CHAPTER 5 – SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

Figures (Volume 2 of this EIA Report)

There are no figures associated with this Chapter.

Technical Appendices (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

Technical Appendix 5.1: Scoping Response Matrix

5. SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In general, the EIA Regulations require that an EIA Report should describe the likely significant effects of a proposed development on the environment. Scoping of potential issues against the physical and operational aspects of a proposed development provides a basis for ensuring that the assessment of environmental effects is appropriately limited to issues of genuine potential significance. This ensures a proportionate approach to EIA that is focused on likely significant effects to be considered and assessed. Consultation and engagement with stakeholders early in the process, with advice and input from key consultees being sought at the early stages of a project, greatly helps inform decisions about the design and EIA work for a proposed development.

5.1.2 This Chapter describes the pre-application consultation, the Scoping process and further consultation that was undertaken to determine the scope of the EIA Report, and the consultations that were undertaken to inform the local community of the Proposed Development. This Chapter also includes a brief description of the environmental receptors of potential significance associated with the Proposed Development which are addressed in detail in the EIA Report, and those that are scoped out.

5.2 Pre-Application Consultation

5.2.1 To introduce the Coire Glas Grid Connection Project, including the Proposed Development, a virtual pre-application meeting was held with statutory consultees, co-ordinated by The Highland Council (THC) on 21st November 2021. The meeting was attended by representatives from NatureScot and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) This provided the Applicant with an opportunity to present the proposals and seek advice on the acceptability of the project, and likely requirements and expectations for a future application.

5.2.2 Following this meeting, A Pre-Application Advice Report was issued by THC on 1st December 2021. The Advice Report provided a note of the meeting and feedback on the information requested to be included in the EIA by key stakeholders.

5.2.3 In May 2022, a combined Consultation Document[1] was issued for the entire Coire Glas Grid Connection Project, to document the route and alignment selection stages of the Proposed Development and the site selection assessments for the proposed Coire Glas Switching Station and the proposed Loch Lundie Substation.

5.3 Consultation with the Public

5.3.1 A consultation event for the Coire Glas Grid Connection Project, including the Proposed Development, was held in May 2022 at the following times and locations:

Location	Date	Time
Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry	4th May 2022	15.00 – 19.00
Fort Augustus Village Hall, Fort Augustus	5th May 2022	15.00 – 18.45
Virtual Exhibition	9th May 2022	17.00 – 19.00

5.3.2 Comments received from stakeholders in response to the Consultation Document[1], or following public consultation events, were documented in the Report on Consultation[2], published in April 2023. Further consultation events are planned to be undertaken in April 2023. These consultation events will be part of the

[1] Coire Glas Grid Connection Project: Consultation Report: (May 2022), produced by SSEN Transmission
[2] Coire Glas Grid Connection Project: Report on Consultation: (April 2023), produced by SSEN Transmission

pre-application consultation events that will be undertaken for the Loch Lundie Substation and Coire Glas Switching Station elements of the Coire Glas Grid Connection Project but will also include an update on the Proposed Development.

5.4 Scoping

5.4.1 An EIA Scoping Report was issued to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government in February 2023 in support of a request for a Scoping Opinion under Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations.

5.4.2 Due to committed timescales to deliver the connection, the EIA Report and Section 37 application has been submitted prior to a Scoping Opinion being received from Scottish Ministers. Where scoping responses from consultees have been received prior to finalisation of this EIA Report, such responses have been considered within the EIA Report and are referenced accordingly. **Technical Appendix 5.1: Scoping Responses Matrix** of this EIA Report includes a matrix detailing the key issues that were raised in the scoping responses received, and how and where they are addressed in the EIA Report.

5.5 Further Consultee Engagement

5.5.1 Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing since the early stages of the project and has continued throughout the scoping and EIA process. During the route and alignment stages of the Proposed Development, stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the route, alignment and design solution options identified, and all responses received were summarised in the Report on Consultation[2]. **Table 5.1** provides a summary of some of the key meetings and engagement that has been undertaken by the Applicant with consultees during the routeing and EIA stages of the project.

