Fasnakyle Area 400 kV Substation

Report on Consultation

March 2024

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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1. Introduction

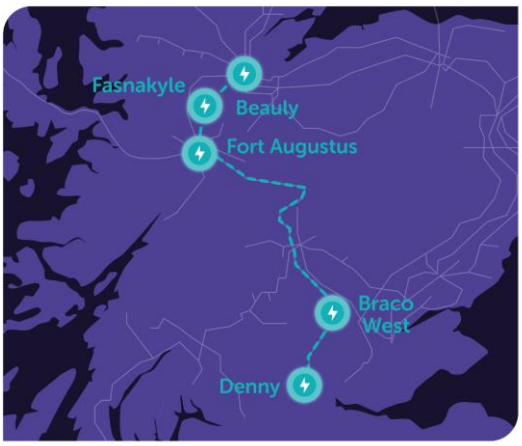
1.1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this Report on Consultation (RoC) is to document the consultation responses received as part of our site selection consultation process for the proposed Fasnakyle 400kV substation, and where appropriate, show how the option taken forward to the next stage has been informed by this process.

This Report details the consultation process undertaken, including details of consultation methods and advertising, those consulted and/or contributing to the process and it also summarises the feedback received, including objections, concerns, questions and statements of support. It sets out clearly how stakeholder feedback has influenced the decisions we have made and confirms the option we are taking forward.

1.2. Project overview

Based on the requirements outlined in National Grid ESO's Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design, we have developed proposals to uprate the existing Beauly to Denny 275kV overhead line (OHL) circuit to operate at 400kV. This requires two new substations and an extension to an existing substation along the line. The uprating of this line will allow the transmission of electricity generated by offshore renewables promoted under Scotwind and contribute to the transition to a low carbon electricity network.



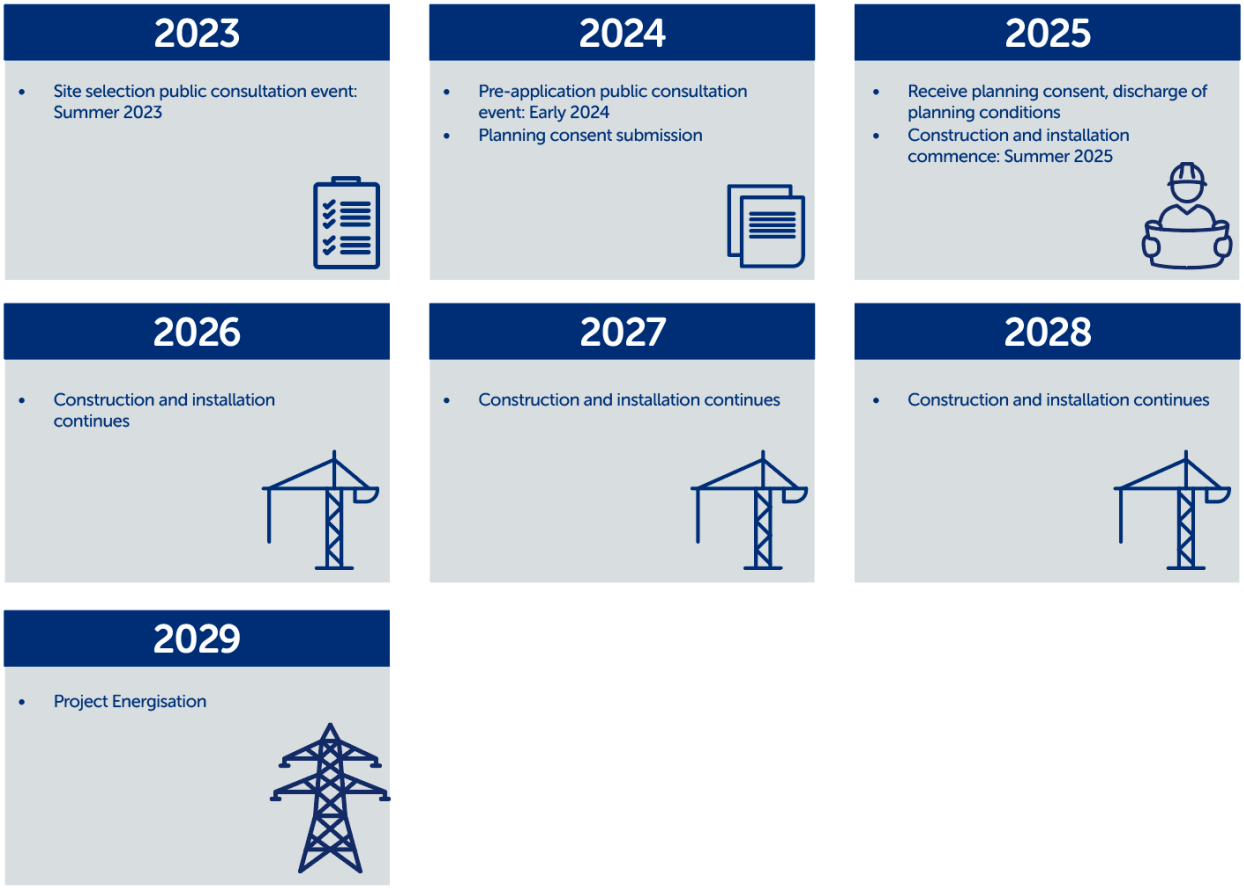
The new Fasnakyle 400kV substation project requires:

- Construction of a new outdoor, Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS), 400 kV substation;
- The approximate dimensions of the proposed substation are 376m x 290m;
- Tie in of the existing Beauly to Denny OHL infrastructure into the new substation;
- Areas for drainage, landscaping/screening and habitat enhancement;
- Temporary areas will also be required during construction for laydown and welfare.
- Rationalisation of the existing Beauly – Denny OHL towers on the spur to Fasnakyle substation.

Please refer to the following webpage for a summary of the wider Beauly to Denny OHL proposed works:

Beauly Denny 400kV Upgrade - SSEN Transmission (ssen-transmission.co.uk)

1.3. Project timeline



Find out more about our 2030 projects: www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects/

1.4. What we were consulting on

As a stakeholder-led business, we understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process. Relevant and insightful stakeholder feedback collected during consultations is critical to ensuring that our decision making is informed, and stakeholder concerns are taken into consideration at each stage of the project's development.

During this consultation, we presented options regarding our site selection for the proposed new Fasnakyle 400kV substation (Figure 1.1). The consultation included information regarding technology options, environmental and technical considerations, set out the project development process and explained the factors which were taken into consideration in the selection process. The consultation explained how Site Option 9 provides the best balance of environmental and technical considerations from our internal assessments.

