Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Black Bridge Replacement Project

Pre-Application Consultation

December 2025



ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

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The consultation events will be taking place on:

Thursday 4 December, 11.45–2.15pm
Phipps Hall, Beauly, IV4 7EH

Thursday 4 December, 4–6.45pm
Kiltarlity Village Hall, IV4 7HH



Powering change together



The time has come to further enhance Scotland's energy infrastructure, providing power for future generations as we move towards net zero.

The shift to a cleaner, more sustainable future is about more than climate change. It's about ensuring future generations have the same opportunities to thrive as we have all had.

Countries around the world are investing in their energy infrastructure to support the demands of modern economies and meet net zero targets. The UK is leading the way in building a modern, sustainable energy system for the future.

We all have a part to play

When it comes to net zero, we have to be in it together. The UK and Scottish governments have ambitious net zero targets, and we're playing our part in meeting them.

We work closely with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to connect vast renewable energy resources—harnessed by solar, wind, hydro and marine generation—to areas of demand across the country. Scotland is playing a big role in meeting this demand, exporting two thirds of power generated in our network.

But there's more to be done. By 2050, the north of Scotland is predicted to contribute over 50GW of low carbon energy to help deliver net zero. Today, our region has around 9GW of renewable generation connected to the network.

At SSEN Transmission, it is our role to build the energy system of the future.

We're investing over £20 billion into our region's energy infrastructure this decade, with the potential for this to increase to over £30 billion. This investment will deliver a network capable of meeting 20% of the UK's Clean Power 2030 target and supporting up to 37,000 jobs, 17,500 of which will be here in Scotland.

More information about the policies and documents driving the need for the energy system for the future can be found here:

Who we are

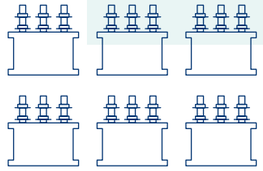
We're responsible for maintaining and investing in the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. We're part of SSE plc, one of the world's leading energy companies with a rich heritage in Scotland that dates back more than 80 years. We are also closely regulated by the GB energy regulator Ofgem, who determines how much revenue we are allowed to earn for constructing, maintaining and renovating our transmission network.

What we do

We manage the electricity network across our region which covers a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of the country's most challenging terrain. We connect renewable energy sources to our network in the north of Scotland and then transport it to where it needs to be. From underground and subsea cables and overhead lines to electricity substations, our network keeps your lights on all year round.

Working with you

We understand that the work we do can have an impact on our host communities. So we're committed to minimising our impacts and maximising all the benefits that our developments can bring to your area. We're regularly assessed by global sustainability consultancy AccountAbility for how we engage with communities. That means we provide all the information you need to know about our plans and how they will impact communities like yours. We want to hear people's views, concerns, or ideas and harness local knowledge so that our work benefits their communities: today and long into the future. You can share your views with us at: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/talk-to-us/contact-us/**



About the project

Fanellan 400kV Substation and Converter Station

In March 2025, SSEN Transmission submitted a planning application to The Highland Council for the Fanellan 400kV substation and converter station project – a key strategic development that will play a major role in supporting national energy security and clean power targets.

Find out more about the Fanellan project here:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

Should the Fanellan substation project receive planning consent, to support construction and reduce local impacts (particularly traffic movements through the village of Kiltarlity), it is proposed that the primary site access to Fanellan is via the C1106 Fanellan Road which crosses the River Beauly via the Black Bridge at Kilmorack.

Project Need - Replacement of the Black Bridge

Due to our current assessment of the condition of the Black Bridge, which already has restrictions in place to limit vehicle movements to a single lane, we are proposing to replace this bridge to ensure it can safely withstand the weight and extent of vehicle movements required to safely transport vehicles and infrastructure to and from site, whilst reducing project traffic transiting through Kiltarlity village.

For project requirements, assessments have identified a replacement as the only viable option.

A replacement will continue to ensure access for other heavy vehicles to areas of the community, and a replacement bridge, funded by SSEN Transmission, will also open traffic movements in both directions and help secure this important local transport route for current and future generations.



Project elements

Replacement of existing bridge
An in situ steel box girder bridge would be constructed, ensuring road closure times are minimised as far as practicable.

