

CHAPTER 6 – SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

6	SCOPE AND CONSULTATION	6-2
6.1	Introduction	6-2
6.2	Consultation with the Local Community.....	6-2
6.3	Scoping	6-3
6.4	Potentially Significant Impacts.....	6-3
6.5	Further Consultee Engagement.....	6-4
6.6	Topics Scoped Out of the Assessment.....	6-4

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

There are no figures associated with this Chapter.

Visualisations (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

There are no visualisations associated with this Chapter.

Appendices (Volume 5 of this EIA Report)

Appendix 6.1: Scoping Report

Appendix 6.2: Scoping Opinion

Appendix 6.3: Scoping Response Matrix

6 SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 In general, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations require that an EIA should describe the likely significant effects of a proposed development on the environment. Scoping of potential likely significant effects having regard to the physical impacts 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, helps greatly to inform decisions about the design and EIA work for a proposed development.
- 6.1.2 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 to inform the local community of the Proposed Development. This Chapter also includes a brief description of the environmental topics of potential significance associated with the Proposed Development which are addressed in detail in the EIA Report, and those that are scoped out.

6.2 Consultation with the Local Community

- 6.2.1 Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) Transmission has sought to maintain an open dialogue with local communities in proximity to the Proposed Development throughout the evolution of the project. This has included carrying out consultation events during the corridor selection, route selection and alignment selection stages, engaging with local elected members such as Ward Councillors and Community Councils and engaging with landowners, residents and businesses that may be affected by the Proposed Development. These events have taken place at a formative stage of the proposals and the feedback has informed the further development of proposals. Prior to these events, specific proposals have been published so to allow consultees to provide a proper and informed response. A summary of the consultation events and engagement that has been undertaken is provided below.
- 6.2.2 During the corridor selection stage, public consultation events were held between 20 September and 5 October 2022, following the publication of a Consultation Document in September 2022¹. The consultation period ended on 28 October 2022, and a summary of responses was detailed in the Report on Consultation, published by SSEN Transmission in March 2023².
- 6.2.3 During the route selection stage, public consultation events were held between 17 and 27 April 2023, following the publication of a Consultation Document in April 2023³. The consultation period ended on 30 June 2023, and a summary of responses was detailed in the Report on Consultation, published by SSEN Transmission in November 2023⁴.
- 6.2.4 Further 'information events' on a 'refined route' were held between 26 February and 28 March 2024, to keep the public informed of evolving route design. As these were not formal consultation events, no consultation documentation was produced, however feedback was encouraged, considered, and reported within the alignment selection stage Report on Consultation.

¹ SSEN Transmission (2022). Consultation Document – Corridor Selection. Available at: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/beauly-blackhilllock-new-deer-peterhead-400kv/beauly-to-peterhead-consultation-document-september-2022.pdf>

² SSEN Transmission (2023). Report on Consultation – Corridor Selection. Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/beauly-blackhilllock-new-deer-peterhead-400kv/beauly-to-peterhead-report-on-consultation-final-v2-inc-appendices_low-res.pdf

³ SSEN Transmission (2023). Consultation Document – Route Selection. Available at: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/bbnp-march-2023/Route-Consultation-Document-Ap>

⁴ SSEN Transmission (2023). Report on Consultation – Route Selection. Available at: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/rocs/bbnp/report-on-consultation---beauly-to-blackhilllock-to-new-deer-to-peterhead-400kv-ohl.pdf>

- 6.2.5 During the alignment selection stage, public consultation events were held between 20 May and 20 June 2024, following the publication of a Consultation Document on 9 May 2024⁵. The consultation period ended on 2 August 2024, and a summary of responses was detailed in the Report on Consultation⁶, published by SSEN Transmission in January 2025.
- 6.2.6 Following completion of the alignment selection stage, further changes were made to the Proposed Alignment due to the removal of the proposed Coachford substation, as SSEN Transmission were no longer proceeding with the Coachford substation project. Engagement events were held with members of the public in Cairnie and Keith on 24 June 2025 and 26 June 2025 respectively, and the consultation period ended on 18 July 2025. Details of this consultation are provided within the Pre-Application Consultation Report which accompanies the s37 application.
- 6.2.7 SSEN Transmission also maintained dialogue with all community and ward councils along the route and has sought to keep members up to date on project progress, and any upcoming consultation events. In addition to regular update meetings with Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), SSEN Transmission has also hosted a number of meetings with local elected members and community forums, including:
- attending Community Council meetings when requested;
 - all public consultation events details shared with Councillors, MSPs and MPs across relevant Local Authority areas, with offers made to arrange 1-1 briefings;
 - briefing meetings held with some Area Committees for local Ward Councillors, such as the Aberdeenshire Buchan Area Committee;
 - briefings held with Local Authority Executive teams including Chief Executive Officers and Heads of departments across the Highlands, Moray, and Aberdeenshire; and
 - regular meetings with Economic Development teams from impacted Local Authority areas to discuss opportunities such as local supply chain spend, job creation, skills development, community benefit funding, and housing legacy.