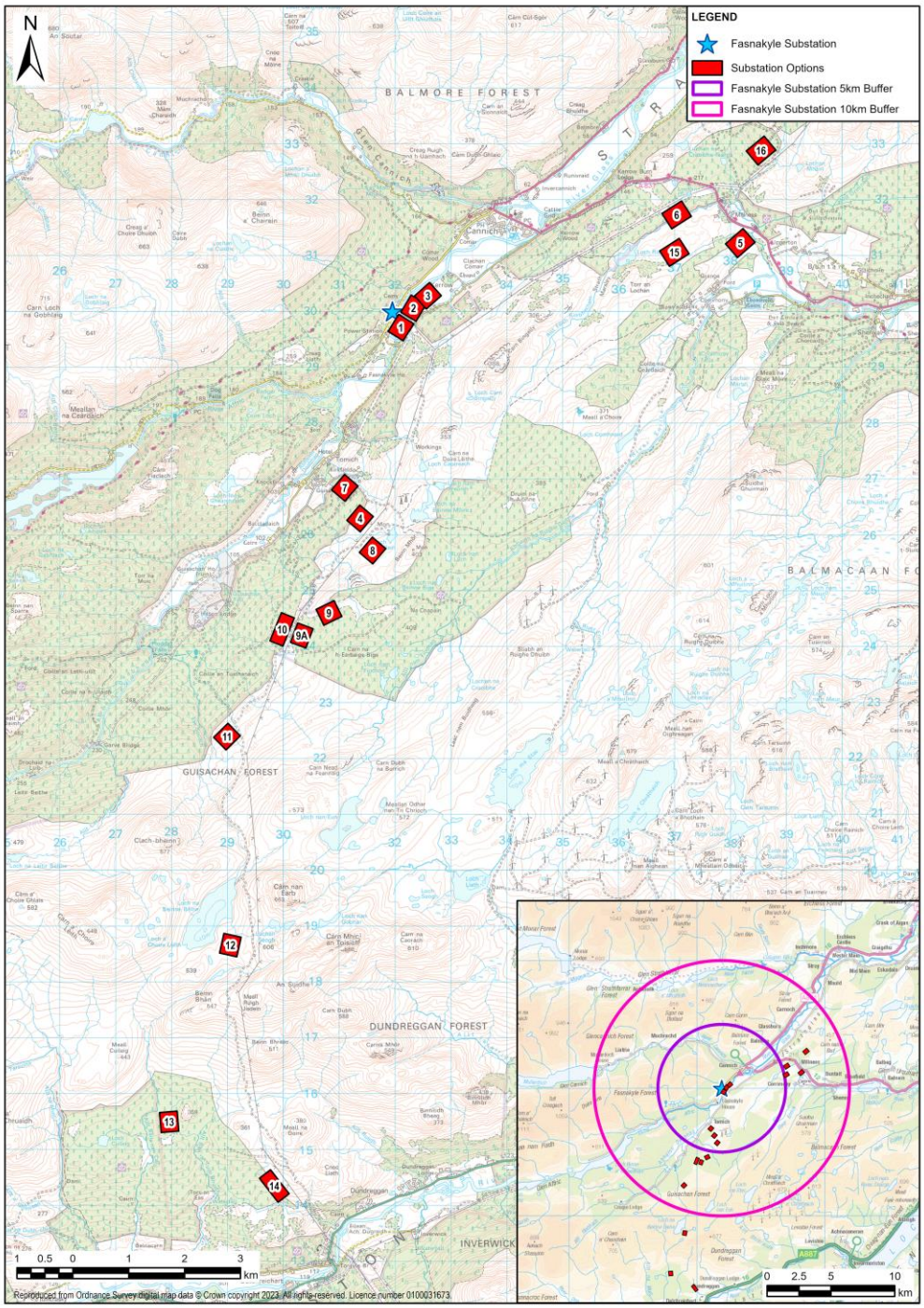


Figure 1.1 – Site Options (Presented at September 2023 consultation)

2. The consultation process

2.1. Who we consulted with

Our consultation process sought to capture the views of anyone who had an interest in our proposals, and we invited comments from all interested parties. During our engagements we aimed to ensure that we captured the views of:

- statutory consultees
- non-statutory consultees
- community members and local organisations; including local elected members
- landowners and occupiers

2.2. Consultation feedback period

The public consultation period was open from 5 September until 17 October 2023.

Statutory Consultees were invited to provide feedback on our Consultation Document between 5 September 2023 and 17 October 2023. Where possible, affected landowners were contacted ahead of the consultation period to discuss land related considerations or concerns.

2.3. The advertising process

The consultation events were advertised extensively using the following methods:

- The Inverness Courier.
- Our social media channels and the dedicated project webpage.
- Community Councillors and Local Elected Members were emailed in advance with information and a poster they could share within their local area.
- A maildrop including a postcard insert was sent to 347 homes and businesses within a ten-mile radius of the potential sites. A copy of the postcard invite can be found in Appendix B.

2.4. Stakeholder participation

In September 2023 we launched our initial consultation on site selection for the proposed Fasnakyle substation, providing an introduction to the project and starting our engagement process.

Consultation event
Public Consultation Event Cannich Hall 5 September 2023 67 attendees

The attendance figure reflects the number of people who had registered their attendance at the event.

For members of the public who were unable to attend the face-to-face consultation event, a virtual consultation event was held on 7 September 2023 between 5.30pm to 7pm.

The virtual consultation event was held via a virtual consultation room which provided information boards giving an overview of the project and the type of infrastructure proposed. During the virtual consultation event, a live chat function was available for members of the public to ask questions about the project.

2.5. Feedback volume

Feedback from our stakeholders was welcomed via a range of methods. This included online or hard copy feedback forms, emails or letters, notes from the consultation events or stakeholder meetings or from any relevant telephone conversations.

Responses to public consultation

Responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Six statutory bodies and 22 non-statutory consultees of relevance to the project, were contacted and requested to provide feedback on the proposals. 13 formal responses were received with a summary of each listed in the Project Specific Feedback Section and provided in Appendix A.

Stakeholder representations

Where non-statutory organisations that were not directly approached by us have responded to the consultation through the public consultation channels, their comments have been taken on board and were analysed for this Report on Consultation along with the other responses.

3. Consultation feedback and our response

3.1. Common themes

Across all of our Pathway to 2030 project consultations, we received feedback covering a number of common themes. Although some of this feedback related to topics which fell outside of the scope of our consultations, we recognise that it is important to address the points that our stakeholders took the time to raise, which we have summarised in this section. In addition, we have also developed a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that can be viewed here.

Project need

The need for these projects has been independently assessed by both the GB Electricity System Operator, National Grid ESO (ESO); and the GB energy regulator, Ofgem.

Some responses questioned whether these projects are needed at all. In many cases, those questioning the need have done so as the electricity these projects will connect and transport is not all needed in the north of Scotland.

Under our licence, we have a legal obligation to provide connections to electricity generators looking to connect to our network and we do not determine the location of new electricity generation. This is led by generators themselves, often underpinned by Government targets and policies.

These projects - which are part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission network across Great Britain - are needed to unlock the north of Scotland's vast renewable electricity resources and transport that power to demand centres across the UK.

The renewable electricity these projects will transport will play a key role in meeting UK and Scottish Government renewable energy and climate change targets. They will also help secure the country's future energy independence by reducing dependence on imported power from volatile wholesale energy markets.

For more details on why these projects are needed and how this need has been assessed, we have published a short briefing paper.

Technology choice

Several respondents have questioned the technology choice, particularly why the infrastructure cannot all be installed subsea or underground, instead of overhead line steel lattice towers.

Due to the significant volume of power we need to connect and transport from generation source to areas of demand the ESO concluded that there is a need for both onshore and offshore network reinforcements.

The ESO's and Ofgem's independent assessment of need for this project and our wider Pathway to 2030 programme was also based on the technology choices we are progressing.

Underground cabling is highly sensitive to ground conditions and terrain. There can be significant and lasting environmental impacts and future land use constraints associated with undergrounding; together with the technical challenges of operating, maintaining and in the event of a fault, restoring power.

Cost is also an important consideration, with subsea and undergrounding significantly more expensive than overhead. As the cost of investing in the electricity transmission network is ultimately recovered by electricity bill payers across GB, cost is one of the key factors in the ESO's and Ofgem's assessment of need, and in Ofgem's future assessment of the costs we are allowed to recover for these projects.

Environmental impacts

We have received feedback highlighting concerns about potential environmental impacts, particularly on local biodiversity.

As one of the greatest risks to our natural environment and biodiversity is climate change, these projects are part of the solution if we are to tackle the climate emergency and deliver net zero emissions in Scotland and across the United Kingdom.

However, we do recognise that in delivering these critical projects, there will be unavoidable impacts and we would like to reassure stakeholders that we take our environmental responsibilities extremely seriously.

To deliver our projects in the most sensitive way possible we ensure environmental factors are considered at every stage in the development of each project, along with technical requirements and economic considerations. A key way we do this for the environment is to follow the mitigation hierarchy. Firstly, we seek to avoid sensitive areas wherever possible and where impacts are likely to occur, we seek to minimise these, provide mitigation and identify opportunities to restore.

In addition, all of our consent applications will be accompanied by detailed environmental assessments which are prepared by external specialists. These assessments will consider impacts on a wide range of environmental topics (many of which have been highlighted in the stakeholder responses to this consultation) and identify measures that may be required to mitigate any impacts.

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; as well as compensatory planting for any trees felled during the construction phase, where possible with native species. 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. You can find out more about how we are delivering a positive environmental legacy by clicking here.

