

# Beauly Community Council Public Meeting Proposed Fanellan Project

**Questions & Answers** 

June 2025



# Beauly Community Council Public Meeting 26th May 2025

The following provides answers to the questions put to members of SSEN Transmission Fanellan project team before and during the Beauly Community Council public meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

# **Fanellan Sub Station questions from Beauly Community Council**

1. How much of the HGV traffic will come through Beauly – before and after the Black Bridge replacement?

## Phase 1: Before construction of Black Bridge.

Peak daily trips for Phase 1 are expected to happen for a period of 1 month. The current forecast flows are:

- 68 HGV daily movements.
- 44 non-HGV movements.
- 112 total daily movements.
- HGV movements are expected to be one full HGV delivery (to and from site) every 20 minutes, which means one HGV movement (in any direction) every 10 minutes. This is a more complete explanation than the original slide as we note HGV movement in any direction. The slide pack has been updated accordingly.
- Around 75% of HGV movements are expected from the A9 (Tore) access route (via Beauly) and 25% of HGV movements from Inverness via the A862.

### Phase 2: After replacement of Black Bridge.

Peak daily trips for Phase 2 are also expected to happen for a period of 1 month. The current forecast flows are:

- 292 HGV daily movements.
- 104 non-HGV movements
- 396 total daily movements.
- HGV movements are expected to be one full HGV delivery (to and from site) every four minutes, which means one HGV movement (in any direction) every 2 minutes. This is a more complete explanation than the original side as we note HGV movement in any direction. The slide pack has been updated accordingly.

• Around 75% of HGV movements are expected from the A9 (Tore) access route (via Beauly) and 25% of HGV movements from Inverness via the A862.

The worst-case peak vehicle movements in the Fanellan Planning application include the total potential vehicle movements along both routes. We anticipate around 75% HGV and 50% car/LGV movements from the north (Tore, A9). The status of Black Bridge does not alter the traffic flows through Beauly. Once Black Bridge is in use, Beauly will still be part of the transport route.

2. Can you give us a better idea of the volumes of traffic on a day to day/week to week basis, rather than just the averages talked about in the traffic impact assessment?

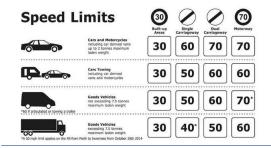
Due to the changing nature of construction, weather and materials availability this level of detail will not be known until at times the week before works are due to start if the project is consented.

3. What counts as an HGV? Can you give us examples of the types of vehicles?

The diagram shows the HGV definition in relation to traffic through Beauly, with the breakdown of the vehicle types. This specification is modelled on, and which Nationwide Data Collection is used when collecting the traffic data for the proposed Fanellan Hub project. Regarding terminology used in the EIA, HGV is ART 3 to DRT classes of vehicles, and anything under ART 3 is considered as non-HGV traffic and referred to as Car / LGV. For the avoidance of doubt, medium types (TB2, TB3 and T4) are included within the Car / LGV total and not within HGV.

# **Traffic & Transport - Overview**

- EIA transport assessment classes HGV as ART3 and above
  - · As per table on right
- · General Road use restrictions on speed limits in table below
- · Vehicles over 7.5t restricted to 40mph on single carriageways
- 30mph or lower if signed in built up areas
- Reducing site traffic below Beauly 20mph limit could increase congestion and pollution due to increase time in area



