Volume 1: Chapter 1 - Introduction and Background





VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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Appendices (Volume 5 of this EIAR)

There are no appendices associated with this Chapter.

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIAR)

Figure 1.1: Overview of the Proposed Development



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Impact Assessment Report (hereafter referred to as 'EIAR') has been prepared by LUC 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. The EIAR will accompany an application for Consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989¹(as amended) and Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to construct and operate approximately 105.2 kilometres (km) of new double circuit 400 kilovolts (kV) overhead transmission line (OHL) between Kintore and Tealing (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). A full description of the Proposed Development and its ancillary works is set out within Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of this EIAR.
- 1.1.2 This EIAR presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken in accordance with Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017². This EIAR presents information on the identified likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in order to inform the decision-making process.
- 1.1.3 The terms "Applicant" and "SSEN Transmission" are used interchangeably throughout this EIAR.

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electrical transmission in its licence area. Where there is a requirement to extend, upgrade or reinforce its transmission network, SSEN Transmission's aim is to provide an environmentally aware, technically feasible and economically viable solution which would cause the least disturbance to the environment and to people who use it.

1.3 Background

- 1.3.1 In July 2022, the National Energy System Operator (NESO³), published the *Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design* (*Pathway to 2030 HND*)⁴ and the *Network Options Assessment 2021/22 Refresh*⁵, setting out the blueprint for the onshore and offshore electricity transmission network infrastructure required to enable the forecasted growth in renewable electricity across Great Britain, including the 2030 offshore wind targets of 50 gigawatts (GW) and 11 GW for the UK Government and Scottish Government, respectively.
- 1.3.2 The extensive studies completed to inform the NESO's Pathway to 2030 HND and Networks Options Assessment 2021/22 Refresh confirmed the requirement to increase the power transfer capacity of the onshore corridor from Kintore to Tealing. This requires a new 400 kV connection between these locations to enable the significant power transfer capability needed to take power from onshore and large scale offshore renewable generation, which is proposed to connect at onshore locations on the East Coast of Scotland and transport it to areas of demand. A more detailed explanation of the project need is set out in Volume 1, Chapter 2: Established Need for the Proposed Development of this EIAR.

New Transmission Infrastructure

1.3.3 To achieve this connection, SSEN Transmission is proposing a new 400 kV OHL between Kintore and Tealing, the Proposed Alignment for which has been selected based on extensive studies, reported in **Volume 1**, **Chapter 4**:

¹ UK Government, 1989. *Electricity Act 1989*.

² HM Government, 2017. *The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017*. [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/contents/made.

³ The ESO was replaced by the National Energy System Operator in 2024.

⁴ National Grid ESO, July 2022. Pathway to 2030 HND. [Online] Available at: https://www.neso.energy/document/262676/download.

⁵ National Grid ESO, July 2022. *Network Options Assessment 2021/22 Refresh*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.neso.energy/document/262981/download.



Alternatives and the Routeing Process, of this EIAR. This Proposed Development also requires the following Intra (Associated) Developments, which are subject to separate planning applications:

- a new 400 kV substation to be constructed at Tealing (approximately 5 km to the north of Dundee, known as the proposed Emmock substation, planning reference 24/00699/FULN6); and
- a new 400 kV substation to be constructed at Fetteresso Forest (approximately 7 km west of Stonehaven, known as the proposed Hurlie substation, planning reference APP/2024/19517).
- 1.3.4 These substations are required to enable future connections to the electricity transmission network and export routes to areas of demand. As previously noted, the proposed Emmock and Hurlie substations are the subject of separate applications for planning permission.

Reconductoring Projects

- 1.3.5 In addition, there are two existing 275 kV OHLs, which require upgrades. These upgrades are to enable operation at 400 kV and to allow them to be connected to the proposed new Emmock 400 kV substation and are also subject to separate applications for Section 37 Consent and deemed planning permission:
 - the Alyth to Tealing 400 kV OHL (Energy Consents Unit (ECU) reference number ECU00005167)8; and
 - Tealing to Westfield 400 kV OHL (ECU reference number ECU00005168)⁹.
- 1.3.6 A Screening Report¹⁰ was also produced to address tie-ins and tie-backs between the Emmock and Tealing substations and the Proposed Development (ECU reference number ECU00005204).
- 1.3.7 These developments do not form part of the Proposed Development and are therefore not assessed as such in this EIAR, although the consideration of the potential for cumulative effects with the Proposed Development is considered, where relevant.