In the following section of this Report on Consultation, we will address any specific environmental feedback relevant to the options we consulted on.

Socio-economic impact

Several community responses highlighted concerns about the impact on the local community, including visual and tourism impacts. We have also been asked what local benefits these projects will provide.

We acknowledge that there will inevitably be a visual impact on some local communities and are committed to do all that we can to minimise and mitigate this as part of the ongoing development of this project. The environmental assessment that will accompany our consent applications will also consider landscape and visual impacts.

From a tourism perspective, as part of our consent application, we intend to consider socio-economic and tourism impacts as part of the suite of documentation to be submitted to relevant consenting authorities. This will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to these issues in the consenting process.

These projects will also provide significant benefits to local and national economies. Independent socio-economic analysis undertaken on our Pathway to 2030 projects has estimated that they will collectively support around 20,000 jobs across the UK, around 9,000 of which are expected in Scotland, adding billions of economic value to the economy.

We also expect these projects to deliver significant local benefits, including direct and indirect job opportunities, alongside supply chain opportunities for local businesses. We will set out more details of these opportunities in due course, including 'Meet the Buyer' events to introduce local businesses to the opportunities presented through our main supply chain partners.

We are also committed to introducing community benefit funding, recognising the important role host communities will play in delivering the infrastructure required to meet our national endeavours to build a cleaner, more secure and affordable energy system for homes and businesses across Scotland and Great Britain in the long-term.

In the following section of this Report on Consultation, we will address any specific community feedback relevant to the options we consulted on.

Consultation process

We have received some feedback that our consultation process was not well promoted to affected communities or wider stakeholders and concerns around the timescale provided for feedback to be given.

As we set out in the 'Consultation Process' section of this Report on Consultation, we held a number of public consultation events, public meetings and bilateral and group engagements, using a range of methods to promote our consultations to our stakeholders.

Even at this early stage of development, where our consultation activities are voluntary, we fully recognise the importance of gathering stakeholder input to help inform our development plans. In

response to stakeholder feedback, we introduced extensions to our consultation period to encourage anyone interested in these projects to provide their feedback. In addition, we would like to highlight that there will be further opportunity to comment on our proposals through the consenting process and would encourage all stakeholders to fully engage in that formal consultation exercise.

We fully recognise there is always room for improvement and as we look forward to the next round of public consultations, we are committed to apply learning from our first round of consultations to increase awareness, accessibility and coverage of consultation events. We will continue to welcome feedback on how we can further improve how we consult with our stakeholders on our projects.

3.2. Specific project related feedback

Introduction

This section of the report provides our responses to the questions and themes emerging from the public consultation and the responses provided by statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. Feedback was collated and analysed by the project teams, to produce relevant data and key themes.

Consultation responses have been grouped by the following project themes, 'Community Impact', 'Environmental Impact', and 'Economic Impact' and stakeholders were grouped into the categories outlined in the table below.

Stakeholder group	Examples
Statutory Consultees	Local Authorities, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), NatureScot, Scottish Forestry, Transport Scotland
Non-Statutory Consultees	Scottish Water, Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays), BT, Joint Radio Company (JRC), National Grid, National Gas Transmission, NATS Safeguarding
Community members and local organisations	Homeowners, local businesses, Residents Associations, elected members, Strathglass Community Council and Local Residents
Landowners & occupiers	Landowners, crofters, tenant farmers, occupiers of properties in closest proximity to substations

Community impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing stakeholder group	Our response
Transport Scotland have stated that they have no comment to make on individual site options however, in the event that the construction works associated with the substation results in the need for Abnormal Load Deliveries (ALD), Transport Scotland will require to be satisfied that the size of loads proposed can negotiate the selected route and that their transportation will not have any detrimental effect on structures within the trunk road route path. They recommend that a full Abnormal Loads Assessment report should be provided that identifies key pinch points on the trunk road network. Swept path analysis should be undertaken and details provided with regard to any required changes to street furniture or structures along the route. In addition, Transport Scotland state that a threshold assessment, in accordance with the IEMA Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic will be required, to determine whether there are likely to be any significant environmental issues associated with increased traffic on the trunk road network, and any requirement for further trunk road assessment. This can be undertaken as part of the planning application process.	Statutory Consultees	We will ensure consultation with Transport Scotland occurs as required throughout the project. The environmental assessment will include a traffic and transport assessment to assess the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the local and wider transport network. This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of a planning application. The assessment will identify any mitigation measures and commitments to be incorporated in the design, construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. Mitigation will be identified and implemented during construction works through the use of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

Transport Scotland can provide further guidance at the formal scoping stage.		
Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays) mention core paths and are hopeful that public access will be considered as a key aspect of the site selection and anticipate that The Highland Council's access team have been consulted. ScotWays welcome future requests for consultation and note they may have more capacity to contribute at a later stage.	Non-Statutory Consultees	Noted. The impact on core paths has also been highlighted by The Highland Council as part of this consultation. The environmental assessment will include an assessment of the potential effects the Proposed Development will have on core paths and the wider path network in the area. This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of a planning application. Further consultation will be undertaken where required to inform the assessments and reporting.
BT have studied the proposed site options with respect to Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) and related problems to BT point-to-point microwave radio links. They conclude that the project should not cause interference to BT's current and presently planned radio network. If site options were to change, BT request to be informed so they can re-assess.	Non-Statutory Consultees	Noted.
Joint Radio Company (JRC) stated the Proposed Development is 'cleared' with respect to radio link infrastructure operated by the local energy networks. JRC does not foresee any potential problems based on known interference scenarios and the data provided to them. However, if any details of the development are to change, it will be necessary to re-evaluate the proposal.	Non-Statutory Consultees	Noted.

JRC note that this clearance pertains only to the date of its issue (28th September 2023) and advise that SSEN seek re-coordination prior to submitting a planning application.		
NATS Safeguarding note that the Proposed Development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and it does not conflict with their safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS (En Route) Public Limited Company "NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal. NATS advise that if any changes are made in regard to this application which become the basis of a revised, amended, or further application for approval, then, as a statutory consultee, NERL requires that it be further consulted on any such changes prior to any planning permission or consent being granted.	Non-Statutory Consultees	Noted.
National Grid have no objection to the proposal as they have no assets in Scotland. However, they have passed the consultation request on to National Gas Transmission who separated from National Grid Group at the start of the year.	Non-Statutory Consultees	Noted.
National Gas Transmission have confirmed that the proposed sites are at least 2km from their assets, therefore they will not affect National Gas Transmission. However, National Gas Transmission advise that they should be	Non-Statutory Consultees	Noted.

consulted for the OHL when the planning application is submitted.

Strathglass Community Council and Local residents raised concerns that none of the shortlisted sites presented are suitable due to potential visual and community impacts.	Community, organisations & officials	As part of the planning application, we will undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which will consider views of the Proposed Development from residential properties, other sensitive receptors and key local viewpoints with the aim of designing the proposed substation to minimise visual impacts. Design considerations will aim to reduce the platform level and building heights (reducing the potential for sky lining) and installing hard and soft landscaping to screen the site from key viewpoints. Building colours can have a significant role in reducing visual impact and will be agreed through the planning process. We will work with The Highland Council, Strathglass Community Council and our Landscape Architects to ensure appropriate viewpoints are captured within the assessment and appropriate design mitigation is put forward in the planning application.
There was not deemed enough information on exact size, noise level impacts for nearby dwellings or visual impacts for all 14 sites.	Community, organisations & officials	Operational and construction noise will be assessed to ensure the Proposed Development operates within acceptable limits. This will form part of the planning application for the development to be submitted to The Highland Council.
Concern of the impacts on Tomich village Conservation Area as a visitor attraction.	Community, organisations & officials	Please see our response in the Common Themes section 'Socio-Economic Impact' for further information. Engagement with local landowners and business owners is welcomed and will continue throughout the development stages of the project. In addition, following feedback at the consultation regarding construction traffic to the proposed Site Option 9, a new access road is proposed from the A831 to divert traffic away from the areas of Cannich and Tomich and facilitate abnormal loads to the site.