Traffic management
Will require to be undertaken whilst the replacement of the bridge is undertaken, including traffic diversions and approach road works.

Mitigation Measures
Will be required to help ensure pedestrian routes are open and alternative parking is made available throughout duration of works. Environmental mitigations such as in-water works will also be required.

Removal of existing bridge
The existing structure will be removed as part of the scope of this project.



Why we're here today:

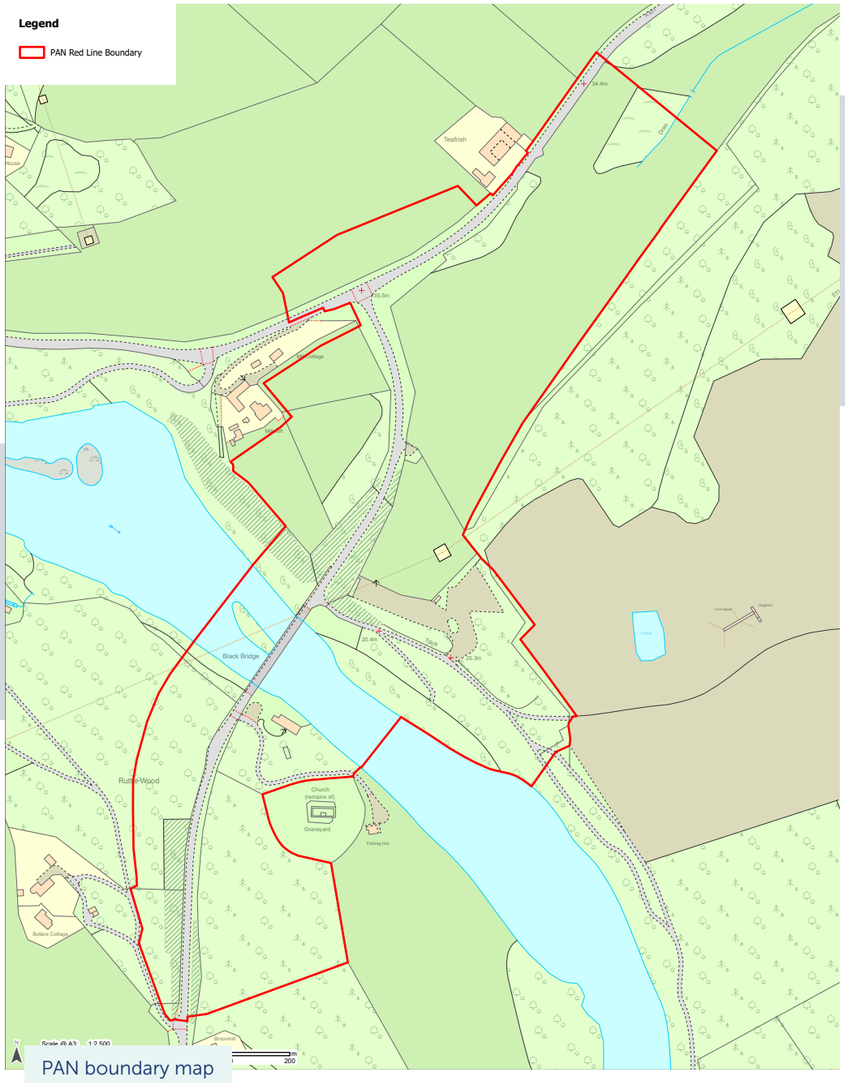
The main legislation governing the requirement for consenting of infrastructure of this type, is the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

A formal Pre-Application Consultation process (PAC) is required for all development proposals that fall within Major or National development categories, as described by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009.

As per the PAC process, a minimum of two in-person public events are required to be held in the project's local area.

This event is the first PAC event, where we will introduce our proposals for the replacement of the Black Bridge and seek initial comments regarding the design of the new bridge structure, traffic management and the mitigation measures we are currently considering. Comments made through the pre-application consultation process are not formal representations to The Highland Council. When the planning application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make formal representations to The Highland Council.

PAN boundary map



PAN boundary map

Please note: As well as the bridge replacement footprint, the PAN (Proposal of Application Notice) boundary has to include all other site requirements, including any temporary site compounds, temporary and permanent drainage, site access and on-site parking, laydown and storage areas for materials and excavated soils, maintaining public access (where required) as well as hard and soft landscaping proposals.