Axles	Groups	Description	Class		Parameters	Dominant Vehicle	Aggregate
2	1 or 2	Very Short - Bicycle or Motorcycle	мс	a	d(1)<1.7m & axles=2		
2	1 or 2	Short - Sedan, Wagon, 4WD, Utility, Light Van	SV	2	d(1)>=1.7m, d(1)<=3.2m & axles=2	-	
3, 4 or 5	3	Short Towing - Trailer, Caravan, Boat, etc.	SVT	3	groups=3, d[1]>=2.1m, d[1]<=3.2m, d[2]>=2.1m & coles=3,4,5		1 (Ught)
2	2	Two code truck or Bus	TB2	4	d(1)>3.2m & axles=2		
3	2	Three axle truck or Bus	TB3	5	axles=3 & groups=2		
>3	2	Four axie truck	T4	6	axles>3 & groups=2	-	2 (Medium)
3	3	Three axle articulated vehicle or Rigid vehicle and trailer	ART3	7	d(1)>3.2m, cxles=3 & groups=3	-	
4	>2	Four oxle articulated vehicle or Rigid vehicle and trailer	ART4	8	d 2 <2.1m or d 1 <2.1m or d 1 >3.2m axles = 4 & groups>2	Q 00	
5	>2	Five ade articulated vehicle or Rigid vehicle and trailer	ART5	9	d 2 <2.1m or d 1 <2.1m or d 1 >3.2m oxies=5 & groups>2	000 00	
>=6	>2	Six (or more) axle articulated vehicle or Rigid vehicle and trailer	ART6	10	oxies=6 & groups>2 or axies>6 & groups=3	000 000	
>6	4	8-Double or Heavy truck and trailer	BD	11	groups=4 & axles>6		
>6	>=5	Double or triple road froin or Heavy truck and two (or more) trailers	DRT	12	groups>≈5 & codes>6	<del></del>	3 (Heavy)

11 Document title



4. Will there be advance notice of really busy times of vehicle movements? How will that be communicated?

There will be regular updates sent out during the construction period via a variety of different methods, such as contact via Community Councils for sharing on their platforms, via the **project distribution list** which we find to be most effective. We would encourage all interested parties to register for Project Updates via the project webpage New Fanellan 400kV substation and Converter Station - SSEN Transmission or by emailing the Community Liaison Manager at: fanellanengagement@sse.com with their contact email address.

5. Concern about the vibration from the roads, particularly as the village lies on a clay bed. What can you do to limit the noise?

Reference in Section 14.20.4 and 5 of the Noise chapter 14 discusses vibration from traffic.

As part of the Construction Traffic Management Plan, which will be developed in discussion with the Community Council, we will have a Code of Conduct for drivers to ensure that speed limits are observed, and courteous driving is employed. The speed limit through Beauly is 20mph, at which speed traffic noise will be minimal.

However, a voluntary reduction in speed for construction traffic can be enforced if this proves desirable.

6. Will you do building condition surveys before and after the work and remedy any damage done to the buildings on the main road, particularly the listed buildings?

There are no plans to conduct pre- and post-work building condition surveys.

7. Parents of children at the primary school are particularly worried about the impact on their children – small children are more susceptible to respiratory problems resulting from air pollution – what will you do to minimise it.

The outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) suggests restrictions to avoid peak periods during the day, including local school start and finishing times.

9. If local people get jobs there, how will they get to work? Could you put on a local bus for the villages, possibly an electric bus? Will you bus the workers to the site to reduce the amount of traffic?

We are investigating the use of electric vehicles to make up a proportion of the site vehicle fleet (4x4s, Vans, minibuses). We are also looking into whether electric buses can be available for running workers to site. The use of electric HGVs, buses and electric delivery vehicles would be limited due to numbers of these within the supply chain and delivery distances not always making it a viable option.

We are investigating provision of a bus service to bring workers to site and alleviate traffic movements. The bus routes would be determined by where the workers are located, in accordance with the accommodation strategy.

We are also investigating provision of park and ride schemes for local workers. These would be integrated into the CTMP. Once developed, we intend to further refine the scheme in conjunction with The Highland Council and Community Councils to identify what useful service can be made available to the public at times of low worker use (e.g. during the middle of the day and early evening)

10. With all these different projects running at the same time and different contractors and sub-contractors, how will we be able to tell who to report poor driving to?

This can be discussed with the Community Council as part of the Construction Traffic Management Plan and driver's Code of Conduct. We intend there to be a system of reporting driver behaviour to the site management for onward action. It will be possible to provide identification numbers for the main contractor and SSEN vehicles and buses although we have no control over the identification of delivery vehicles other than by livery and number plate. The Principal Contractor will have a project-designated Community Liaison Manager to work alongside the SSEN T Community Liaison Manager. Contact details will be widely shared should any such problems arise.

11. Will there be somebody available immediately to manage traffic problems – a traffic warden essentially? All the time, or peak movement time?

Our understanding is that the community are looking for someone to direct traffic – which a Traffic Warden would not do so on this basis we would not employ a Traffic Warden, nor would we typically employ a member of staff to direct traffic. We will liaise with the Community Council on the development of the Construction Traffic Management Plan with the full intention of preventing any problems arising and will constantly monitor traffic impacts to ensure these are managed with our delivery partners.

