Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION

SSEN Transmission
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12 June 2025

Dear Glengarry Community Council,

Please find below our response to the questions raised in relation to the current Loch Fearna PSH Connection Routeing consultation. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any further information on this or any other SSEN Transmission project in the area.

Best wishes,

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Glengarry Community Council
Questions for SSE at meeting on 12th May 2025

1. Are SSE assuming Loch Fearna is going to be consented?

SSEN Transmission has no access to any information on the status of planning applications other than what is publicly made available by planning authorities. As the connection supplier we have to work on the assumption that Loch Fearna will be consented and consider it a live project.

2. Why the rush? The Loch Fearna plans suggest it will be 10 years until completion?

As Transmission Operator for the north of Scotland, we enable electricity generators in this region to connect to the transmission system by providing their connections which allow the electricity generated to be transported to areas of demand.

When applying for a connection to the Transmission network, the developer requests a connection date, and our project teams then work to create a programme that will ensure we can meet that contracted delivery date.

To design, develop, consent and construct a connection such as Loch Fearna takes several years, and as such we're engaging at an early stage of development to ensure we can take full advantage of stakeholder feedback, allowing it to shape our proposals where appropriate.

Our current programme wouldn't see construction start until 2030**,** with completion in 2032.

3. Will the connection be another and separate pylon/power line?

Yes. The existing power line that runs through the glen is the Fort Augustus - Skye line which is coming to the end of its operational life. We've applied for and received consent to replace the existing line (Skye Reinforcement Project) and will remove the existing Skye line once the new one is built.

The Loch Fearna PSH Connection will be a new additional line with taller towers (400kV) than those which would be used for the Skye rebuild (132kV).

Should both projects go ahead as proposed, there would be 2 transmission overhead lines running through the glen, the replacement Skye line and the Loch Fearna connection line.

4. What will it look like?

The proposed technology solution for the Loch Fearna PSH connection project would be a 400kV double circuit steel lattice overhead line. This is the highest voltage on our network.

The typical height for the tower suite we're proposing , is approx. 60 m on average, although tower heights may vary where topography dictates. The average span length between towers would be approx. 350 m.

For the public consultation, we published a tower height comparison handout, to illustrate how the new line would compare in size to the towers which would be used for the Skye Reinforcement project.

The proposed steel lattice towers would support six conductors on cross arms (three on each side) and an earth wire between the peaks. The below shows a photograph of a typical 400kV steel lattice tower.

5. Has the Skye Reinforcement line been agreed by ECU and is this now 'set'?

The Skye Reinforcement Project has now received ECU consent (as of Monday 09 July). Details on the consent can be found on the Energy Consent Unit's website:
Scottish Government - Energy Consents Unit – Application Details (Documents -> Determinations)

6. How big are the Skye Reinforcement line pylons?

The towers on the Skye Reinforcement line will be approximately 28-33 meters in height. (see answer to Question 7 for further details)

7. How does this compare to what is now being proposed and what already exists?

For the Skye Reinforcement project, we're proposing to use the same type of towers for the rebuild of the existing overhead line. The towers will be comparable in height and average 0.6m higher and 1.1m wider.

For the proposed Loch Fearna PSH Connection the typical height for the tower suite we're proposing, is approx. 60 m on average. These towers are comparable to those installed on the Beauly-Denny powerline along the A9.

8. How much of this proposal will be underground? Where?

The overall length of the Loch Fearna PSH connection is approximately 25.5km. We are currently contracted to deliver approximately 24.5km of overhead line and 1km of underground cable. The 1km of underground cable will be on the approach to Loch Lundie Substation.

9. Does it rely on the SAR and the 'new Whitebridge'?

Can you please clarify what "SAR" is referring to?

The Loch Fearna PSH Connection does not currently rely on the 'new Whitebridge' as we are proposing to follow the Skye Reinforcement line as much as possible. However, this may change if the feedback from the public determines that a route to the South of Loch Garry is preferred.

10. How many HGV and other vehicle movements will there be? Where?

For the Loch Fearna PSH Connection it is too early in the development process to say. We'll have a better indication of this by the time we come to submit a consent application for the project to the ECU and within this, our Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will include information relating to traffic movements.

Once a primary contractor is appointed, they'll then create a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) which will be agreed with The Highland Council, and we'll look to ensure the local community is engaged on the CTMP. We also continue to play an active part in the Glengarry Community Led Liaison Group.

The CTMP will also depend on access routes which are not known at this early stage whilst the project is still at routeing assessment stage.

11. What is the total number of projected HGV and other vehicle movements that SSER/N/T/X (over which years) for all projects in Glengarry and surrounds?