Concern of the impact of tourism in the area, specifically Glen Affric. Concern that the proposed development will be visible from the National Scenic Area nearby, and a belief that it cannot be adequately mitigated.	Community, organisations & officials	Please see our response in the Common Themes section 'Socio-Economic Impact' for further information. In addition, visualisations of the proposed substation from key viewpoints in the surrounding area will be included as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in the environmental assessment. A 3D model will be presented at the next public consultation events to demonstrate how the development may look and give people the opportunity to feed back their views. This will be a more refined model than that presented in September 2023. The planning application will be accompanied by photomontages taken from viewpoints agreed with The Highland Council showing how the development would look. Where landscape and visual impacts are identified, the environmental assessment will include mitigation proposals. We will seek to reduce visual impacts through design (aiming to reduce the platform level and building heights and installing hard and soft landscaping).
Of the shortlisted sites, some consultees raised a preference for Site 10. This site was seen as being the furthest away / most remote, and closest to OHL.	Community, organisations & officials	Noted. Site 10 is closer to residential properties than Site 9. Site 9 is on the other side of the existing OHL and further away from residential properties than Site 10.
A concern was raised that lighting on the hill, at any stage, would interfere with dark skies.	Community, organisations & officials	Our substations are not permanently manned or floodlit but instead have motion sensor-controlled security lighting, plus work lighting in case of urgent repairs during hours of darkness. We will fully assess the requirements for construction and operational lighting as part of the environmental assessment. The environmental assessment will include site specific recommendations to mitigate any impacts of lighting on nearby properties. We will produce a lighting strategy for the operation of the site as part of the planning application. Construction lighting will follow best practice to minimise light spillage.

A request was made to engage the public with regards to traffic management.	Community, organisations & officials	The environmental assessment will include a traffic and transport assessment to assess the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the local and wider transport network. This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of the planning application.
Concerns have been raised over potential impacts of access to the substation.	Community, organisations & officials	The environmental assessment will include a traffic and transport assessment to assess the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the local and wider transport network. This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of the planning application.
There were some preferences raised for the 'preferred option' of Site 9.	Community, organisations & officials	Noted.
Some consultees raised preferences for sites 1, 2 or 3.	Community, organisations & officials	Site Options 1, 2 and 3 were discounted at Stage 1 of the site selection process due to the close proximity to residential properties, the landscape and visual impacts from the public roads and the wider area, the physical constraints between River Glass and the public roads, the risk of flooding from River Glass and the close proximity to the A Listed Fasnakyle Power Station and B Listed Fasnakyle Bridge over River Glass.
There is a lack of understanding as to why several site options have been discounted and clarity on how the options were shortlisted down to three options. Some consultees felt there was a lack of transparency in the decision making and RAG ratings.	Community, organisations & officials	Please refer to our FAQs for information on our approach to optioneering.
Several consultees did not believe that any of the shortlisted options were suitable.	Community, organisations & officials	Please refer to our FAQs for information on our approach to optioneering.

A number of consultees were dissatisfied with the public consultation event. Concerns included: • Presenters being unable to adequately answer some questions; • Belief that information was manipulated; and, • Concern that contradictory information was provided (some consultees were told AIS was the only option and others were told the opposite, and some were also told the site could not be placed further away and others were told the opposite).	Community, organisations & officials	We have fully noted this feedback and recognise there is always room for improvement. As we look forward to the next round of public consultations, we are committed to apply learning from our first round of consultations to increase awareness, accessibility and coverage of consultation events. We will continue to welcome feedback on how we can further improve how we consult with our stakeholders on our projects. Please refer to our Common Themes regarding our approach to Consultation.
Some consultees raised concerns as to why the Proposed Development was required, indicating that they were unsure as to why a substation is required near Fasnakyle.	Community, organisations & officials	As indicated in our Common Themes section above, and our FAQs, the overall need for the project is defined in the context of the Pathway to 2030 which establishes the need for new transmission infrastructure to contribute towards meeting climate goals, ensuring energy security and supporting Scottish and UK Government targets for a just transition to a net zero future. These needs cannot be achieved by upgrading or extending the existing substation at Fasnakyle due to space constraints. More information on the need for this project can be found in the Consultation Document posted on the project website (Beauly Denny 400kV Upgrade - SSEN Transmission (ssen-transmission.co.uk))
A consultee stated they believe that a decision has already been made and that the document and presentation was not a consultation but rather a justification.	Community, organisations & officials	The 'Consultation' section of our Common Themes outlines how we will be directly actioning some changes to the consultation process in response to feedback. In regards the Fasnakyle area specific feedback, we acknowledge the feedback from the local community which prompted further review of areas to the

		northeast of the overall study area. This is discussed further with the 'Summary of Key Decisions' section.
Members from the Strathglass Community Council raised concerns regarding a lack of communication, despite their requests and agreement from SSEN, prior to Stage 2.	Community, organisations & officials	We have fully noted this feedback and recognise there is always room for improvement. We will continue to welcome feedback on how we can further improve stakeholder communication on our projects.
A request that all sites are re-evaluated and returned to community as current information does not demonstrate that all angles have be fully evaluated.	Community, organisations & officials	Our 'Consultation' section of our Common Themes outlines how we will be directly actioning some changes to the consultation process in response to feedback. In regards the Fasnakyle area specific feedback, we acknowledge the feedback from the local community which prompted further review of areas to the northeast of the overall study area. This is discussed further with the 'Summary of Key Decisions' section.

Environmental Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing stakeholder group	Our response
The Highland Council detailed the following comments: The Highland Council are generally supportive of the generation and transmission of renewable energy and understand the benefits of the project. There is an opportunity for a strong design concept with use of woodland screening and long-term management. Whilst the Planning Authority can support the principle of the development, the concerns raised along with the mitigation measures and further supporting information requested will require further consideration, particularly with regards to the landscape and visual impact of the scheme, both individually and cumulatively, potentially detrimental impact on peat, access and impacts on surrounding roads. The Highland Council detailed the following specific comments: It is supportive of renewable energy developments in principle. • Cumulative effects with wind farm proposals in the area will need to be considered. • It may be useful to review the Beinn Mhor Wind Farm refusal (14/01731/FUL/DPEA) on	Statutory Consultees	The Highland Council's (THC) requirements on the scope of assessments required to support the planning application are noted and the scope of environmental assessments and supporting information will be agreed with THC. Further consultation with THC will be undertaken once the design is suitably evolved to further inform the assessments and mitigation.

land immediately north / northwest of Site 9 for any useful environmental information.

- It is unclear how significant the visual and landscape impacts may be. It is important to have a strong evolved design concept.
- NPF4 Policy 5 – Soils, confirms proposals will only be supported if they are designed and constructed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. Proposals on peatland will only be supported if they meet the exceptions noted and subject to further information and mitigation measures.
- Construction traffic should not be routed through Tomich, full details should be summarised in the various supporting information requested. Access proposals currently unclear and will require careful consideration, given the cumulative pressure on the network from ongoing/consented major developments and grid upgrades in this part of Highland.
- The physical impact on the Core Path and forest road should be assessed and mitigated.