Many of these requirements will be temporary, during the construction phase, and will be permanently removed upon completion of the project.

Proposed bridge design

Following ongoing optioneering and discussion with The Highland Council (THC), we have proposed a steel box girder permanent bridge as the preferred option as it provides a suitable bridging structure for project use as well as providing a 2 lane and pedestrian crossing structure for ongoing adoption by THC. Providing a structure with a 120 year design life and capacity for all standard road users and project traffic.

The proposed steel box girder design has been assessed as the most time efficient solution, to ensure that the bridge can be reopened in a timely manner and incorporates a mixture of on site and off site fabrication to reduce on site construction time.

The proposed structure shall be located on the current bridge alignment and over bridge the existing bridge structure. The existing structure shall be removed once the new bridge works are completed. The new bridge will be available for both project and public use. This in situ replacement option allows for construction time savings and reduced impacts to the local area during and post construction through limiting the impact to existing land use adjacent to the bridge.

With a 6m carriageway width for 2 way traffic, the structure will be a single span structure of 90m from bank to bank of the river with new bridge abutments on each river bank. A 2.5m walkway will be attached to the bridge structure on the downstream side providing segregated walkway for pedestrians and cyclists.

Bridge Key Information

Span - 90m single span

Carriageway Width - 6m wide carriageway with 0.6m wide verges at both sides of carriageway for a total internal width between parapets of 7.2m and total width of 8.8m between vertical members

Bridge structure height - circa 10m height

Clear opening height - 5.3m structure free zone

Walkway width - 2.5m walkway on east (downstream) side of structure

The approach roads, either side of the bridge, forming the U1106 will undertake public road improvement works to increase the carriageway widths to 6m, forming two lanes, as well as enhancements to the A831/C1106 junction. In conjunction with widening the carriageway, the vertical profile of the approach roads will also be raised to meet the deck level of the new bridge.

The below visualisation indicates what the steel box girder design proposal may look like in situ



Development considerations

Traffic and transport

The replacement of the bridge will result in diversions for road users whilst works are carried out as construction works will require the closure of the existing river crossing to vehicular and foot traffic.

A key part of the construction strategy will be a Traffic Management Plan, to be agreed ahead of construction works with THC. This will include the transportation of vehicles to and from site, including construction machinery, materials, temporary offices and pre-fabricated bridge sections, delivered on heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

Mitigation is a key consideration, and we are currently exploring all avenues to:

- Expedite the closure.
- Maintain access for emergency vehicles.
- Maintain access for pedestrians to existing paths (cyclists, walkers).
- Minimise impacts on potential school bus journeys.
- Minimise impacts to local fisheries.

Emergency services

Emergency services will be made aware of longer closures and use alternative routes with project team engaging with the services to update on works progress and changes to access. Appropriate mitigation and additional resources shall be discussed and agreed by the service providers and the project team.

Public/School Transport

The project team will liaise with local bus services for school and public use to identify suitable amendments to services or appropriate alternative arrangements to maintain appropriate levels of access and service.

Parking and recreation

We will continue to work with THC to fully identify recreation paths and appropriate mitigation to minimise impact on there use by the public during the proposed construction period. With any required diversions and closures clearly signposted and communicated within the immediate area.

Water and drainage

A bridge deck drainage system will be provided on either side of the carriageway over the length of the bridge and discharged into a drainage collection system, located to the back of the abutments and wing walls. The collection system will then outfall into a soak-away located to the south-east of the bridge.

