

TRANSMISSION

Beauly to Peterhead 400kV overhead line

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Coachford Proposed Alignment Design Changes

Public Consultation Events June 2025





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The consultation events will be taking place on:

Tuesday 24 June, 3–7pm Cairnie Memorial Hall, Cairnie, AB54 4TQ

Thursday 26 June, 3–7pm Longmore Community Hall, Banff Road, Keith, AB55 5ET



Powering change together

The time has come to further enhance Scotland's energy infrastructure, providing power for future generations as we move towards net zero.

The shift to a cleaner, more sustainable future is about more than climate change. It's about ensuring future generations have the same opportunities to thrive as we have all had.

Countries around the world are investing in their energy infrastructure to support the demands of modern economies and meet net zero targets. The UK is leading the way in building a modern, sustainable energy system for the future.



We all have a part to play

When it comes to net zero, we have to be in it together. The UK and Scottish governments have ambitious net zero targets, and we're playing our part in meeting them.

We work closely with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to connect vast renewable energy resources—harnessed by solar, wind, hydro and marine generation—to areas of demand across the country. Scotland is playing a big role in meeting this demand, exporting two thirds of power generated in our network.

But there's more to be done. By 2050, the north of Scotland is predicted to contribute over 50GW of low carbon energy to help deliver net zero. Today, our region has around 9GW of renewable generation connected to the network.

At SSEN Transmission, it is our role to build the energy system of the future.

We're investing over **£20 billion** into our region's energy infrastructure this decade, with the potential for this to increase to over **£30bn**. This investment will deliver a network capable of meeting **20%** of the UK's Clean Power 2030 target and supporting up to **37,000 jobs**, **17,500** of which will be here in Scotland.



Scan the QR code with your smartphone to find out more about how these policies have been assessed and determined.

Who we are

We're responsible for maintaining and investing in the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. We're part of SSE plc, one of the world's leading energy companies with a rich heritage in Scotland that dates back more than 80 years. We are also 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.

What we do

We manage the electricity network across our region which covers a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of the country's most challenging terrain. We connect renewable energy sources to our network in the north of Scotland and then transport it to where it needs to be. From underground/subsea cables and overhead lines to electricity substations, our network keeps your lights on all year round.

Working with you

We understand that the work we do can have an impact on communities. So we're committed to minimising our impacts and maximising all the benefits that our developments can bring to your area. We're regularly assessed by global sustainability consultancy AccountAbility for how we engage with communities. That means we provide all the information you need to know about our plans and how they will impact communities like yours. The way we consult is also a two-way street. We want to hear people's views, concerns, or ideas and harness local knowledge so that our work benefits their communities: today and long into the future. You can share your views with us at: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/talk-to-us/contact-us**

Project overview

The proposed Beauly – Peterhead 400kV overhead line project (previously referred to as the Beauly – Blackhillock – New Deer – Peterhead 400kV overhead line project), is a key part of our Pathway to 2030 programme of works investments to update the electricity transmission network across the north of Scotland.

These investments, which are required to support the delivery of clean power and energy security targets, are part of a wider upgrade of the electricity grid across Great Britain.

What does the project involve?

The project will involve the construction of a new approx. 185km long, 400kV overhead line between new proposed substations near Beauly, New Deer and Peterhead, using steel lattice towers likely to average around 58m in height. We have been engaging with stakeholders and local communities on this project since 2022, ensuring meaningful engagement with stakeholders potentially affected by our development proposals. We are now consulting on proposed changes to our project in the Keith area.



Removal of Coachford from project scope

Following detailed ground investigation works which revealed technical challenges at the site of the proposed Coachford Substation, we will no longer be proceeding with the construction of the proposed substation at Coachford as part of the Beauly to Peterhead 400kV overhead line (OHL) project. The results of our ground investigation work created an opportunity to reassess how, when and where the objectives of Coachford could be delivered, taking future development opportunities in the area into consideration.