The Highland Council have also detailed the following supporting information requirements:

- Abnormal Load Assessment
- Access Management Plan

- Assessment of Impact on Historic Environment
- Borrowpit Management Plan
- Compensatory Planting Plan
- Construction Noise Assessment
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Design and Access Statement
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Forest Residual Waste Strategy
- GWDTE Assessment
- Habitat Management Plan
- Landscape and Visual Impact (including residential visual amenity assessment)
- Landscape Maintenance / Management Plan
- Operation Noise Assessment
- Peat Management Plan
- Planning Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Private Water Supplies
- Protected Habitat Survey
- Protected Species Survey

- Schedule of Mitigation
- Sustainable Design Statement
- Swept Path Analysis
- Transport Assessment
- Tree Constraints Plan
- Tree Protection Plan
- Visualisations

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) note that detailed design and assessments are not yet available and advise that a cultural heritage assessment should take account of the guidance in their EIA Handbook and the HES Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance on setting. HES understand that details for the height of the Proposed Development and the tie-ins to the existing Beauly-Denny OHL are yet to be confirmed. HES request that more details regarding the Proposed Development and a corresponding Bare Land Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) be supplied to them at an early convenience. This would allow assessment of the intervisibility between assets within their remit and the Proposed Development, and in turn the significance of potential impacts. HES further detail that the cumulative impacts of the	Statutory Consultees	HES's requirements on the scope of assessments required to support the planning application are noted and the scope of the cultural heritage assessment will be agreed with HES. Further consultation with HES will be undertaken once the design is suitably evolved to further inform this assessment and mitigation.

proposed option(s) along with the required tie ins and other relevant infrastructures should be considered during the more detailed assessment. HES detail that the platform size of the proposed substation is different in the Site Selection Consultation Document compared to the Site Selection Public Consultation Booklet, and request that clarification on platform size be given. HES confirm there are no Scheduled Monuments, Category A-Listed Buildings, Inventory Battlefields, Gardens and Designed Landscapes or World Heritage Sites within the boundaries of Options 4, 9, and 10. With regards to potential setting impacts, HES detail two Scheduled Monuments of concern (Badger Fall, still 150m SSE of, Glen Affric (SM13577), and Comar Wood, dun 830m SW of Comar Lodge (SM13578)). Based on distance and landscape, at this stage, HES confirm they do not foresee any significant setting impacts on Scheduled Monuments from any of the shortlisted options (Options 4, 9, and 10). However, HES detail that they should be reconsulted once a site is selected and a site layout plan with heights identified, including details of the OHL tie-ins to the Beauly-Denny OHL. Any re-consultation should be supported with appropriate ZTV and, if required,		

visualisation(s) showing view(s) to the proposed site from any Scheduled Monuments which have intervisibility. With regard to the Category A-listed building: Glen Affric Hydro Electric Scheme, Fasnakyle Power Station (LB7118), HES detail that views of the surrounding landscape are restricted by the building's valley setting and surrounding woodland. HES would require more concrete details about the proposals to confidently understand the significance of potential impacts. Therefore, they recommend assessment of the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of this A-Listed Building to be included in support of an application. In Summary HES detail that the substation could be located at the preferred Option 9, and Option 10, and not raise issues of national interest within their remit. However, this should be confirmed by full assessment once the details of the proposed substation including potential mitigation options, if required, are known. For Option 4, HES conclude that more concrete information on the Proposed Development would be helpful to better understand any potential impact on the setting of designated assets within HES's remit.		

SEPA welcome further pre-application engagement if there were to be any peat probing and habitat survey work undertaken and if the layout of the proposal is developed further. SEPA have not reviewed all locations and have provided specific site comments in relation to the preferred option – Site 9, as detailed below: It is not clear if a new access route is required. If required, it would need to be demonstrated that the use of existing infrastructure is not feasible, and that the proposed new route is the best environmental option with minimal adverse impacts. Where it is identified that peat is likely to be present on site, SEPA welcome that a full peat assessment will be undertaken to assess the extent of its presence. SEPA recommend that the presence of Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) is also considered, and surveys undertaken if appropriate. Although no private water supplies are identified within 250m of the substation location, it is not clear if a new access route would encroach on this buffer. If this is the case, SEPA request that it would be helpful if further information is provided once the route options are available. If a new access track is proposed, provided any watercourse crossings are designed to	Statutory Consultees	We note SEPA expectations for information provision to support the planning application. Consultation with SEPA will be undertaken to ensure appropriate information is provided. A Biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment will be undertaken to demonstrate how habitat improvement will be achieved. Peat probing has been completed at Site Option 9 in 2024 to support peat assessment, design refinement and the production of a peat management plan.

accommodate the 1 in 200-year event, plus climate change, and other infrastructure is located well away from watercourses, SEPA do not foresee a need for detailed information on flood risk. SEPA have additionally provided regulatory guidance along with detailed scoping requirements which sets out their general minimum information requirements. SEPA further state that there may be opportunities to scope out some of the issues raised in their guidance. To avoid delay and potential objection, evidence must be provided within the submission to support why an issue is not relevant.		
NatureScot indicated that all site options lie out with any designated sites for nature conservation, and they do not anticipate any direct and / or indirect impacts to designated sites. They therefore have no further comments to make for the site selection of the Proposed Development.	Statutory Consultee	Noted.
Scottish Forestry welcome the consideration of Ancient and native woodlands during the site selection process and highlight the following guidance and policy that should be considered as the project progresses:	Statutory Consultee	Noted. Further consultation with Scottish Forestry will be undertaken as the project design progresses.

- Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal
- The National Planning Framework 4 – Policy 6 Forestry, Woodlands and Trees
- UK Forestry Standard
- Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018
- The Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
- Scottish Forestry's guidance booklet: Woodland creation Application Guidance

Scottish Forestry confirm the 'preferred site' (Site 9) is located in an area mapped and recorded as forested, using aerial imagery the site appears to be felled and cultivated. Therefore, the scoping report should set out the current status of the site. Where the consultation report states that no trees need to be felled, Scottish Forestry advise that forestry land that is already felled and awaiting restocking must be treated as forest / woodland.

Scottish Forestry note that the development boundary does not include the access roads and grid connection operating corridor, and that this infrastructure could have significant impacts upon woodland. Scottish Forestry cannot provide a full response on the impact the site selection

may have on woodland, while the overall impact of the development is unknown. For future scoping consultation, Scottish Forestry encourage the developer to publish both the site and associated infrastructure layout to enable an informed response.		
Scottish Water welcome early engagement and consultation and confirm that the Proposed Development falls within a drinking water catchment where a Scottish Water abstraction is located. Therefore, more detail about the proposal is required to fully assess the risk to the ground water source. Scottish Water state that as the area is within a drinking water catchment, this should be noted in future documentation, and anyone working on the site should be made aware of this fact. Scottish Water request further involvement at the more detailed design stages, to determine the most appropriate proposals and mitigation within the catchment to protect water quality and quantity. Scottish Water further request that 3 months advanced notice is given prior to any works commencing on site.	Non-Statutory Consultee	Noted. Further consultation will be undertaken with Scottish Water as the project design develops and potential impacts of the proposed development on the drinking water catchment will be included in environmental assessments supporting the planning application.
A concern was raised that the development will severely impact Glen Affric NNR and NSA, and	Community, organisations & officials	Visualisations of the proposed substation from key viewpoints in the surrounding area will be included as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. A

other statuses, which present major assets to the area.		3D model will be presented at the pre-application public consultation events to demonstrate how the development may look and give people the opportunity to feed back their views. This will be a more refined model than that presented in September 2023. The planning application will be accompanied by photomontages taken from appropriate agreed viewpoints in the NSA and NNR showing how the development would look.
A concern was raised regarding the risk of fire impacting the surrounding environment from the substation.	Community, organisations & officials	The substation is designed with a wide exclusion zone up to and on the outer periphery of the security fence. This prevents a fire from within the substation from spreading beyond it. Further, we are undertaking a wildfire assessment to determine the risk of wildfire spreading to the operational equipment within the substation.
There is a concern that peat has received little recognition at this stage. There is a view that the proposal will require significant peat extraction.	Community, organisations & officials	Peat probing has been completed at the Site Option 9 area in 2024 to support a peat assessment, design refinement and the production of a peat management plan. This will accompany the planning application, which will include measures to create biodiversity net gain (BNG) for the project.
There is concern that there is likely to be significant noise generation that could reverberate around the glen.	Community, organisations & officials	Potential operational and construction noise impacts will be assessed to ensure the site would operate within acceptable limits. This will form part of the planning application to be submitted to The Highland Council (THC). Noise limits for the site may be imposed by THC through planning condition.
One consultee raised concern that wildlife information presented is incorrect, stating that red squirrel, badger, and pine martin should not be identified as European Protected Species.	Community, organisations & officials	This comment is correct and red squirrel, badger and pine marten are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5 and 6 and Protection of Badgers 1992, both national legislations rather than European. While this doesn't materially affect the consideration of protection of these species in our assessments, we recognise the error and will ensure correct references in future publications.

