

VOLUME 1: CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1-1
1.1	Overview	1-1
1.2	Project Need	1-2
1.3	Routeing Process	1-2
1.4	Legislative and Statutory Context	1-2
1.5	The Need for EIA	1-3
1.6	EIA Report Structure	1-3
1.7	Notifications	1-4

Figures (Volume 2 of this EIA Report)

Figure 1.1: Location Plan

Appendices (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

Appendix 1.1: Permitted Development Works Appraisal

Appendix 1.2: Glendye Wind Farm Overhead Line Grid Connection: Electricity Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017: Screening Opinion (November 2024)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report has been prepared by ASH design+assessment Limited ("ASH") on behalf of Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc ("the Applicant") who, operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission ("SSEN Transmission"), own, operate, and develop the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands. In this EIA Report, the Applicant and SSEN Transmission are used interchangeably, unless the context requires otherwise. The EIA Report has been prepared to accompany an application for consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989¹ ("the 1989 Act").
- 1.1.2 The Applicant seeks consent under section 37 of the 1989 Act to construct and operate approximately 19 km of new 132 kV overhead line (OHL) to connect the consented Glendye Wind Farm² to the electricity transmission network at Fetteresso substation. The location of the project, referred to as the "Glendye Wind Farm Overhead Line Grid Connection" (and hereafter also referred to interchangeably as 'the Proposed Development'), is shown on **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.1.3 The Applicant is also seeking deemed planning permission under section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) ("the Planning Act") for certain elements of the Proposed Development, or ancillary development required to facilitate its construction and operation. These ancillary works would include the installation of temporary and permanent access tracks, upgrades to existing access tracks, temporary working areas and tree / vegetation clearance.
- 1.1.4 Certain elements of the Proposed Development would be undertaken utilising the Applicant's permitted development rights³. This includes two short sections of underground cable (UGC), which would comprise approximately 0.7 km of UGC on commencement of the grid connection from the consented Glendye Wind Farm on-site substation, and approximately 0.5 km of UGC on final approach to the existing Fetteresso substation. As Permitted Development works do not require specific express consent, an appraisal of potential effects from the installation of the UGC is included in **Appendix 1.1: Permitted Development Works Appraisal**, for completeness.
- 1.1.5 Electricity transmission infrastructure (such as the Proposed Development) is recognised in Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) as a National Development⁴ under 'ND3 Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure'. The Proposed Development forms a vital element in the delivery of network and grid infrastructure required to meet both the UK and Scottish Government's legally binding targets for net zero emissions and renewable energy electricity generation objectives.
- 1.1.6 An EIA has been undertaken for the Proposed Development in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017⁵, hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations, to assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The findings of the EIA are presented in this EIA Report, including the measures which would be taken to prevent, reduce and, where possible, offset predicted likely significant adverse effects.

1 Electricity Act 1989. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents> (last accessed 08/10/2025)

2 Received consent from the Scottish Government in October 2023 (ECU Reference: ECU00000676). Available at: <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00000676> (last accessed 08/10/2025)

3 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/223/contents> (last accessed 08/10/2025)

4 Given that this development is of a scale that would have otherwise been classified as 'Major' by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

5 The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/contents/made> (last accessed 08/10/2025)

1.2 Project Need

- 1.2.1 The Applicant owns and maintains the electricity transmission network across the north of Scotland and holds a transmission licence under the 1989 Act. In terms of section 9(2) of the 1989 Act, the Applicant has a statutory duty to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electrical transmission, and a separate duty to facilitate competition between current and new generators of electricity.
- 1.2.2 The Glendye Wind Farm was granted consent by Scottish Ministers in October 2023². The wind farm would be constructed on both the Glen Dye and Fasque Estates, situated approximately 5 km northwest from the village of Fettercairn and approximately 12 km southwest from the village of Strachan, Aberdeenshire. The wind farm is anticipated to generate in excess of 104 megawatts (MW) and to comprise of 26 turbines⁶ which require connection to the electricity transmission network by late 2029.