Following the decision to remove the substation from the Beauly to Peterhead 400kV OHL project, we will now start exploring alternative options to deliver the initial needs of Coachford—informed by community feedback and development insights gathered so far—at a new site.

What that means for the Beauly to Peterhead 400kV project

The Beauly to Peterhead 400kV OHL project will now comprise **three new substations rather than four**, alongside the overhead line infrastructure, and still fully deliver the power transmission and grid connectivity requirements identified under our Pathway to 2030 projects.

The proposed OHL alignment has been carefully considered and assessed through an extensive routeing process to minimise impacts and therefore it is proposed that the OHL alignment will remain largely unchanged.

However, to the east and southeast of Keith, adjustments to the OHL design are required to adapt to the removal of the proposed Coachford Substation, including a new 'diamond crossing' of the existing Blackhillock to Rothienorman 400kV OHL.



Read more about the decision to remove Coachford Substation from the scope of the project via the QR code below or via our project webpage:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/coachford



Why we're here today

The purpose of this consultation is to share our amended design and proposed alignment for the development in this section following the removal of Coachford Substation from the project scope, including details on how decisions were taken.

We have been developing these design updates and will present the changes to the overhead line around the Coachford area (Section 19-20) within this consultation.

We have identified and assessed 3 alignment options within this area, and we are seeking stakeholder feedback on our proposals within Sections 19 and 20.

To allow for the engagement with stakeholders and inclusion of these changes in our Environmental Impact Assessment, our Section 37 application for the proposed overhead line will now be submitted in **early Autumn 2025**.



For more information about the project, including our previous proposals and engagement events, please visit our project webpage:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/BBNP



About the overhead line changes

Removal of diversion

The original project design included a diversion of the existing Blackhillock to Rothienorman 400kV OHL into and out of Coachford Substation. As Coachford Substation is being removed from the project scope, this diversion is no longer needed.

This will reduce the number of new OHLs to the southeast of Keith, between the A96 and the Balloch Hill, **from three, to one.** Removal of a section of the existing 400kV OHL is also no longer proposed.

Diamond crossing

To the southeast of Keith, the existing Blackhillock to Rothienorman 400kV OHL runs in a south-westerly/ northeasterly direction and the new OHL is designed to run roughly north/south. Without the need for the diversion of the existing OHL into Coachford Substation, the proposed new OHL needs to cross over the existing line. At the point where the two lines meet, the design solution proposed is referred to as a 'diamond crossing'. This enables one of the OHLs to pass under the other in a 'diamond' configuration.

Passing through Coachford

At the Coachford Substation site itself, the proposed alignment will pass straight through the site, rather than connecting into the substation.

New location of transposition towers

Due to the line being over 100km long, we need to switch the positions of the wires (called conductors) twice along the route. This helps keep the electricity flowing evenly, preventing potential network issues.

To do this, we use special towers called transposition towers. These include two towers with longer cross arms, placed about 100m apart. We'll need to install these at two points along the route to make the swaps possible.

As a result of the removal of Coachford Substation, we have had to amend the location of the proposed transposition towers, to ensure they are located at distances of one third and two thirds along the length of the alignment between Fanellan and Greens substations. The new locations of the transposition towers are available to view in the materials available at these events and on our webpage: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/BBNP**





Selecting an alignment

The consideration of alignment options and design solutions brings together work by four main disciplines:

Engineering Team

Who identify engineering constraints and where overhead lines and cables can be installed from a construction and operational perspective.

Key considerations include:

- Infrastructure crossings
- Environmental design
- Ground conditions
- Accessibility
- Proximity to existing infrastructure and properties



Environmental Team

Who identify key environmental, community and social constraints along the routes which the new infrastructure could impact upon.

