



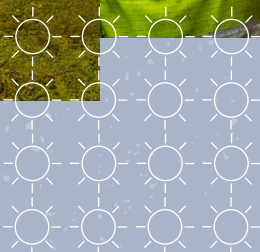
Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Balallan 132kV Switching Station Project

Pre-application consultation

October 2025



[ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/
project-map/balallan-switching-station](https://ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/balallan-switching-station)

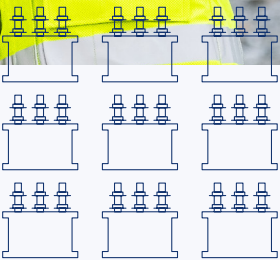
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The consultation event will be taking place on:

Wednesday 22 October 2025, 3–7pm
Kinloch Historical Society Community Hub, Balallan, HS2 9PN

Thursday 23 October 2025, 3–7pm
The Resource Centre, Kershader, HS2 9QA



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 £30 billion. 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.



More information about the policies and documents driving the need for the energy system for the future can be found here:

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 and 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 our host 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. 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/

The Pathway to 2030

Building the energy system of the future will require delivery of significant infrastructure over the next few years. In partnership with the UK and Scottish governments, we’re committed to meeting our obligation of connecting new, renewable energy to where it’s needed by 2030.

Achieving Net Zero

By 2030, both the UK and Scottish governments are targeting a big expansion in offshore wind generation of 50GW and 11GW respectively. The Scottish Government has also set ambitious targets for an additional 12GW of onshore wind by 2030.

Across Great Britain, including the north of Scotland, there needs to be a significant increase in the capacity of the onshore electricity transmission infrastructure to deliver these 2030 targets and a pathway to net zero.

Securing our energy future

And it’s not just about net zero. It’s also about building a homegrown energy system, so that geopolitical turmoil around the world doesn’t severely impact the UK and push up energy prices.

The UK Government’s British Energy Security Strategy further underlines the need for this infrastructure, setting out plans to accelerate homegrown power for greater energy independence. The strategy aims to reduce the UK’s dependence on and price exposure to global gas wholesale markets through the deployment of homegrown low carbon electricity generation supported by robust electricity network infrastructure.

Meeting our 2030 targets

In July 2022, National Grid, the Electricity System Operator (ESO), published the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND). This set out the blueprint for the onshore and offshore transmission infrastructure that’s required to support the forecasted growth in the UK’s renewable electricity. It’s an ambitious plan that will help the UK achieve net zero.

Greater security

This investment will play a critical role in improving network reliability and security of supply for homes and businesses across the Western Isles, reducing reliance on the back-up diesel-powered electricity generation station at Battery Point in Stornoway. It will also support national efforts to deliver greater energy independence and energy security, reducing the country’s dependence on volatile global wholesale energy markets.

Future network investment requirements

Our 2030 targets are the first step on the transition to net zero. The UK Government has a target to decarbonise our electricity system by 2035 and fully decarbonise our economy by becoming net zero by 2050, with the Scottish Government committing to net zero five years earlier, by 2045.

To achieve these targets, further investment in new low carbon electricity generation and the enabling electricity transmission network infrastructure will be required.

