

Case Study SPL Powerlines

Busby Junction, Glasgow

GripplE has collaborated closely with OLE engineers and contractors to develop the game-changing SwiftLine Rail Dropper which is faster, safer, and easier to install than anything else on the market.

To demonstrate its effectiveness and efficiency in challenging OLE projects, GripplE supplied SPL Powerlines, leading provider of electrical solutions for rail infrastructure, with its SwiftLine Rail Droppers, so they could complete changes to the OLE geometry and amend height adjustments at Busby junction following S&C renewal. This enabled SPL Powerlines to mitigate the risks, costs and time pressures of a possession window.

“The team were able to complete the project quickly, even in the face of the cold and wet conditions which can often cause delays. This was crucial as the OLE works were only afforded a small window of access to complete the works at the end of a 72-hour possession window. Any initial apprehension about using new tools for the job disappeared immediately, as the SwiftLine Rail Dropper only requires a brief familiarisation before installation due to its simplicity. It’s a real game-changer, and it’s clear GripplE has worked closely with engineers to address the issues we face during OLE installations.”

Alan Kennedy, Head of Engineering at SPL Powerlines

The project came about as the junction at Busby was being remodelled, resulting in significant changes to the OLE geometry. A mid-point anchor portal, where the catenary terminates on the boom, required height adjustments by replacing the droppers, as the catenary height was fixed. This possession window presented the perfect opportunity to utilise 20 SwiftLine Rail Droppers instead of relying on traditional rail droppers.

The SwiftLine Rail Dropper was developed with several goals in mind: reduce installation time, improve safety, and offer flexibility to accommodate the needs of a wide range of infrastructure projects. And at Busby Junction, it did just that.

Supplied pre-assembled and fully adjustable, the SPL Powerlines team could adapt to the as-built track position without

manufacturing new droppers. This eliminated the need for cutting, crimping, or on-site fixing, minimising time spent working at height in the dark and enhancing safety.

As projects evolve and infrastructure shifts, the droppers can be adapted or relocated without needing new installations. This reduces waste, saves resources, and lowers costs over time—aligning with all-important sustainability goals.

The SPL Powerlines team installed the droppers much quicker than when using traditional methods, and the secure quarter-turn catenary fixing and Auto Torque contact wire clamp ensured consistent, accurate torque every time. This means almost every chance of a mistake was eliminated despite only a short tutorial briefing.



The SwiftLine Rail Dropper has been designed, developed, and manufactured entirely by GripplE in Sheffield, UK.

Leveraging GripplE’s specialist wire joining and tensioning technology, along with its commitment to innovative solutions, the SwiftLine Rail Dropper simplifies the journey to a fully electrified rail network.