UK and Scottish Government Climate Targets

- 1.3.8 These proposals have been determined as critical to enable the delivery of the UK and Scottish Government's climate goals and renewable energy targets. These projects also contribute towards ensuring energy security and supporting Scottish and UK Government targets for a just transition to a net zero future. The Proposed Development fulfils the following requirements:
 - Addressing Climate Change: The UK and Scottish Governments have ambitious targets to combat climate
 change and guarantee a secure and reliable supply of energy. The UK is aiming for 50 GW of offshore windgenerated electricity by 2030. SSEN Transmission's *Pathway to 2030 HND* projects have been identified to help
 achieve such targets by delivering the vital infrastructure required.
 - Promoting Energy Independence: In 2022, the UK Government set out a strategy¹¹ to reduce dependence on volatile global gas markets, moving to local, sustainable electricity sources instead. Establishing the necessary infrastructure for this is critical.
 - Planning for Future Need: NESO carries out extensive analysis and research to predict the UK's future energy needs. This information is then carefully considered to guide infrastructure upgrade decisions.

Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL: EIAR Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction and Background Page 3

⁶ SSEN Transmission, November 2024. Emmock Substation Planning Application 24/00699/FULN. [Online] Available at: https://planning.angus.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=SN6VOFCFMUA00.

⁷ SSEN Transmission, December 2024. Hurlie Substation Planning Application APP/2024/1951. [Online] Available at: https://upa.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=SNUVKWCAJ2G00.

⁸ SSEN Transmission, 2024. Alyth to Tealing OHL 400kV Upgrade (Reconductoring) application for s37 consent. [Online] Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005167 (submitted November 2024).

⁹ SSEN Transmission, 2024. Tealing to Westfield OHL 400kV Upgrade (Reconductoring) application for s37 consent. [Online] Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005168. (submitted November 2024).

¹⁰ SSEN Transmission, August 2024. LT455 Proposed Emmock and Tealing Overhead Line Tie-ins – Screening Request. [Online] Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005204.

¹¹ HM Government, 2022. British Energy Security Strategy. [Online] Available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-energy-security-strategy/british-energy-security-strategy.



• Approved by Ofgem: Britain's independent energy regulator, Ofgem, granted approval for the *Pathway to 2030 HND* projects in December 2022¹² as part of its strategy for accelerated network upgrades.

1.4 The Section 37 Application

- 1.4.1 The application seeks Consent under Section 37 of the *Electricity Act 1989* to install, operate and keep installed approximately 105.2 km of new double circuit 400 kV OHL, supported by steel towers, between Kintore Substation in Aberdeenshire and a substation located near to Tealing in Angus, Scotland. Consent to install, operate and keep installed is also sought for the permanent realignment and reconductoring of other existing OHLs comprising approximately 10.91 km and associated temporary diversions comprising approximately 2.93 km to enable the construction of the Proposed Development as described in further detail in **Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description**.
- 1.4.2 In total, the Proposed Development would comprise approximately 119.04 km of OHL. An overview of the Proposed Development¹³ is shown in **Volume 3**, **Figures** on **Figure 1.1**: **Overview of the Proposed Development**.
- 1.4.3 An EIA has been undertaken for the Proposed Development in accordance with the EIA Regulations to assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment. The findings of the EIA are presented in this EIAR including the measures which would be taken to avoid, reduce, and, wherever possible, offset predicted likely significant adverse effects.

