Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Lewis Hub Local Fund Fund Proposal

October 2026

Overview and Consultation

What is community benefit funding?

Our network across the north of Scotland plays a vital role in connecting renewable electricity from wind, hydro and marine power to homes and businesses across the UK. This new electricity transmission infrastructure is essential for meeting clean power and energy security targets, but we recognise that hosting infrastructure can bring change for local areas.

Community benefit funds are one way to ensure that communities hosting new infrastructure benefit directly from this investment.

They are monetary funds which support regional and local priorities, build resilience, and leave a meaningful legacy.

About the consultation

This proposal was developed through a consultation process and we would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate.

Community consultation was carried out in the area of benefit in May and June 2026. Approximately 92 people attended the in-person and online events and 158 people completed the survey. In addition, desk-based research was carried out using available data, and meetings were held with key stakeholder including Third Sector Hebrides, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and community organisations. We also met with Pointers Youth Centre and The Shed Project to get a better understanding of the needs of young people.

Consultation Activity	Participation
Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway, Monday 18 May	50
North Lochs Hotel, Leurbost, Tuesday 19 May	25
Online consultation event, Monday 25 May	17
Survey	158 responses

Area of benefit

The 'area of benefit' is the geographic area where benefits from the fund should be delivered. The area of benefit for the Lewis Hub Local Fund will be the following Community Council areas:

- **North Lochs**
- **Laxdale**
- **Stornoway**
- **Sandwick**

For further information on how the area of benefit was selected, see the Lewis Hub Local Fund **Community Consultation Report.**

Funding

Fund Value

All SSEN Transmission community benefit funding is being delivered in accordance with UK Government guidance on the delivery of community benefit for transmission infrastructure. The Lewis Hub Local Fund is made up of community benefit funding associated with the infrastructure of the following projects:

- A High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Converter Station
- An Alternating Current (AC) Substation

As per UK Government guidance and SSEN Transmission's approach to community benefit, the total lifetime value of the fund is **£1,060,000.**

Fund Priorities

It is proposed that the top four priorities identified by respondents will be the core priorities of this Fund. These are:

1. **Health and well-being** (including tackling social isolation and intergenerational projects).
2. **Accessible/affordable activities for children and young people** (including activities, equipment and travel).
3. **Community-led facilities and amenities** (including community centres and leisure/gym/sports venues).
4. **Capacity building of community bodies** (including funding for skills development and people).

Fund Duration and Structure

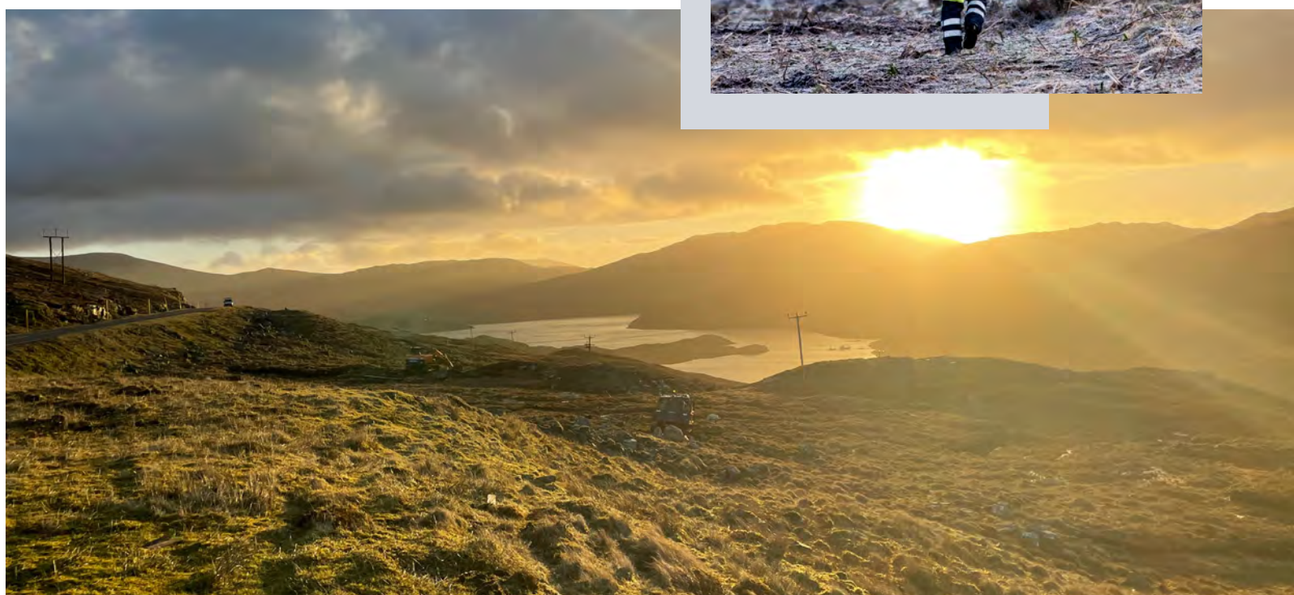
It is proposed that the Fund is established to run for five years. This proposal is based on consultation responses indicating a clear preference for the Fund to be delivered over **3-5 years.**

100% of the community benefit funding associated with the transmission infrastructure in the Lewis Hub will go into the Local Fund.