Table 5.1: Summary of Further Consultee Engagement

Consultee	Date	Summary of Engagement
NatureScot	October 2021	The Applicant issued a letter to NatureScot on 28th October 2021, setting out the scope and methodology of the proposed ornithology surveys for the Coire Glas Grid Connection Project. NatureScot provided a response on 29th November 2021.
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) - West Region)	February 2022	Early consultation commenced with FLS West regarding the project, and in particular discussion regarding infrastructure within Glengarry Forest.

Consultee	Date	Summary of Engagement
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	March 2022	In their pre-application consultation response, HES recommended that early consultation be carried out '*to discuss the proposed works and identify any requirements for scheduled monument consent (SMC) or particular mitigation measures to ensure that direct impacts are avoided'.* The Applicant attended a virtual meeting with HES on 31st March 2022, to discuss the potential effects of the Preferred Alignment on the Torr Dhuin Scheduled Monument and potential mitigation measures.
FLS – West Region	June 2022	During the consultation period, FLS (West Region) indicated that they were concerned with the location of the Coire Glas Switching Station within Glengarry Forest as it impacted on Caledonian Pine due to its irreplaceable nature and fragility. A further meeting with FLS (West Region) was held in June 2022 to understand and discuss their concerns and what next steps may be taken to address these concerns. There is ongoing engagement and discussion with FLS (West) in this regard. This has been undertaken on a tri partite basis with CGHPSL in order that the Technical and Engineering constraints relating to the proposed switching station location that forms the terminal point for the OHL along with measures to mitiigate the impact from the OHL alignment itself can be taken into account alongside that of FLS (West)
HES	June 2022	Following the virtual meeting on 31st March 2022, HES provided a formal response on the proposed OHL alignment on 24th June 2022. In this response HES stated that based on the information supplied, they consider it likely that the Proposed Development would have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the setting of Torr Dhuin, fort, scheduled monument (SM794) and it is likely that they would object to the proposals as presented. HES queried whether temporarily undergrounding the existing 132 kV Fort Augustus to Fort William 132 kV OHL, until it becomes defunct, so that Tower 6 can be located within the existing wayleave, could be a solution. The Applicant committed to undertake further consultation with HES.
Site Visit and Workshop with FLS - West Region	September 2022	At this workshop an "Agreement in Principle" was reached in that FLS accepted that the alignment for the OHL was acceptable together with mitigation proposals related to access tracks and limited Operational Corridors and careful siting of towers. However, this was subject to further assessment of two alternative locations for the Coire Glas Switching Station as suggested on site by FLS (West Region). This further assessment was issued to FLS (West Region) in October 2022. Following this further assessment Site Option CG1 location remained the project's preferred location for the switching

Consultee	Date	Summary of Engagement
		station (and therefore the alignment of the 400 kV OHL remained the preferred alignment to be taken forward into the EIA Stage of the project). Engagement with FLS (West Region) is ongoing and will continue following the submission of the s.37 application.
HES	November 2022	In November 2022, the Applicant provided a response to HES to explain why temporarily undergrounding the existing 132 kV Fort Augustus to Fort William OHL was not a viable solution from an engineering perspective.
FLS - North Region	November 2022	In November 2022 FLS (North Region) raised concerns of the potential impact of the proposed OHL alignment on existing forestry tracks on the approach to Fort Augustus Substation (i.e. Towers 3, 4 and 5). However, moving these towers would have a significant impact on residential properties and visual impact on the Auchterawe community. In March 2023, FLS formally confirmed they will accept the preferred OHL alignment.
The Highland Council (THC)	February 2023	On 6th February 2023, the Applicant's noise consultant issued an outline of the proposed scope for the noise assessment including methodology, baseline conditions, and noise criteria for agreement with THC's Environmental Health Officer (EHO). On 8th February 2023, THC's EHO responded to confirm that BS5228 would be the relevant guidance to be used for the assessment. The EHO advised that given the separation distances from residential receptors, significant construction noise issues would not be anticipated; however, there may be some need for consideration of construction traffic if in proximity to noise sensitive receptors. The EHO advised that for noise which is audible at any receptor, the recommended hours of operation for construction works are 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday; 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and no work on Sundays, whereas work which is inaudible can be undertaken at any time. In terms of operational noise, the EHO provided THC's standard scoping response for electrical infrastructure developments. They advised that ideally any assessment would be able to demonstrate compliance with the same criteria. The EHO also noted that there have been significant noise issues in the past at Auchterawe (Fort Augustus) Substation and it may be necessary to include a cumulative assessment for nearby receptors.
BT	February / March 2023	BT initially confirmed (via email) that they had completed a desk based review of the proposed OHL alignment and that Towers 37 and 38 fail the 100 m clearance threshold from the fixed BT 18 Ghz radio link from Invergarry Glac Dubh (Grid ref: 22703 801355) to Fort Augustus RS (Grid ref: 236052 804934).

