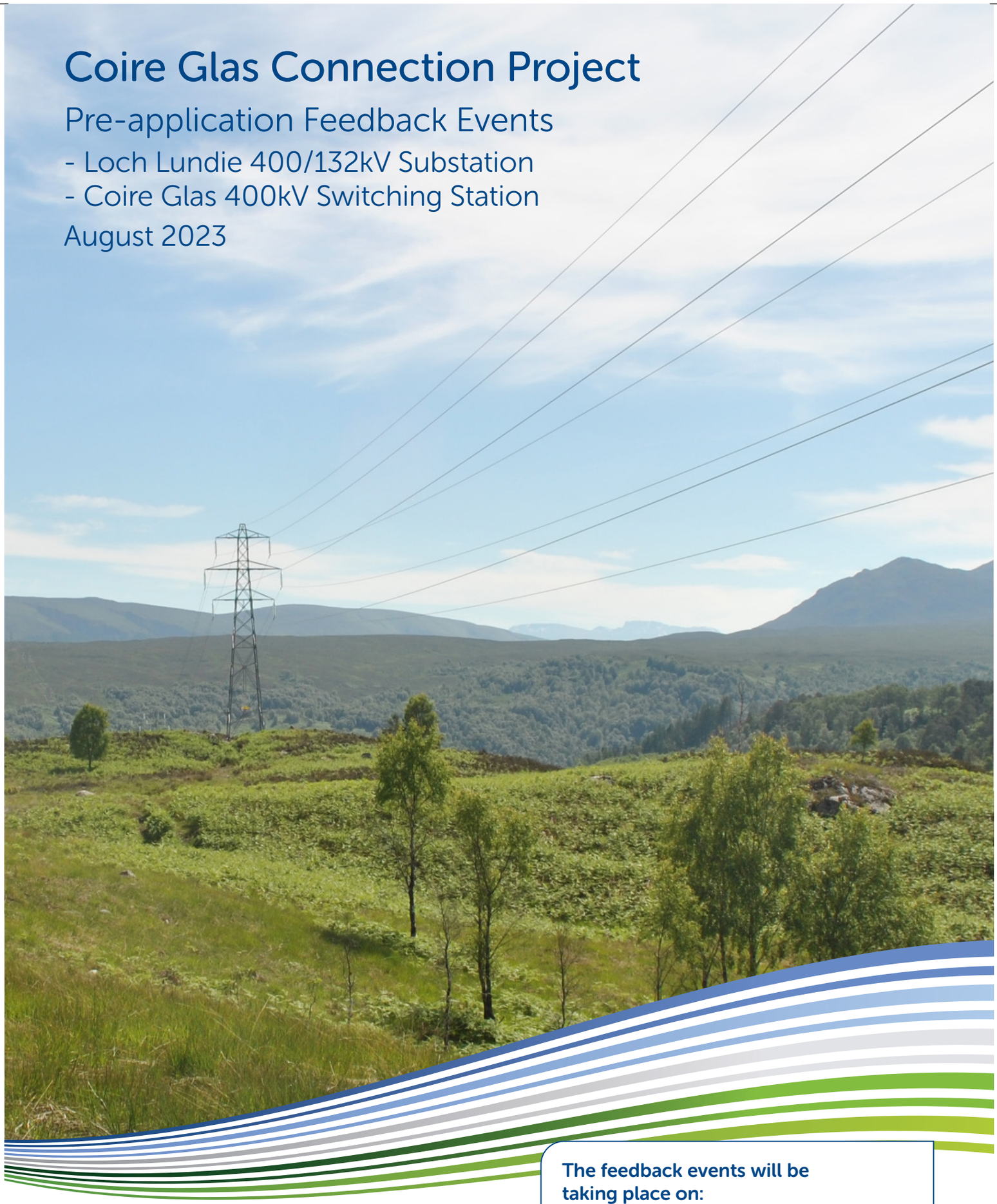
Coire Glas Connection Project

Pre-application Feedback Events

- Loch Lundie 400/132kV Substation
- Coire Glas 400kV Switching Station

August 2023



The feedback events will be taking place on:

Tuesday 8th August 3pm–7pm	Invergarry Community Hall
Wednesday 9th August 3pm–6.45pm	Fort Augustus Village Hall

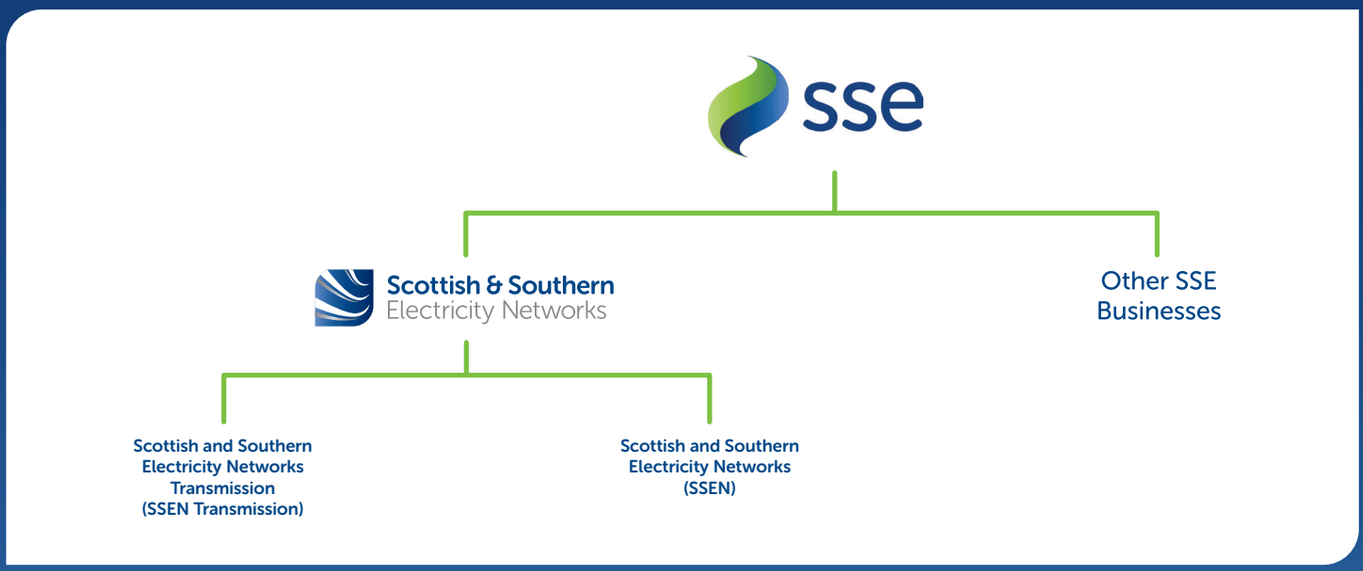
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Contents

Who we are

We are SSEN Transmission, the trading name for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission. We are responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland, maintaining and investing in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network.



Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles or steel towers, and electricity substations. It extends over a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of its most challenging terrain.

Our first priority is to provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to our communities. We do this by taking the electricity from generators and transporting it at high voltages over long distances through our transmission network for onwards distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.

Our operating area is home to vast renewable energy resources and this is being harnessed by wind, hydro and marine generation. Working closely with National Grid, the GB transmission System Operator, we also enable these electricity generators to connect to the transmission system by providing their connections and allowing the electricity generated by them to be transported to areas of demand across the country.

Scotland's transmission network has a strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the UK and Scotland's Net Zero targets. We're already a mass exporter of renewable energy, with around two thirds of power generated in our network area exported to demand centres further south. By 2050, the north of Scotland is expected to need 40GW of low carbon energy capacity to support net zero delivery. For context, we currently have around 8GW of renewable generation connected in the north of Scotland.

As a natural monopoly, we are closely regulated by the GB energy regulator, Ofgem, who determines how much revenue we are allowed to earn for constructing, maintaining and renovating our transmission network in the north of Scotland. These costs are shared between all those using the transmission system, including generation developers and electricity consumers.