12. Can you widen the pavements at either end of the village – out to Muir of Ord and along to the Lovat Bridge or on the other side of the trees/or road?

We are committed to improving connectivity in the area by providing Active Travel schemes using new cycle paths. This is to ensure the safety of vulnerable road users and provide worker wellbeing while providing a long-term legacy for the communities in terms of Active Travel, connectivity, and tourism.

A significant plan is being developed, and feasibility studies and land reviews are underway. We are looking at the area described as part of the overall review and will be taking it into account.

13.Can you have a speed reduction on HGVs

HGVs are held to the same speed limits as other road traffic within built-up areas e.g. 20/30mph dependent on restrictions in place. A voluntary reduction in speed can be discussed as part of the Construction Traffic Management Plan. There may however be disbenefits to this, which should be considered, such as increasing journey times for other traffic through Beauly.

14.Can you create a lorry park where HGVs can pull over if traffic gets too busy, e.g. when the Kessock Bridge is shut?

In the event of the Kessock Bridge being shut traffic would move to use the A862 to and from Inverness along the southern edge of Beauly Firth where road restrictions allow.

Vehicles that are not able to use the southern road would be retained on site unless alternative diversion routes were available to them. This process has been exercised several times with the current works at Beauly substation during bridge closures in the recent past.

15 - 16. Have you been in contact with Cromarty Firth Port Authority about their coaches during the summer – they are already swamping the village on occasions and will cause even more chaos with the additional traffic?
Can you create a coach park at the bottom end of the village (near Catholic Church), so buses drop people there rather than on the main road in the middle of the square?

We are investigating sites that might be suitable for a tourist coach park to alleviate parking and improve the flow of traffic which might be done in a way to leave a useful long-term benefit to tourism. We intend to liaise further with the Community Council on this matter.

17 - 19 Is there going to be a workers' camp nearby? If so, where, and how many workers. Will our services be swamped by people from a workers' camp nearby? What are arrangements for doctors, nurses etc – will you have people on the site, or will they be looking for appointments at the local surgeries?

Our intention is that there will be a workers' village in the Muir of Ord / Conon Bridge area, depending on the appropriate permissions, and in consultation with The Highland Council and Community Councils. This will be done in accordance with our accommodation strategy, which considers the long-term housing needs for the area and will create a legacy for housing. The welfare facilities from the village will be left as a legacy benefit of the community (and will be available to the community to some extent during the construction). This will leave the community with a shop, day care centre, Gym Studio and MUGA.

In order not to be a burden to existing healthcare services, as part of the overall accommodation plan, workers will have access to their own healthcare provision and a clinic room will be available with services from a healthcare provider.

20.There's not a lot for people to do at night in Beauly/Muir of Ord and the surrounding villages – what are all these construction workers going to do? When they built the hydro dams, they built a multi-purpose hall which was used for entertainment purposes to keep the workers occupied – will we get something similar?

The workers' village will be provided with ample facilities to ensure worker wellbeing including a cinema, hobby room, gym, shop, most of which will be handed over as permanent facilities to the community. As part of the wider accommodation plan, there will be another MUGA and potential improvements to sports and club facilities identified as having a significant role in ensuring worker wellbeing while leaving a community legacy.

21. Will our cafes and takeaways be swamped at lunchtimes and the square overwhelmed with traffic

To minimise traffic and parking, the current plan is for workers to be bussed directly to site. However, we are conscious that we also want the local communities and businesses to reap the benefits from the additional footfall from the proposed project. We would intend to work with local businesses on deliveries / collection of food, confectionary and drinks for provision to site. We would also welcome pop-up food type services up at the site. If consent is given, we will be holding a "Meet the Buyer" event to provide opportunities for a range of local businesses.

22. You've mentioned creating "legacy" housing – will any of it be in Beauly? If so, will it just be for workers on your projects or will it be available for general rent/buy?

As part of the wider accommodation plan all proposed housing developments can be considered where the developer is likely to gain consent. To maximise the legacy benefit to the area and the North of Scotland in general, SSEN is targeting those developments where the developer has been able to ensure that the most beneficial and appropriate housing model is in place (e.g. mid-market rent), to ensure the housing mix is appropriate for the community needs where the development is located.

