

Beauly – Denny 400kV upgrade: Fort Augustus substation 400kV upgrade

Pre-application consultation

30 November 2023

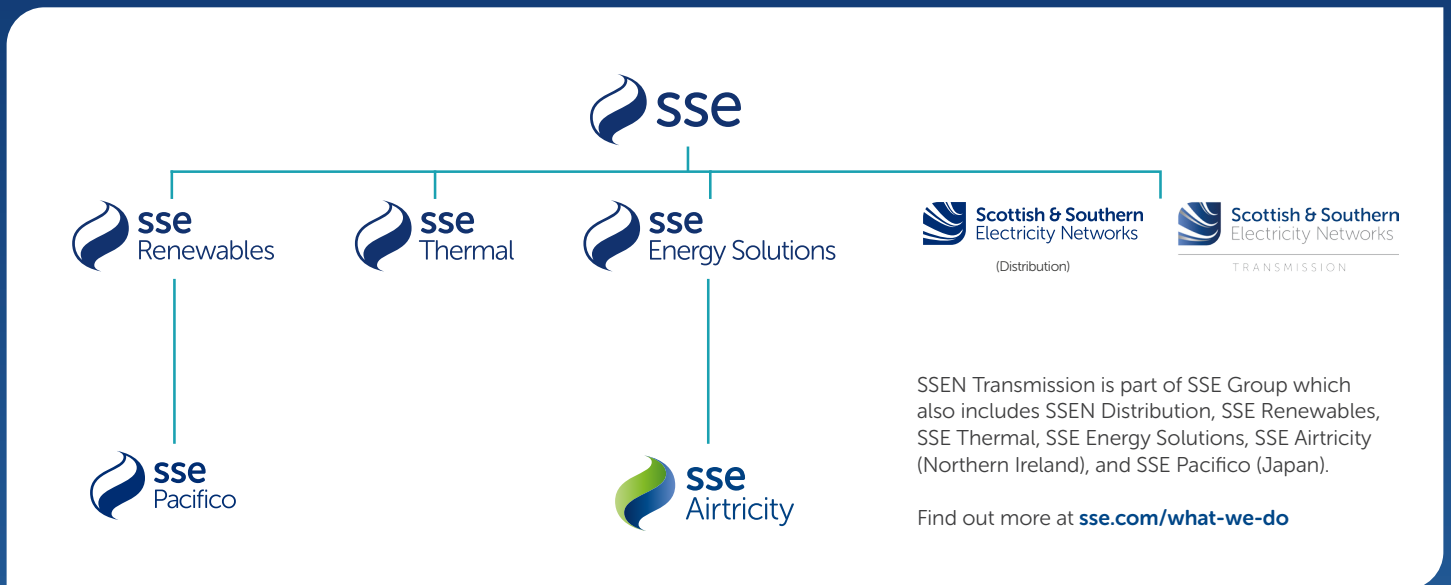


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Who we are

We are SSEN Transmission, the trading name for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission. We are responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland, maintaining and investing in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network.



Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles or steel towers, and electricity substations. It extends over a quarter of the UK’s land mass, crossing some of its most challenging terrain.

Our first priority is to provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to our communities. We do this by taking the electricity from generators and transporting it at high voltages over long distances through our transmission network for onwards distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.

Our operating area is home to vast renewable energy resources and this is being harnessed by wind, hydro and marine generation. Working closely with National Grid, the Great Britain (GB) transmission System Operator, we also enable these electricity generators to connect to the transmission system by providing their connections and allowing the electricity generated by them to be transported to areas of demand across the country.

Scotland’s transmission network has a strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the UK and Scotland’s Net Zero targets. We’re already a mass exporter of renewable energy, with around

two thirds of power generated in our network area exported to demand centres further south. By 2050, the north of Scotland is expected to need 40GW of low carbon energy capacity to support net zero delivery. For context, we currently have around 8GW of renewable generation connected in the north of Scotland.

As a natural monopoly, we are 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 in the north of Scotland. These costs are shared between all those using the transmission system, including generation developers and electricity consumers. Following a minority stake sale which completed in November 2022, we are now owned 75% by SSE plc and 25% by Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan Board.

As a stakeholder-led business, SSEN Transmission is committed to inclusive stakeholder engagement, and we conduct this at an ‘Advanced’ level as assessed by AccountAbility, the international consulting and standards firm.

The Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design

SSEN Transmission’s Pathway to 2030 projects, to which the Fort Augustus Substation 400kV Upgrade is included, are part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission network across Great Britain (GB) that are required to help deliver UK and Scottish Government climate change and energy security targets. In simple terms, these projects are required to connect homegrown, low carbon renewable electricity generation and transport that power to areas of demand across the country, building a cleaner, more secure and affordable energy system for homes and businesses across Great Britain.

The requirement for delivering a Pathway to 2030, key dates:

Jan 2022: The Crown Estate’s ScotWind leasing round delivered seabed leases for 28GW of renewable generation from offshore wind farms, vastly exceeding expectations of 10GW.

April 2022: The UK Government published their British Energy Security Strategy confirming UK targets for 50GW of offshore wind to be delivered by 2030, including the current 11GW Scottish Government target—to accelerate net zero to deliver homegrown, low-carbon, affordable energy independence.

July 2022: National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) published their Holistic Network Design (HND) entitled ‘Pathway to 2030’, detailing their recommended approach for connecting the 23GW produced by offshore wind farms by 2030, including the needs associated with the offshore transmission network and the onshore transmission network

Dec 2022: Ofgem provides their regulatory approval of need for HND projects (Dec 22) as part of its Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) framework decision.

Now: Transmission Operators are in the process of developing the projects outlined in the HND. SSEN Transmission’s HND projects for our operating area of the North of Scotland are listed below and we are working closely with affected stakeholders to help inform and shape the design process.

SCOTWIND & PATHWAY TO 2030

In-flight investments

1. Argyll 275kV strategy
2. Fort Augustus to Skye 132kV upgrade
3. Orkney 220kV AC subsea link

Pathway to 2030 investments

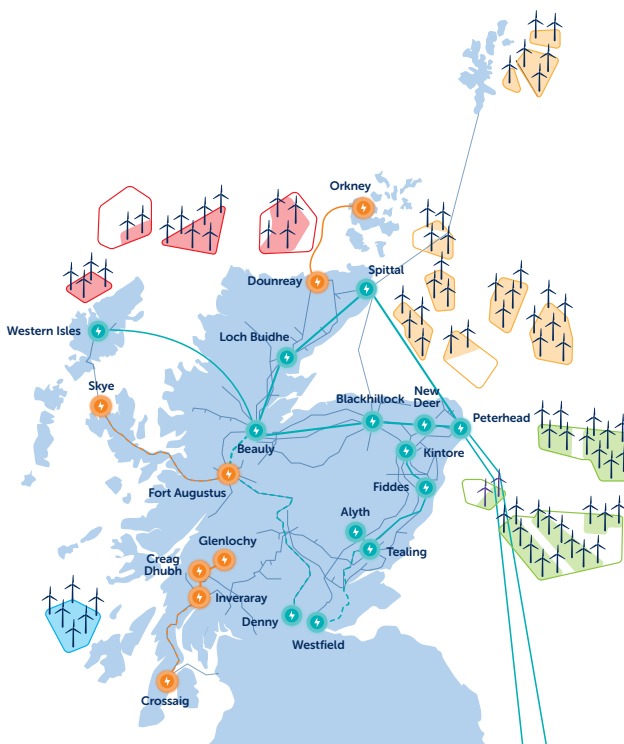
- 1a. Spittal to Loch Buidhe 400kV reinforcement
- 1b. Loch Buidhe to Beauly 400kV reinforcement
- 2a. Beauly to Blackhillock 400kV double circuit
- 2b. Blackhillock to Peterhead 400kV double circuit
3. Beauly to Denny 275kV circuit to 400kV
4. East Coast Onshore 400kV Phase 2 reinforcement
5. Spittal to Peterhead 2GW HVDC subsea link
6. Peterhead to Drax 2GW HVDC subsea link
7. Peterhead to South Humber 2GW HVDC subsea link
8. Arnish to Beauly 1.8GW HVDC link
9. Aquila Pathfinder

Public consultation to inform project development

All new reinforcements remain subject to detailed consultation and environmental assessments to help inform route and technology options.

More detail on these projects, including how to sign up for updates, will be made available on SSEN Transmission website: [ssen-transmission.co.uk](https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk)

- New infrastructure (routes shown here are for illustrative purposes)
- - - Upgrade/replacement of existing infrastructure
- Existing network



SSEN Transmission is set to deliver 10% of the total emissions abatement required for Net Zero.