Key considerations include:

- Engagement with statutory consultees and planning authorities
- Results of specialist environmental surveys including archaeology, ornithology, ecology, geology and hydrology
- International environmental designations including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs - designated for habitats), Special Protected Areas (SPAs - designated for bird species), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance identified under the terms of the Ramsar Convention) and World Heritage Sites
- National designations including Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, National Scenic areas, National Nature Reserves, Gardens and Designed Landscapes
- Regional environmental sensitivities including
 Wild Land Areas and Special Landscape Areas
- Local environmental aspects including visual amenity, local and RSPB nature reserves, recreation uses

Communities Team

Who work with communities and make sure that their feedback during the consultation process is closely considered during project refinement.

Key considerations include:

- Community engagement
- Consultation responses review
- Recreational areas and areas of local interest



Striking a balance

When selecting an alignment, we need to carefully balance key considerations relating to engineering, environment, cost and social aspects, in each section of the overhead line route. We then consider the likely effect and level of impact of each consideration, which will vary from section to section. This can be based on how populated the area is, the outcomes of environmental and engineering surveys, stakeholder and community feedback, the presence of peat, the local water environment, if there is existing infrastructure we need to avoid, if the effects on land and property can be mitigated and if a constructable alignment can be identified.

Ultimately, we need to balance a range of factors and present the solution we consider most viable, to then put forward for consultation. We consulted in Summer 2024 on our Potential Alignment, and earlier this year we confirmed the route we are taking forward as the Proposed Alignment within our Report on Consultation.



Land Team

Who engage with landowners to identify key land use constraints.

Key considerations include:

- Landowner engagement
- Mitigating effects of infrastructure on land and properties
- Reaching land agreements

Due to the removal of Coachford Substation from the Beauly – Peterhead 400kV OHL project scope, the design changes we are now consulting on did not form part of our Alignment Report on Consultation.

Our Alignment Report on Consultation details the consultation responses received as part of our Refined Route and Alignment Options consultation process for the project and where appropriate, shows how the alignment option being taken forward to consent has been informed by this process. This can be downloaded from the project webpage or viewed during the consultation events.



You can download our Alignment Report on Consultation and Alignment Maps from our website: ssen-transmission.co.uk/BBNP

Alignment selection outcomes

Following the removal of the Coachford Substation from the Beauly to Peterhead 400kV project and the resulting changes to requirements, the overhead line (OHL) design in this area has been revised. Three alignment options—A, B, and C—were assessed in detail, with Alignment C identified as our proposed alignment.

Alignment A

Alignment A begins to the east of Keith and to the south of the A95 and the River Isla. It travels southeast to pass over the existing 400kV OHL, then south over Mill Wood. To the south of Mill Wood, Alignment A travels southwest, passing to the east of Dunnyduff Wood. To the south of Dunnyduff Wood, it turns to a southeasterly direction, until it connects to the proposed alignment to the east of Glen of Coachford.

Alignment B

Alignment B begins at the same location as Alignment A, travelling southeast to pass over the existing 400kV OHL then south over Mill Wood. South of Mill Wood, it travels southwest, to the east of Dunnyduff Wood. Here Alignment B changes direction to travel south, passing Mains of Birkenburn, until it connects to the proposed alignment to the east of Glen of Coachford.

Proposed Alignment: Alignment C

Alignment C begins at the same location as Alignment A, travelling southeast to pass over the existing 400kV OHL then south over Mill Wood. South of Mill Wood, it travels south east into Balloch Wood. At Wester Herricks, it changes direction to pass in a southerly direction to the east of the properties at Wester Herricks, through Balloch Wood. Once the alignment has passed these houses, it travels southwest until it reaches the old military road. From here it travels south until it connects to the proposed alignment to the east of Glen of Coachford.





Alignment options - environmental designations and constraints

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Alignment options considerations

The revised alignment options have been further assessed against a range of environmental, technical and cost considerations. We have also taken into account previous community and landowner feedback in this area to reach a decision on the most appropriate alignment to take forward as part of our Section 37 application. The key findings of our assessments are as follows:

Environmental considerations

Alignments A and B are very similar in comparison for the majority of environmental topics. Alignment A is slightly less constrained due to having the least cultural heritage assets and the least amount of forestry to be removed, and from a visual perspective it avoids crossing in front of a number of residential properties.