Maximising social and economic opportunities

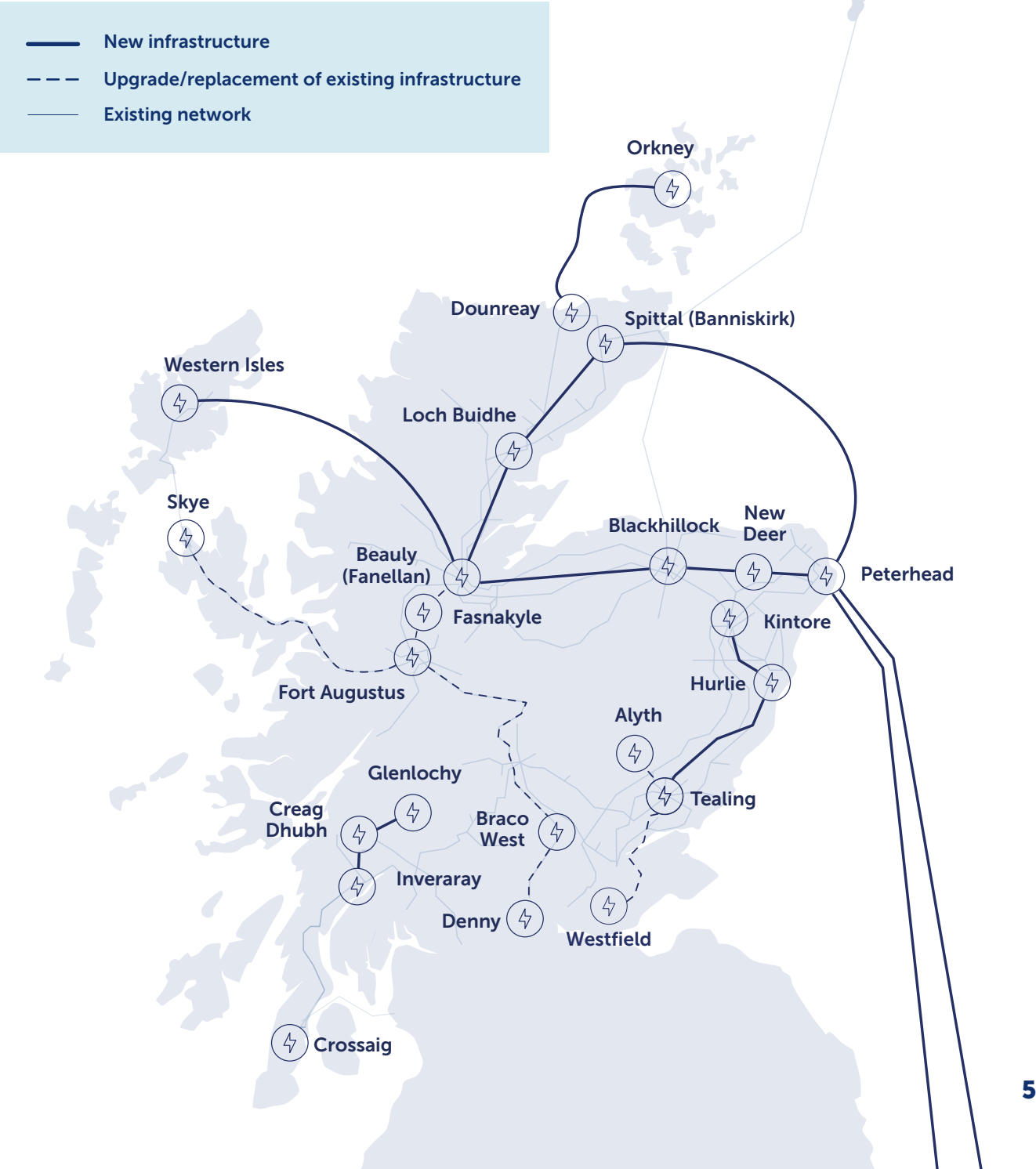
We are committed to maximising the significant local economic opportunities and benefits these investments will unlock. Over and above a wide range of opportunities for the local supply chain, benefits may vary from project to project based on the type of works and local requirements during the construction process. We are working closely with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Western Isles renewable developers to explore collective opportunities to have a lasting legacy through maximising social and economic opportunities. We are committed to build on the learnings and local benefits from other projects, such as our ongoing Shetland HVDC link project.

Delivering a community benefit fund

We recognise the vital role local communities will play in hosting this critical infrastructure and are committed to delivering ambitious and transformational community benefit schemes that have the potential to changes lives and create a sustainable and positive legacy. We recently set out plans for our first ever Community Benefit Fund, and in September this year we will release initial funds which will be accessible to communities where in flight projects are taking place.

A community benefit fund panel was appointed and is responsible for awarding funding to projects that deliver on three identified themes of:

- People focusing on skill training and employability
- Place emphasising the community and culture
- in the North of Scotland
- Alleviating fuel poverty



The Pathway to 2030

What this means for you

The development of onshore renewables on the Isle of Lewis, particularly wind power, has driven a requirement to reinforce the electricity transmission network on the island. Key benefits of these works will include the connection of local renewable energy, planned and future, onto the network as well as improving the security of the electricity network on Lewis.