Project need and overview

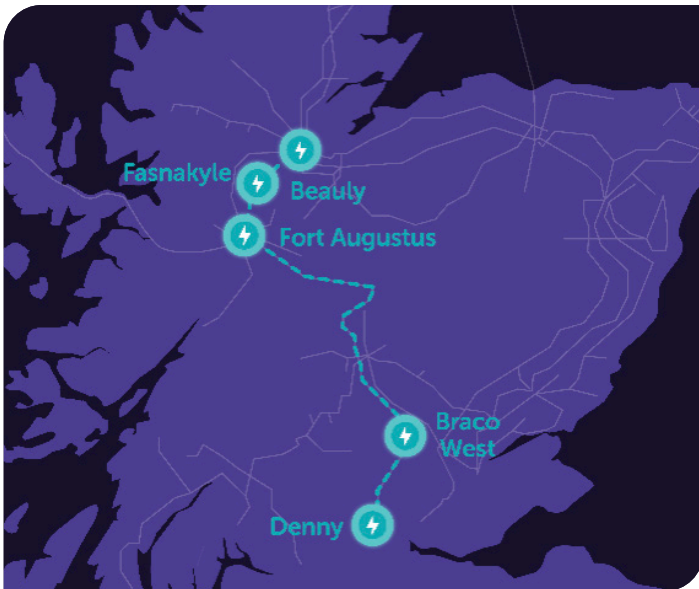
What does this mean for the Central Highlands?

Extensive studies informing the Electricity System Operator's (ESO) Pathway to the 2030 Holistic Network Design confirmed the need to upgrade the second circuit of the Beauly – Denny line from 275kV to 400kV which requires a substation upgrade at Fort Augustus.

Providing new higher voltage connections between these sites will deliver the significant increased capacity needed to transport energy from new large scale onshore and offshore renewable generation (mainly wind farms) to demand centers via onshore and High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) subsea links.

To enable these new connections, new 400kV substations are required at key locations as shown on the map below. These key locations will also allow offshore and onshore renewable generation to connect to the reinforced electricity network.

These projects have been highlighted as critical to delivering the UK and Scottish Government's targets, with the development of them accelerated to meet the target dates of energisation by 2030.



Fort Augustus substation 400kV Upgrade: This project will supersede the existing planning consent for a 275kV extension, to include the upgrade of existing 275/132kV 240MVA transformers at Fort Augustus to 400/132kV 240MVA transformers, with the inclusion of two reactors to support blackstart requirements. This will also involve the removal of existing 275kV equipment.

New Braco West 400kV substation: This project features a new 400kV outdoor Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation in the Braco area to support upgrade of Beauly – Denny OHL to a 400kV double circuit. The new substation will house two 400/132kV Super Grid Transformers (SGTs) and be future proofed with four 400kV future bays tied into the 400kV double busbar.

New Fasnakyle 400kV substation: This project features a new 400kV outdoor AIS double busbar in the wider Fasnakyle area. This new substation will house 2no. 400/132kV SGTs and be future proofed with four 400kV future bays tied into the 400kV double busbar.

Kinadorchy – Errochty Cable: This requires the installation of new 240MVA 400/132kV SGTs and connect to the Phase Shifting Transformers (PSTs) at Errochty via two new 132kV underground cables. It will also require the dismantle and removal of the existing Tummel substation including the 275/132kV SGTs. The existing Errochty intertrip scheme shall also be amended to trip the 400/132kV SGTs at Kinadorchy under a loss of the 400kV double circuit south of Kinadorchy.

Our consultation process

At SSEN Transmission, we are committed to delivering a robust and transparent consultation process underpinned by inclusion and accessibility. As a stakeholder led business, we understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process.

During this consultation, we are presenting our approach to developing the Fort Augustus 400kV upgrade. Our consultation includes our proposed layout for the 400kV upgrade, environmental considerations and maps which aim to give stakeholders and community members a better visual representation of the work on the projects to date.

This period of engagement in the development phase is vital in shaping our proposals and to do this effectively, we need to capture feedback from stakeholders, harness local knowledge to identify key risks and explore potential community benefit opportunities.

We have undertaken consultation as part of the planning stages for the previous Fort Augustus substation reinforcement works which included both Phase One (of which has recently completed construction) as well as Phase Two, which was consented and not built, and superseded by this 400kV upgrade.

This event is the first of two planned, sequential, public consultation events following the submission of the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN). The PAN submission triggers the initial formal Town and Country Planning (major application), consultation process for this site—including the 12-week (minimum) pre-application consultation period.

Who we're consulting with

We are keen to hear feedback from a broad range of stakeholders including but not limited to local residents, landowners, businesses, non-statutory consultees and statutory consultees such as local authorities, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS).

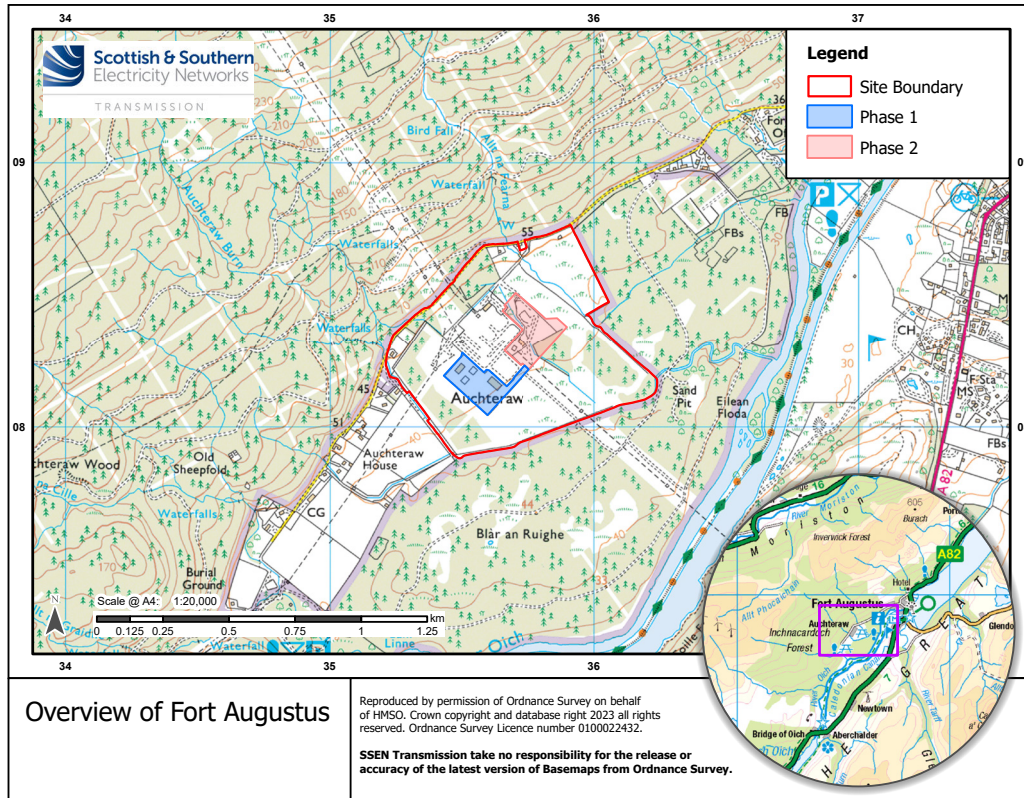
Further consultation

The second consultation event is provisionally planned for 22 February 2024 to advise on the finalised design and provide feedback on responses received and alterations as a result of feedback from this initial consultation event. This will be prior to the main planning application submission.

If you require additional support to submit your views, please contact our Community Liaison Manager Rosie Hodgart who will happily assist you.



History of Fort Augustus substation



Original substation

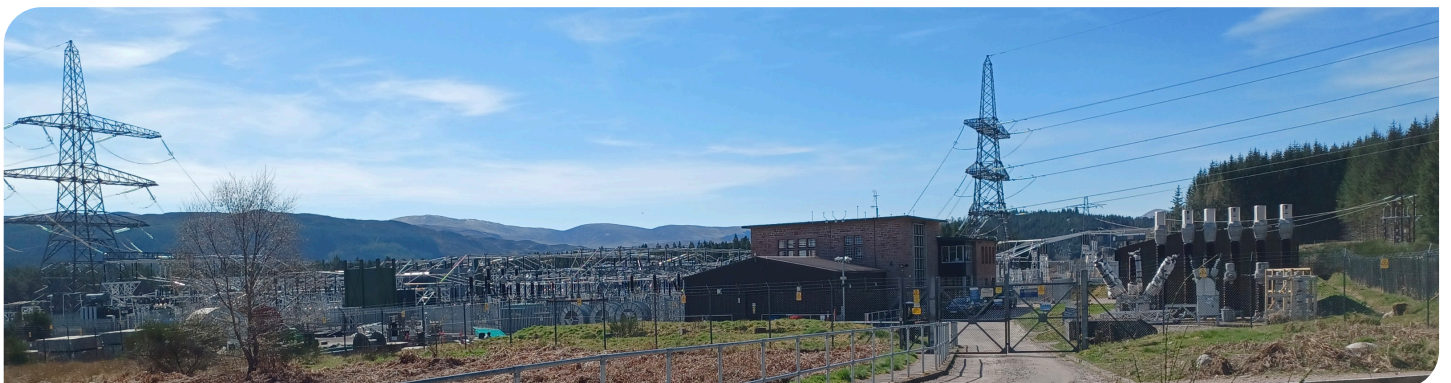
- The original Fort Augustus substation was constructed at Auchterawe in 1955. Land in the area was dominated by commercial forestry.
- The overhead steel tower line which runs between Fort Augustus substation (Auchterawe) and Fort William substation (Achintee Road) was constructed in 1955 and is operated at 132kV.