Economic Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing stakeholder group	Our response
Concern of the impact of tourism in the area, specifically Glen Affric.	Community, organisations & officials	Please see our response in the Common Themes section 'Socio-Economic Impact' for further information. In addition, engagement with local landowners and business owners is welcomed and will continue throughout the development stages of the project.
A concern that no consideration has been given to how the project can support meaningful economic development in rural areas.	Community, organisations & officials	Please see our response in the Common Themes section 'Socio-Economic Impact' for further information. In addition, engagement with local landowners and business owners is welcomed and will continue throughout the development stages of the project.
Concern that the substation could negatively impact tourism to the area and inevitably damage the local economy.	Community, organisations & officials	Please see our response in the Common Themes section 'Socio-Economic Impact' for further information. In addition, engagement with local landowners and business owners is welcomed and will continue throughout the development stages of the project.
There is a concern that the substation would not protect energy security. Design could be made less vulnerable in respect to drone attacks, saboteurs and potential full-scale war.	Community, organisations & officials	As part of the consenting process, an initial scoping exercise will consider impacts as a result of Major Accidents and Disasters. If deemed necessary, appropriate mitigation and safeguards will be implemented. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ (formally the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)) have been consulted regarding a security designation for the site. Based on the response, the site security will be designed accordingly.

4. Summary of key decisions

The key decision taken, following the consultation process for site selection and our review of stakeholder (statutory and non- statutory) feedback, is to progress Option 9 as the Proposed Option for the Substation.

Option 9 was the proposed site for consultation following an assessment of environmental, engineering and cost criteria. However, feedback from the consultation process recommended that we consider alternative sites. We identified potential new sites (Sites 15 and 16) to the northeast of the overall study area. Both sites were seeking to mitigate the constraints highlighted by feedback from local residents, however both sites were ruled out as viable options following further engineering and environmental investigations. Site 15 was found to be dominated by pristine blanket bog and wet heath habitats, classified as priority Annex I habitats under the Habitats Directive, with blanket bog identified on the Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL) and the Highland Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) as a priority habitat for conservation. Site 16 was ruled out due to constructability constraints as it would require substantial amounts of civil earthworks and therefore it was not taken forward for further assessment.

Following elimination of Sites 15 and 16 we further reviewed the northeast area to identify any additional sites, however a number of constraints in the area including engineering and constructability, topography, limited space for ancillary works such as temporary compounds and landscaping, connectivity, ancient woodland and proximity to residential properties have prevented any additional sites being taken forward.

Overall, Site Option 9 still remains the preferred site area from an environmental and engineering perspective following the completion of the consultation process. To reduce the impact on high quality protected habitats and areas of deeper peat in the Site Option 9 area we have microsited the site to the south, which is referenced as Site 9a. Consequently, a decision has been made to progress with Site Option 9a as the proposed site to be taken forward to the next phase of the development.

In addition, to reflect the geographical location of the proposed site, the project will be known as Bingally 400kV Substation for the planning process.

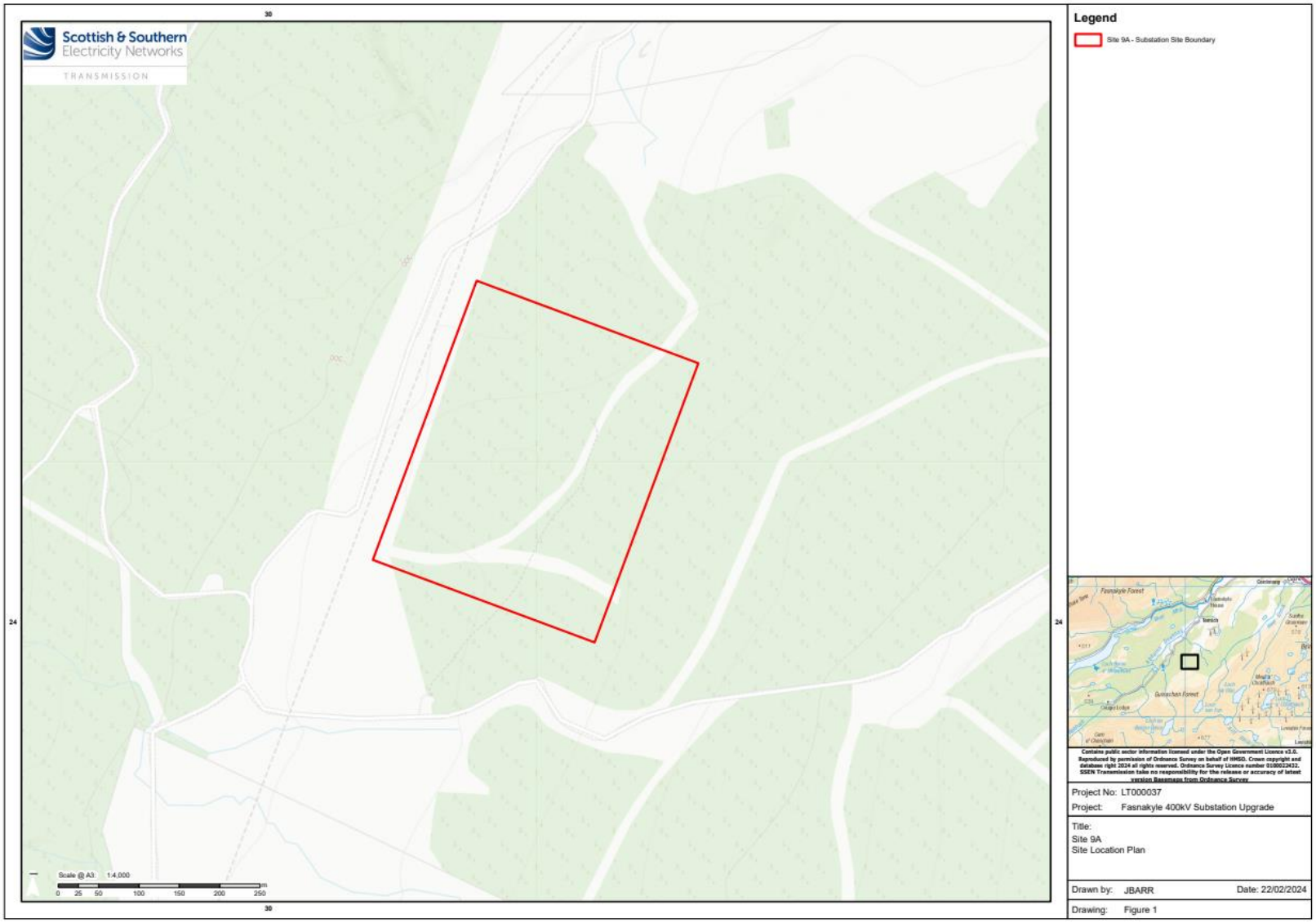
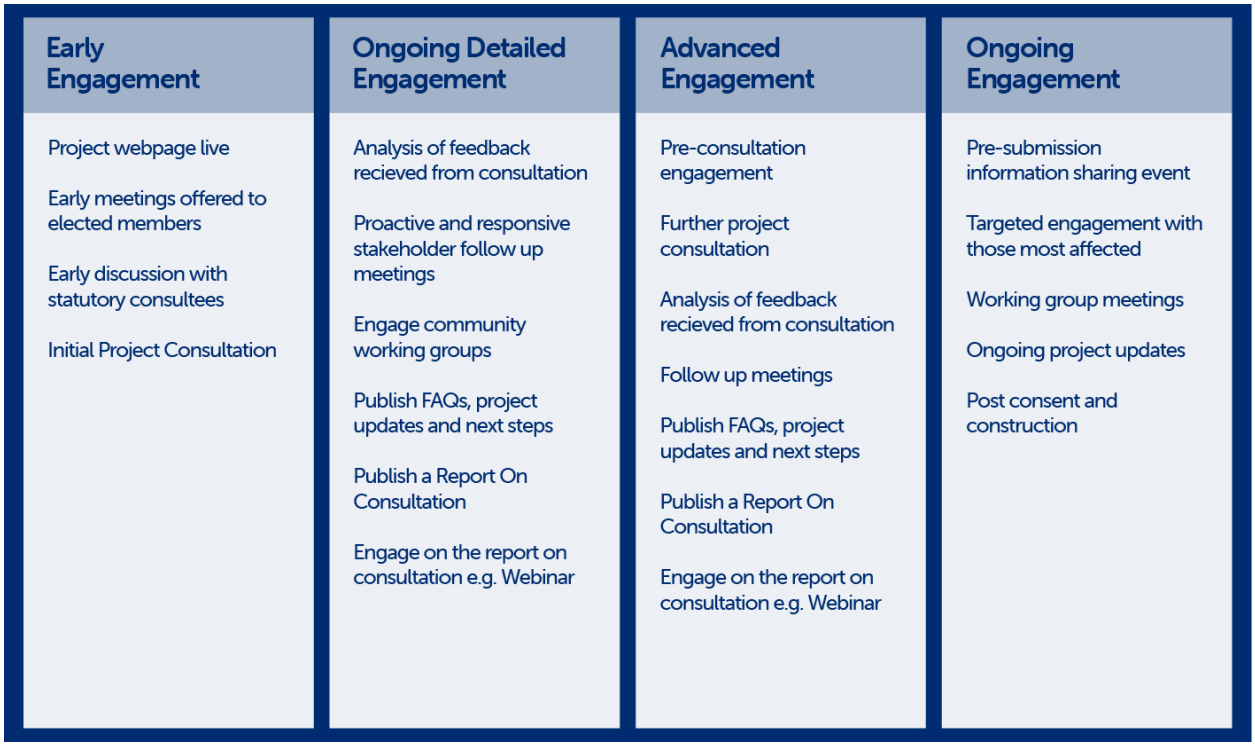


