



Self-Approval of Designs User Guide

For Independent Connection Providers
(ICPs) & Independent Distribution
Network Operators (IDNOs)

May 2026

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1. Introduction

SP Electricity North West owns, operates, and maintains the local electricity distribution network. However, connection works are delivered within a competitive framework, and suitably accredited third-party providers may undertake a range of contestable activities.

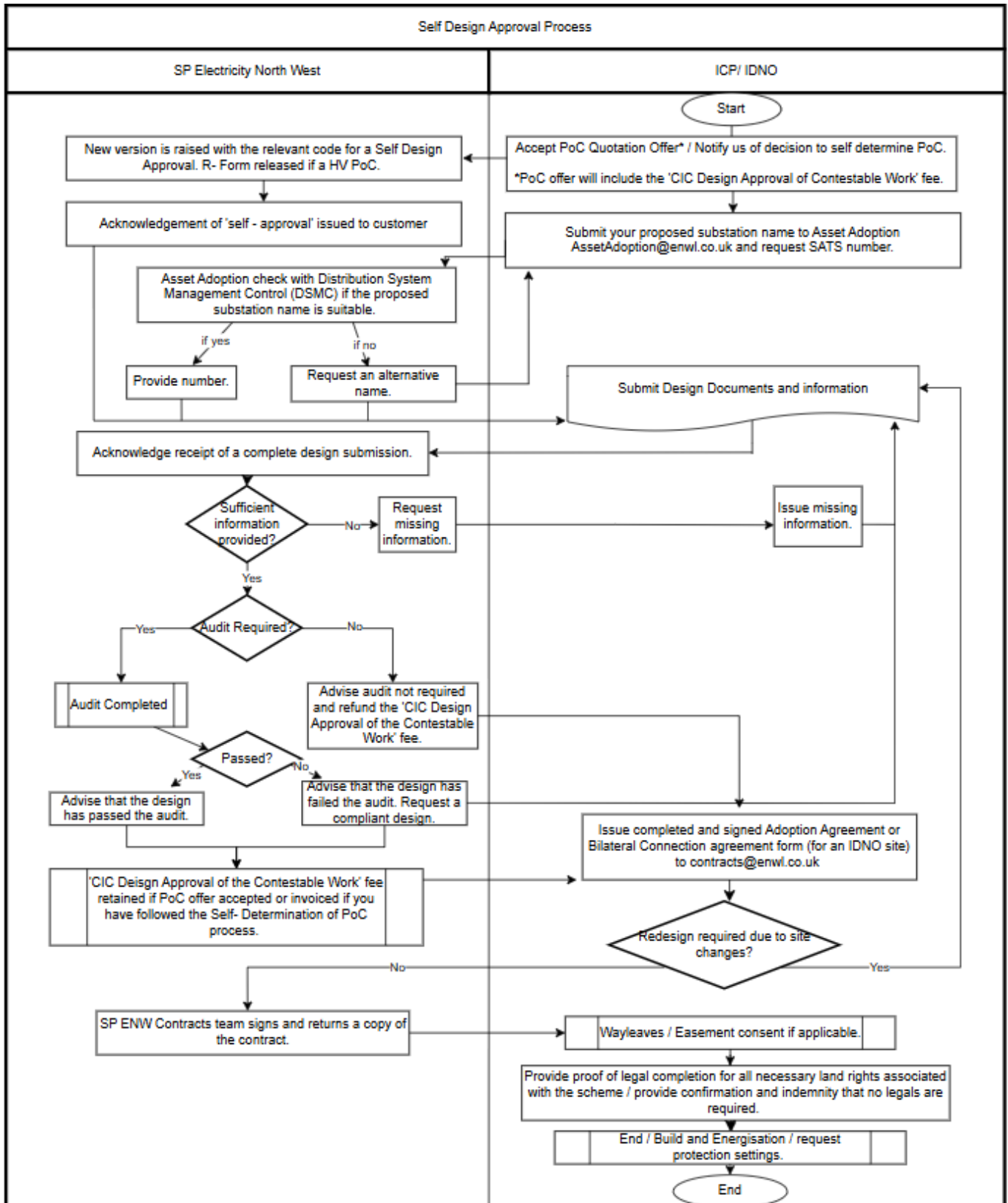
Independent Connection Providers (ICPs) and Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) can carry out connection works that interface with the SP Electricity North West network. Where eligibility and accreditation requirements are met, ICPs and IDNOs may also take responsibility for approving their own connection designs.

This guidance explains SP Electricity North West's Self-Design Approval arrangements. It sets out how ICPs and IDNOs can self-approve connection designs, the standards and policies that must be followed, and the responsibilities that apply.