The Balallan Switching Station project is required to facilitate the connection of Muaitheabhal (Uisenis) Wind Farm, and future onshore wind farms, to the rest of Lewis and the wider Transmission network.



Project overview

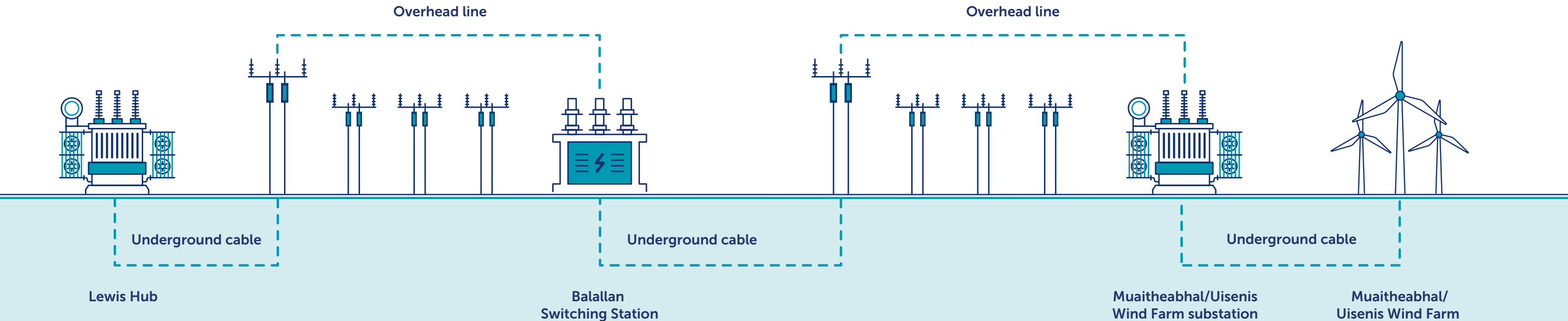
We’re leading some exciting projects to power change in the UK and Scotland. To support the delivery of 2030 offshore wind targets set by the UK and Scottish Governments, and to power local communities, we need to upgrade our existing network. In some key areas, we need to develop entirely new infrastructure.

Balallan 132kV Switching Station

The purpose of this booklet and public engagement event is to provide an update on the Balallan Switching Station.

The proposed new Balallan Switching Station is a strategic development which is required on the Western Isles. It is required to facilitate the connection of contracted and future renewable generation from the Western Isles onto the wider transmission network.

- Project elements include:**
- A 132kV Gas Insulated Switching Station located near Balallan.
 - The connection of the new Balallan Switching Station to the existing Harris – Stornoway 132kV Overhead Line (OHL) circuit
 - The connection of the Harris – Stornoway 132kV OHL circuit to the Lewis Hub 132kV substation



Our Consultation Process

The work we have planned is significant and has the potential to deliver massive benefits in your community, Scotland, and beyond. Yet we know that achieving our goals will require a lot of work that will impact your lives. That’s why we want to work with you every step of the way throughout the planning and delivery stages of these essential and ambitious works.

We’re committed to delivering a meaningful consultation process and have actively sought the views of everyone affected by our plans. We have tried to make our plans easily accessible, so that you can give us input throughout each stage of the development process.

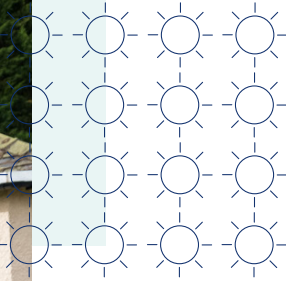
Throughout the consultation, we have presented our approach to developing the project, including changes made since we last consulted with you. We will also provide some visualisations and maps to show you where everything will be located.

We want you to share your thoughts and opinions on our plans, where you think we can make improvements, concerns about the impact of our work and what you think of any changes and refinements we’ve made. By telling us what you think, you will help shape our proposals. We want to harness your local knowledge so that we spot any unforeseen challenges early and maximise the potential benefits and opportunities for your communities.