Due to the project being in the early stages of development it is too early to say, however we fully recognise the concerns regarding cumulative traffic movements, and our Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will consider cumulative traffic impacts from other combined local developments, and will be publicly available. We will also continue to actively support the work of the Glengarry Community Liaison Group which we understand will look to assess and support minimising impact of cumulative traffic impacts.

12. How much will it add to my electricity bill?

We are closely regulated by the independent energy regulator, Ofgem, for the work we do in constructing, operating, and maintaining the transmission network in the north of Scotland. The costs of constructing, operating, and maintaining the transmission network are shared between all those using the transmission system, including generation developers and electricity consumers.

Transmission network associated costs represent a small fraction of the average electricity bill, therefore, price per household on an individual project such as this would be a very small part of the overall transmission network cost.

It is also worth noting that the UK Government has proposed that people living near new transmission infrastructure across Great Britain will get money off their energy bills, as part of its Plan for Change for clean power by 2030.

Under powers in the UK Government's proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill, households within 500 metres of new electricity transmission infrastructure will get electricity bill discounts of up to £2,500 over 10 years.

Details of how and when the bill discount scheme will be implemented are currently under development by the UK Government but are expected to be in place from 2026. More information can be found here.

13. What other projects are in the pipeline and are they all now accounted for?

The other projects in the locale currently in our (SSEN Transmission) pipeline of works are:

- **Skye Reinforcement** (now consented)
- **The Quoich Switching Station Project** - however this has undergone an extensive review and has now been fully integrated into the Skye Reinforcement project. We are working on a solution where the Quoich Switching Station will become redundant. In this scenario the replacement overhead line from the Quoich Power Station will directly link into the new proposed Skye overhead line.
- **Coire Glas Connection & proposed Loch Lundie Substation:** This project covers the connection of the Coire Glas PSH to the grid and includes the new proposed Loch Lundie Substation near Loch Lundie.
- **Proposed Beinn Bheag Windfarm:** SSEN Transmission have not received a connection request for this project yet.

We know that local stakeholders are keen to understand the full extent of renewable developments being proposed in their area. Applications to connect to the transmission network in our license

area are made to the National Energy System Operator (NESO) and undergo a lengthy process of assessment before we begin to develop a network connection for those developments.

We aim to be transparent about renewable developments looking to connect to our network but are not permitted to disclose any details until they are in the public domain. A list of projects that hold contracts for Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) with the NESO is available from their website: Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) register | National Energy System Operator
The Highland Council has also released their own Web map showing the renewable energy projects in their planning system: Major Energy Related Planning map

We would always alert the Community to any new connection requests as soon as the information is in the public domain. Please note that any new generation projects would require either a transmission or distribution connection (usually depending on output).

14. How much bigger will the Loch Lundie site have to be to accommodate this?

No bigger. The substation has been designed with space provision for future renewable generation in the area to connect into. The Pre-Application Consultation Booklet for Loch Lundie from February 2025 explained that we had recently received a Transmission Owners Connection Agreement for Loch Fearna PSH, which would be developed to connect into Loch Lundie substation in 2032.

15. How much did SSEN/T contribute to the Timber Transport Scheme C1144 improvements?

SSEN contributed £100,000 towards the STTS scheme on the C1144.

16. Why are an extra 31 bellmouths required?

The extra bellmouths required for the Skye Reinforcement Project are to facilitate safe access for construction traffic from the public road to the new overhead line. The majority of these accesses are temporary and will be removed following construction. A map of the proposed access tracks/bellmouths in the Glengarry locality can be found in the ECU application documentation. These are currently being reviewed by our contractors and final locations/numbers will be communicated.

17. Where will the substation and connection to serve the Loch Fearna PSH main camp be situated?

No contractor has been appointed for the Loch Fearna PSH Connection yet and therefore we are unable to confirm any potential camp locations. Before planning permission for any such camp was sought, we would engage early in order to work closely with the community and maximise potential benefits.

Loch Lundie Substation – May I please supply this info separately as I am awaiting input from the Loch Lundie Substation project team on this point.

18. Have RES submitted a Transmission Owners Connection Agreement in respect of the Beinn Bheag Windfarm?

Whilst RES have made initial contact with SSEN Transmission, we have not yet received a connection request.

19. Is it intended to increase the weight limit on the Quoich Bridge?

At this point in time there's no such intention and the Skye Reinforcement Project is therefore proposing to use the 'loop access track' in order to divert from the Quoich Bridge.

20. How will the assurances given in respect of the Knoydart National Scenic Area be upheld under the new proposals?

Our approach to routeing overhead lines is to seek to minimise the impacts of new infrastructure on both the environment (including designated areas including National Scenic Areas, wildlife, habitats, cultural heritage and biodiversity) and on communities who live, work and spend time in these areas. We seek to find the best balance between these whilst also ensuring the proposal is technically feasible and economically viable. More detail on the Routeing Process - Overhead Lines cand be found here.