Following a minority stake sale which completed in November 2022, we are now owned 75% by SSE plc and 25% by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board.

As a stakeholder-led business, SSEN Transmission is committed to inclusive stakeholder engagement, and we conduct this at an 'Advanced' level as assessed by AccountAbility, the international consulting and standards firm.

What is the Coire Glas Connection Project and why is it needed?

Project need

SSEN Transmission has received a Transmission Owner Connection Agreement to connect the Coire Glas Pumped Hydro Scheme for December 2027. The Scheme will be the first large-scale pumped storage scheme to be developed in the UK for more than 30 years and has a potential capacity of up to 1500 Megawatts (MW). This supports the UK move towards a net zero carbon energy system by 2050. A degree of rationalisation of the existing infrastructure will form part of these works.

Project overview

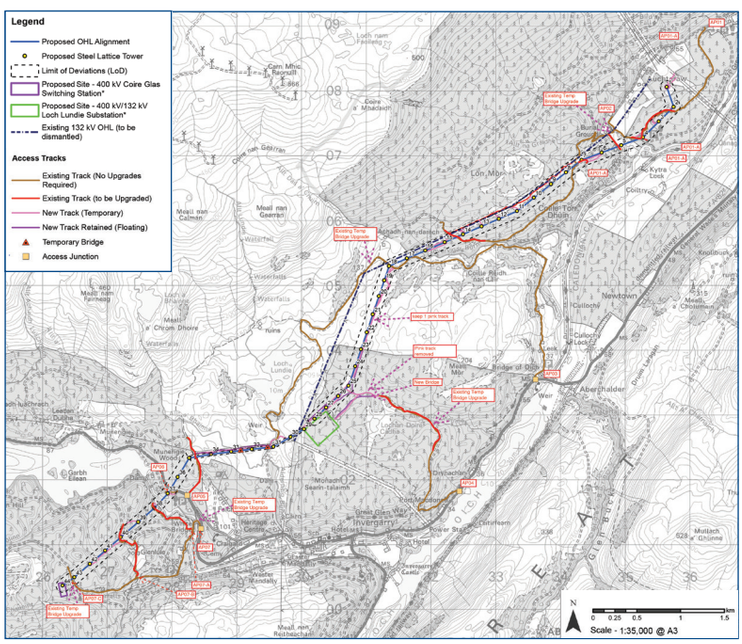
The scheme is located southwest of Laggan Locks, near to Loch Lochy, Highland. The contracted connection is for a total of 1296MW Export/1360MW Demand and will be carried out in two phases. Phase 1 will see the connection of 612MW Export/660MW Demand in December 2027. Phase 2 will see the connection of a further 684MW Export/700MW Demand in October 2029.

Delivery of this project will include the following project elements:

Phase 1 (Connection December 2027)

- A new Coire Glas 400kV external Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Switching Station, this will include 2 control buildings.
- Approximately 3.5km of 400kV double circuit overhead line (OHL). This will be installed from the proposed Coire Glas switching station to a new substation located in the vicinity of Loch Lundie.
- A new 400/132kV substation in the vicinity of Loch Lundie. This will comprise of a control building, 2 transformers and outdoor AIS equipment.
- Approximately 8.5km of 400kV double circuit overhead line. This will be installed from the proposed Loch Lundie Substation to the existing Fort Augustus Substation at Auchterawe.
- Rationalisation of sections of the existing 132kV Fort William and 132kV Invergarry Power Station OHL circuits. This will involve terminating the existing circuits into the new Loch Lundie substation to transfer their loads onto the new 400kV OHL between Loch Lundie and Fort Augustus and then dismantling the corresponding sections of 132kV OHLs.

Coire Glas project layout



The pre-application consultation process

This consultation specifically relates to our Proposal of Application Notices for the proposed Coire Glas switching station and Loch Lundie substation.

Engagement to date

In 2022 we consulted with our stakeholders in Invergarry Community Hall and Fort Augustus Village Hall explaining the need and the scope of this project and seeking feedback on the proposed route and alignment for the new 400kV overhead line (OHL) and proposed switching and substation sites. We then published our responses for both the OHL and substation elements.