The site was identified for substation reinforcement back in 2017, with two upgrades developed for the site in two phases.

Phase One comprised works to install equipment including two additional 400/132kV transformers to allow for improved arrangements/connections for the Bhlraidh and Beinneun wind farms. These works are located primarily on the south-western boundaries of the existing substation.

The previous Phase Two proposals allowed for the interconnection of the 275kV busbar with the 400kV double bus-bar arrangements via two additional 400/275kV transformers. This solution also provides additional wider network benefits of interconnecting the 275kV and 400kV systems. These works are predominately on the north-eastern boundaries of the existing substation.

These were submitted in 2018 to the Highland Council under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), reference 18/00760/FUL, to extend substation, creation of two platforms across two phases for gas insulated substation buildings, plant, access tracks, associated landscaping and other ancillary equipment. Planning permission was granted with Phase One construction starting on site in 2021 and completed in 2023. Phase Two has not commenced to date—this Fort Augustus 400kV upgrade project will supersede the existing 275kV extension (Phase Two).



Proposed substation upgrade

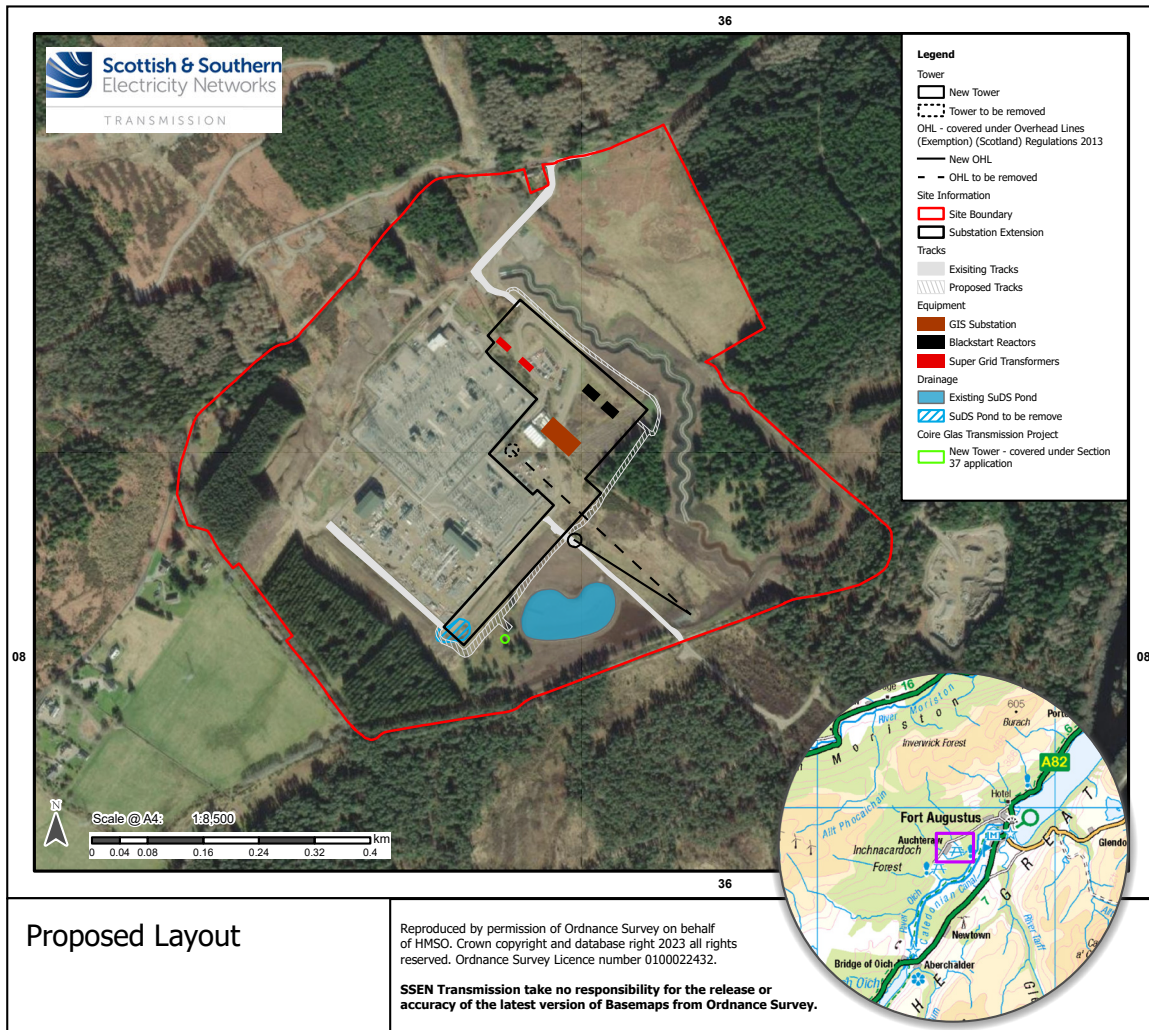
What we're consulting on today

The existing planning consent for the extension at Fort Augustus covered two projects in two phases—the first phase to install two additional 132kV/400kV transformers which has recently been completed, and a second phase for the interconnection of a 275kV/400kV busbar arrangement. Due to the network upgrades required, the second phase has now been superseded with requirements for a 400kV upgrade.

The revision to the second phase aims to upgrade the existing 275/132kV 240MVA transformers at Fort Augustus to 400/132kV 240MVA transformers. This includes a space revision for two reactors (to support blackstart requirements) with the removal of some existing 275kV equipment. The building dimensions for the new GIS hall are 14.5m in height, 62m in length and 32m wide. It also includes equipment to facilitate the new Coire Glas connection via the new Loch Lundie substation. The proposal is to utilise the existing consented space in the north and east of the Fort Augustus site, building on our existing knowledge, data and surveys obtained as part of the earlier development phases. This consultation aims to gain feedback on the proposed layout of the upgraded equipment at the site.

There are other SSEN Transmission and third party projects which are connecting into Fort Augustus substation. However, these schemes have their own consultation process—further information is available on the SSEN Transmission website.

We are keen to hear your feedback regarding our substation extension layout and preferred overhead tower relocation and if there are further considerations you believe need to be taken into account during the next stage of the development process.

