wide and would be mainly within the public highway. The new electricity cables would be laid within the trenches and connected to the Wincobank and Pitsmoor substations and Wincobank and Templeborough substations. Horizontal directional drilled (HDD) cables would be drilled under the River Don and Sheffield and Tinsley Canal to allow underground cable connection beneath these watercourses instead of the previous bridges. There would also be some minor above ground works for the cable connections including the installation of above ground link pillars (kiosks) at joint bays on the new cable routes.

The applicant has provided plans and a narrative description of the proposed new cable route, which starts at the existing electricity sub-station located in the Wood Hill district north of Carlisle Street East. The cable will then run south along Newhall Road until the junction with the A6109 Brightside Lane where the cable route will then follow Brightside Lane in an easterly direction for approximately 1.3km at which point the road heads north before turning east again on the A6019 Meadowhall Road. The cable route continues on Meadowhall Road for a further approximate 1.3km. Where Meadowhall Road meets Alsing Road (north of Meadowhall Shopping centre and south of Meadowhall rail Interchange) the cable route continues east along Alsing Road until the M1 flyover. At this point the cable route turns south at ground level under the M1 viaduct or follows an alternative route across land at the Meadowhall staff car park until it meets Blackburn Meadows Way. At Blackburn Meadows Way the cable route turns east and follows Blackburn Meadows Way on its northern side for approximately 620m where the route passes under the River Don and proceeds south crossing the A6178 Sheffield Road into St Lawrence Road where the route continues south to Highgate, a distance of approximately 650m, the route follows Highgate to the east connecting with PRoW SHE/452 and then turns south and then east to connect with the electricity substation east of Chapel Flat Dike.

Screening

The development does not fall within the definition of 'Schedule 1 development'.

The development is not specifically listed as 'Schedule 2 development' as described in Regulation 2(1) of the 2017 EIA Regulations. However, given the scale of the proposal it could be considered to fall within section 10 Infrastructure projects (b) urban development projects.

The relevant threshold is (i) development which includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development.

The site is not within a sensitive area or particularly close to such an area as defined in the EIA regulations, passing through residential, commercial and industrial land.

When screening Schedule 2 projects the Local Planning Authority is obliged to consider the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, which includes:

- The characteristics of the development;
- Location of the development (with regard to specific matters which have to be considered in relation to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development); and
- Type and characteristics of the potential impact.

The NPPG provides further advice on EIA screening. A set of indicative thresholds and criteria have been produced to aid local planning authorities to determine whether a project is likely to have significant environmental effects. The guidance also gives an indication of the types of impact that are most likely to be significant for specific types of development. However, each development is considered on its own merits. The guidance makes it clear that developments above the indicative threshold should not be presumed to always require assessment, or those falling below could never give rise to significant effects, especially where the development is in an environmentally sensitive location.

The EIA Impact Assessment Screening Report (November 2023) that has been submitted assesses that the development would have no significant environmental impacts upon natural resources. Trenches would need to be dug to remove / replace sections of cable; however, these would be backfilled (and any contaminated material that is encountered would be removed and disposed of properly). The above ground development would be largely limited to small electrical equipment kiosks which would be likely to have minimal impact and are routine items of highway furniture which would be controlled to some extent by the Council as highways authority.

The applicant advises that, where encountered, trees would be protected as far as is practical using approved methods. Any loss of street trees/ replacement planting could be controlled through the street works permit and all protected trees would require further consent to work on or remove. A section of cabling would pass beneath the River Don; however the river and riparian zone will be protected through the use of underground HDD 20m from the watercourse. Once the development has taken place the land is likely to appear little different with the original topography re-instated.

Given the nature and extent of the proposed works and the fact that much of the affected land is within the highway or existing urbanised areas it is considered that there is no reasonable basis to conclude that the construction of the development and its operational phase would have any unusual or severe environmental impacts or an excessive use of natural resources.

It is acknowledged that there may be a degree of waste created through the course of the development and, during construction, there is the possibility that pollution (through construction vehicles), noise, dust, vibrations and general disturbance may occur. However the applicant states that the development will be phased and managed through the implementation of a CEMP (Constructional Environmental Management Plan). The applicant further explains how oil from the decommissioned cables will be disposed of in a responsible manner; again, covered by a CEMP. This would also be subject to relevant environmental controls and regulations.

The development is within Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. Flood risk has been considered within the Screening Report. The assessment is that it is unlikely that ground water will impact upon the operation of the development (with some limited de-watering likely to be required for the HDD). Surface water and foul water are proposed to be locally managed through a CEMP during the construction phase of the development. There is considered to be no reason to suspect the impact of the development upon the water environment would be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

The site is within the City-wide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A Construction Traffic Management Plan would be implemented and this alongside the CEMP would seek to limit air pollution. The project would undoubtedly lead to air quality emissions due to dust and fumes from construction activities and construction traffic and this impact would take place over the considerable duration of the project. However the construction work would largely take place within urban locations which are not particularly sensitive in terms of proximity to human and environmental receptors and would be limited to manageable work areas undertaken progressively. Where works would take place near to residential communities mitigation is proposed in terms of environmental controls managed through the CEMP. There is considered to be no reason to suspect the impact of the development upon air quality would be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

The scheme would not significantly affect the setting of any designated or undesignated heritage asset or scheduled ancient monuments once completed. Whilst the site runs between two listed structures on Brightside Lane, associated with the Forgemasters steelworks complex (Vickers Building and Roadside Wall), the applicant has indicated that work in these areas will be undertaken with caution to ensure that there are no physical impacts on these buildings during the construction phase. There will be no significant impact post completion. Other listed buildings are separated from the route by intervening uses such that no impacts on these assets are envisaged. The applicant has indicated that they will watch for archaeological features during the dig and liaise with South Yorkshire Archaeology Service if any such features are encountered. There is considered to be no reason to suspect the impact of the development upon heritage assets would be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations

There is no reason to conclude that there would be a significant change or increase in the major accident risks associated with the development. The development is not

identified as a major hazard and does not lie within the consultation zone of any major hazards.

The most significant risks to health are from noise, air quality and contamination, through the spillage of oil from the decommissioned pipes. These can be adequately dealt with through a CEMP. Any impacts would be localised and not of a scale, duration, magnitude or complexity which would ordinarily be considered to require Environmental Impact Assessment. Equally, although several major development projects are consented near the route (including the extension of Meadowhall and the River Don District scheme) and this is one of the key areas for employment growth proposed within The Sheffield Plan, there is no evidence to suggest that the impacts of the proposed re-cabling works would interact with or exacerbate the impacts of any other planned or approved development projects within the relevant area to any significant degree.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence available it is concluded that the impacts of the proposed development are likely to be localised and the environmental effects of the project would not be significant in EIA terms. An Environmental Statement is therefore not required and the development is not EIA development in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority.

The development would not require planning permission, being permitted development, as set out under Schedule 2, Part 15, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 (Development by statutory undertakers for the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity for the purposes of their undertaking).

I can confirm that I have the delegated authority to issue this opinion.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hull

City Centre and Major Projects Team Manager
Development Management