Figure 4-1 Site 9a Location Plan

5. Next steps

5.1. Ongoing engagement

The period of consultation described in this report is part of an ongoing engagement process that spans the full development cycle for the project, where feedback is sought at different stages and engagement with stakeholders is continuous as we refine our proposals.



Following publication of this Report, we, alongside specialist consultants and contractors, will further develop the design of the proposed development.

In March and June 2024, we will hold two formal Pre-Application consultation events at Cannich. These will be preceded by the submission of a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) to The Highland Council, affected Community Council(s) and relevant elected officials. Attendees will be provided with a proposed design and layout of the substation and overhead line tie-ins accompanied by a 3D model and visualisations.

We will shortly be submitting a request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion for the substation development to The Highland Council to determine whether the proposed development constitutes an EIA development. If it is confirmed as an EIA development, a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion will then be made to THC to identify the potential impacts of the development and the scope of assessments to be included within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The EIAR will be prepared and submitted with the Town and Country Planning Application.

A similar request for EIA Screening and Scoping Opinions will be made to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) for the proposed Beauly-Denny overhead line tie-ins to the proposed development.

5.2. Feedback

If you have any further views at this stage, then please get in touch with the Community Liaison Manager at BDUP@sse.com.

Community Liaison Manager

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission

1 Waterloo Street,

Glasgow

G2 6AY

Further information about the project is also available on the project website:

www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/BDUP

6. Glossary

Term	Definition
Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation	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 Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS).
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line OHL, along with location of key angle structures.
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland	Defined in National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 as "*land that has maintained continuous woodland habitat since at least 1750*".
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	AWI is a provisional guide to the location of Ancient Woodland. It contains three main categories of woodland, all of which are likely to be of value for their biodiversity and cultural value. These include Ancient Woodland, Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO), and other woodlands.
Area of Search (Study Area)	A broad geographical area within which possible sites might be capable of identification within approximately 5km of the required connectivity point; usually determined by geographical features such as coastlines or hill/mountain ranges, or designation boundaries, such as National Park boundaries.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was pre-development. It focuses on the change in the biodiversity value of a site, comparing the pre and post construction biodiversity values to ensure a positive impact overall.
Conductor	A metallic wire strung from support structure to support structure, to carry electric current.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
Double circuit	A double circuit transmission line comprises of two independent circuits each made up of three sets of conductors (cables).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
Engagement	The establishment of effective relationships with individuals or groups.
Electricity System Operator (ESO)	National Grid is the Electricity System Operator (ESO) for Great Britain. The ESO balances electricity supply and demand to ensure the electricity supply.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes lists those gardens or designed landscapes which are considered by a panel of experts to be of national importance.
Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation	A GIS substation is constructed with switchgear with gaseous reliant components which allows operation and safety clearances to be reduced compared to an AIS substation.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Holford Rules (as modified)	Principles developed by the late Lord Holford in 1959 which continue to be employed as the basis for routeing high voltage overhead lines and include additional notes on the siting of substations.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in a landscape that differentiate the area from another.
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
National Scenic Area (NSA)	A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value.
Offshore Integrated Link	Offshore cable connection between the onshore network and offshore network being developed as part of the Coordinated Offshore Network. This is being developed as a result of the Holistic Network Design (HND) publication in summer of 2022 produced by National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to facilitate greater co- ordination and efficiency for offshore windfarms. In the autumn of 2022 Ofgem published their Asset Classification findings which in turn

	meant SSENT were tasked with delivering large parts of the Coordinated Offshore Network.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or wooden poles.
Planning Application	Used in this context to describe an application for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from intentional planting.
Preferred Option	The option which SSEN Transmission believes offers the best balance of technical and environmental impact considerations identified through initial assessment. This is then subject to consultation with stakeholders, where local and previously unknown considerations may confirm or alter the initial preference. Once confirmed, this becomes the Proposed Option to take forward to the next stage of project development.
RAG Rating	A Red, Amber, Green rating provided to allow for a comparison between different options being appraised.
Red Line Boundary (RLB)	This area should include all land necessary to carry out the Proposed Development.
Riparian Woodland	Natural home for plants and animals occurring in a thin strip of land bordering a stream or river.
Route	A linear area of approximately 1 km width (although this may be narrower/wider in specific locations in response to identified pinch points / constraints), which provides a continuous connection between defined connection points.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.
Section 37 Application	An application for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop an overhead electricity line.
Semi-natural Woodland	Woodland that does not obviously originate from planting. The distribution of species will generally reflect the variations in the site and the soil. Planted trees must account for less than 30% of the canopy composition
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Designated area of national importance for natural heritage. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.

Span	The section of overhead line between two structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by The Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive74/409/EEC) to protect important bird habitats. Implemented under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SHE Transmission works.
Study Area	The area within which the corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
Substation	A node on the network to allow safe control of the electricity network. This could include convergence of multiple circuits, transformation of voltage or other functions to maintain and operate the electricity network.
Substation Site Area	Site area identified as necessary to deliver all the substation infrastructure requirements e.g. platform, access tracks, temporary construction area, drainage including SUDS, landscaping.
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)	Drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses.
Terminal Structure	A structure (tower or pole) required where the line terminates either at a substation or at the beginning and end of an underground cable section.
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in the Great Britain.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)	The UK BAP was published in 1994 after the Convention on Biological Diversity. It summarised the most threatened species and habitats in the UK and gave detailed plans for their recovery.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between a landowner, upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed, and SHE Transmission
Wild Land Area (WLA)	Those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland.
Works	Constructing new transmission infrastructure such as substations, overhead lines, underground cables; major refurbishment of these; the dismantling and removal of any parts of the system; and associated works, which may include formation of access tracks, bridge and road improvements, tree cutting, drainage etc.

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A – Statutory consultee feedback

Summary of feedback	Our response
The Highland Council The Highland Council detailed the following comments: • It is supportive of renewable energy developments in principle. • Cumulative effects with wind farm proposals in the area will need to be considered. • It may be useful to review the Beinn Mhor Wind Farm refusal (14/01731/FUL/DPEA) on land immediately north / northwest of Site 9 for any useful environmental information. • It is unclear how significant the visual and landscape impacts may be. It is important to have a strong evolved design concept. • NPF4 Policy 5 – Soils, confirms proposals will only be supported if they are designed and constructed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. • Construction traffic should not be routed through Tomich, full details should be summarised in the various supporting information requested. • The physical impact on the Core Path and forest road should be assessed and mitigated. The Highland Council have also detailed the following supporting information requirements: • Abnormal Load Assessment	We note The Highland Council's requirements to inform future planning applications and ensure information will be provided as part of the planning application. Further consultation with The Highland Council will be undertaken where required to inform the assessments and reporting.