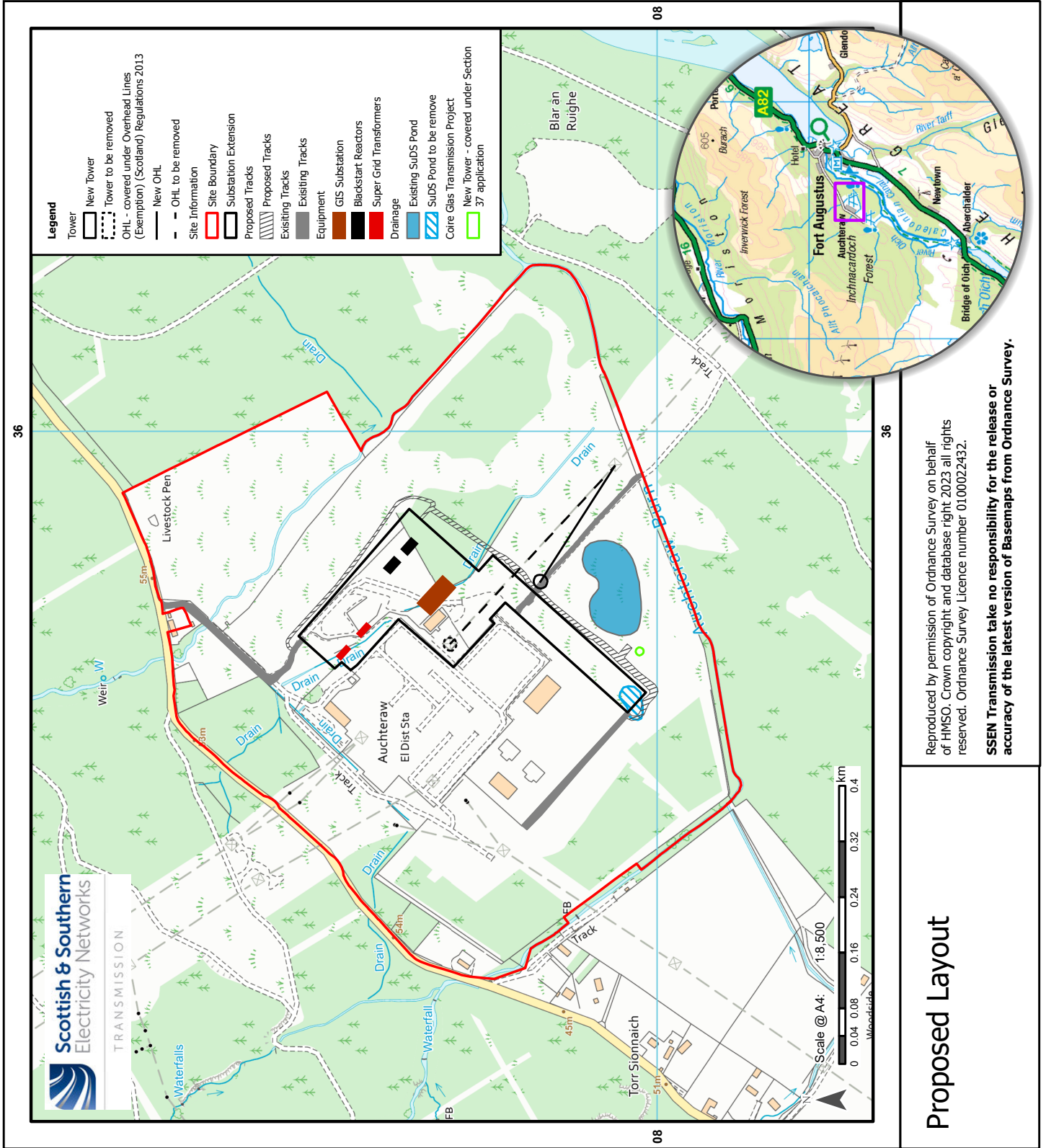


Proposed Layout

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Proposed layout



Other projects in the Fort Augustus area

Bhlaraidh wind farm extension connection

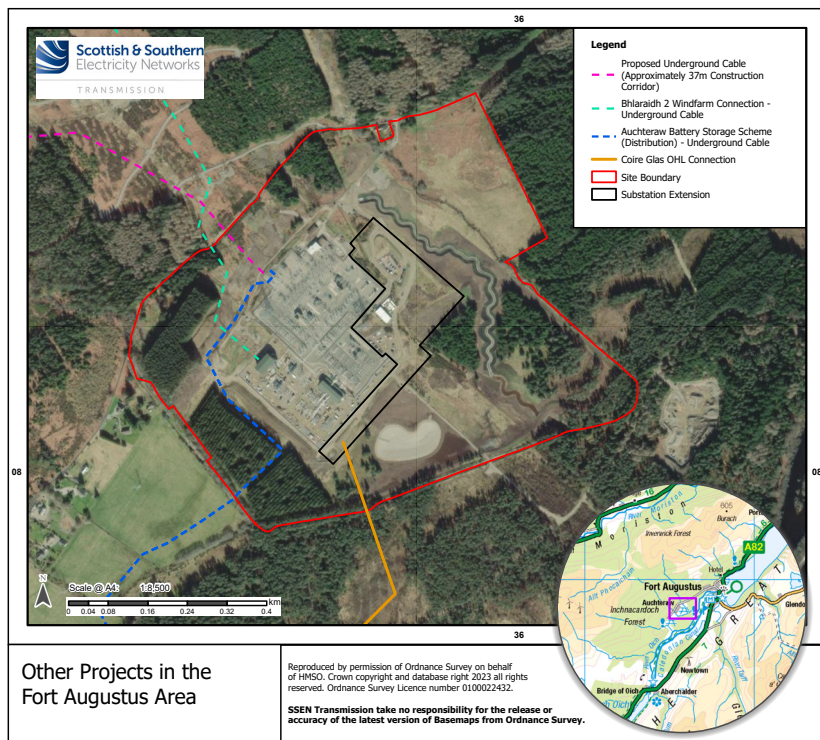
The existing Bhlaraidh wind farm is located to the west of Loch Ness, approximately 5km north of Invermoriston on a high rocky plateau. The proposed extension to the existing wind farm is due east on this plateau. SSEN Transmission will be constructing a single circuit 132kV overhead line from the Bhlaraidh extension wind farm substation compound, for a distance of approximately 500m, to within around 0.5km of the Fort Augustus substation. The remaining 500m distance, to a termination at the Fort Augustus substation will be by a 132kV underground cable; subject to obtaining the necessary wayleave and consent approvals. The 132kV line and cable will be built using conductors sufficiently rated to accommodate the Bhlaraidh extension wind farm.

Skye reinforcement project

SSEN Transmission has applied to the Scottish Ministers for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to install and keep installed approximately 160km of new overhead line and underground cabling between the existing Ardmore substation located approximately 30km northwest of Portree, to the existing Fort Augustus substation located approximately 2.5km west/south-west of Fort Augustus. This includes 110km of new double circuit 132kV overhead line supported by steel lattice towers between Fort Augustus and Broadford, 27km of new single circuit 132kV overhead line supported by trident wood poles (H poles) between Broadford and Ardmore substation, and approximately 24km of double circuit 132kV underground cable.

Fort Augustus substation - 400kV and 132kV development

The previous Phase One works at Fort Augustus, relating to the first part of the 400kV and 132kV substation upgrade to reinforce the network, has reached completion on site.



Coire Glas connection project

This proposed overhead line transmission connection will facilitate the export of renewable energy from the Coire Glas pumped hydro scheme. The scheme is located southwest of Laggan Locks, near to Loch Lochy, Highland. The connection is for a total of 1296MW export/1360MW demand. This includes approximately 8.5km of 400kV overhead line between the proposed Loch Lundiesubstation to the existing Fort Augustus substation at Auchterawe.

As the transmission license holder in the north of Scotland, we have a duty under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity. We have obligations to offer non-discriminatory terms for connection to the transmission system, both for new generation and for new sources of electricity demand. There are also two connection projects which have contracted connections into the new Fort Augustus substation.

Working with landowners

SSEN Transmission recognises landowners and occupiers as key stakeholders in the development of our projects and is committed to consultation and engagement with all parties likely to have an interest in our proposals.

Due to the location of the upgrade at the existing Fort Augustus site, we have been in touch with residents for historical and more recent works, with an ongoing Community Liaison Group (CLG) to communicate both project updates and feedback.

As the project design develops, we will work with landowners and occupiers to mitigate the effects of our infrastructure on their properties.

We will be required to carry out various engineering and environmental surveys to inform the design process. Consent will be sought from affected landowners and occupiers in advance for these surveys.

Once we have finalised the design of the substation, if any additional land is required for the project we will be required to secure the appropriate land rights from landowners and occupiers in order that appropriate consents can be sought from Scottish Ministers. Our land managers will endeavour to reach a voluntary agreement with landowners and occupiers, however, as a statutory undertaker, we may require to underpin voluntary discussions with an application to Scottish Ministers for a Necessary Wayleave or Compulsory Purchase Order. Ultimately this is to ensure nationally significant infrastructure projects are delivered on time and in line with our licence obligations. We also have a duty to protect the interests of the UK bill payer. Statutory powers are not used lightly as we aim to work with landowners and occupiers to secure the necessary land rights voluntarily.

All potentially affected landowners and occupiers have the opportunity to provide feedback at our in person consultation events and by submitting a feedback form. We would encourage all those with an interest to submit their views through this consultation.

Contact details for the dedicated project land managers can be found on the project webpage: ssen-transmission.co.uk/BDUP



Biodiversity net gain

We recognise that we have significant interaction with the environment through the activities we undertake in Scotland as we seek to develop and improve the transmission network. With this work comes a legal responsibility to design and build our projects in a manner which protects the natural and built environment.

We are committed to protecting and enhancing the environment by minimising the potential impacts from our construction and operational activities on biodiversity. To this end, we have committed to positively contribute to the UN and Scottish Government Biodiversity strategies by committing to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on all Transmission projects gaining consent on or after 22 May 2023, actively enhancing biodiversity and leaving a positive legacy at all of our SSEN Transmission sites as we deliver the UK and Scotland's Net Zero targets.

As this project progresses through the development process, we will actively seek ways to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity, through careful design to avoid areas of highest biodiversity value, to implementing habitat restoration and improvement measures in areas within and surrounding the proposed development. Some examples of biodiversity improvements that have been implemented on other recent projects include:



Creag Rhiabach bird boxes:

Installation of wooden bird boxes made from reused and recycled construction materials to support local raptor populations at key locations across the highlands, including kestrels, tawny owl and barn owl.

