# Land Rights and Consents for Electricity Network Infrastructure call for evidence

## 6 September 2022

### Summary of Logistics UK View

- Reform of land rights and consent processes is required to reduce time and costs for adding new connections to the network, promote transparent communications between all parties and ensure equitable connection opportunities for new connecting customers.
- Connection to the electricity network infrastructure is vital for deployment of necessary charging infrastructure to meet decarbonisation goals.
- The current voluntary negotiation process for wayleaves and easements introduces barriers for connection customers.

## About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of Britain's largest business groups and the only one providing a voice for the entirety of the UK's logistics sector. Our role, on behalf of over 19,000 members, is to enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of freight movement throughout the supply chain, across all transport modes. Logistics UK members operate over 200,000 goods vehicles - almost half the UK fleet - and some one million liveried vans. In addition, they consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and over 70 per cent of sea and air freight.

## Response to consultation

In responding to this consultation, we have summarised comments and feedback provided by our members.

**Context:**

For logistics operators to decarbonise, electric vehicle (EV) charge points are required at scale across sites and a large number of new connections and upgrades are required to the electricity network surrounding our sites. Reform of the land rights and consent process is needed to:

a) reduce the timeline (and associated costs) for connection customers to add new connections to the network,
b) promote transparency in communication between landowners, electricity operators and connection customers, and
c) ensure connection opportunities are equitable for new customers wanting to connection to the network.

**Q2 - What has been your overall experience of the land rights and consenting processes for electricity network infrastructure?**

Our members have confirmed that the current rights and consenting process to connect to and/or upgrade electricity network infrastructure presents challenges for new customers connecting to the network, or requiring upgrades, to deliver power needs. As logistics operators, this impacts the ability of businesses to deploy necessary infrastructure to meet decarbonisation goals. These challenges are difficult to circumvent and often cause delays to projects at additional cost which cannot be predicted or mitigated.

**Q3 - What is your experience of, and what are the pros and cons of, the current voluntary negotiation process for wayleaves and easements? For example, this could include consideration of time and cost, impact on landowners, communication between parties.**

The current voluntary negotiation process for wayleaves and easements introduces barriers for connection customers in four areas.

1. **Process:** The negotiation process between DNOs (on behalf of the connection customer) and landowners is complex, lengthy and does enable equitable opportunities for all parties to connect to the network.

*For example:* Proposed route upgrades cannot be initiated with landowners until a full design approval is completed by the DNO for that geography. Design approval often requires sign off from a large number of landowners and any disagreement requires reroute and design, meaning recommencing the approvals process and council permissions having to be sought again. Additionally, connection customers can go through the whole process to find power capacity has been pre-procurement, to be sold to connection customers at higher commercial rates. Connection customers must then agree to these commercial rates to deliver their power needs.

2. **Communication between parties:** There is limited communication between parties throughout the wayleave or easement process, leaving connection customers uninformed on business-critical work to support strategic planning and decision making.

   *For example:* Connection customers are informed of the application status when route design is unsuccessful, or at the end of the process when they are either granted access or turned down. When unsuccessful, limited information is shared as to why, which does not support connection customers with future applications. Combined, this makes it challenging for businesses to remain agile and make timely decisions to manage or mitigate the impact on electrification and EV infrastructure deployment in line with decarbonisation plans.

3. **Timeline:** The complexities in the negotiation process create delays that are difficult to predict and impacts strategic planning for EV charge point installation required to meet business decarbonisation goals.

   *For example:* Connection customers cannot progress infrastructure works until legal terms are agreed with landowners. Where the process introduces delays, such as reroute/design requiring new approvals, or ongoing negotiations between the DNO and landowners on ownership of the equipment, connection customers must wait for resolution which can take weeks or months. This delays the deployment of the charge point infrastructure needed, within the timelines required, to deliver decarbonisation goals.

4. **Cost**: The complexity of the application process, unforeseen delays and commercial interest of parties introduces additional costs.

   *For example:* Applications require dedicated resource. Unforeseen delays and challenges make this difficult to plan for accurately. Where applications require resubmission, it can lead to duplication of work at multiple stages of the process. Finally, where landowners procure land to lease at independent commercial rates the costs are hard to predict.

**Q7 & Q8 - How do you expect your experience of the voluntary negotiation process for wayleaves and easements to change given a rapid increase in network build will be required to meet net zero and energy security objectives? How do you think the voluntary negotiation process for wayleaves and easements could be improved?**

For connection customers to secure the power required to support site electrification for EV charge point deployment, a successful voluntary negotiation process would:

- Be streamlined to promote speed and agility of decision making for new connections/upgrades to the electricity network.
- Ensure greater transparency of communication and decision making between landowners and DNOs where there are time/cost impacts on connection customers.
- Ensure any process supports equitable commercial conduct by parties.

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