### 23. Hours of traffic movements

The CTMP is subject to agreement with The Highland Council. As stated in the in the Plan found within Volume 4, Appendix 12.1: Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan, the proposed construction traffic HGV movement hours are expected to be:

Monday to Friday: 08:00 - 19:00; and

Saturday: 08:00 – 13:00.

However, it is expected that movement of smaller vehicles (Car / LGVs would be out with this time frame).

To align with the Proposed Development Site working hours, it is proposed that Car / LGV movements (not including workforce movements) are expected to be between Monday to Sunday: 07:00 – 19:00.

Therefore, the baseline traffic flows have had factors (derived from DfT's TRA0308) applied to convert the 24-hour AADF to comparable 11-hour flows for HGV traffic and for 12-hour flows to compare the car /LGV traffic.

The movements of Staff and Workforce are expected to take place before 07:00 and after 19:00 and are therefore outside the proposed construction working hours. It is anticipated that the Principal Contractor will enforce efforts to reduce impact on local receptors during staff and workforce movement hours.

24. How many of these really big bits of kit are there – the ones that require you to halt the traffic while you move them? Will you move them at weekends or during the night?

For the Transformers and Converters which fall under the classification of abnormal indivisible loads (AIL), these are subject to a road movement order from the road's authority. The approval process is rigorous and ensures that all road infrastructure and stakeholders are considered and will includes requirements on the day and time considering local traffic and road conditions, events etc. We have 8 AIL's required for the project, and these are scheduled to take place in 2029 once the appropriate orders are in place.

Abnormal Indivisible Loads will be subject to individual permit approval; separate notification of these deliveries will be provided, and times and dates may differ based on permit conditions.

25. Will there be a local liaison group during the construction period?

Yes, that is our intention. We are currently in the process of working with local ward councillors and members of Community Councils across the region. We are also hoping to re-establish the Beauly Community Liaison Group. Ideally this would be re-established during the planning determination phase.

26. When is work likely to start and how long will it take to build in total?

This is dependent on if, and when we receive planning permission and what planning conditions are assigned by The Highland Council which we need to close out prior to construction. The construction programme is for three years with a further two years to commission the new substation and reach full energisation currently 2030.

27. Does the traffic impact assessment include all the other projects operating at once? Can you stagger all the project, so everything isn't happening at once?

Reference - 12.8 in Traffic Chapter of EIA Projects being delivered by SSEN Transmission this will provide an opportunity for construction activities to be coordinated to minimise the effects generated by construction traffic.

We recognise that a coordinated approach to traffic movements for our projects and neighbouring development schemes will be essential to limiting impacts and any updated assessments will be communicated should there be changes to initial assumptions.

We also understand and value the significance of local events such as The Black Isle Show, Highland Cross and Belladrum and are committed to working with the local community to explore options to minimise the overall impact of traffic movements on these occasions. We have asked our Contractor to consider these events in the detailed CTMP they will produce.

28.We're concerned about impact on the Priory. There's been a recent issue with Priory leaning to one side, following some work, has there been discussion with Historic Environment Scotland?

Historic Environment Scotland provided advice at pre-application and are a Statutory Consultee to the planning application (see planning portal for their response). HES has not indicated a concern relating to the proposed development in relation to the priory at Beauly.

29. What does Beauly get out of it for putting up with all this?

Over and above the economic benefits of projects such as Fanellan bring, such as community benefit funding, job opportunities, increase in local trade and new houses, we want to understand what specific initiatives we could consider which would specifically directly benefit surrounding local areas.

We intend to work with the Community Council to ensure we understand what we could do to leave a local legacy, and we are also very open to receiving direct requests and suggestions to our project mailbox to consider.

30.We know there's a community benefit scheme been announced by UK Government for communities "hosting" infrastructure, but we will not necessarily qualify for that because our boundary is so tightly drawn. So, what do we get out of it for all the disruption?

Following publication of UK Government guidance, every transmission project with new substations or overhead line will provide a community benefit fund. Funding will consist of a **strategic fund available to all communities across our network area** and local funds for communities close to new infrastructure. If our planned projects go ahead, this funding is worth **more than £100m** to communities over the coming years.