Argyll Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT) woodland planting collaboration

Argyll's rainforest is a unique and rare habitat of ancient and native woodland. This collaboration with ACT will help deliver SSEN Transmission's compensatory tree planting commitments in Argyll while helping towards ACT's woodland planting ambitions, supporting its charitable objectives including biodiversity gain, health and wellbeing improvement for local people, outdoor learning opportunities and climate change workshops.



Thurso South substation:

Creation of approximately 10 hectares of pollinator habitat to support the rare endemic great yellow bumblebee and contribute to wider conservation efforts for this species.



Please let us know if you have ideas for biodiversity improvement projects in your local area that SSEN Transmission could get involved with.

The planning process

A planning application for the construction and operation of the proposed Fort Augustus 400kV substation upgrade will be submitted to The Highland Council under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The intention was to build out the existing consent however there are some changes to the platform area and the proposed layout of the existing consent, reference 18/00760/ FUL which means a new planning application is required.

A single overhead line tower requires relocation within the site to accommodate the extension. We expect this will be covered under the Overhead Lines (Exemption) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 and a notification will be sent to the Local Planning Authority (The Highland Council).

The substation planning application will identify the proposed development, including:

- Site boundary clearly shown in red (the Red Line Boundary) including any permanent access routes and junctions onto public highways.
- The proposed development in relation to the site boundary with dimensions of all permanent and temporary works including structures, buildings, perimeter fencing, drainage features, key electrical equipment, construction compounds and laydown areas.

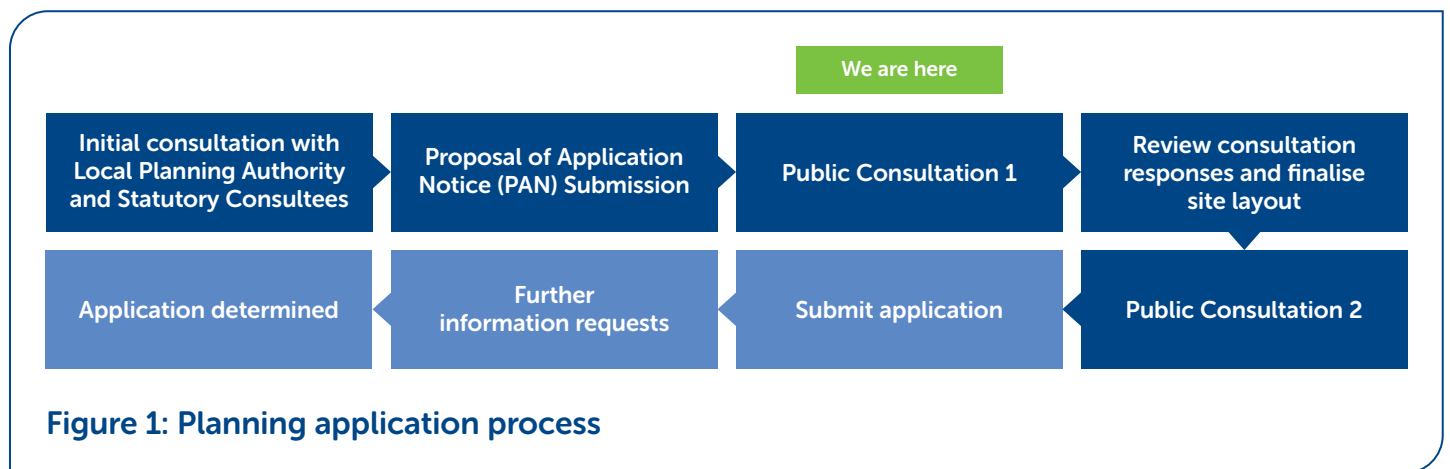


Figure 1: Planning application process

This project may be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. This requires any application to be supported by a formal EIA Report together with robust consultation and mitigation proposals. An EIA Screening request has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority (The Highland Council).

Should the proposed development be deemed non-EIA (due to its scale or potential environmental impacts), a voluntary Environmental Appraisal (EA) will be produced by SSEN Transmission to support the application.

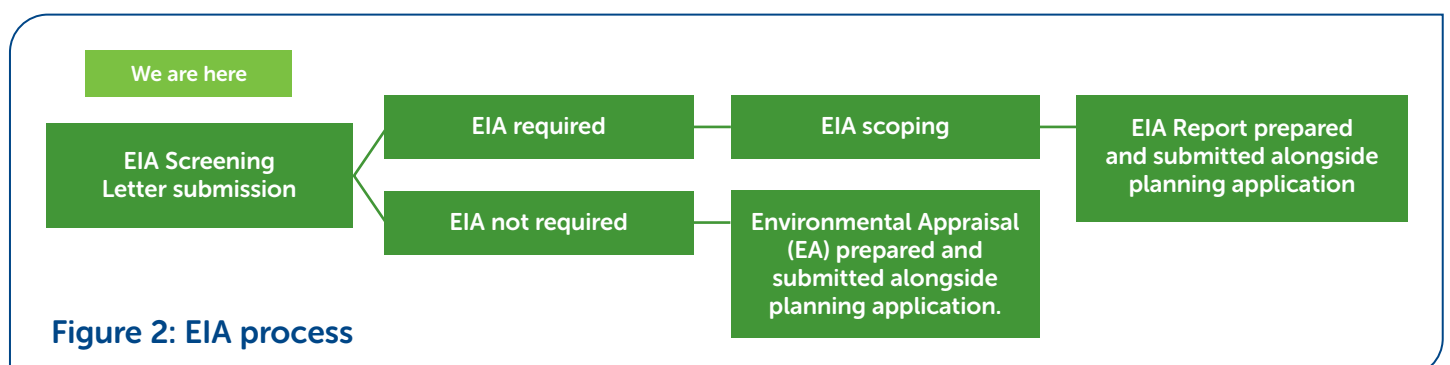
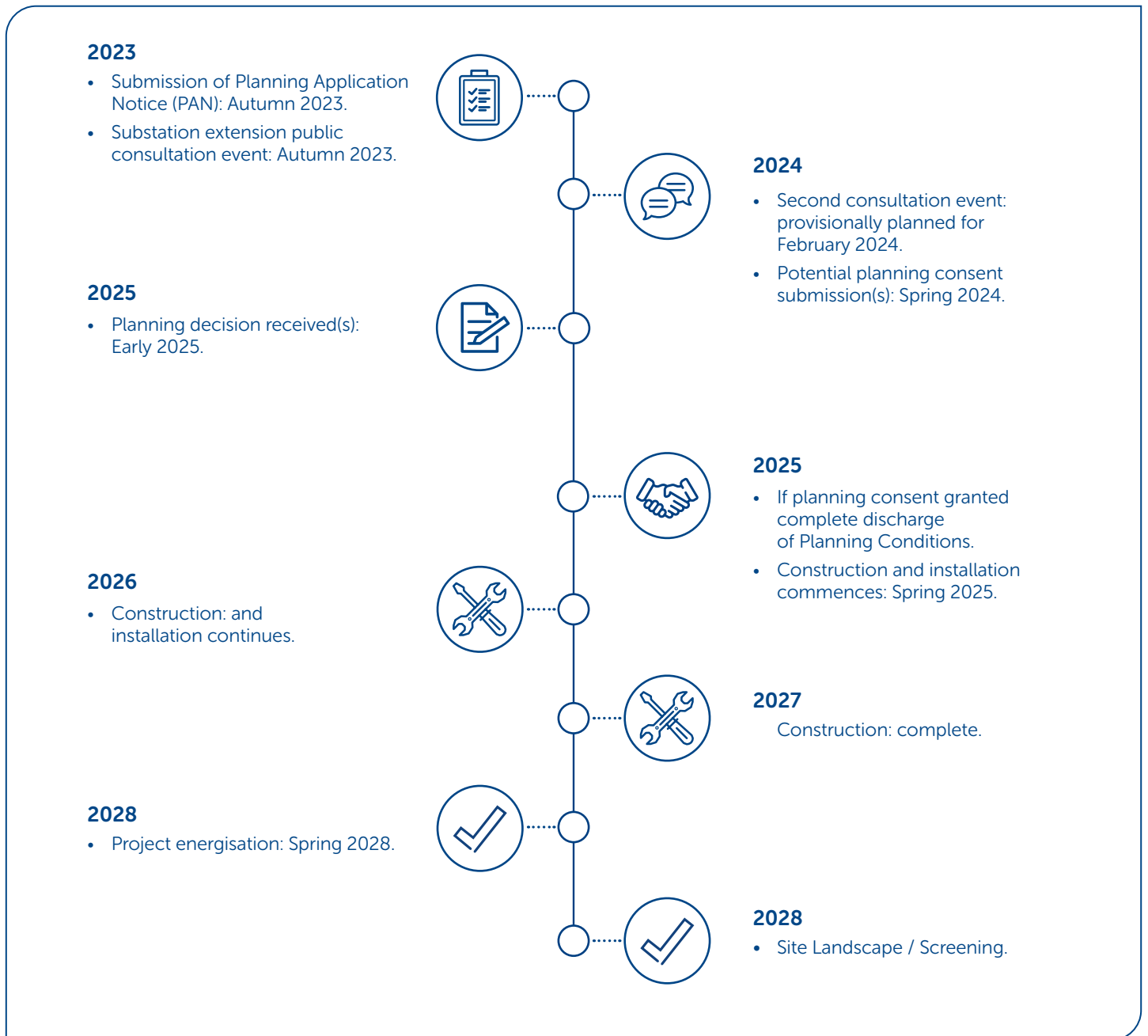


Figure 2: EIA process

Project timeline



Substations

The upgraded overhead line has to connect to the existing transmission network at connection points along the route. Therefore, new 400kV substation sites are required in addition to the existing sites at these locations.