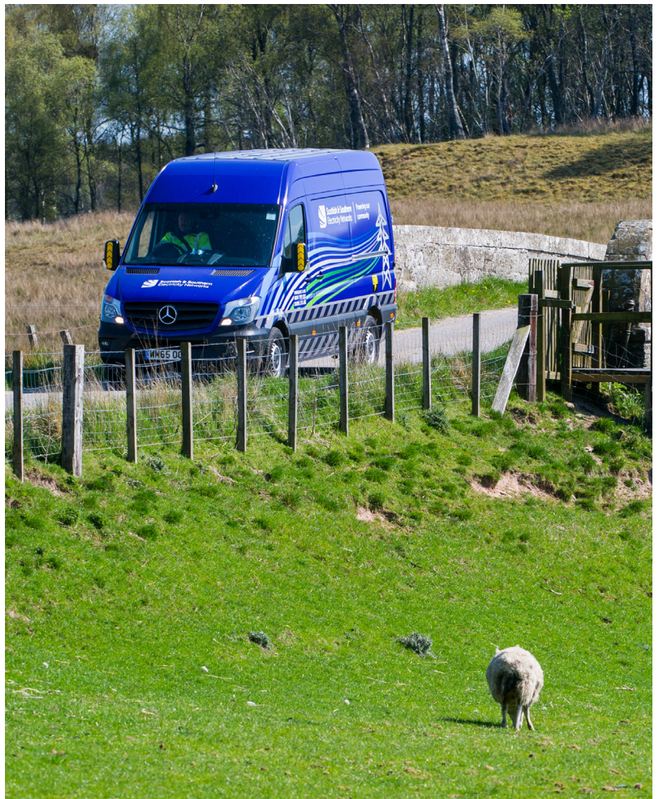
Surface water from the northern approach road will be intercepted prior to crossing the bridge and connected to a drainage outfall located to the north-east of the bridge.

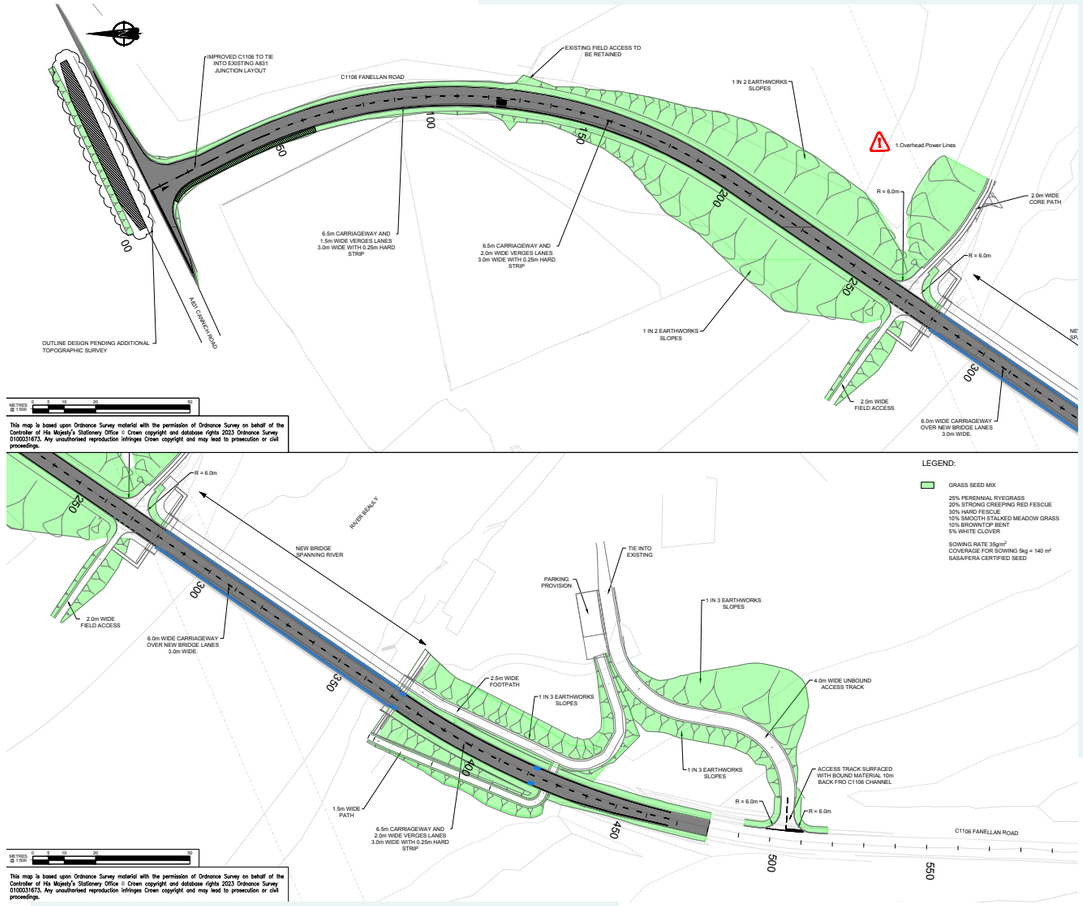
Fishing

The river Beauly is popular with anglers, fishing is undertaken on the river between February and October. Mitigation measures are currently being reviewed and ongoing consultations with the local fishing syndicate will be undertaken.