In March 2023 we submitted a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for each site. Following this submission, 2 public consultation events were held in April 2023 at the same venues where further feedback was gathered. The project team ensured all feedback was considered and where possible implemented to inform design refinement of our proposals. In addition, we have continued to liaise closely with a wide range of stakeholders to further help inform the projects' design.

The information presented at these events, showing the location and layouts of the proposed substations, together with a copy of the Report on Consultation can be found under Project Documents on the project's webpage:
ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/coire-glas-connection-project

What we are sharing with you today

Changes to the formal pre-application consultation were introduced by the Scottish Government in October 2022. As part of these changes, a second public event must now take place for 'major' or 'national' scale developments (which are defined by legislation) before an application can be submitted. Both our proposed substations for the Coire Glas connection are classed as 'national' scale developments and so fall under this new requirement.

The purpose of this event is for us to share the feedback and comments we have received throughout the pre-application consultation process, together with our responses, and to demonstrate how these have been addressed. We aim to show where comments will be addressed in the planning applications, or, where they can't, provide an explanation.

We would like to confirm that comments made to SSEN Transmission through the pre-application consultation process are not representations to The Highland Council. When SSEN Transmission submit the planning applications there will be an opportunity to make representations on those applications to The Highland Council.

A quick reminder of the proposals

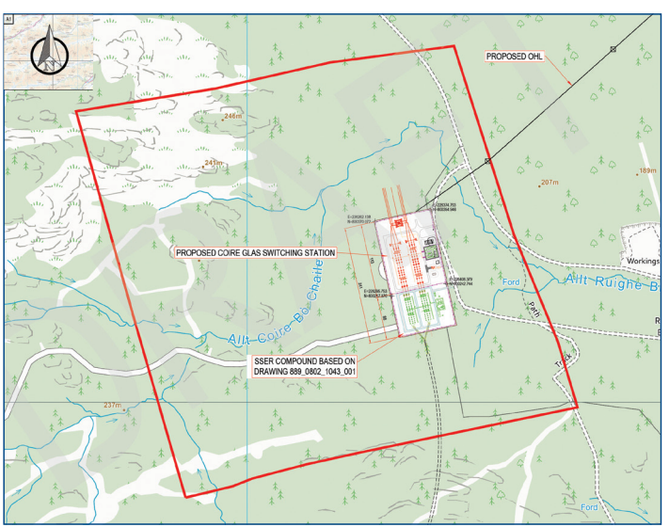
Coire Glas switching station

A 400kV switching station is being proposed in the Glengarry forest area to connect the consented Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme's underground cables to the national grid. The platform will be approximately 270m x 120m in size and will comprise both an SSEN Transmission compound and a separate compound for the Coire Glas developer.

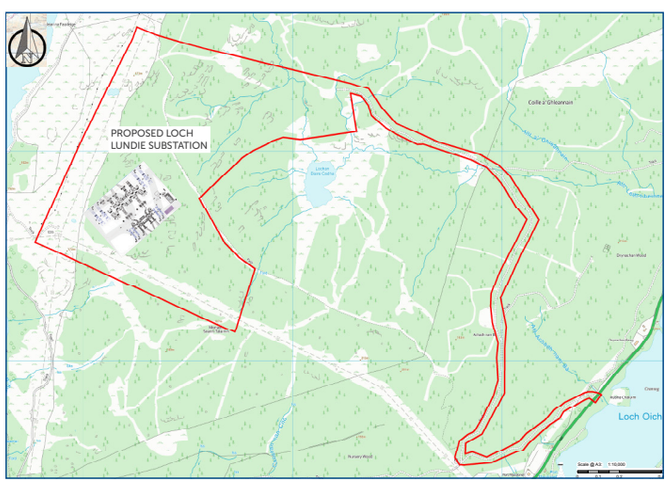
Loch Lundie 400/132kV substation

The proposed new 400kV/132kV Loch Lundie Substation allows us to connect Coire Glas whilst rationalising the existing 132kV OHLs from Fort William and Invergarry Power Station. These circuits will be diverted into the proposed substation and will connect to the new 400kV OHL to Fort Augustus. The corresponding sections of the existing 132kV OHLs can then be decommissioned and removed. The Substation will contain two transformers and will be approximately 434m x 320m in size.