Both revenue and capital projects will be considered for funding. This reflects the clear stated preference of the majority of consultees for both types of funding to be made available.

It is proposed that both **small-scale (up to £10,000)** and **medium-scale (up to £100,000)** activities and projects are funded.

As the Fund will be delivered over a minimum of five years, the total amount available annually will be approximately **£212,000.** The total amount delivered over the lifetime of the Fund will be **£1,060,000.** This amount may increase if additional eligible projects are built in the area and this will be communicated clearly with stakeholders.



Decision Making Process

An independent, impartial investment forum will be appointed to act as the decision-making body for the Fund. This investment forum will include representatives from the local authority area plus a representative of SSEN Transmission and will be supported by the SSEN Transmission Community Fund Manager to ensure consistent standards are applied throughout the decision-making process.

Funding decisions will be based on the priorities set out in this document and will also consider factors such as the applicant project's distance from infrastructure, its impact, value for money, alignment with local plans, deliverability, level of community involvement and evidence of need. Full guidance for applicants will be published when the fund is opened.

More information on the investment forum will follow in advance of the fund opening.

Community Capacity

Consultation responses indicated that most respondents feel that there are sufficient capable community organisations in their area to use the funding and deliver positive impacts, however, the challenges faced by community organisations were highlighted, including volunteer burnout and a lack of revenue funding.

Only around one in seven respondents were either unsure or did not think that their local area has appropriate organisations to support the development and progression of community projects. Any groups requiring additional support will be signposted to the relevant organisations.

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, organisations must have a constitution, operate on a not-for-profit basis, and align with the fund priorities identified through the consultation. Community organisations are welcome to apply in partnership with public bodies, but the community organisation must be the lead partner/applicant. Statutory services and gap funding for existing provision will not be supported.

Funding is not available for community projects which fall under the following categories:

- The advancement of religion or politics (including requests to support the core activities of religious or political groups);
- Direct costs of energy consumption;
- The repayment of loans or payment of debts;
- Trips abroad;
- Feasibility studies;
- Costs already incurred or activities which will take place before a decision has been made (retrospective funding);
- Payments towards areas generally understood to be the primary responsibility of statutory authorities.

Next Steps

SSEN Transmission would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the consultation and fed back on the Fund Consultation.

We expect Round 1 of the Lewis Hub Local Fund to open in November 2026 and a Local Investment Forum to be appointed in early 2027. This Forum will make decisions on applications to the Lewis Hub Local Fund and future funds in the Western Isles. Community Fund Manager will continue to support the development and administration of the Fund'.

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How to get in touch

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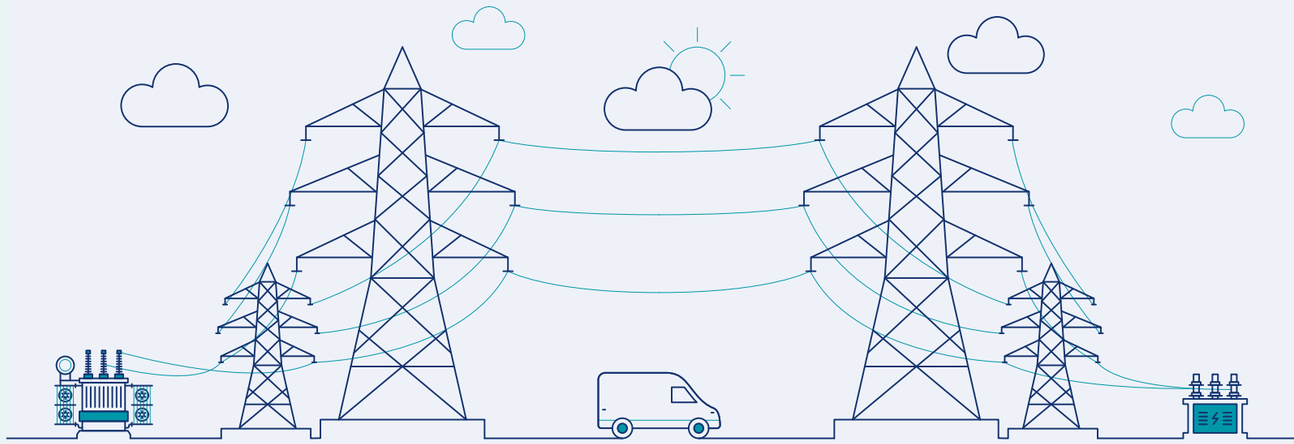
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