Because, ultimately, we want you to work with us to ensure that the energy infrastructure we build will be the best it can possibly be.

Who we’re consulting with

As well as communities, we have received feedback from a broad range of other stakeholders including but not limited to landowners, businesses, non-statutory consultees and statutory consultees including local authorities, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Local Fisheries Trusts & Boards.



The Town and Country Planning Process

The legislation that enables the planning of projects like the Balallan Switching Station is the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Engaging the right people

Local Planning Authorities determine the outcome of any applications made under the Town and Country Planning Act and establish the planning pathway our substation and converter projects must take, including which consents are required. This involves confirming whether projects require Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). We are progressing this project as EIA development. This assessment will be made publicly available once submitted.

The Balallan Switching Station project is classed as “National Development” under the Town and County Planning process; therefore, pre-application consultation is required with the public and interested parties.

The pre-application process

A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on the 31 July 2025 and acknowledged on the 7 August 2025. This is the first stage in the planning application process, and the beginning of a consultation period that must allow for at least 12 weeks between the start of the pre-application consultation and feedback, and submission of a planning application.

The plans we are presenting at this event might change between now and the submission of a planning application. The red line boundary submitted with the PAN boundary represents the maximum extent of the land potentially included in the application site, but this area may be reduced or rationalised as the development proposal becomes finalised.

There is a requirement to hold at least two events to provide the opportunity for members of the public to comment on the proposals. This public event is included in the second round of events. Your feedback will be included in a Pre-application Consultation (PAC) Report.

Submitting a planning application

The planning application is due to be submitted to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in Winter 2025. A Pre-application Consultation Report will accompany the planning application providing details of the consultation undertaken and communicating how the consultation process has influenced the proposed development. Where comments are received that cannot be addressed in the final proposal, an explanation will also be given why this is the case.

Comments made through the pre-application consultation process are not formal representations to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. When the planning application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make formal representations to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.



Balallan Switching Station

What is a switching station?

A switching station is a vital part of the electricity transmission network that helps manage the flow of power between different circuits. It allows electricity to be safely and efficiently routed across the network, improving reliability and supporting future growth. The new Balallan Switching Station will enable the connection of renewable energy from the Muaitheabhal (Uisenis) Wind Farm and strengthen the local transmission system, enhancing security of supply for the Western Isles.

Key switching station functions

Balallan Switching Station will play a vital role in managing the local transmission network, supporting safe and reliable energy flow across the Western Isles. Key functions of the project includes:

- Monitoring and isolating faults to protect the network.
- Managing energy flows for system flexibility and maintenance.
- Collecting and relaying real-time data on voltage, current, and power flows.
- Supporting safe integration of local generation into the wider grid.