If you are an ICP or IDNO planning to self-approve designs, you should read this document in full. It includes information on the self-design approval process, policy and compliance requirements, design responsibilities and liabilities, and land rights such as wayleaves and easements.

This guidance is intended to ensure that self-approved designs are safe, compliant, and suitable for adoption, while providing clarity and consistency for all parties involved.

2. Flow Process



1. You will need to notify us of your wish to determine a new Point of Connection (PoC) yourself, or if you wish for us to do this on your behalf. For more information on the Self-Determination Point of Connection (SDPoC) process, please read the SDPoC user guide on our website.

2. You should either follow the new SDPoC process, or the standard process for determining a PoC. If you request us to provide a PoC, you will receive a formal PoC connection offer. Should you choose to proceed you will need to send payment in line with our standard charges, signed acceptance form, and a notification that the design will self-approved, to us at connectionapplications@enwl.co.uk

If you decide to determine your own PoC, you will need to complete a Self-Determination of Point of Connection Acceptance Form (see Appendix 3), confirming that the design will be self-approved and send to connectionapplications@enwl.co.uk

Please note that your signature on the Notification form will confirm that the design is in accordance with all our latest network policies. We will acknowledge your submission and confirm that it is a 'self-design approval' project. The notification form can be found [here](#).

3. If your design includes a substation, you must submit the proposed substation name to our Asset Adoption team at AssetAdoption@enwl.co.uk.

This will ensure that the proposed substation name aligns with our naming conventions. To help you, please read our CP615 Substation, Circuit and Plant Identification document (see Appendix 1). You will need to provide them with the scheme number, site address nature of work i.e. LV, HV substation etc. person responsible, ICP/ IDNOs name and expected completion date.

If your new connection is classed as a major amendment (see Appendix 2 for classification) you must request a SATS (System Amendment Tracking Software) number from our Asset Adoption team via AssetAdoption@enwl.co.uk. In your email, please include the following information:

- Project number
- Name and details of the responsible engineer running the scheme
- Estimated date of completion • If the project is to be done in one phase of several phases (i.e. should the drawing office expect one or several drawings over a length of time)
- Work type (underground cable lay, substation, service only, overhead, overhead to underground, new link box, transformer change, switchgear change etc)

The Asset Adoption team will provide/record the information and give you a unique SATS number. You will need to put this number on all drawings.

4. You will need to submit design documents and information to us at cic@enwl.co.uk
These should include:

- Notification Form
- Design drawings
- Substation name and number
- approved by Distribution System Management Control (DSMC) if HV
- Land boundary/adoption drawing
- Completed Schedule of Works (SoW) Template
- Appropriate Completed Bi-lateral Connection Agreement (BCA) Template (See Appendix 5)
- Legal consents

These documents are the minimum pre-requisites that you must provide for the self-design approval process. If there are any other documents which you believe are also relevant to the design, please include these in your submission.

5. We will acknowledge receipt of your submitted documents, and if appropriate, issue a request for any missing documents.

6. Based on your previous performance, we will determine whether a design audit is required. Where an audit is necessary, it will be completed within a maximum of 10 working days.

Designs are not automatically audited. If your previous design submissions have been compliant and have not required correction, subsequent designs may not be subject to audit. However, where previous submissions have required amendments or re-work, the design will be subject to an audit check.

During the initial stages of self-design approval, all designs may be audited to establish a performance record and support future audit decisions.

Audit charges align with the CIC Design Approval charges set out in our *Connections Common Charging Methodology*, published on our [website](#). The applicable charge will be included within the Point of Connection (PoC) offer and will be refunded where self-design approval is confirmed and an audit is not required.

Where the ICP or IDNO self-determines the Point of Connection, SP Electricity North West will not issue a PoC offer and CIC Design Approval charges will therefore not be paid at the point of acceptance. In these circumstances, where a design audit is required, SP Electricity North West will raise an invoice for the applicable audit charges.

All projects progressing through the self-design approval route, including any audits undertaken and their outcomes, are recorded to ensure compliance with the audit regime described in Section 3.

7. Dependent upon the outcome of the audit phase, you will either receive notification that:

- Your design does not require an audit (your previous submissions have been correct),
or
- Your design requires an audit and has passed the audit, or
- Your design requires an audit, and it has failed the audit

If your design does not require an audit, or has passed an audit, you will need to download our Adoption Agreements Schedule of Work (see appendix 4) and complete with site specific and contact information, along with your signature.

If your design did not pass the audit, we will notify you by email and request a compliant design. You will need to return to Step 4 and follow the process again until your design passes the audit.

