



May 2010

UK'S FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC 'CHERRY PICKER' ON SOUTHAMPTON'S STREETS

SSE Contracting staff are now using the UK's first ever all-electric 'cherry picker' to maintain Southampton's street lights.

The brand new, revolutionary battery-powered vehicle, which has a range of up to 80 miles, has just been delivered to SSE Contracting's recently-opened street lighting depot at Hedge End. Officially called a MEWP (mobile elevating work platform), the electric 'cherry picker' allows staff to work safely – and quietly - at height. It will be used by electricians to replace, upgrade and maintain the City's 28,000 street lights and illuminated road signs.

Martyn Dancer, operations manager at Hedge End depot, said: "We are thrilled with this new vehicle as it operates really quietly, ideal when we have to work on street lights outside people's homes."

"Using it will also allow us to build up a picture of what it's like to work on a daily basis with an electric vehicle, an important factor if they are to become widely available in the future," he added.

Made by Smith Electric Vehicles and Versalift, the MEWP has a silent motor which is powered by a lithium-ion battery pack. It has the same lifting capacity as the equivalent diesel-powered vehicle. An electric charging point has been installed at SSE Contracting's depot in Flanders Road, Hedge End, where it will be powered up overnight.

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**SSE Contracting is a trading name of Southern Electric Contracting Limited
and part of the Scottish and Southern Energy Group**



press release

SSE Contracting started work on maintaining Southampton's street lights in April when it took over a £225 million, 25-year street lighting contract for three south coast councils. The South Coast Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI), the largest PFI of its kind in the UK, manages lighting services for Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and West Sussex County Council.

To support the new contract, SSE Contracting announced it would be creating 50 new jobs at its new depot at Flanders Road in Hedge End. Around 150 staff will be based there, including existing street lighting and administration staff from SSE and the councils, as well as 50 new roles. Thirty five of these are currently being recruited and the company expects to take on a further 15 before the end of the year. The new, skilled positions will include electricians, admin and store staff.

The MEWP is the latest in a line of electric vehicles being used by SSE Contracting's parent company SSE (Scottish and Southern Energy). Staff are also currently driving around in the all-electric MINI E and peddling around on electric bikes.

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