Alignment C passes through areas of mature commercial woodland and would require a larger area of tree removal than the other alignment options. Alignment C also has a greater potential for impacts to protected species, due to the larger areas of native woodland habitats. There are a number of Scottish Water drinking water abstractions and two private water supplies close to this alignment, however impacts to these abstractions can be avoided through sensitive tower placement and construction mitigation measures. Alignment C also crosses over more core paths and through Balloch Wood, which is used recreationally by walkers.

From a visual perspective, Alignment C is considered to be less constrained for residential receptors in the immediate vicinity, as it passes behind a number of properties and maintains more open vistas across farmland in near-distant views. It is also less constrained from an agricultural perspective.

Community feedback considerations

Community feedback from our previous engagement events indicated that there was a preference to keep infrastructure away from the community of Keith to reduce the impact this would have on residential properties, agricultural land, and local people within the area. We have taken this feedback into consideration during our design and routeing process of the three alignment options presented, this feedback has significantly influenced our proposed route. Our proposed alignment takes the same route as the previously proposed Rothienorman to Coachford OHL diversion and passes through woodland on the lower slopes of Balloch Wood.

Engineering considerations

All alignment options must cross the Blackhillock to Rothienorman 400kV OHL at the same location, requiring a new 'diamond crossing' arrangement to the east of Keith. Alignments A and C require one crossing of the existing Moray West underground cable route, whereas Alignment B requires three crossings of this cable.

Alignment C crosses elevated terrain for a longer distance than Alignments A and B, but with a maximum elevation of 260m this is well within the design capability of the proposed towers. Alignment C also crosses slightly steeper side slopes where it crosses the lower side of the Balloch, however constructability surveys have not identified any concerns in this area.

All alignment options have reasonable access for both construction and maintenance. Alignment C has a slight benefit due to the existing forestry track that provides good access along a section of Alignment C.

Alignments A and B require five angle towers whereas Alignment C requires seven.

Alignments A and B both pass within close proximity of three residential properties, whereas Alignment C remains further than 170m from all properties. Alignment A also comes close to a small wind turbine that would likely need to be removed, whereas Alignments B and C have no turbines in close proximity.

Cost considerations

Alignment B has the lowest estimated capital cost. All alignment options are within 120% of the lowest cost option and are therefore considered acceptable from a capital cost perspective.

Alignment C has highest estimated operational cost due to increased resilience felling requirements compared with Alignments A and B.

Project timeline



3D visualisations

We understand that stakeholders need to be able to understand and visualise what the development may look like in their local area. We've commissioned 3D visualisations which model the proposed overhead line into the local landscape to help the understanding of the proposals in terms of the visual impact, distance, and height.

The following are some images taken from the 3D model for this specific area of the proposed alignment, including different typographys, through woodland, and the proposed diamond crossing.



To find the 3D flythrough video, scan the QR code or visit the following URL: ssen-transmission.co.uk/ BBNP



Proposed Alignment through Balloch Woods with indicative felling for the operational corridor

To get a better sense of the proposals in full, a visualisation portal including a flythrough video of the specific section that we are consulting on is also available to view from the project webpage through the link and QR code above. Our consultants, 3D Webtech, will be assisting us at our consultation events with copies of the model that attendees can interact with.

Photomontages

Photomontage visualisations will also be produced as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Once the EIA is completed, we'll ensure these photomontages are available to view on our webpage.



Proposed Alignment looking East from the A96 near the previously proposed Coachford site



Proposed Alignment through previously proposed Coachford site

Our access strategy

Constructing and maintaining our overhead line

We are currently developing our access strategy, which considers access requirements for construction and maintenance of the overhead line. Access requirements have also informed the Proposed Alignment selection process, as a key engineering consideration. We have now determined our proposed access routes for each tower location and established which of these are planned to be upgrades to existing access or new temporary or permanent access tracks. These proposals are available to view at our consultation events. A detailed traffic and transport assessment will form part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, which assesses potential impacts of construction traffic and the capacity of local roads to accommodate this traffic, this will take into consideration the design changes in this section. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be agreed with the local authorities prior to works commencing.