Consultee	Date	Summary of Engagement
		Subsequently, BT confirmed that sufficient clearance distances could be achieved and they have no objection to the Proposed Development.
HES	March 2023	In March 2023 the Applicant met with HES to further discuss the impact of Tower 6 on the Torr Dhuin scheduled monument and to explain the technical constraints associated with the solution proposed by HES in June 2022. The Appllicant propose to microsite Tower 6 within the Limit of Deviation (LOD). Consultation with HES will continue following submission of the s.37 application.

5.6 Issues Scoped out of Assessment

5.6.1 It is considered that the following topics do not require to be the subject of detailed EIA assessment as it is considered that they are not likely to give rise to significant effects. They were referred to in the Scoping Report as topics to be scoped out from further consideration within the EIA Report.

Land Use and Agriculture

5.6.2 Key land use along the alignment of the proposed OHL include commercial forestry and agricultural lands used for rough grazing and some Highland sports.

5.6.3 Land use impacts associated with the Proposed Development are anticipated to be minimal. The construction work may result in some temporary loss of land or access restriction; however, it is considered that this can be adequately managed through wayleave agreements with the relevant landowners. The permanent loss of land to tower locations would be small in size and it would remain possible for grazing to continue around and under towers during the operational lifetime of these support structures. In addition, no land capable of supporting Arable Agriculture (Class 1, 2 or 3)[3] has been identified within the vicinity of the Proposed Development. Consequently, impacts on high quality agricultural land are anticipated to be minimal. The potential for significant effects on commercial forestry are fully considered in **Chapter 14: Forestry**.

5.6.4 Dialogue would be maintained by the Applicant and the Principal Contractor with landowners, local tenants and property owners throughout the construction period to ensure any potential disruption as a result of the proposed works is kept to a minimum. An Outdoor Access Management Plan would also be developed by the Applicant and Principal Contractor to ensure continued access for recreational users along Core Paths, and other walking / cycling routes in the area. A Draft Outdoor Access Plan is included as **Technical Appendix 15.3** of this EIA Report.

5.6.5 Considering the above, no separate assessment of Land Use and Agriculture has been included as part of this EIA Report.

Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs)

5.6.6 EMFs arise from electric charges and current flow. Transmission lines and associated substation / switching station sites comply with the government policy of adopting the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) on exposure to EMFs. The Applicant believes that compliance with government policy on levels of exposure to EMFs, which in turn is based on the advice of the government's independent scientific advisers, the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) (now part of the Health

[3] The Macaulay Land Use Research Institute (2020); *Land Use Capability for Agriculture in Scotland,* Craigiebuckler, Aberdeen. Available at: https://www.hutton.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/soils/lca_map_hutton.pdf [Last Accessed 0//03/2023]

Protection Agency), ensures the appropriate level of protection for the public from these fields. The NRPB keeps the results of EMF health studies under constant review to ensure that the guidelines for limiting exposure are based on the best available scientific information.

5.6.7 Overall, no likely significant effect on human health associated with EMFs is predicted, and an assessment of such effects has therefore been scoped out of this EIA Report in its entirety.