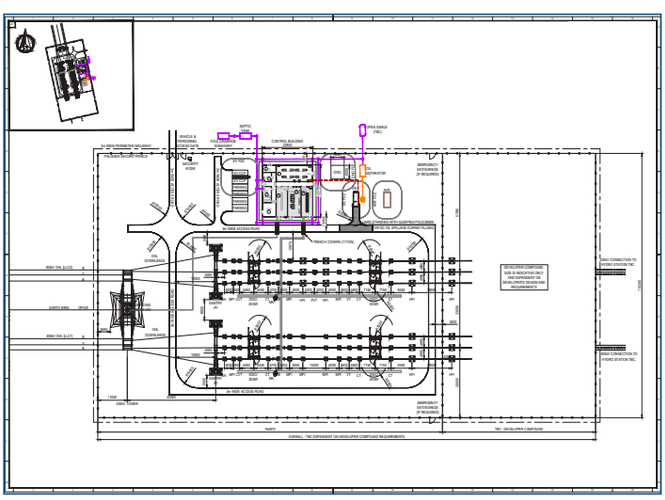
Coire Glas switching station PAN boundary plan



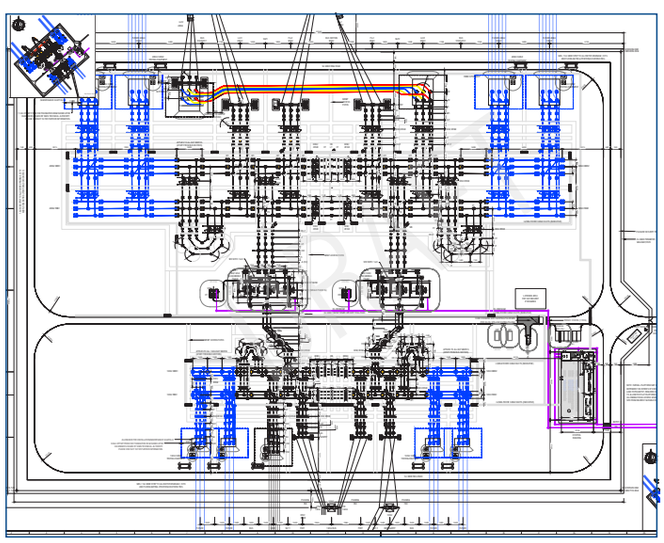
Loch Lundie substation red line boundary



Coire Glas switching station indicative layout



Loch Lundie substation indicative layout



ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/coire-glas-connection-project

What you told us at the public events in April 2023

Following the submission of the Planning-Application Notices (PAN) in March 2023 (one for the Coire Glas Switching Station and one for the Loch Lundie Substation), the first of two rounds of PAN events were held at Invergarry Community Hall on Tuesday 25th April and Fort Augustus Village Hall on Wednesday 26th April. A total of 31 attendees attended over the 2 days, 19 at Invergarry and 12 at Fort Augustus.

2 submitted via website

1 submitted via email

All 3 commented on the project's contruction phases

During the 4-week feedback period which closed on 26th May 2026, 3 pieces of feedback were received. Two feedback forms related to both the Coire Glas switching station and Loch Lundie substation with comments the exact same for both sites. The third piece of feedback was received as an email. The three relevant pieces of feedback commented on the construction phases which was where their concerns were focused The feedback box below is reflective of the questions on the feedback forms for both the switching station and substation.