What is a substation?

An essential component in the energy network, substations connect sources of generation, such as wind farms and power stations. They connect overhead and underground circuits and can connect nearby utility systems. Substations manage electricity flows within the network, which can include connection and disconnection of circuits to direct the flow, transform voltages to higher or lower ratings (step-up or step-down—for example 132kV stepping-up to 275kV), manage the frequency of the electricity and increase efficiency and reliability of the power supply.

Other key substation functions

Substations are critical in maintaining an efficient and healthy energy network, as they monitor and report back to operators on statistics and events to provide live information on our network. This allows for the following functions:

- Fault monitoring and identification which allows for isolation to protect the network and allow repairs.
- Allow for redirection and disconnection of energy to allow for demand/maintenance.
- Provide data such as voltage, current and power flow to allow for efficient running and future predictions.

Types of substations



The 275kV AIS substation at Loch Buidhe

Air Insulated Switchgear Substation (AIS)

An AIS substation is constructed with switchgear which relies on open air components, which can require large clearance areas for operation and safety, which takes up a larger area of land than GIS.

Pros: Traditionally lower cost and typically less construction time with less components required and easier maintenance.

Cons: Larger area of land required, exposed to elements, not recommended for coastal environments.

Gas Insulated Switchgear Substation (GIS)

A GIS substation is constructed with switchgear with gaseous reliant components which allows operation and safety clearances to be reduced compared to AIS.

Pros: Less space required, reduced visual impact.

Cons: High costs, specialised maintenance required, longer outage repair times.



The GIS substation at Peterhead

Option assessment

Plans for a substation extension

The initial intention was to build out the existing consent. However, as a result of the upgrade from 275kV to 400kV, there are some changes to the platform areas and the proposed layout which extends the operational boundary of the existing consent, reference 18/00760/FUL.

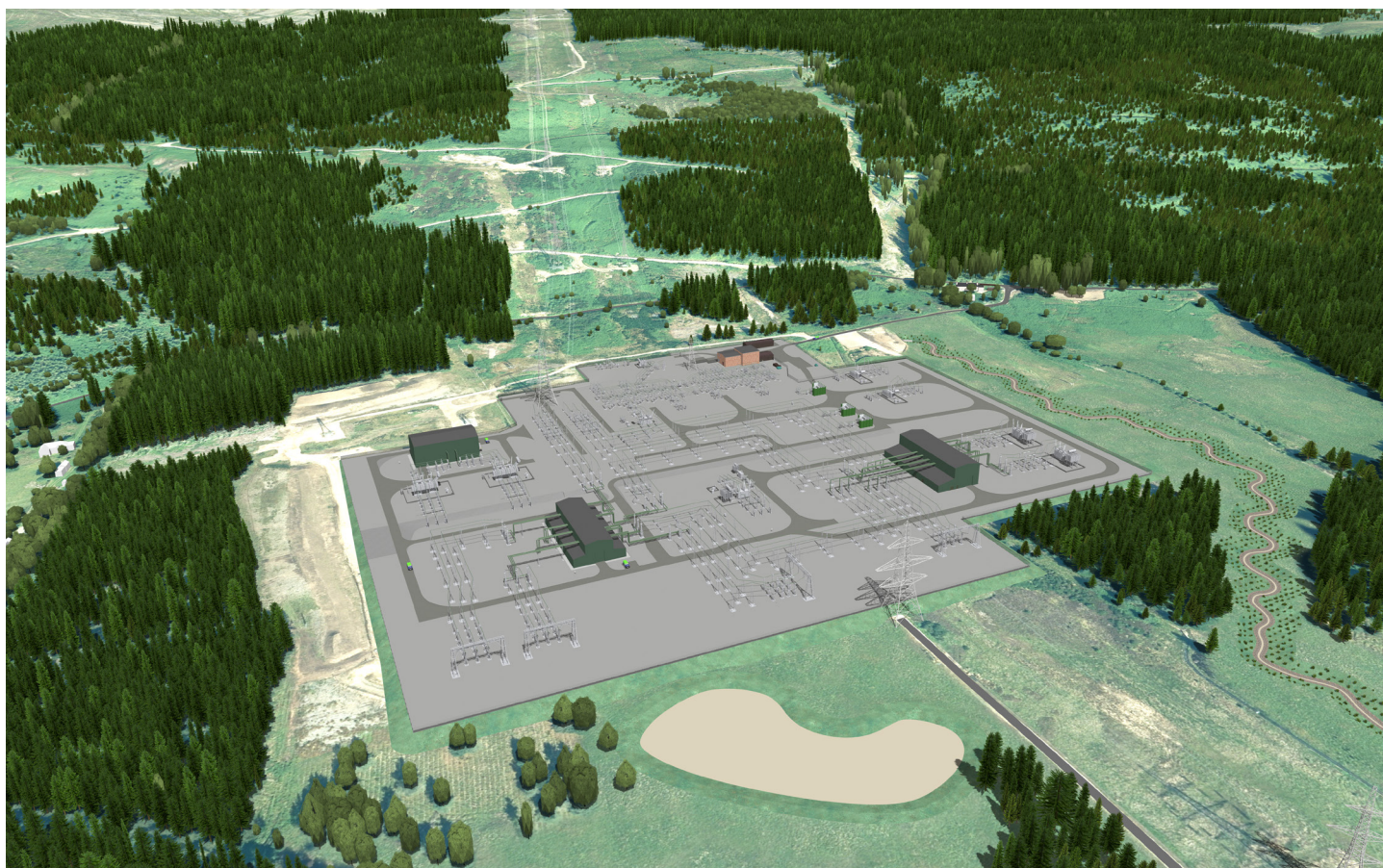
A review of the cost benefit of the extension in comparison to a new remote site, which would need to connect back into the existing Fort Augustus substation and the Beauly – Denny OHL, showed a new site was not viable for the following reasons:

- Technical and infrastructure requirements are reduced—no need to connect a new greenfield site to the existing site.
- Visual impacts are reduced as additional OHL tie-ins from the existing site to connect to a new greenfield site are not required.
- Reduced footprint in comparison to a new site.

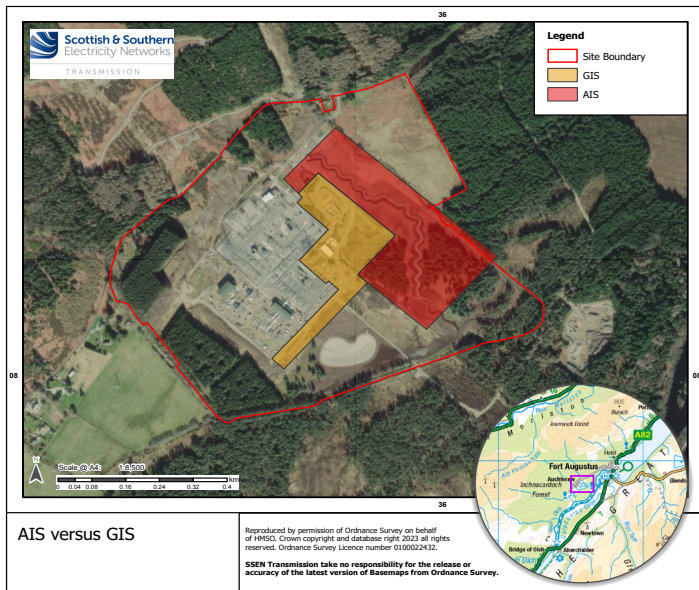
Options assessment

An options assessment was carried out to look at the different options available for the substation extension at the site. This identified a Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) substation extension as the preferred solution.

This option assessment process is detailed in the Consultation Document and is available to view on the project website.