1.3 Routeing Process

- 1.3.1 The Applicant has undertaken studies during a routeing process to identify and appraise route and alignment options for the Proposed Development, involving consideration of environmental, technical and cost factors. Consultation has been undertaken during both route and alignment selection stages to seek comments from stakeholders, including members of the public, on the options put forward prior to finalising the design of the Proposed Development, as described in this EIA Report.
- 1.3.2 Further detail on the routeing and alignment selection stages of the Proposed Development is contained within **Chapter 2 - The Routeing Process and Alternatives**. Further detail on consultation is contained within **Chapter 4 - Scope and Consultation**.

1.4 Legislative and Statutory Context

- 1.4.1 Consent for the Proposed Development is sought from Scottish Ministers under section 37 of the 1989 Act. The 1989 Act is the primary legislation governing the electricity supply industry in Great Britain and places statutory obligations upon a licence holder.
- 1.4.2 The Applicant, as a transmission licence holder under the 1989 Act, has a statutory duty under paragraph 3, Schedule 9, of the 1989 Act, that 'when formulating proposals to generate, transmit, distribute or supply electricity' to:
- 'have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest'; and
 - 'do what [it] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects'.
- 1.4.3 The requirement to undertake an EIA for developments requiring consent under section 37 of the 1989 Act (subject to stipulations and thresholds) is set out in the EIA Regulations). This is discussed further in **Section 1.5** of this Chapter.
- 1.4.4 Construction of the Proposed Development and ancillary works constitutes development in terms of section 26 of the Planning Act. Accordingly, these works require planning permission. However, section 57(2) of the Planning Act provides that on the granting of a consent under section 37 of the 1989 Act, for overhead transmission lines and ancillary development, the Scottish Ministers may direct that planning permission for that development shall be deemed to be granted. Deemed planning permission under section 57 of the Planning Act is therefore being sought from the Scottish Ministers in terms of the application.

⁶ Glendye Wind Farm Website: Available at: <http://www.glendyewindfarm.co.uk/> (last accessed 08/10/2025)

- 1.4.5 Installation of the UGC would be undertaken utilising the Applicant's permitted development rights³. As such these works do not require specific express consent. The assessment of potential effects from the installation of the UGC are however included in **Appendix 1.1: Permitted Development Works Appraisal** for completeness.

1.5 The Need for EIA

- 1.5.1 The Proposed Development is not covered by the developments listed within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations. Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations identifies projects where EIA may be required, where a project listed in that Schedule is "likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location".

- 1.5.2 The Proposed Development is classified as Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations, by virtue of it being classed as:

"The carrying out of development (other than development which is Schedule 1 development) to provide any of the following -

(2) an electric line installed above ground –

(a) with a voltage of 132 kilovolts or more"

- 1.5.3 A Screening Opinion was sought from Scottish Ministers, as consenting authority, for consideration under the EIA Regulations to determine whether the Proposed Development would constitute 'EIA Development'.
- 1.5.4 The Screening Opinion of the Scottish Ministers was issued on 20th November 2024⁷ and determined that the Proposed Development does constitute 'EIA Development', and any forthcoming application for consent under section 37 of the 1989 Act should be accompanied by an EIA Report. The Screening Opinion is included as **Appendix 1.2**.
- 1.5.5 A request for a Scoping Opinion was subsequently made to the Scottish Ministers under Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations in November 2024. A Scoping Report⁸ was submitted to support the request, which sought input from statutory and non-statutory consultees regarding the information to be provided within this EIA Report (see **Appendix 4.1**).
- 1.5.6 The Scoping Opinion of the Scottish Ministers was issued in February 2025 confirming the scope of the EIA Report (see **Appendix 4.2**). Further details are contained in **Chapter 4 – Scope and Consultation**, and associated appendices.