- Access Management Plan
- Assessment of Impact on Historic Environment
- Borrowpit Management Plan
- Compensatory Planting Plan
- Construction Noise Assessment
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Design and Access Statement
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Forest Residual Waste Strategy
- GWDTE Assessment
- Habitat Management Plan
- Landscape and Visual Impact (including residential visual amenity assessment)
- Landscape Maintenance / Management Plan
- Operation Noise Assessment
- Peat Management Plan
- Planning Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Private Water Supplies
- Protected Habitat Survey
- Protected Species Survey
- Schedule of Mitigation

- Sustainable Design Statement
- Swept Path Analysis
- Transport Assessment
- Tree Constraints Plan
- Tree Protection Plan
- Visualisations

Historic Environmental Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) note that detailed design and assessments are not yet available and advise that a cultural heritage assessment should take account of the guidance in their EIA Handbook and the HES Managing Change in the Historic Environment guidance on setting.

HES understand that details for the height of the Proposed Development and the tie-ins to the existing Beauly-Denny OHL are yet to be confirmed. HES request that more details regarding the Proposed Development and a corresponding Bare Land Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) be supplied to them at an early convenience. This would allow assessment of the intervisibility between assets within their remit and the Proposed Development, and in turn the significance of potential impacts. HES further detail that the cumulative impacts of the proposed option(s) along with the required tie ins and other relevant infrastructures should be considered during the more detailed assessment.
HES detail that the platform size of the proposed substation is different in the Site Selection Consultation Document compared to the Site Selection Public Consultation Booklet, and request that clarification on platform size be given.

HES confirm there are no Scheduled Monuments, Category A-Listed Buildings, Inventory Battlefields, Gardens and Designed Landscapes or World Heritage Sites within the boundaries of Options 4, 9, and 10.

With regards to potential setting impacts, HES detail two Scheduled Monuments of concern (Badger Fall, still 150m SSE of, Glen Affric (SM13577), and Comar Wood, dun 830m SW of Comar Lodge (SM13578)). Based on distance and landscape, at this stage, HES confirm they do not foresee any

We note Historic Environment Scotland's feedback. The environmental assessment will include a cultural heritage assessment to assess the potential impacts on the historic environment. This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of the planning application.

This assessment will identify any mitigation measures and commitments to be incorporated in the detailed design, construction and / or operational phase of the Proposed Development.

significant setting impacts on Scheduled Monuments from any of the shortlisted options (Options 4, 9, and 10). However, HES detail that they should be reconsulted once a site is selected and a site layout plan with heights identified, including details of the OHL tie-ins to the Beauly-Denny OHL. Any re-consultation should be supported with appropriate ZTV and, if required, visualisation(s) showing view(s) to the proposed site from any Scheduled Monuments which have intervisibility. With regard to the Category A-listed building: Glen Affric Hydro Electric Scheme, Fasnakyle Power Station (LB7118), HES detail that views of the surrounding landscape are restricted by the building's valley setting and surrounding woodland. HES would require more concrete details about the proposals to confidently understand the significance of potential impacts. Therefore, they recommend assessment of the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of this A-Listed Building to be included in support of an application. In Summary HES detail that the substation could be located at the preferred Option 9, and Option 10, and not raise issues of national interest within their remit. However, this should be confirmed by full assessment once the details of the proposed substation including potential mitigation options, if required, are known. For Option 4, HES conclude that more concrete information on the Proposed Development would be helpful to better understand any potential impact on the setting of designated assets within HES's remit.	
SEPA SEPA welcome further pre-application engagement if there were to be any peat probing and habitat survey work undertaken and if the layout of the proposal is developed further. SEPA have not reviewed all locations and have provided specific site comments in relation to the preferred option – Site 9, as detailed below:	We note SEPA's expectations for information provision to support the planning application. The environmental assessment will include a full peat assessment of both the substation and any access track required to facilitate the works. Habitat surveys will also be undertaken to identify the potential presence of any GWDTE. Further consultation with SEPA will be undertaken where required to inform the assessments and reporting.

It is not clear if a new access route is required. If required, it would need to be demonstrated that the use of existing infrastructure is not feasible, and that the proposed new route is the best environmental option with minimal adverse impacts.

Where it is identified that peat is likely to be present on site, SEPA welcome that a full peat assessment will be undertaken to assess the extent of its presence. SEPA recommend that the presence of Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) is also considered, and surveys undertaken if appropriate.

Although no private water supplies are identified within 250m of the substation location, it is not clear if a new access route would encroach on this buffer. If this is the case, SEPA request that it would be helpful if further information is provided once the route options are available.

If a new access track is proposed, provided any watercourse crossings are designed to accommodate the 1 in 200-year event, plus climate change, and other infrastructure is located well away from watercourses, SEPA do not foresee a need for detailed information on flood risk.

SEPA have additionally provided regulatory guidance along with detailed scoping requirements which sets out their general minimum information requirements.

SEPA further state that there may be opportunities to scope out some of the issues raised in their guidance. To avoid delay and potential objection, evidence must be provided within the submission to support why an issue is not relevant.

NatureScot NatureScot indicated that all site options lie out with any designated sites for nature conservation, and they do not anticipate any direct and / or indirect impacts to designated sites. They therefore have no further comments to make for the site selection of the Proposed Development.	We note NatureScot considers the Proposed Development will cause no likely significant effects to any qualifying interests of any relevant designated sites within the area.
Transport Scotland	We will ensure adequate consultation with Transport Scotland occurs as required throughout the project.

While we would state that Transport Scotland has no comment to make on the individual site options, it should be noted that in the event that the construction works associated with the substations result in the need for Abnormal Load Deliveries (ALD), Transport Scotland will require to be satisfied that the size of loads proposed can negotiate the selected route and that their transportation will not have any detrimental effect on structures within the trunk road route path. A full Abnormal Loads Assessment report should be provided that identifies key pinch points on the trunk road network. Swept path analysis should be undertaken and details provided with regard to any required changes to street furniture or structures along the route. In addition, a threshold assessment in accordance with the IEMA Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic will be required, to determine whether there are likely to be any significant environmental issues associated with increased traffic on the trunk road network, and any requirement for further trunk road assessment. This can be undertaken as part of the planning application process, and we can provide further guidance at the formal scoping stage.	The environmental assessment will include a traffic and transport assessment to assess the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the local and wider transport network. This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of the planning application. The assessment will identify any mitigation measures and commitments to be incorporated in the design, construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.
Scottish Forestry Scottish Forestry welcome the consideration of Ancient and native woodlands during the site selection process and highlight the following guidance and policy that should be considered as the project progresses: • Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal • The National Planning Framework 4 – Policy 6 Forestry, Woodlands and Trees • UK Forestry Standard • Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 • The Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 • Scottish Forestry's guidance booklet: Woodland creation Application Guidance Scottish Forestry confirm the 'preferred site' (Site 9) is located in an area mapped and recorded as forested, using aerial imagery the site appears to be felled and cultivated. Therefore, the scoping report should set out the current status of the site. Where the consultation report states that no trees need to be felled, Scottish Forestry advise that forestry land that is already felled and awaiting restocking must be treated as forest / woodland.	We note Scottish Forestry's feedback. Further consultation will be undertaken once the design is suitably evolved to include access tracks and all associated infrastructure to allow a full assessment of woodland / forestry impacts. We seek to avoid felling of forestry or woodland in the first instance. However, where this is unavoidable, a forestry assessment will be undertaken and will identify any mitigation measures and commitments to be incorporated in the design, construction and / or operational phase of the Proposed Development. Compensatory planting arrangements will be provided as part of a planning application and will comply with UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and associated applicable guidelines. Planting will be supported by an approved replanting plan and shall identify, location, species and woodland design, timing, maintenance, monitoring, and reporting standards.

Scottish Forestry note that the development boundary does not include the access roads and grid connection operating corridor, and that this infrastructure could have significant impacts upon woodland. Scottish Forestry cannot provide a full response on the impact the site selection may have on woodland, while the overall impact of the development is unknown. For future scoping consultation, Scottish Forestry encourage the developer to publish both the site and associated infrastructure layout to enable an informed response.	This assessment and reporting will be submitted as part of the planning application where required.

7.2. Appendix B – public consultation event postcard invites