8. You must sign and send the Adoption or Bilateral Connection contracts to us at contracts@enwl.co.uk

We reserve the right to check all required legal consents are in place and no risks to SP ENW or non-compliances are present prior to signing the Adoption or Bilateral Connections contracts. We will then sign and return a copy back to you.

9. You will need to obtain wayleave or easement consent if applicable.

10. The connection can then be completed and energised in accordance with SP ENW's energisation process that can be found [here](#) if SP ENW are jointing or [here](#) if the ICP is undertaking the contestable jointing.

3. Audit regime

The table below shows the level of audits we would expect to carry out based on your previous performance.

Audit Level	Designs submitted	Audit Level	Requirements to progress to next level	% design audit fee to be charged
1	1-5 design submitted for self-approval	100%	5 x schemes passed	100%
<p>If NERS accredited and submitting both HV and LV designs; The submission must include at least x2 LV and 2 X HV The audit pass must be awarded to 2 x LV and 2 x HV to progress to next level</p>				
2	6-10 designs submitted for self-approval	60%	3 x schemes passed	60%
<p>If NERS accredited and submitting both HV and LV designs; The submission must include at least x 2 LV and 2 X HV The audit pass must be awarded to 1 x LV and 1 x HV to progress to the next level</p>				
3	> 10 designs submitted for self-approval	30%	n/a	30%

Your performance and audit level will be reviewed periodically by an SP ENW panel. Where we feel it may help with your design submissions, we may invite you to discuss your designs with us. Following these reviews, we may decide to change your audit level to reflect your performance. Whilst we anticipate that most ICPs would progress through to Audit level 3, these levels operate in both directions (i.e. we will move you up or down the audit levels depending on your performance).

4. Policy Information

All proposed points of connection need to be compliant with all our network policies. If you wish to approve a design yourself, you will need to make sure that the design for the new connection complies with all our network policies.

Please refer to our [Policy Index Library](#), which contains all public-facing, open-access documents available on our website. For operational policies, please register for access to our [online portal](#).

5. Liabilities

Under the standard approval process, we would have sight of all proposed designs and be able to ensure compliance with our policies. In the new process we will not have the same level of visibility, and therefore we will not be held responsible or liable for any designs which are approved by ICPs/ IDNOs, that are not compliant with our policies. If you approve your own design, you will be liable for any consequential loss or damages any kind which as a result of the works including but not limited to non-compliant network design.

For more information please refer to our standard Adoption Agreements available on our website [here](#).

6. Wayleaves and easements

You will need to make sure that you are familiar with and comply with our published guidance notes on Wayleaves and Land Rights, which is accessible on our website [here](#).

Please note it is your responsibility to provide SP ENW's Land Rights and Consents team with the following information:

Developer-Only Sites

For developer-only sites with no third-party involvement, we require the following:

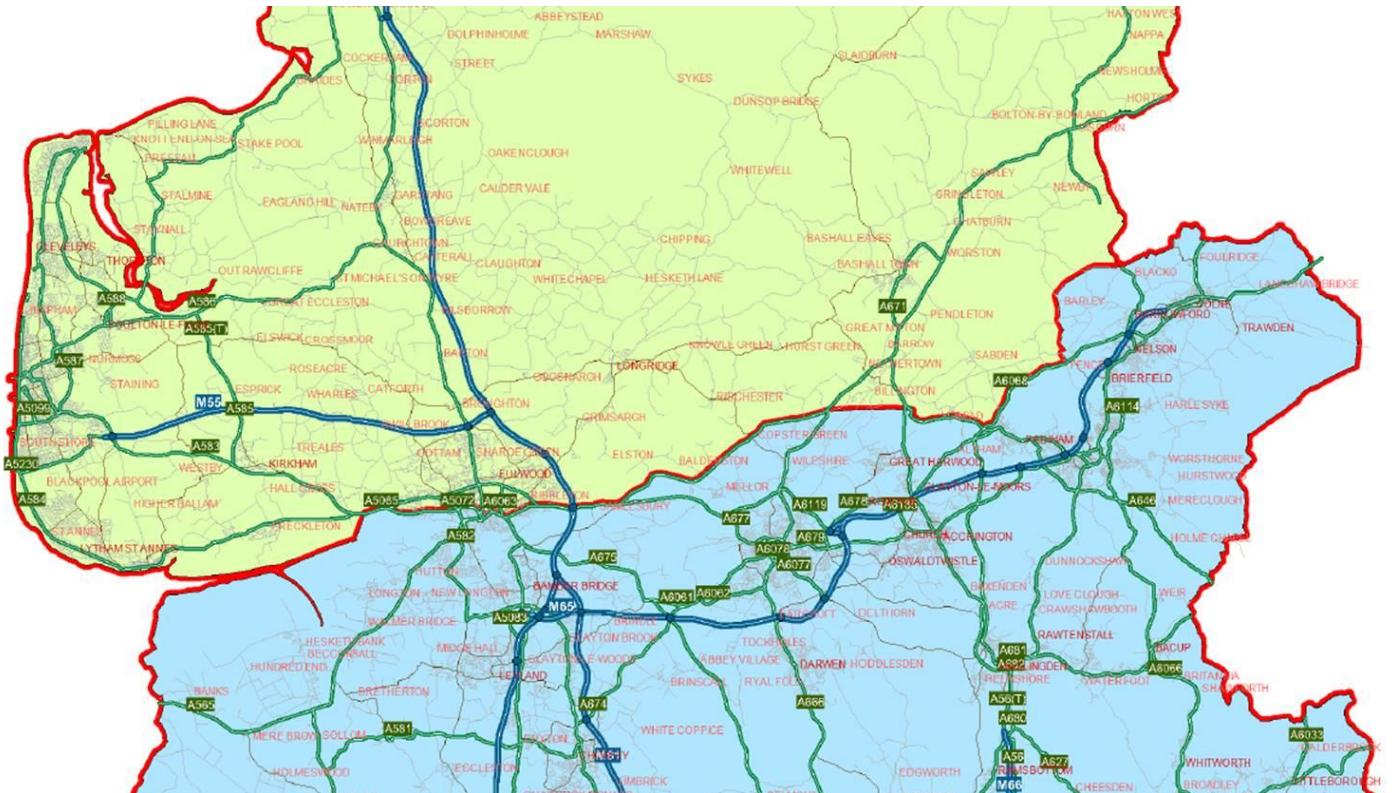
- A completed consent form.
- A Land Registry-compliant legal plan.
- Highways search information clearly showing the extent of adopted highways.
- A Land Registry title register and corresponding red-line plan.