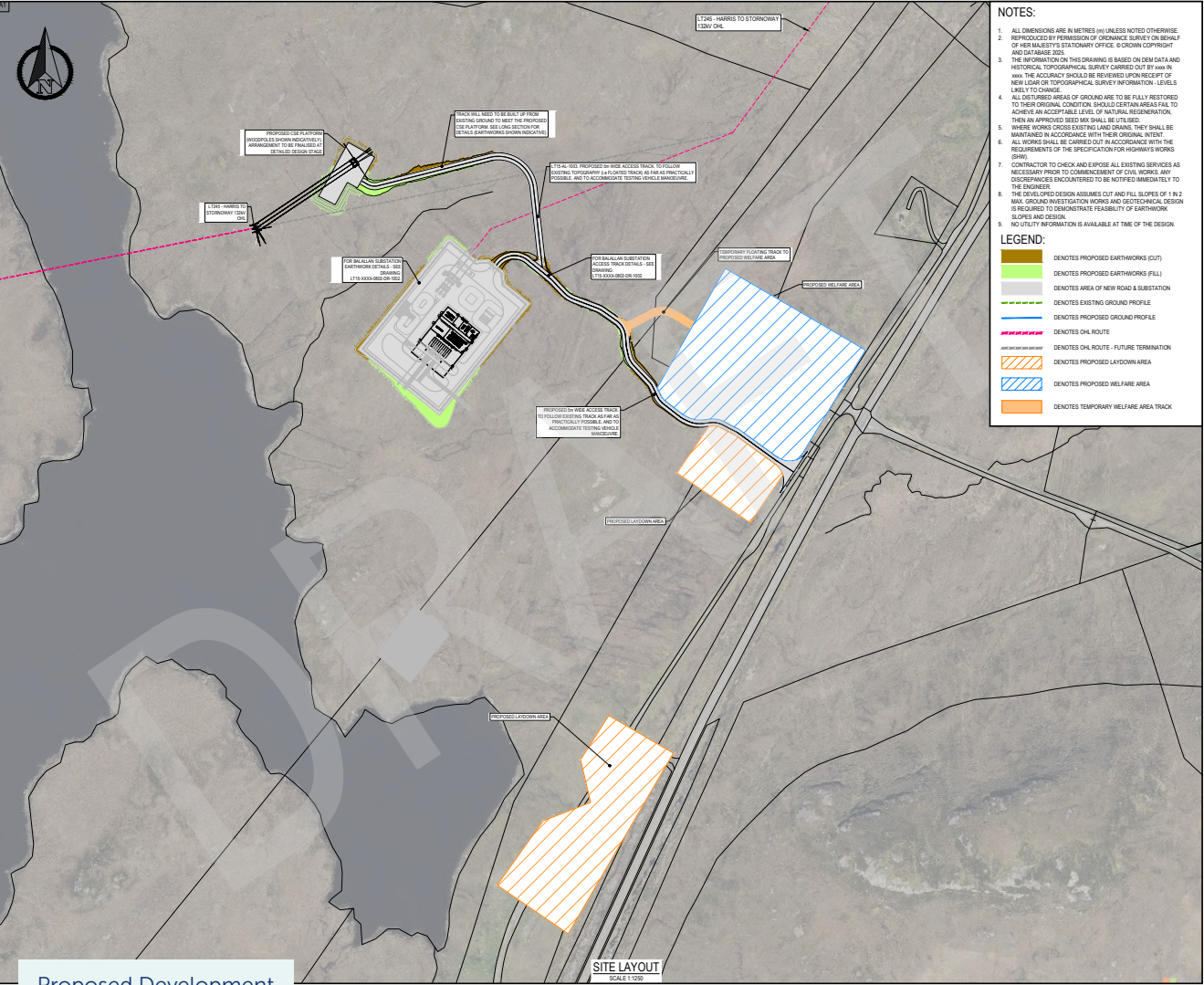
Access

A new permanent access road (5m width) with passing bays, which will connect onto the A859. The same access location will be utilised during construction along with internal perimeter access tracks to reduce the volume and weight of traffic on the existing public road network.



3D aerial view of the proposed Balallan Switching Station infrastructure

Development Infrastructure



Proposed Development

Please note: The Switching Station site footprint, the PAN (Proposal of Application Notice) incorporates all site requirements including any temporary site compounds, temporary and permanent drainage, site access and on-site parking, laydown and storage areas for materials and excavated soils, as well as hard and soft landscaping proposals.

Many of these requirements will be temporary, during the construction phase, and will be permanently removed upon completion of the project.

The red line boundary, therefore, does not represent the permanent footprint of the substation itself but indicates the full development area.

Summary of Feedback

The PAN for the Balallan Switching Station was submitted to The Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in July 2025. There were 50 attendees and 3 responded with comments at the event and after the event held on 27th & 28th August 2025 at the Kinloch Historical Society Community HUB & the Resource Centre, Kershader. The feedback and comments received together with our responses at and since this event are summarised in the table below. The feedback period for this final statutory event will close on 6 November 2025 which will bring to a close the consultation period. Feedback received following this Feedback event will be included together with responses in the Pre-application consultation report which is submitted alongside our formal planning application.