1.6 EIA Report Structure

- 1.6.1 The EIA Report consists of the following volumes:

- Volume 1: Main Report;
- Volume 2: Figures;
- Volume 3: Visualisations (NatureScot guidelines)⁹;
- Volume 4: Appendices to support each of the Chapters in the EIA Report where required; and

⁷ The Scottish Governments Energy Consents Unit – The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 Screening Opinion (November 2024) (online) Available at: <https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005197> (last accessed 08/10/2205)

⁸ Scoping Report – Glendye Wind Farm Overhead Line Grid Connection – November 2024, produced by SSEN Transmission

⁹ NatureScot (Formerly Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)), (2017), Visual Representation of Wind Farms (Version 2.2) (SNH, 2017) Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2019-09/Guidance%20-%20Visual%20representation%20of%20wind%20farms%20-%20Feb%202017.pdf> (last accessed 10/08/2025)

- Non-Technical Summary.

- 1.6.2 Volume 1 of the EIA Report provides an introduction to the Proposed Development and provides a description of the key components, including construction and operational access requirements, and the main alternatives considered during project development. The approach to the EIA Report is also outlined, as well as the consultations undertaken to define the scope of the EIA. This volume also includes an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on receptors relevant to each topic-based assessment, including; a description of the proposed mitigation measures appropriate to those assessments and confirmation of the predicted residual effects. The consideration of cumulative effects is also discussed where relevant in each specialist topic.
- 1.6.3 Volume 2 contains supporting figures referred to in Volume 1 of the EIA Report.
- 1.6.4 Volume 3 comprises photomontage visualisations of the Proposed Development, prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance from NatureScot⁹.
- 1.6.5 Volume 4 comprises supporting appendices to Volume 1 of the EIA Report.
- 1.6.6 A standalone Non-Technical Summary is also provided which describes the Proposed Development and the likely significant effects predicted in a concise, non-technical manner.
- 1.6.7 A Planning Statement is also included with the application as supporting documentation. The Planning Statement considers the compatibility of the Proposed Development in the context of the development plan and national energy and planning policies.
- 1.6.8 Furthermore, a Pre-Application Consultation Report is included with the application as supporting information to summarise the public consultation undertaken by the Applicant in relation to the Proposed Development.

1.7 Notifications

- 1.7.1 In accordance with Section 5 of the Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990, and Regulation 14 of the EIA Regulations, the application and this EIA Report will be advertised in The Press and Journal and local/regional newspapers. Adverts will also be placed in the Edinburgh Gazette and on the Applicant's website.
- 1.7.2 Notice of the section 37 application, including this EIA Report and associated documents and figures, will be available for viewing at the following public locations during normal opening hours:
- Banchory Library, Bridge Street, Banchory AB31 5SU. Banchory Library Opening Hours: Monday: 9am - 5pm, Tuesday: 9am - 6pm, Wednesday: Closed, Thursday: 9am - 6pm, Friday: Closed, Saturday: 10am - 2pm, Sunday: Closed;
 - Stonehaven Library, 35 Evan Street, Stonehaven AB39 2ET. Stonehaven Library Opening Hours: Monday: Closed, Tuesday: 9am - 6pm, Wednesday: 9am - 5pm, Thursday: Closed, Friday: 9am - 5pm, Saturday 10am - 2pm, Sunday: Closed; and
 - Mearns Community Library, Aberdeen Rd, Laurencekirk AB30 1ZJ. Mearns Community Library Opening Hours: Monday: 2 - 6pm, Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 10am - 3pm, Thursday: 2 - 6pm, Friday: Closed, Saturday: 10am - 12pm, Sunday: Closed.
- 1.7.3 An electronic version of the report is available online at: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/glendye-windfarm-connection/>

1.7.4 This EIA Report is available in other formats if required. For details, including costs, contact:

Leona Graves
Consents and Environment Manager
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
Grampian House
200 Dunkeld Road
Perth
PH1 3AQ

Tel: +44 (0)7493 885 180

Email: leona.graves@sse.com