Noise

Due to the nature of the infrastructure, post-completion there will be no anticipated noise impacts.





The above demonstrates the Public Road Improvement (PRI) design intent for the approach roads and A831/C1106 junction

Copies of the figures contained within this booklet are available at the consultation events and to download from the project webpage.

Wildlife

A preliminary protected and priority species survey was also carried out in April 2025. The survey aimed to record the habitat's suitability to support targeted protected species; and record incidental signs of their presence and/or activity. The survey covered all land within the Site as well as relevant survey buffers, where safe access was available:

Ecological constraints are present with preliminary appraisals confirming species comprising of otters, beavers, ospreys and freshwater pearl mussels potentially present. Further ecological studies will be progressed within the constraints of the varying seasons (as required).

In all instances, irrespective of the proximity to designated sites or sensitive habitats or species, general environmental protection measures will be implemented as standard during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. Such measures include best environmental practice guidance outlined in the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency's (SEPA) Pollution Prevention Advice and Guidance and those outlined by applicable Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidance. The Proposed Development will be constructed in adherence General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) and Species Protection Plans (SPPs), which have been produced and agreed in liaison with NatureScot. We will require that the protocols detailed within these documents are implemented successfully by our employed contractors.



In addition, the following minimum standards will be adhered to prevent and suitably reduce ecological effects:

- Measures will be taken to prevent dust and other emissions from construction affecting land beyond the immediate vicinity of the Site.
- Debris netting will be erected under the bridge to prevent any debris from falling into the River Beauly. This will be employed during the demolition of the existing bridge to 3m below the cross head level or during any other works which may cause the existing bridge materials to deteriorate or fall.
- Chemicals and fuels will be stored in secure containers located away from watercourses or water bodies. Spill kits will be available.
- Construction work and footprint will be reduced to the minimum necessary footprint.
- Excavations will be covered or securely fenced (with no potential access points beneath fencing) and with a ramp installed in case animals fall in when the Site is closed (e.g. overnight) to prevent entrapment of animals.
- Noise and vibration will be controlled and kept to the minimum necessary.
- Any lighting installed or used during the construction works will be minimised or designed to reduce impacts on bats as per the recommended guidance. No artificial light will be allowed to overspill into woodland, riparian or river habitats.
- Appropriate exclusion zones will be marked around identified protected breeding or resting sites, such as bat roosts; otter resting sites; badger setts; beaver burrows/lodges; bird nests etc. Applicable SPPs recommended (if species identified) and site operatives will be made aware of them.
- Habitats which are temporarily disturbed during construction will be reinstated.



Black Bridge Replacement Project

Landscape and visual

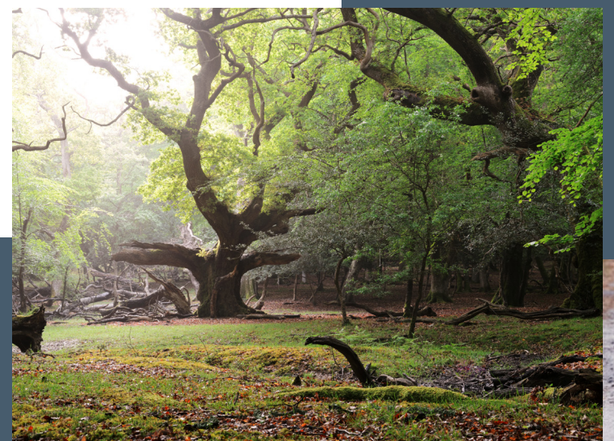
The Proposed Development lies primarily within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 229 Enclosed Farmland (trees being identified as a key element throughout this character area) and adjacent to the west and south-west of Black Bridge, is located within LCT 227 Farmed Strath – Inverness (characterised by steep vegetated slopes as well as small-scale broad leaf and coniferous woodland).