Overview of visual impacts



After (showing existing infrastructure and Balallan Switching Station) - view from The Pairc Land Raiders Cairn

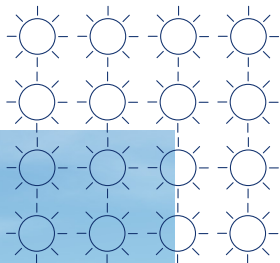


LT15-A859 Junction View

This visualisation is shown without screening. We are currently working with a landscape architect to develop landscape forms and planting design to help to screen the Switching Station from view.

Considerations regarding visual impacts

As part of this consultation process and discussions with the Local Authority we are showing modelled visual representations of the Switching Station from local and well-known viewpoints.



LT15 Hebridean Way - Existing



LT15 Hebridean Way - Proposed

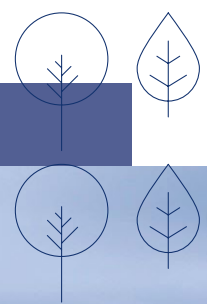
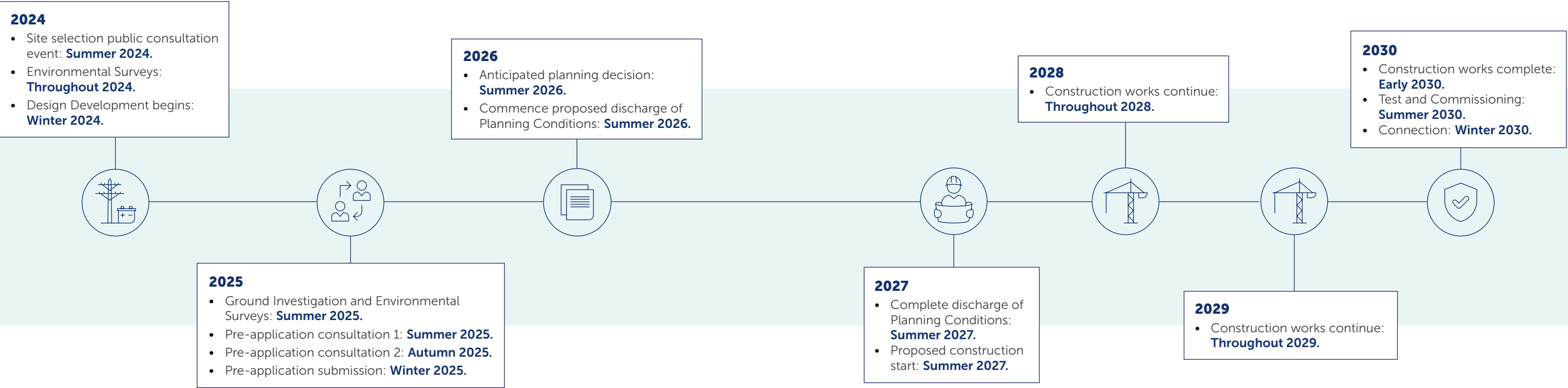
Addressing feedback

Feedback	Response
Impacts on landscape and views	When planning routes for overhead lines and substations, we consider visual impacts and how this may affect the local scenery, visitor experience and communities. For each project we develop, we conduct a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. This is one element of the EIA Report that forms part of our application to the local authorities and Scottish Government. In this assessment, we consider visual impact from centres of population, popular spots, like walking paths and tourist sites, and where possible reduce any potential negative visual impacts. Key view points that have been raised as part of our consultation process will be included in our Environmental Impact Assessment report, this is inclusive of views from the A859 and the Hebridean Way which passes Loch Stranabhat to the west side of the proposed site. Further visualisations will be provided as part of the EIA Report.
Impacts on Biodiversity Consultees have highlighted the requirement for national developments to demonstrate that biodiversity will be in a 'demonstrably better state', in line with the requirements of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).	We also acknowledge that minimising impacts is not enough on its own, and we have therefore committed to delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all our projects; Where our projects are unable to completely avoid irreplaceable habitats (for example peatland or ancient woodland), we have also introduced a commitment to restore more habitat than we affect.
Impacts on Land Raiders Monument A question was raised by a member of the public regarding the viability of providing screening of the building from the Land Raiders Monument.	The project team and environmental specialists assessed views with and without a screening bund and the expert opinion was that creation of a bund to provide screening was not in keeping with the surrounding peatland landscape.
Loch Stranndabhat water quality and Safety A MoP raised concerns over any impact on the loch which would impact use for open water swimming and fishing	Impacts to the water environment will be minimised and mitigated through design and further mitigation, to reduce the potential for impact to watercourses (particularly during construction of the Proposed Alignment) will be identified as part of the EIA. There is a buffer of 50m from the red line boundary of the site. There will be no untreated runoff and the site has undergone detailed drainage design by our specialist. Water quality monitoring of the loch has commenced as part of the Stornoway to Harris OHL upgrade project and this monitoring will continue as part of our commitment to protect the surrounding environment of our site.