6.3 Scoping

- 6.3.1 An EIA Scoping Report was issued to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) of the Scottish Government on 26 June 2024 (see **Appendix 6.1: Scoping Report**). A Scoping Opinion was provided by ECU on 2 October 2024 and is included in **Appendix 6.2: Scoping Opinion**.
- 6.3.2 The responses, contained within the Scoping Opinion, were considered in detail during the EIA process. **Appendix 6.3: Scoping Response Matrix** of this EIA Report includes a matrix detailing the key issues that were raised in the Scoping Opinion and how and where they are addressed in the EIA Report.

6.4 Potentially Significant Impacts

- 6.4.1 In response to the consultation received through both the scoping process and the ongoing stakeholder consultation exercise, issues relating to the following key environmental topics associated with the Proposed Development have been identified as having the potential for significant effects and are therefore addressed in the EIA and discussed in the EIA Report:
- Landscape and Visual (Chapter 7);

⁵ SSEN Transmission (2024). Consultation Document – Alignment Selection. Available at: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/2030-projects/bbnp-alignment-consultation-materials-may-24/bbnp-alignment-consultation-document.pdf>

⁶ SSEN Transmission (2025). Report on Consultation – Alignment Selection. Available at: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/2030-projects/bbnp-alignment-consultation-materials-feb--march-2025/bbnp-alignment-report-on-consultation-2025.pdf>

- Ecology (Chapter 8);
- Ornithology (Chapter 9);
- Water and Geological Environment (Chapter 10);
- Cultural Heritage (Chapter 11);
- Forestry (Chapter 12);
- Transport (Chapter 13);
- Recreation and Tourism (Chapter 14); and
- Noise and Vibration (Chapter 15).

6.5 Further Consultee Engagement

6.5.1 Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing since the early stages of the project and has continued throughout the scoping and EIA process. During the corridor, route and alignment stages of the project, stakeholders were given the opportunity, following publication of specific proposals, to provide feedback on the corridor, route, alignment, and design solution options identified, and all responses received were considered and summarised in the relevant Report on Consultation documents. **Table 6.1** provides a summary of some of the key engagement areas that have been subsequently discussed during the EIA stage of the project.

Table 6.1: Summary of key engagement at EIA stage

Consultee	Summary of Engagement
Historic Environment Scotland	Looking at assets of national importance across the route and seeking to minimise impacts upon them and their inter-relationship with the Proposed Development.
National Trust for Scotland	Designing the Proposed Overhead Line to minimise impact on the battlefield at Culloden and associated Conservation Area
NatureScot	Working with NatureScot to identify the crossing of the Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest with the least impact on the designated features. Engagement also took place regarding peat restoration approaches and opportunities.
NatureScot and RSPB Scotland	Agreement of survey methodologies for birds and terrestrial species. Discussing potential impacts on capercaillie due to the proximity to Darnaway and Lethen Forest Special Protection Area (SPA), and ways to minimise risk to the species and adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Discussion and agreement of assessment methodologies for Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems and Private Water Supplies, and survey methodology for peat.
Scottish Water	Discussion regarding the alignment across the Spey Valley and investigating ways to minimise potential impacts to the Dipple public drinking water supply and other supplies in the area.
The Highland Council	Working with the council to understand their concerns and to minimise landscape and visual effects crossing the Great Glen (including the Aird, A82 and crossing of the Caledonian Canal); at Easter Moniac A862 and the A9.

6.6 Topics Scoped Out of the Assessment

6.6.1 It is considered that the following topics are not likely to give rise to significant effects and therefore do not require further consideration in the EIA process:

- Land Use;
- Air Quality;
- Climate Change;
- Material Assets and Waste;
- Major Accidents and Disasters;

- Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) (although a separate EMF study will accompany the application for consent);
- Radio and TV Interference;
- Population and Human Health; and
- Socio-Economics (although a separate socio-economic study will accompany the application for consent).

6.6.2 They were referred to in the Scoping Report (see **Appendix 6.1: Scoping Report**) as topics to be scoped out from further consideration within the EIA Report. There was general agreement amongst consultees, as detailed within the Scoping Opinion (see **Appendix 6.2: Scoping Opinion**), as to the proposed scope of the EIA Report. The justification for scoping out each of the topics in the list above is presented in **Appendix 6.1: Scoping Report**.