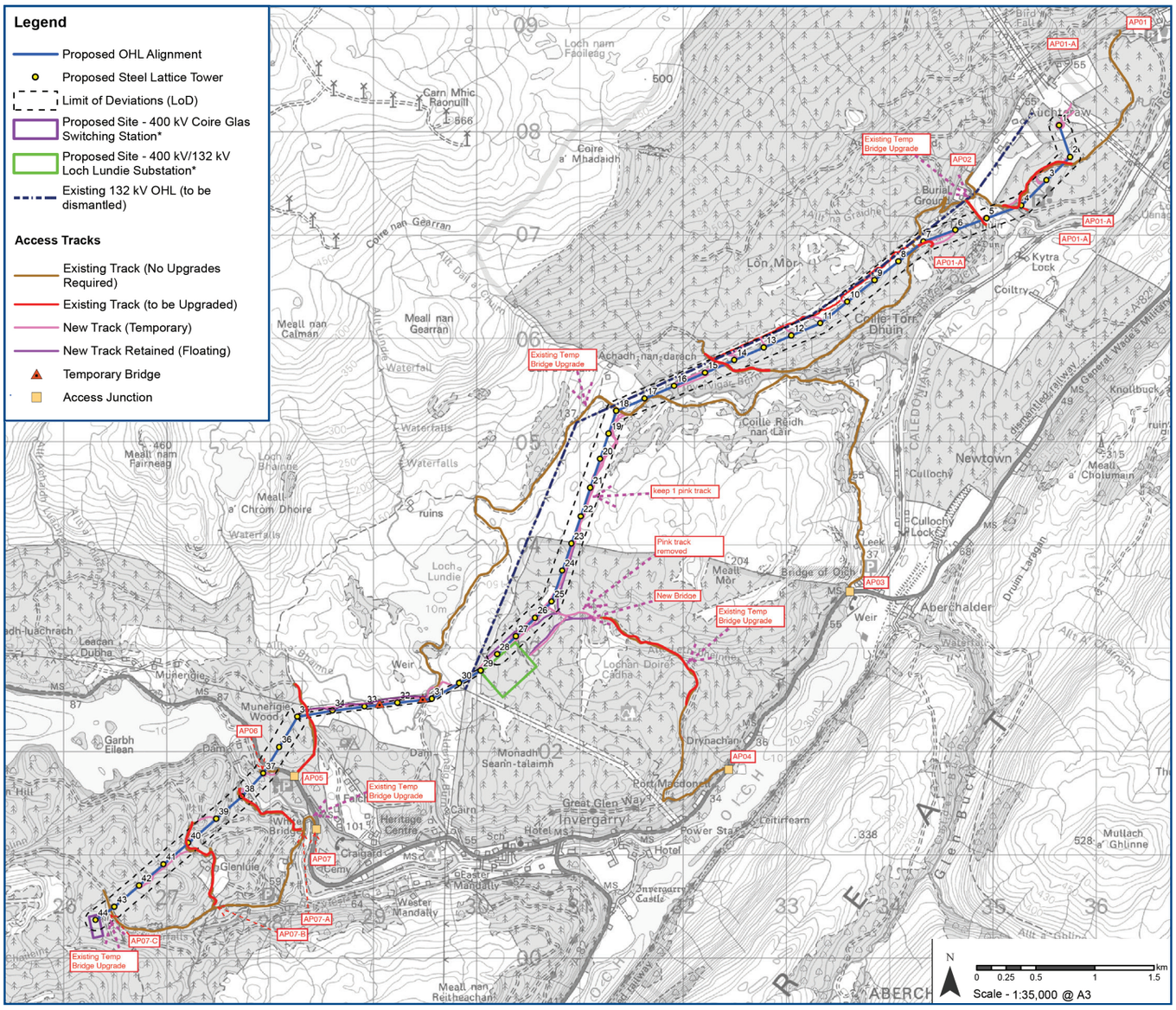
For these second round of PAN events we are now sharing the project information, feedback and our responses following the April events.

Below provides a summary of responses and our feedback to these.

Feedback	Response
The feedback stated that the project documents had good detail and summary.	We were pleased to receive this as we strive to provide as much information as possible at each event to allow the public to fully understand the extent of what is being proposed.
	We were pleased to hear that the proposed developments are considered to be appropriate. As explained, we have undergone an extensive site selection process taking into account environmental, planning and engineering considerations to ensure an appropriate site was chosen and the layout rationalised.