Electromagnetic Interference (EMI)

5.6.8 OHL noise is generally associated with a phenomenon known as “corona discharge”, which is essentially a limited electrical breakdown of the air which, in the main, occurs during damp weather. Corona discharge will create a source of audible noise (a crackling sound occasionally accompanied by a low frequency hum in certain wet conditions). Power transmission line conductors are designed to minimise corona discharge, but this may be affected by minor surface irregularities caused by damage, insects, raindrops, or pollution. The highest noise levels generated by an OHL usually occur during light rain when water droplets, collecting on the surface of the conductor, can initiate corona discharge. The number of droplets that collect, and hence the amount of noise, depends on the rate of rainfall. Corona discharge as an operational noise is discussed **Chapter 13: Noise**. Corona discharge is considered unlikely to cause significant interference to very high frequency (VHF) reception (i.e. FM radio or digital radio and television which operate in the UHF range).

5.6.9 Micro-gap discharge can affect digital television and radio reception but is not considered to be a source of long-term annoyance as equipment is built and maintained to high standards and any such discharge would be the subject of remedial action. In addition, the Proposed Development is located within a predominantly rural area, and there are very few instances where the Proposed Development would be located within 500 m of properties. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the Proposed Development would cause significant interference to VHF reception for nearby receptors.

5.6.10 Electromagnetic interference to medium and long wave (AM) radio signals could occur at properties within close proximity of the Proposed Development. Potential effects from the Proposed Development on TV and radio signals would be caused by physical obstruction of the signal. One fixed 18Ghz BT radio link from Invergarry to Fort Augustus has been identified within the path of the proposed OHL alignment, however BT have confirmed that following a detailed desk study, they have identified that there is sufficient clearing distance from all towers and that they therefore have no objection to the Proposed Development.

5.6.11 Overall, it is concluded that no likely significant effect on human health associated with EMI is predicted, and an assessment of such effects has therefore been scoped out of this EIA Report in its entirety.

Vibration

5.6.12 There are no known vibrational noise issues associated with the construction or operation of the Proposed Development. Therefore an assessment of vibration effects been scoped out of this EIA Report in its entirety.

Light Disturbance

5.6.1 Construction activities would in general be undertaken during daytime periods as described in **Section 3.11** of **Chapter 3: Project Description** of this EIA Report. No lighting would be associated with the Proposed Development during normal operation.

5.6.2 It is therefore concluded that no likely significant effect on human health associated with light disturbance is predicted and such effects has therefore been scoped out of this EIA Report in its entirety.

Air Quality and Climate Change

5.6.3 Local air quality is a combination of background air quality, representative of general levels of pollution away from busy roads and industrial activity and added emissions from local emission sources such as road traffic. The Proposed Development is not located within an Air Quality Management area (AQMA) as there is currently only one AQMA within THC area (the Inverness City Centre AQMA declared for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)). Due to the generally rural nature of the Proposed Development, and sparse distribution of sensitive receptors, impacts of pollution from road traffic and other industrial sources are minimal.

5.6.4 In the context of the EIA process climate change is considered both in relation to the contribution of the Proposed Development to increasing or decreasing gaseous emissions with global warming potential (GWP), and in relation to climate change adaptation.

5.6.5 Emissions associated with the Proposed Development would be limited to temporary and short-term emissions of exhaust gases from vehicles and construction plant, and the potential for the release of carbon dioxide as a result of dewatering and exposing peat and peat soils during construction. Neither source is considered likely to be significant in terms of GWP.

5.6.6 With regard to climate adaptation, consideration will be given to the potential implications of climate change on the OHL design and the design of pole and tower support structures (e.g. design for increased flood risk and adverse weather); however, no potential for significant impacts have been identified.

5.6.7 The Proposed Development has limited potential to impact upon air quality. There is a potential to give rise to some localised and temporary construction related releases associated with dust and construction traffic exhaust emissions. However, the nature of construction activities means these would be localised, short term and intermittent. Potential effects would further be minimised through the implementation of mitigation measures, in particular the project Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) (see **Technical Appendix 3.6** for an Outline CEMP) and relevant General Environment Management Plans (GEMPs). Measures for the management of dust during construction are set on in a Dust Management GEMP (see **Technical Appendix 3.2: General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) and Species Protection Plans (SPPs)**).