If you require copies of the documents listed above, please contact our Land Rights and Consents Enquiries team to request a document pack by emailing wayleaveenquiries@enwl.co.uk.

Please send all required documents to the relevant SP ENW Land Rights and Consents team, depending on the site location:

- **South Team:** landrights&consentsnewschemessouth@enwl.co.uk
- **North Team:** landrights&consentsnewschemesnorth@enwl.co.uk

Please refer to the map below for the North/South boundary.



Once we receive the completed consents form, an SP ENW Land Rights and Consents Officer will issue site-specific Heads of Terms, which must be signed by the developer.

If you have any general queries before submitting your instructions, please send them to wayleaveenquiries@enwl.co.uk.

Sites Involving a Third Party

If the point of connection is located on third-party land, or if any part of the cable route crosses third-party land, you must provide all the documents required for developer-only sites. In addition, the following is required:

- You must agree Heads of Terms with the third party and provide us with their solicitor's details. The third party must sign the Heads of Terms, and the signed document should be submitted to us along with the completed Land Rights and Consents Instruction Form.

If you would like an example Heads of Terms form, please contact our Land Rights and Consents Enquiries team to by emailing wayleaveenquiries@enwl.co.uk.

You are responsible for obtaining any additional consents or permissions required on third-party land, including but not limited to:

- Environment Agency main river consents or exemptions.
- Local authority ordinary watercourse consents.
- Planning permission, where applicable.
- Overhead line exemption notices.
- Environmental surveys and Natural England assents.

Once we receive your completed instruction pack:

1. We will review your submission and inform you if anything is missing.
2. If all required information has been provided, we will issue:
 - a. A unique reference number
 - b. Confirmation of the Land Rights and Consents Officer assigned to your project

You will then be able to contact the assigned officer directly for updates as the land rights process progresses.

7. Substation locks and notices

If you determine your own HV PoC SP ENW will not be providing you with a quotation which includes substation locks and notices. Therefore, it will be your responsibility to procure these items to SP ENW specification.

- ES309 - Locks for Substations and Associated Plant
- ES356 - Notices and Nameplates
- CP615 - Substation, Circuit and Plant Identification (See Appendix 1)

Please refer to our [G81 policy page](#) for detailed information on SP ENW's approved equipment and materials list.

8. Contact / FAQ

If you have any queries relating to the new SDPoC process which we have not already answered through this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us on cic@enwl.co.uk

9. Appendices

Appendix 1

[Code of Practice 615 – Substation, Circuit and Plant Identification](#)

Appendix 2

[Definition of a Major Amendment](#)

Appendix 3

[Self- determination of Point of Connection Acceptance Form](#)

Appendix 4

[Schedule of Work \(SoW\) Template](#)

Appendix 5

[Bilateral Connection Agreement \(BCA\) Templates](#)