Community Benefit Funds enable us to give back to both communities hosting our transmission network **and the wider locale** by helping fund projects that can leave a lasting, positive legacy in those areas.

Our projects will boost the economy, supporting local jobs and businesses, creating huge economic value for Scotland. Economic analysis forecast that, if delivered in full, total investment could support **17,500 jobs in Scotland**. We are working with Local Authorities to create accommodation solutions and are committed to develop 1,000 properties, which upon completion of the transmission infrastructure projects, will provide accommodation for local people, delivering a legacy.

31-33 Would SSEN pay for a land agent to represent the village in negotiations in the same way they pay for land agents to represent landowners and householders near the site?

Land Agents represent landowners and buyers when purchasing land. It is up to individual landowners and property owners to source and pay for their land agent.

34. We are a tourist centre, known for the beauty of the surrounding countryside – what do you intend to do to address the potential impact on the tourism economy?

Tourism impacts were considered and assessed within Chapter 16 of the EIA concludes that for the Fanellan project, both positive and negative impacts may be experienced. On the positive side, increased economic activity could lead to improvements in local tourism infrastructure and services, attracting more visitors in the long term. However, construction activities might temporarily disrupt tourism assets, which will require to be carefully managed. Balancing these trade-offs will be crucial to maximising the net positive impact on the tourism sector.

We are developing plans for cycle paths and connectivity in the local area and will enhance outdoor access where practical on land affected by the overhead line developments. A potential tourist bus park is being investigated for Beauly, and we are seeking to re-purpose unoccupied properties where appropriate. All of which has potential significant impact on enhancing tourism.

34.Will tourists want to visit if the area is covered in pylons and substations? What compensation will you make available for the loss of tourists and subsequent loss of jobs?

Neither Scotland's Tourism Strategy nor the Tourism Scotland 2020 Yearly Review suggests that energy projects are viewed as obstacles to tourism growth.

35. What plans are there for screening and bunding to minimise the visual impact in the local area. It is so huge we will even see it from Beauly.

The proposed development has proposed significant screening and a planting regime to mitigate the visual impact of the station from the surrounding area.

36.Are you planning to underground any sections of the lines going into the Fanellan substation?

Undergrounding sections of 400kV AC OHL would require additional infrastructure at the start and end of the UGC of approx. 100m by 100m cable sealing ends (look like substations) increasing asset number in the area. And possible increase in substations at either end of the OHLs.

The underground HVDC cable link to the Western Isles will connect into the proposed converter station under permitted development rights. This means that it is deemed permission under Town and Country Planning Order, so a formal consultation process is not required. However, we still consider it important to offer all our stakeholders the opportunity to consider our plans and provide feedback and events were recently held.

37. The River Beauly is an important part of the village, providing jobs and recreational opportunities – what measures are you putting in place to ensure there is no impact on this precious local asset?

For the proposed Fanellan project, we are in discussion with The Highland Council on the best way to secure the future of the Black Bridge crossing at Kilmorack. Any works at the bridge will be undertaken under the appropriate licences from SEPA which will require the appropriate methods to protect the watercourse. Recreational use of the designated core path will be preserved as will use of the river for fishing.

38. Are the Lovat Bridge and the railway bridge suitable for construction traffic in their current condition and do they require assessment?

We have no concerns regarding the current condition of both the Lovat and the Railway bridge. However, all possible routes to site are indeed being assessed re suitability for construction traffic as part of abnormal loads assessment and road conditions will be continuously reviewed as per best practice.

Once determined, the routes deemed most appropriate as per our abnormal loads assessment will be detailed in our Contractors Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

39. Will you engage with Beauly Fire station to ensure there isn't an impact on emergency services?

Yes. We will engage with all identified relevant third parties that could be potentially impacted by the project, including local emergency services. Through this engagement, we would look to determine any potential issues or concerns arising and agree appropriate solutions.

40. Will you consider using means such as tachographs, cameras or numbering vehicles to identify speeding vehicles?

During the Beauly Community Council meeting, we committed to working to implement a vehicle numbering system in response to a suggestion put to us. In terms of tachographs and cameras, we are open to exploring these solutions, which are currently under consideration alongside other community suggestions. Our aim would be to refine these in collaboration with the Community Council and adopt as part of the CTMP.