Detailed Ground Investigation (GI) works have been taking place across the route; these works are required to inspect the proposed tower location and are carried out under out permitted development rights. GI works are temporary in nature and separate to any proposed construction works but are a necessary step in any new development with the results helping to establish final tower foundation designs.

The table below explains the different types of tracks that are typically considered and what they are required for.

Turne of accord	What do as it mann?
Type of access	what does it mean?
Construction Access	During construction, stone tracks would typically be used to gain access to each of the tower locations. This would normally be temporary except in locations where it is considered that it needs to be retained to maintain safe access for future operations and maintenance requirements. There are different types of construction access tracks. These include cut tracks, surface tracks and floated roads. Each provide different benefits depending on the ground conditions in the area. A typical access track would be of a minimum 4m in width however this could be wider in areas where heavy plant require access.
Statutory Inspection and General Maintenance Access	When designing the overhead lines, we need to consider how our operational teams will be able to access the locations in the future to carry out routine inspections and maintenance. Operational access would normally be taken by an off-road 4x4 vehicle with a trailer being able to reach each tower. If we considered that it was not possible for a 4x4 to be capable of doing this, we would need to consider alternative access either by identifying a route where temporary track mats can be installed as and when required or through construction of a permanent track. In open fields with fair ground conditions and generally accessible terrain no additional permanent access would normally be required.
Demolition Access	At times we may need to consider access for future safe removal of an overhead line. This doesn't mean having access to every location to be able to dismantle the towers, that we should take into account how we may take the access and what additional roads and panelling would be required if we were to do so.

Beauly to Peterhead 400kV overhead line

	What does it mean?
Type of access	what does it mean:
Heavy Maintenance Access (cont.)	In certain situations, we might have to take heavy plant to the sites of towers and we have to plan how that access could be taken.
	Typically, the main focus here is access to the angle towers. At angle towers this is where the overhead line conductors get pulled onto the towers so additional access and space is needed in these locations during construction to carry this out.
	Where these locations cannot be easily accessed, we would look to retain permanent access so that if a conductor needed replaced in the future this could be carried out safely whilst minimising the timeframes required to perform the maintenance.
Helicopters	The use of helicopters for construction of steel lattice towers is feasible, however, the operational restrictions (e.g. weather, proximity to public roads and environmental factors), and the significant cost implications, for a project of this scale are key considerations. The use of helicopters is likely to be required in more remote sections of the project, and where particular environmental or geographical constraints necessitate their use. Where helicopters are used, construction plant would still require access to each tower location to facilitate construction and erection of towers. Helicopter landing zones would also require to be identified.

Public road improvements

Feedback received from local stakeholders at the previous stages of engagement included questions about improvements to public roads. Public road improvements (PRI) will be required in some locations to facilitate construction traffic travelling along existing public roads. These works could include upgrades such as road widening, installation of temporary or permanent passing places, new or upgraded road junctions, and upgrades to or replacement of existing bridges. Further information on PRI works will be provided in the EIA as part of the application for s37 consent.







Have your say

We value community and stakeholder feedback. Our alignment proposals are the result of extensive engagement with a wide range of different stakeholders and we believe the proposed alignment strikes a balance between the various different considerations that we must take into account.

As part of the Section 37 application process, we are expected to hold at least two pre-application consultation events prior to submitting the application. We held the second round of engagement events in February and March 2025. These additional events are to engage on our design changes due to the removal of the proposed Coachford Substation. They provide an opportunity for members of the public to respond to the new proposed alignment within Section 19 and 20.

Earlier, additional public consultation was also undertaken at the corridor, route and route refinement, and potential alignment stages.

Submitting your final comments to us:

We intend to submit our application for consent in Autumn 2025. Prior to this, you can submit your final formal comments to us before our feedback period closes on Friday 18th July. We welcome final comments from members of the public, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders regarding our proposals until such time as we submit our consent application.