Feedback	Response
Impacts on Peatlands Consultees highlighted the presence of Nationally Important peatlands in sections of the Proposed Alignment, with potential for impact to carbon-rich soils and peatlands.	Impacts on peatlands and carbon rich soils will be a key consideration in the development of the Proposed development, informed by habitat and peat depth data and following the mitigation hierarchy. Opportunities for peatland restoration and enhancement will be considered and delivered in line with SSEN Transmission's BNG commitments. A Stage 1 Peat Management Plan and Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment will be provided in support of future application for consent.
Impacts on Birds Potential impacts to various bird species have been highlighted by consultees.	Bird surveys supported by collation of historical and recent records have been undertaken to establish an accurate baseline and identify ornithological constraints. It is considered that impacts on bird species will be limited and where there is the potential for impacts this will be addressed through mitigation by design. Further mitigation to reduce the potential for impact to bird species, particularly during the breeding season, will be identified as part of the EIA.



Project timeline



Have your say

We value community and stakeholder feedback. Without this, we would be unable to progress projects and reach a balanced proposal.

The feedback period

We will be seeking final comments and feedback from members of the public, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders regarding our proposals until **6 November 2025**.

How to provide feedback

Submit your comments and feedback by completing and returning the feedback form at the back of this booklet which is also online via the project webpage, emailing or writing to your Community Liaison Manager.

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.



To support everyone online, we provide accessibility and language options on our website through 'Recite Me'. The accessibility and language support options provided by 'Recite Me' include text-to-speech functionality, fully customisable styling features, reading aids, and a translation tool with over 100 languages, including 35 text-to-speech.

Please select "Accessibility" on our website to try out our inclusive toolbar."

You can also follow us on social media:



What we're seeking views on

During our last public consultation event in **August 2025**, we wanted to know your thoughts on the substation sites under consideration and if you agreed with the one we'd identified as best.

We want you to share your thoughts and opinions and let us know where you think we can make improvements. We also want you to let us know any concerns you might have about the impact of our work, including during the construction period.

It would be helpful to understand what you believe we should be doing to help minimise the impact of the development. We would also ask you to identify any opportunities for local community benefit or environmental enhancement we may be able to deliver alongside this project.

We encourage all interested community members to fill in a feedback form when submitting feedback, however if you prefer, you can email us to provide your feedback or ask any questions.

Community Liaison Manager

Kevin Morrison

 Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, Battery Point, Stornoway, Outer Hebrides, HS1 2RT

 07586 237 814

 kevin.morrison@sse.com

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/projects/project-map/balallan-switching-station



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

Q1. Did you attend either of our events in balallan on the 22nd October or in Kinloch on the 23rd October, or did you look at the consultation materials online?

☐ In person ☐ Online ☐ Neither

Q2. Do you have any comments on the location of the development?

Comments:

Q3. Do you have any comments on the final design or layout of the Balallan Switching Station development?

Comments:

Q5. Do you have any comments on the appearance of the Switching Station or preference on colour of the substation buildings?

Comments:

Q6. Is there anything you would like more information on regarding the project?

Comments:



Full name: **Email:**

Telephone: **Address:**

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 emails 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: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, Battery point, Stornoway, Outer Hebrides, HS1 2RT

Email: kevin.morrison@sse.com

Online: ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/balallan-switching-station

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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Notes

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