Engineering considerations



Site extension – AIS or GIS solution

Within the land around the substation, it would be infeasible to install an AIS design without major redevelopment to the floodwater drainage system. Relocating the flood mitigation would require procurement of adjacent land. An AIS solution also makes connecting future circuits very challenging on the other side of the busbar. An example footprint of an AIS solution as a site extension is demonstrated to the left in red. The existing SSEN Transmission owned land at Fort Augustus has already been prepared for another GIS busbar on the second Beauly – Denny circuit currently operating at 275kV. These plans are similar to works previously planned at 275kV, except the voltage which will now be 400kV. A GIS busbar design ensures the design fully utilises the works undertaken during previous schemes. An example footprint for a GIS solution as a site extension is demonstrated to the left in orange.

Connectivity

There are a number of considerations to tie in with the existing infrastructure at Fort Augustus:

- Two 400kV interconnector circuits to existing busbar.
- 132kV circuits from SGT1 and SGT2 into the existing 132kV AIS busbar.
- To prevent the interconnector circuits having to form part of the overall Beauly – Denny line, one side should go through the existing busbar and on the other via the new busbar.
- Connect to two of the 400kV Beauly – Denny circuits.

Previous works

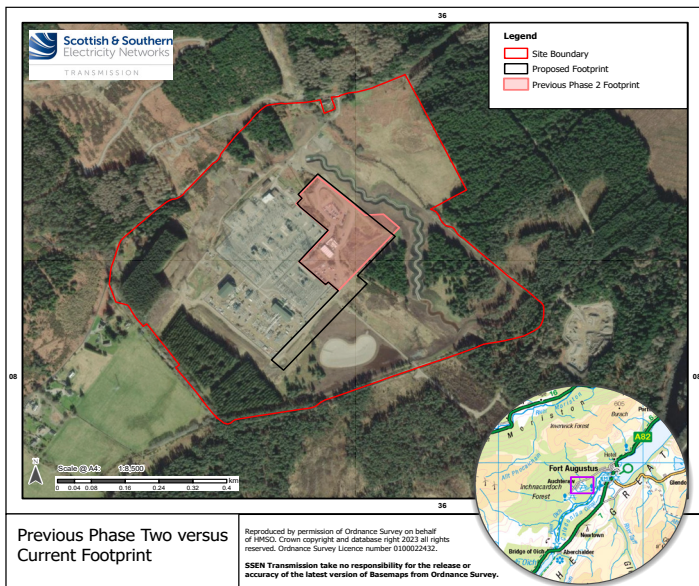
The Phase One Fort Augustus Redevelopment which finished construction in 2023 included a site extension, a new 400kV GIS busbar, a 132kV GIS busbar and two new 400/132kV transformers.

The planning for these works also included for a Phase Two which was for a new 275kV GIS busbar and two new 400/275kV transformers.

The flood mitigation measures constructed under Phase One were designed with these Phase Two developments in mind.

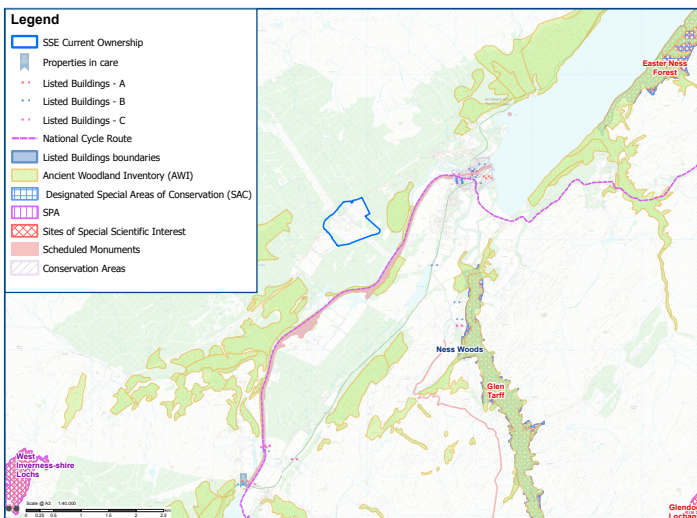
Much of the design and construction of the Phase One project considered a new GIS busbar within the land highlighted on the left in red.

Utilising the area designated for Phase Two takes advantage of the infrastructure works completed in Phase One.



Environmental considerations

The following potential environmental impacts will be assessed as part of the Environmental Appraisal/Environmental Impact Assessment (EA/EIA), which will be submitted as part of the planning application to The Highland Council in Spring 2024. The EA/EIA Report will be available for members of the public to view and comment on as part of the planning application supporting information, following submission of the application.



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Cultural heritage

There are no designated assets identified within the proposed development boundary. The closest Listed Buildings are more than 2km away with the closest Scheduled Monuments, The Caledonian Canal and Torr Dhuin Fort are approximately 880m south-west of the site and approximately 1.3km south-west of the site respectively.

An appraisal including a walkover survey of the site and its surrounding area has been undertaken to understand the potential effects on the historic environment.

Consultation will be carried out with The Highland Council to identify any on-site archaeological investigation that would be required before construction works commence and if required a Written Scheme of Investigation would be prepared which would set out a strategy for archaeological mitigation in advance of the construction works.

Terrestrial ecology and ornithology

The site has been surveyed to identify habitats, protected species and birds. A biodiversity net gain condition assessment was also undertaken concurrently with the habitat survey which allows the biodiversity units of the site to be calculated.

The site does not lie within any sites designated for nature conservation. The closest designations are the Ness Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Glen Tarff Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lie approximately 2km southeast of the proposed site.

There is limited potential for protected species within the proposed development area however habitats in the wider area were considered to be suitable for badger, pine marten, red squirrel and bats. Breeding bird surveys indicated that the site and surrounding area support numerous breeding bird species. Small areas of wet modified bog and wet heath were identified within the site.

A Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (or equivalent) will be prepared, and the project will also seek to enhance the environment through Biodiversity Net Gain.

Landscape and visual assessment

The appearance and character of the landscape is already influenced by infrastructure including the existing Fort Augustus substation, nearby steel lattice towers and overhead lines.

The site is located approximately 2.3km west of the Loch Ness and Duntelchaig Special Landscape Area (SLA), a designated area highlighting special landscape qualities. The site is located within Landscape Character type 225/2019 which encompasses the Great Glen and Loch Ness.

A landscape and visual assessment will be carried out to understand how the proposed development will be viewed within the surrounding area, to identify any significant effects and propose recommendations to mitigate these effects.

Environmental considerations



Land use and recreation

The land surrounding the site is generally wooded with a mix of commercial conifer plantation and mixed broadleaf woodland. Fort Augustus is approximately 2km to the east and offers holiday accommodation and visitor services.

The Core Path (Auchteraw Woods paths) IN16.14 is directly adjacent to the northern border of the site. Core Path (Jenkins Park Forest Walks) IN16.02 runs 460 meters north of the site. National Cycle Network Route 78 is approximately 700m southeast of the site running alongside the River Oich and the Caledonian Canal. Other Core Paths also exist along the River Oich and Caledonian Canal.

Woodland and forestry

The site does not lie within any areas of Ancient Woodland, the closest area being approximately 500m east. There are areas of commercial conifer plantation and mixed broadleaf woodland surrounding the site. There may be some requirement for removal of small areas of woodland planting to facilitate this development. Any loss would be compensated by an equivalent area of new tree planting. Given the limited space available on the site it is possible that some of this would be delivered off site. The existing Woodland Management Plan will be updated and re-issued to support the planning application.

Traffic

The construction of the proposed development will require vehicles to deliver plant, machinery and workers to the site. Access would use the existing entrance off the A82, via the U1671 (Great Glen Way), the U1663 (Jenkins Park) and the Auchterawe Road into the main entrance to the site from the east.

A construction traffic management plan will be developed for suitable management of all abnormal loads and vehicle movements to ensure road safety for all other road users during the construction works.

Water environment and soils

The River Oich and Caledonian Canal lie approximately 0.9km southeast of the site. There are numerous Private Water Supplies within 500m of the site, these are predominantly to the northwest of the site around Auchterawe. The site lies within a Drinking Water Protected Area (Ground). Existing diversion of surface waters exists around the perimeter of the site due to the existing Fort Augustus substation construction.

A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Impact Assessment will support the planning application. A site water management plan will be developed to manage potential risks to the water environment during construction.

Noise

Construction noise is considered to be short term and intermittent and can be controlled through the implementation of a noise management plan, which would include working hours agreed with The Highland Council.

Baseline noise monitoring surveys have been undertaken at noise sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the site to inform an operational noise impact assessment. Appropriate mitigation measures will be considered dependent on the results of this assessment.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Some of the most frequently asked questions are outlined below.

Will there be any noise impacts from the substation?

Noise surveys will be carried out and a detailed noise impact assessment will be completed and included in the Environmental Appraisal/Environmental Impact Assessment Report. This will consider noise impacts from the substation, cumulative noise impacts as well as consideration of any mitigation required.