Once an application for consent has been submitted, there will be an opportunity for the public to make formal representations directly to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit before it takes a decision.

What we're seeking views on

During our public consultation events in February and March 2025, we presented our proposed alignment. We are now presenting our proposed alignment in this section with the necessary design changes following the decision to not proceed with the proposed Coachford Substation site. We are asking for any final comments or feedback ahead of submitting our Section 37 consent application for the Beauly to Peterhead 400kV OHL project. It would be helpful to share any opportunities to deliver a local community benefit or biodiversity projects you would like us to consider.

You can also follow us on social media:



@ssentransmission

) @SSETransmission

How to provide feedback

Submit your feedback online by scanning the QR code on this page or via the form on our project webpage at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/BBNP

Email the feedback form to the Community Liaison Manager, or write to us enclosing the feedback format the back of this booklet.

Our Community Liaison team

Each project has a dedicated Community Liaison Manager who works closely with community members to make sure they are well informed of our proposals and that their views, concerns, questions, or suggestions are put to our project teams.

Throughout the life of our projects, you will hear from us regularly. We aim to establish strong working relationships by being accessible to key local stakeholders such as community councils, residents' associations, and development trusts, and regularly engage with interested individuals.

Community Liaison Manager

Kirsty McNamara



SSEN Transmission, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

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) +44 7586 295 274



Additional information:

The best way to keep up to date is to sign up to project updates via the project webpage:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/BBNP

Your feedback

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation booklet. In order to record your views and improve the effectiveness of our consultation, please complete this short feedback form.

Please note that comments on this form are not formal representations to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU). Once an application for consent has been submitted, all documents relating to the submission will be made publicly available and there will be an opportunity for the public to make formal representations to the ECU before it takes a decision.

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. (Please tick one box per question only)

Q1.	Which consultation ev	ent did you attend? (Sele	ect all that apply)	
	Keith	Cairnie Ad	cessed information online	None
Q2.	Do you have any comr or concerns relating to	nents regarding the alig the construction phase	nment being proposed of the project?	
	Comments:			
Q3.	If consent is granted, we at key milestones. We	we will continue to prov continuously seek to ide	ide updates as the project of entify the best methods of o	develops and communication
	based on community i updates so that we car	needs. Please tell us how n consider this for futur	you would prefer to receive improvements (Select all t	ve project :hat apply)
	Newsletter	Email to a mailing	list Text message	Letter
	Dublic mostic	Wobsite undeter	Other (sheet)	
	Public meetings	website updates	Other (please st	ate)

Q4.	Our Community Benefit Fund will provide an opportunity for local groups and organisations to apply for community funding. Do you have any suggestions for local community benefits or local initiatives, such as volunteering, that we could support to leave a positive legacy in your area? Comments:
Q5.	We are committed to achieving biodiversity net gain as part of our proposals. Do you have any suggestions for nature projects that we could consider to leave a positive nature legacy in your area? Comments:
Full name	e: Email:

We would like to send you relevant communications via email such as invitations to stakeholder events, surveys, updates on projects, services and future developments from the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks group listed below. If you are happy to receive email updates please opt in by ticking the box below. You can unsubscribe at any time by contacting us at stakeholder.admin@sse.com or by clicking on the unsubscribe link that will be at the end of each of our emails.

If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the project, please tick this box

Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form. Please submit your completed form by one of the methods below:

Post: FAO Kirsty McNamara - SSEN Transmission, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

Email: BBNP@sse.com Online: ssen-transmission.co.uk/BBNP

For information on how we collect and process your data please see our privacy notice available at today's event. This can also be obtained online at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/privacy

Comments forms and all the information from today's event will also be available to download from the project website.

We intend to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist our experienced teams in the analysis of your feedback, so we can categorise key points raised more quickly. You can learn more about how we're utilising AI at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/AIFAQ

Any information given on the feedback form can be used and published anonymously as part of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks consultation report. By completing this feedback form you consent to Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks using feedback for this purpose.

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