

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
Inveralmond House
200 Dunkeld Road
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Ms Ruth Cadbury MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

9 April 2025

Dear Ms Cadbury,

Follow-up to oral evidence session 2 April 2025

Thank you again for the opportunity to attend the Committee's oral evidence session last week. Please find below additional information that was requested by the Committee and further clarification points.

Contractual Arrangements between SSEN Distribution and London Heathrow

At several points during the Committee session Mr Woldbye referenced the contracts Heathrow held with SSEN Distribution as 'resilient power set-ups', suggesting they provided a higher standard of resilience. For clarity, Southern Electric Power Distribution plc (the company holding our south distribution licence) (SEPD) has a contract with Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) for connection of HAL's private network to the distribution network. This is one agreement that covers the three points of connection.

These terms and conditions are reflective of our general Connection Agreement terms and conditions and do not contain any enhanced or otherwise bespoke terms for Heathrow Airport, save for the configuration of the connections which are bespoke to each customer. The contract reflects an industry standard position where connected parties have a right to remain connected and energised and have a maximum or capped level of load but do not have a guaranteed or uninterrupted power supply.

As I explained to the Committee last week, connections are sometimes referred to as 'firm' connections but this is a term used across the industry to mean that there is at least one alternative route for electricity to flow through the network and this allows for a level of resilience in case of fault or other outage or unexpected incident.

In respect of contractual payments, Mr Woldbye referenced a figure of £135m to the Committee in terms of the amount paid by Heathrow to energy suppliers. This is not an amount reflective of charges invoiced to HAL's energy supplier for Distribution Use of System (DUoS) charges in any year, which are significantly lower. As such, we are unaware of the context of the value mentioned.

Priority customers

SSEN Distribution would like to clarify a point made by Mr Woldbye to the Committee where he suggested that SSEN had informed him that he was a 'Priority Number 1' customer. SSEN Distribution provided a detailed note to Heathrow on Tuesday 1 April explaining the operation of our network in order to assist Heathrow in making an informed decision on whether they wished to reconfigure their private network to receive power from all three available links as was case prior to the disruption. This confirmed the availability of the arrangement that had been offered to them by 10:00am on Friday 21 March.

In that note, a statement was included referencing how the network would be operated in the unlikely event of further outages on the National Grid Electricity Transmission system at North Hyde. Reference was made to the Electricity Supply Emergency Code (ESEC) and Heathrow's 'protected status' under that code. This was not intended to be interpreted by Heathrow as having number one priority and the application of any prioritisation regime would require to be under the direction of a government body and Ofgem.

SSEN Distribution Visibility of the Heathrow Private Network

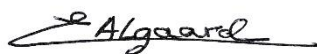
Bill Esterson MP requested that we provide clarification regarding our visibility of the Heathrow private network. I can confirm, as I stated, at the time of the Select Committee, we had no detailed visibility of the Heathrow private network beyond the boundary of our network.

Following the Select Committee, a technical meeting took place between SSEN Distribution, Heathrow and UK Power Network Services, who provide power distribution and energy infrastructure solutions for Heathrow, at 12.30 on Wednesday 2 April at which a high-level network diagram was shared on screen by Heathrow. Following that meeting, at 16.18 on Wednesday 2 April, UK Power Network Services provided SSEN Distribution with an augmented version of the SSEN Distribution network diagram to show a portion of the configuration of the Heathrow private network. The boundary was marked as denoting SSEN Distribution and UKPNS areas either side and the Heathrow side denoted as 'Network controlled by Heathrow Control Centre'.

We have had meetings with Heathrow prior to the North Hyde incident regarding the airport's future electricity needs, looking ahead to 2035 and 2050, most recently on 22 January 2025. In the previous meeting, on 5 December 2024, Heathrow Airport provided a very high-level diagram of a proposed future high voltage network. This reflected an entirely different arrangement to that in place today with one entirely new point of connection to the private network from either the Transmission or Distribution network and therefore, is not reflective in any way with the electrical configuration currently in place.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Eliane Algaard
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SSEN Distribution