1.5 Legal and Policy Context

- 1.5.1 As referenced above, Consent for the Proposed Development is sought from Scottish Ministers under Section 37 of the *Electricity Act 1989*, which is the primary legislation governing the development of electrical transmission infrastructure in Great Britain, and places statutory and licence obligations upon a transmission licence holder. Consent is also sought for development ancillary to the main OHL that is the subject of the Section 37 Consent application. Under Section 57(2) of *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997*¹⁴ (as amended), upon the granting of a Consent under Section 37 of the *Electricity Act 1989* 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 *1997 Act* is therefore being sought from the Scottish Ministers in terms of this application.
- 1.5.2 The Applicant, as a transmission licence holder, has a statutory duty under paragraph 3 of Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 "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."
- 1.5.3 Some sections of the Proposed Development cross through, or within the vicinity of, sites of European nature conservation importance, as defined by European Council Directives of 2 April 1979 on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) and of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC). The Directives were implemented in the UK by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), and those Regulations as amended remain in force. For projects requiring consent under the Electricity Act 1989, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 apply. Where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, and that plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, such sites are protected by the duties placed on competent authorities.

¹² Ofgem, 2022. *Decision on accelerating onshore electricity transmission investment*. [Online] Available at: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/decision/decision-accelerating-onshore-electricity-transmission-investment.

¹³ Given the length of the Proposed Development, the Proposed Alignment has been split into six defined geographical 'sections' (Sections A to F). This is discussed further in **Section 1.7** of this Chapter.

¹⁴ Scottish Government, 1997. *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997*. [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents



Those duties include the requirement to make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives and, in general terms, to agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not affect the integrity of the site¹⁵, or where adverse effects exist and there are no alternative solutions, it be justified for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and compensatory measures can be secured¹⁶.

1.5.4 Information is provided in this EIAR to assist the competent authority in carrying out an appropriate assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on European sites which are protected under the terms of the *Habitats Regulations* in **Volume 5**, **Appendix 12.3: Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA)**.

1.6 The Need for EIA

- 1.6.1 The Proposed Development is classified as Schedule 1 development under the *EIA Regulations* by virtue of it being classed as "construction of overhead electrical power lines with a voltage of 220 kilovolts or more and a length of more than 15 kilometres" 17.
- 1.6.2 As such, this automatically triggers the requirement for an application for development consent to be supported by an EIAR given that the Proposed Development is proposed to operate at a voltage of 400 kV and is approximately 105.2 km in length. The EIAR provides environmental information in accordance with Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations.
- 1.6.3 A request for a Scoping Opinion was made to the Scottish Ministers under Regulation 12 of the *EIA Regulations* in September 2024. A Scoping Report¹⁸ was submitted to support the request, which sought input from statutory and non-statutory consultees regarding the information to be provided within this EIAR (ECU Reference: ECU00005225).
- 1.6.4 The Scoping Opinion¹⁹ of the Scottish Ministers was issued in December 2024 confirming the scope of the EIA. Further details are provided in **Volume 1**, **Chapter 6**: **Scope and Consultation**, and associated appendices.

1.7 EIAR Structure

- 1.7.1 Due to the length of the Proposed Development, the Proposed Alignment for the new 400 kV OHL has been split into six defined 'Sections' to more easily describe the Proposed Development and baseline environmental factors. These 'Sections', which were also adopted throughout the routeing and alignment selection stages of the Proposed Development (see **Volume 1, Chapter 4: Alternatives and the Routeing Process**) are broadly defined as follows:
 - Section A: Emmock 400 kV substation to Forfar;
 - Section B: Forfar to Brechin;
 - Section C: Brechin to Laurencekirk;
 - Section D: Laurencekirk to Hurlie 400 kV substation;
 - Section E: Hurlie 400 kV substation to River Dee; and
 - Section F: north of the River Dee to Kintore Substation.

¹⁵ The integrity of a site can be defined as "the coherence of all its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations for which it was classified". Scottish Government, 2020. Scottish Executive Circular 6/1995: EIR release. [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-201900008726/.

¹⁶ UK Government, 2017. *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*. [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/regulation/70/2017-11-30.

¹⁷ Scottish Government, 2022. Electricity Act 1989 - Sections 36 and 37: applications guidance. [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/pages/4/.