Comments expressed by a local tourism business expressed concerns about construction noise and disruption during the construction phase, which included concerns about ensuring access is available to walking/cycling routes. The visual impact of a new line.	We acknowledge concerns about disturbance caused during construction. The Contractor will produce a noise management plan to ensure noise is managed and minimised. This plan will provide for local community engagement on any noisy activities, working hours and any out of hours working (which would need agreed with The Highland Council's Environmental Health Officers). The project will also provide an Outdoor Access Plan which will ensure rights of way are maintained during construction. With regards to the visual impact of the new OHL, the application was accompanied by a full Landscape & Visual assessment, including the production of photo montages. Our routeing process has chosen a route which uses an existing OHL corridor coming into Fort Augustus and designed in a rationalisation of existing infrastructure between the Loch Lundie substation and Fort Augustus. It is hoped that the removal of existing lines in the area will help to offset any visual impacts from the new OHL. The OHL is part of a separate Section 37 application and does not form part of these planning application proposals.
Comments requested that contractors and sub-contractors work within agreed hours/ noise limits.	Working hours for the project will be agreed with The Highland Council through the planning process and will be incorporated into the contractual requirements for our contractors. Any out of hours working would be kept to a minimum and would need to be agreed in advance with The Highland Council's Environmental Health Officer. The project team would notify neighbours and the local community through regular updates ahead of any additional works.
Comments stated that the business would suffer less of an impact if work was carried out off-season (Oct-April). The feedback emailed in stated that they do not have any issues, concerns or queries about the proposed site location or layout of either the Coire Glas switching station or the Loch Lundie substation. The comments included were relevant to the construction phase of the project about access for walkers, cyclists. In the case of the Coire Glas switching station part of the access route to be used for the construction of the switching station itself uses an existing access track which will be shared with walkers on Cape Wrath Trail/ Scottish National Trail. In the case of Loch Lundie substation, part of the proposed access to be used for construction uses an existing access track which will be shared with walkers/cyclists on the Great Glen Way and requested shared useage for each.	This is a good point and our construction programmes are designed to allow work to progress around seasonal constraints. This will include employing a team of ecologists to undertake pre-construction surveys during the breeding season and scheduling works like tree clearance during the Autumn and Winter periods. The project will also provide an Outdoor Access Plan which will ensure rights of way are maintained during construction.

Project layout



Timeline and next steps

March 2023

- Submission of the Section 37 application to the ECU for overhead line.

March 2023

- Proposal of Application Notices (PAN) submitted to The Highland Council for Coire Glas switching station and Loch Lundie substation.

26th May 2023

- Deadline for comments for the first PAN events.

May – September 2023

- Spring/Summer 2023 - Review of feedback; further refinement of design and layout of both proposals; and progression of EIA.

August 2023

- Final 'feedback' PAN public consultation events for the proposed switching station and substation.

Autumn 2023

- Submission of planning applications to The Highland Council for the proposed switching station and substation.

Autumn 2023 – Spring 2024

- Determination of the planning applications by The Highland Council.

What happens now?

Without the valuable feedback gathered during all of our engagements we would be unable to progress these projects with a balanced approach. Feedback gathered during all our engagement has been very useful and has helped inform our proposals and final planning applications.

Our project development team will be carrying out the final refinements and environmental assessments for both the proposed switching station and substation.

Following these final public events the Pre-Application Consultation Report will be produced and shared on the project web page, it will also form part of the 2 separate planning application submissions which will be in Autumn 2023.

Comments made to SSEN Transmission are not representations to The Highland Council. When SSEN Transmission submit the planning applications there will be an opportunity to make representations on the applications to The Highland Council. A pre-application consultation report outlining the consultation process will accompany each future Planning Application.

Sally Cooper

Community Liaison Manager

sally.cooper@sse.com

+44 (0) 7918 470281

Sally Cooper
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks,
10 Henderson Road,
Inverness, IV1 1SN

Additional information

Information will also be made available via the project webpage and social media channels:

Project website:
ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/coire-glas-connection-project

Follow us on Facebook:
@ssencommunity

Follow us on Twitter:
@ssetransmission

Notes