We are also actively considering the use of additional measures such as 'smilies' (which react in flashing lights to vehicles in relation to speed limits) and 'police scarecrows' (cardboard cut outs of police officers) regarding speed monitoring. However, agreement from the roads authority will be required for such measures and police approval regarding the scarecrows.

41. The community noted the need for improved road linings on the roads on the route to and from Beauly – especially around the Tarradale bend – is this something SSEN Transmission would do?

We will be in communication with The Highland Council regarding general requirements for maintenance and upkeep of public roads in the area, and requirements for road linings would form part off that discussion.

42. Would SSEN Transmission consider provision of a Land Agent and a traffic warden on the village`s request.

Our understanding was that the community were looking for someone to direct traffic – which a Traffic Warden would not do so on this basis we would not employ a Traffic Warden, nor would we typically employ a member of staff to direct traffic.

However, we are keen to ensure appropriate and effective solutions to controlling contractor vehicle movements in collaboration with communities.

In relation to a village Land Agent, as discussed during the meeting this is not something we would actively consider.

43. How do SSEN Transmission intend to re-instate Archaeology pits if planning consent is not received?

It would be reinstated as agricultural land, which it was prior to investigation.

44. How can we guarantee our peak traffic numbers are actually the peak – who are we/SSEN Transmission accountable to?

We are accountable to the Local Authority, so in the case of Fanellan, The Highland Council.

45. What time of year was the road traffic assessment done?

The road traffic assessment report was compiled in the several months prior to the consent application in March 2025. This assessment was completed by third party transport specialists engaged by SSENT. The traffic data used within the assessment was collected by two methods.

• Completion of traffic counting through automatic traffic counters installed at the below locations between the 16<sup>th of</sup> April and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024. For the roads immediately adjacent to the proposed development. The location descriptions and co-ordinates as presented in the EIA documents.

Location No	Description	
1	C1106 – proposed site access	
2	C1106 – Aird Accountancy Ltd	
3	U1604 – South of C1106	
4	C1108 – South of U1604	
5	C1108 – Between C1106 & U1604	
	junctions	
6	U1604 – South of A831	
7	A831 – East of Global	
	Infrastructure	
8	A833 – Southwest of A862	

- Traffic data for the other roads assessed were sourced from the department of transport data resource at,
  - https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/#6/55.254/-6.053/basemap-regionscountpoints
  - Assessment was completed using the last available 2023 Annual Average
     Daily Flow (AADF) estimate as 2024 manual count data was not available at the time of the assessment.
  - National Road Traffic Forecast 1997 document and process was then used to estimate the future base road use to complete the assessment.

46. Human health does not appear to be part of EIA Scoping – are we (the Beauly Community) an experiment?

The Beauly Community is not an experiment, infrastructure of this size and scale is already safely operational across Scotland and the UK.

47. What is the long-term timescale – if consent is granted?

If consent is granted construction is due to start during 2026, with expected completion by end of 2030.

48. What happens if planning permission is rejected by Highland Council

We will first seek to understand the reasons for rejection, then we will consider what options we have, we might appeal, we might assess if we can re-design, we would need to consider all our options.

49. The design is AIS (air insulated sub-station) not GIS (gas insulated substation), so we are not benefiting from the corresponding space savings?

At 275kV there may be space savings, however at 400kV there is not, and we would wish to avoid GIS at this site as that would require another large building. We have not found the space savings suggested in the question, at this site.

50. How many workers will be employed at peak construction, will the local supply chain benefit, will there be opportunities for a local workforce? b) will school leavers have opportunities to do apprenticeships?

450 workers at peak and yes, opportunities will exist for the local supply chain, a local workforce, and school leavers.

In addition to these questions, we also took away suggestions and requests to consider and follow up on. Whilst they will require additional time to consider, we would like to thank those who contributed their suggestions and have logged the takeaways as follows:

- Looking at additional car parking in Beauly
- Commitment to provide regular updates with regards planning of traffic through Beauly to the Community Council as plans become further developed and commitment to collaborate with the community.
- Consideration of use of electric vehicles
- Consideration of improved road surfacing and lining
- Road safety improvements, speed cameras etc
- Consideration of the health document (following our request for this document to be shared with the SSEN T project team)