5.6.8 The Proposed Development would connect the consented Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme to the transmission network, which in turn would play a role in facilitating increased production of renewable electricity generation capacity to the transmission network, displacing emissions associated with fossil fuel-based electricity generation elsewhere and positively contributing to Scotland's climate change targets.

5.6.9 Based on the above, and on professional judgement and experience in the assessment of effects associated with OHL projects, this issue is scoped out of the EIA and no specific assessment of air quality and climate change is included as part of the EIA Report. Where relevant, consideration of the implications of climate change is however considered in technical chapters of this EIA Report.

Major Accidents and Disasters

5.6.10 Given the nature of the Proposed Development, the potential for effects related to the vulnerability to accidents and disasters are likely to be limited to those associated with unplanned power outages, due to extreme weather or structural damage. Crisis management and continuity plans are in place across the SSE Group. These are tested regularly and are designed for the management of, and recovery from, significant energy infrastructure failure events. Where there are material changes in infrastructure (or the management of it) additional plans are developed.

5.6.11 Furthermore, the Principal Designer would need to fully assess risks and mitigate as appropriate during the construction stage as part of the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (2015).

5.6.12 Where there are major road, rail or built up area crossings under the section of the route being constructed, it is likely that a form of mechanical protection, such as scaffolding or other approved method, would need to be supplied and erected to provide protection to members of the public and property in case of equipment failure.

5.6.13 Potential significant effects relating to the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to accidents and disasters is therefore proposed to be scoped out of the EIA Report in its entirety.

5.7 Other Issues

5.7.1 The 2017 EIA Regulations introduced several factors to be considered within an EIA Report; specifically, those factors listed under Regulations 4(3) and 4(4), and Schedule 4. **Table 5.2** describes how this EIA Report has addressed these factors.

Table 5.2: Assessment of Factors Identified in Regulations 4(3), 4(4) and Schedule 4

Topic	Potential for Significant Effects
Population and Human Health	Potential effects relating to population and human health have potential to arise from EMF, EMI, air quality, water quality, noise and / or vibration, light disturbance or residential visual amenity effects Potential effects relating to population and human health on nearby receptors arising from EMF, EMI, air quality, vibration and light disturbance have been scoped out of further assessment, as detailed in section 5.8 'Issues Scoped Out of Assessment' of this Chapter and are not considered further in this EIA Report[4]. Potential effects relating to population and human health on nearby receptors arising from water quality, noise and visual effects are considered within the relevant Chapters of this EIA Report, as follows: • Visual Amenity - **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Amenity**; • Water Quality - **Chapter 10: Soils, Geology and Water**; and • Noise - **Chapter 13: Noise.**
Biodiversity (species and habitats protected under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora)	The requirement to consider effects on biodiversity is addressed in **Chapter 8: Terrestrial Ecology,** and **Chapter 9: Ornithology** of this EIA Report.
Land and Soil (and natural resources availability)	The potential effects on geological receptors, peat and groundwater resources are considered in **Chapter 10: Geology, Soils and Water** of this EIA Report.
Water (and natural resource availability)	The potential effects on the water environment are considered in **Chapter 10: Geology, Soils and Water** of this EIA Report.
Air and Climate	Potential effects on air and climate, as described under Section 5.8: of this Chapter, have been scoped out of further assessment in this EIA Report.

[4] With the exception of noise arising from the corona discharge effect during the operation of the Proposed Development, which is considered further in Chapter 13: Noise of this EIA Report.

Material Assets, Cultural Heritage	**Chapter 11: Cultural Heritage**, includes an assessment of the potential for significant effects on material assets and cultural heritage including archaeological assets and historic landscapes.
Landscape	**Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Amenity** considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape.
Major Accidents and Disasters	Potential effects relating to major accidents and disasters, as discussed under Section 5.8 of this Chapter, have been scoped out of further assessment in this EIA Report.
Interaction Between Factors (cumulative effects)	The approach to cumulative effects is outlined within Section 4.5: Cumulative Effects of **Chapter 4: EIA Process and Methodology** of this EIA Report and is considered within each of the technical chapters (Chapters 7-15) where appropriate.