Are there any increased risks from flooding or drainage?

Fort Augustus has previously been identified as a site at risk of flooding based on flood maps, although there is no history of flooding at the site. Based on the possibility of a 1 in 1000 year flood event, significant flood mitigation measures were constructed at Fort Augustus to minimise the risk of flooding for the previous substation extension. The planned works at the time, included a phase two development between the existing compound and the new watercourse. This area is included within the original flood mitigation measures installed under previous substation extension. The area required this new 400kV upgrade would be similar to that which was originally planned for the previous 275kV development. On-going work is being done to ensure drainage and flood mitigation measures are sufficient to prevent any increase in flood risk as part of the proposed development. Surface water flood risk in relation to the construction and operation of the proposed development will be considered during the Environmental Assessment stage. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be developed in the pre-construction stage and SSEN Transmission General Environmental Management Plans will be applied, which include standard mitigation measures such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) in order to minimise the potential for impacts on surface water and groundwater during construction and operation.

Will the valuation of my property be impacted?

The introduction of new infrastructure onto property has varied effects on the property value and each case is considered on its individual merits within the statutory framework of the Electricity Act 1989 and the Land Compensation Act 1961. That is, SSEN Transmission are obliged to follow a legal framework, therefore effects on value of property need to be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Will access on the public road be maintained?

There is potential for travel disruption during construction, when we take delivery of key plant items or because of increased volumes of traffic on the local road network. Disruption will be minimised and typically controlled through an agreed Traffic Management Plan with The Highland Council as part of any consent conditions. SSEN Transmission aims to ensure that construction traffic uses the roads safely and that any inconvenience to the public is kept to a minimum whilst maintaining a safe environment for the workforce and other road users.

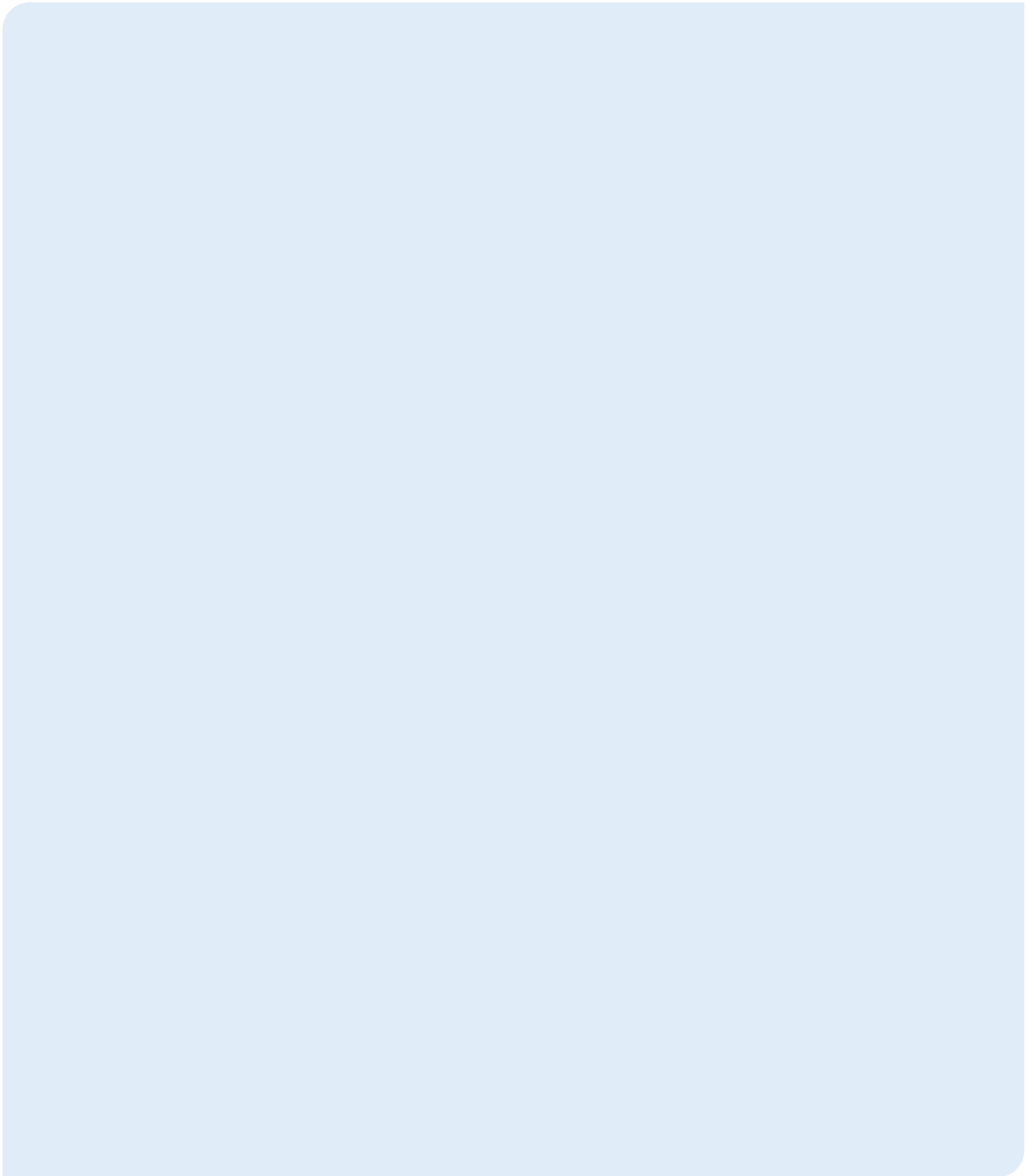
How will woodland and trees on the site be considered?

A Woodland Management Plan exists for the Fort Augustus substation. The Woodland Management Plan will be updated and re-issued to support the planning application. This follows a phased approach for felling and planting throughout the site to try and ensure continuity of woodland screening around the site. It will also include a review of the existing planting, to identify if any other recent planting has not been successful.

Will there be any impacts to the local environment and wildlife?

SSEN Transmission have undertaken a number of desktop studies and environmental surveys to ensure that the proposed works will have as little an impact on the local environment as possible. The project team are in contact with the appropriate regulatory bodies and are committed to ensuring that works adhere to applicable UK and Scottish regulations, as well as industry best practice.

Notes



What happens now and how do I have my say?

We understand and recognise the value of the feedback provided by members of the public during all engagements and consultations. Without this valuable feedback, the project development team would be unable to progress projects and reach a balanced proposal.

We are keen to receive your views and comments in regards to the following questions:

- Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand what is being proposed and why?
- Are you satisfied that the proposed layout is appropriate for the site location?
- Do you have any particular concerns or queries on the proposed location?
- Is there anything specific you would like to raise in relation to the project which will impact on the planning process to deliver this essential connection project to support Government net-zero targets?
- Do you have any other comments on the proposed development?



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."

Comments

Your views and comments can be provided to the project team by completing the feedback form or by writing to our Community Liaison Manager. All feedback received will be assessed and the proposed options adapted where necessary.

Feedback

We will be seeking feedback from members of the public, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders regarding our proposals until **11 January 2024**.


You will find the feedback forms at the back of this booklet or online at the project webpage.

Rosie Hodgart

Community Liaison Manager

 BDUP@sse.com

 +44 (0) 7879 793 652

 **Rosie Hodgart**
Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission,
1 Waterloo St, Glasgow, G2 6AY

Additional information

Information will also be made available via the project webpage and social media channels:



Project website:
ssen-transmission.co.uk/BDUP

Follow us on Facebook:
[@assencommunity](https://www.facebook.com/assencommunity)

Follow us on Twitter:
[@SSEtransmission](https://twitter.com/SSEtransmission)

Please let us know if you require information in an adapted format such as paper copy, large print or braille and we will work with you to accommodate your preferences. We are happy to accommodate all reasonable requests for adapted communications.

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 Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand what is being proposed and why?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q2 Are you satisfied that the proposed layout is appropriate for the site location?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q3 Do you have any particular concerns or queries on the proposed location?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q4 Is there anything specific you would like to raise in relation to the project which will impact on the planning process to deliver this essential connection project to support Government net-zero targets?

Comments:

Q5 Do you have any other comments on the proposed development?

Comments:

Full name

Address

Telephone

Email

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

If you would like your comments to remain anonymous 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, 1 Waterloo St, Glasgow, G2 6AY

Email: BDUP@asse.com

Online: ssen-transmission.co.uk/BDUP

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

The feedback form and all information provided in this booklet can also be downloaded from the project websites.

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.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks is a trading name of: Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution Limited Registered in Scotland No. SC213459; Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213461; Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213460; (all having their Registered Offices at Inveralmond House 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ); and Southern Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in England & Wales No. 04094290 having its Registered Office at Number One Forbury Place, 43 Forbury Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3JH which are members of the SSE Group.