¹⁸ SSEN Transmission, September 2024. *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report – Kintore to Tealing 400 kV Overhead Line*. [Online] Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005225.

¹⁹ Energy Consents Unit, December 2024. *Scoping Opinion on behalf of Scottish Ministers under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.* [Online] Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00005225.



- 1.7.2 An overview of the length of the Proposed Development, separated into the geographical sections referred to above, is shown on **Figure 1.1: Overview of the Proposed Development**. Further detail describing each geographical section is detailed in **Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description**.
- 1.7.3 This EIAR consists of the following volumes:
 - Volume 1, Main Text;
 - Volume 2, Technical Chapters;
 - Volume 3, Figures;
 - Volume 4, Visualisations;
 - Volume 5, Appendices (to support each of the chapters in Volumes 1 and 2 of the EIAR where required);
 - Volume 6, Confidential Documents; and
 - Non-Technical Summary.
- 1.7.4 **Volume 1, Main Text** provides the main text of the EIAR and consists of the following introductory chapters (**Chapters 1-6**):
 - Chapter 1: Introduction and Background (this Chapter) provides an introduction to the Proposed Development, the need for an EIAR and sets out the structure of the report;
 - Chapter 2: Established Need for the Proposed Development sets out the needs case and requirement for the Proposed Development;
 - Chapter 3: Project Description contains a more detailed description of the Proposed Development;
 - Chapter 4: Alternatives and the Routeing Process describes the routeing process, including the corridor, route and alignment selection stages and the consideration of alternatives;
 - Chapter 5: EIA Process and Methodology presents the assessment methodology applied in the evaluation of environmental effects and the approach to mitigation; and
 - Chapter 6: Scope and Consultation sets out the Scoping process and further consultation undertaken to determine the scope of the EIAR.
- 1.7.5 Volume 2, Technical Chapters comprises of a series of technical topic-based chapters (Chapters 7-15):
 - Chapter 7: Land Use and Prime Agricultural Land presents a section-by-section general overview of the land
 use baseline of the Proposed Development and presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant
 effects of the Proposed Development on prime agricultural land, recreational airfields and recreational fishing;
 - Chapter 8: Forestry presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on forestry;
 - Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Amenity presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant
 effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors and includes a Residential Visual
 Amenity Assessment (RVAA);
 - Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage;
 - **Chapter 11: Ecology** presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on ecology, including habitats and protected species;
 - Chapter 12: Ornithology presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on ornithological receptors;
 - Chapter 13: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the water environment and geological resources including peat;
 - Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the traffic and transport network and its users; and



- Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration presents the findings of the assessment of the likely significant noise and vibration effects of the Proposed Development on sensitive receptors.
- 1.7.6 **Volume 2, Technical Chapters** also contains the following chapters:
 - Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects presents a summary of the in-combination effects resulting from the Proposed Development and any reasonably foreseeable developments (as presented in Volume 2, Chapters 7-15). This chapter also provides a qualitative assessment of the potential for interactive effects;
 - Chapter 17: Schedule of Mitigation collates the mitigation measures and environmental management
 commitments which are presented in each of the technical chapters in Volume 2, Chapters 7-16 of this EIAR;
 and
 - Chapter 18: Summary of Effects presents a summary of the environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development, identified within Volume 2, Chapters 7-16 of this EIAR.
- 1.7.7 **Volume 3, Figures** contains supporting figures which are referred to in **Volume 1, Main Text** and **Volume 2, Technical Chapters** of the EIAR.
- 1.7.8 Volume 4a-e, Visualisations (Volume 4a, Volume 4b and Volume 4c are visualisations related to Volume 2, Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Amenity and Volume 4d and Volume 4e are visualisations related to Volume 2, Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage) comprises photomontages and wireline visualisations of the Proposed Development from a series of viewpoints throughout the length of the Proposed Development that have been prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance (see Volume 5, Appendix 9.5: LVIA and Visualisations Methodology) and in consultation with Angus Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS).
- 1.7.9 Volume 5, Appendices comprises supporting appendices to Volume 1, Main Text and Volume 2, Technical Chapters of the EIAR. Appendices include further detailed reporting or information to support the EIAR and technical assessments contained therein. Other notable appendices include Volume 5, Appendix 12.3: Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) where the Proposed Development intersects with, or crosses within the vicinity of, sites of European nature conservation importance.
- 1.7.10 **Volume 6, Confidential Documents** contains appendices and figures of a confidential nature. This volume contains appendices and figures of a confidential nature that will not be available in the public domain, this volume will be provided to relevant statutory consultees.
- 1.7.11 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.
- 1.7.12 Other supporting documents submitted as part of the Section 37 application, but separate to the EIAR include:
 - a Planning Statement which considers the compatibility of the Proposed Development in the context of existing and emerging development plan and national energy and planning policies;
 - an Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) Compliance Report which includes analyses undertaken by the SSEN
 Transmission engineering team, and which demonstrates EMFs would be below the International Commission
 on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guideline levels²⁰;
 - a **Socio-Economic Report** which provides information relating to wider socio-economic (including tourism) impacts to be considered in relation to wider policy, as part of the determination process;
 - a completed Marine Directorate Science Evidence Data and Digital (MD-SEDD) Checklist as requested in the Scoping Opinion; and
 - A Pre-Application Consultation Report (PAC Report) which sets out what has been done in relation to preapplication consultation with the public to accord with the guidance¹⁷.

²⁰ ICNIRP, 1998. *Guidelines for limiting exposure to time-varying electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields (up to 300 GHz).* [Online] Available at: https://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPemfgdl.pdf.

1.8 Notifications

- 1.8.1 In accordance with the Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990, and Regulation 14 of the EIA Regulations, the Section 37 application will be advertised in the national newspaper, the Edinburgh Gazette, as well as local newspapers.
- 1.8.2 Notice of the Section 37 application, including this EIAR and associated documents and figures, will be available for viewing at the public locations in **Table 1.1: EIAR Viewing Locations**.
- 1.8.3 An electronic version is available online at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/kintore-tealing-400kv-ohl-connection/.
- 1.8.4 This EIAR is available in other formats if required. For details, including costs, contact:

Via email to: tkup@sse.com

OR

By writing to:

For the Attention of Kintore to Tealing Community Liaison Manager

SSEN Transmission

200 Dunkeld Road

Perth

PH1 3GH

Table 1.1: EIAR Viewing Locations

Location	Opening Hours	Address
Angus Council, Angus House	Monday to Friday: 8am - 5pm	Orchardbank Business Park Orchardbank Forfar Angus DD8 1AN
Culter Library	Monday: 1pm-7pm Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm Saturday: 10am - 1pm	189 North Deeside Road Peterculter Aberdeen AB14 0UJ
Fintry Library	Monday: 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 7pm Tuesday: 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 5.30pm Wednesday:10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5.30pm Thursday: 9am - 1pm Friday: 9am—1pm & 2pm - 5.30pm	1 Findcastle Street Dundee DD4 9EW
Inverurie Library	Tuesday: 8.45am - 5.15pm Wednesday: 8.45am - 5.15pm Thursday: 8.30am - 5.30pm Saturday: 10am - 2pm	Inverurie Town Hall Market Place Inverurie AB51 3SN
Mearns Community Library	Monday: 2pm - 6pm Wednesday: 10am - 3pm Thursday: 2pm - 6pm Saturday:10am – 12pm	Mearns Community Campus Aberdeen Road Laurencekirk AB30 1ZJ
Stonehaven Library	Tuesday: 9am - 6pm Wednesday: 9am - 5pm Friday: 9am - 5pm Saturday: 10am - 2pm	Evan Street Stonehaven AB39 2ET
Westhill Library	Tuesday:10am - 7pm	Westhill Primary School



Location	Opening Hours	Address
	Wednesday: 10am - 7pm	Westhill Drive
	Thursday:10 am - 6pm	Westhill
	Saturday: 9am - 1pm	AB32 6FY