Key sensitive receptors within 1km of the Proposed Development include several residential properties located between 0.2km and 1km in all directions, along with recreational receptors such as users of the River Beauly, local footpaths, Beauly Quarry, and Beauly Substation. While the surrounding topography and riverside vegetation provide substantial visual screening, one nearby property on higher ground is likely to experience glimpsed views and a higher level of visual impact. Footpath users and anglers along the northern bank of the River Beauly will also have clearer sight lines to the site, though overall, existing landform and vegetation help to limit significant visual effects on most viewpoints.

Landscape and visual assessments indicate that the proposed development lies within areas of enclosed farmland and farmed strath, with limited potential for significant landscape effects due to the scale of the project and existing vegetative screening. Visual impacts are expected to be negligible for most receptors, although some residential properties and recreational users may experience increased visibility of the new structure depending on the final design.

Following mitigation measures will be implemented:

- Space trusses will be used to allow filtered views through the structure
- Selected material colours that will blend into the landscape and minimise contrast will be used
- Tree removal will be avoided, wherever possible
- Where removal is unavoidable, replacement with new planting of native species will be considered.



Local Wildlife

Three protected species resting sites were identified. Unavoidable works affecting these resting sites will require NatureScot licensing prior to the Proposed Development's construction works commencing within 30m of; or heavy impact works within 100m of them:

- Bat roosts in two separate locations.
- Non-breeding, otter holt.

Following pre-construction and construction phase mitigation measures will be implemented:

- Adherence to the baseline SPP and GEMP documentation
- General environmental protection measures set out, including the use of bridge debris netting as detailed in above section of Wildlife
- Opportunities for enhancement to be considered, to comply with planning policy, within the scale of the Proposed Development will be identified.
- Should in-water works be required, further aquatic species surveys or consideration, including potential NatureScot FWPM licence, may be required to inform decision-making.



Project timeline

2025
- **November:** PAN Drawing Issued
- **December:** PAC 1 Public Information Events

2026
- **January:** Feedback Window Closure
- **March:** PAC 2 Public Feedback Events
- **June:** Consent Application Submission

2027
- **March:** Est Consent Determination
- **March-June:** Discharging pre commencement conditions
- **June:** Main Construction Start on Site
- Commence Bridge Construction

2028
- Bridge Construction Ongoing
- **December:** Bridge Open for Public use
- Existing Bridge Removal

*Please note that the timeline is indicative and subject to change.



Have your say

We value community and stakeholder feedback. Without this, we would be unable to progress projects and reach a balanced proposal.

The feedback period

We will be seeking initial feedback from now until **Tuesday 13 January 2026.**

How to provide feedback:

Submit your feedback online or via the form on our project webpage at: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan**

You can also email the feedback form to the Community Liaison Manager or write to us enclosing the feedback form at the back of this booklet.



Recite me

To support everyone online, we provide accessibility and language options on our website through 'Recite Me'. The accessibility and language support options provided by 'Recite Me' include text-to-speech functionality, fully customisable styling features, reading aids, and a translation tool with over 100 languages, including 35 text-to-speech.

Please select "Accessibility" on our website to try out our inclusive toolbar."

What we're seeking views on

We are seeking your thoughts on the design proposal for the replacement Black Bridge and any comments you have regarding mitigation proposals and traffic management. We would like to know if there are additional factors over and above those detailed in our proposal, or if you think we can make any improvements, changes or refinements to these proposals.

By telling us what you think, you will help refine our proposal and mitigation measures.

Community Liaison Manager

Sally Cooper

SSEN Transmission 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

07918 470 281

fanellanengagement@sse.com

Additional information:

The best way to keep up to date is to sign up to project updates via the project webpage:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

You can also follow us on social media:

@ssentransmission @SSETransmission

Your feedback

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation booklet. In order to record your views and improve the effectiveness of our consultation, please complete this short feedback form.

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. (Please tick one box per question only)

Q1. **We are considering proposing a 24hr working schedule, to reduce the construction period and subsequent bridge closure. Do you have any thoughts regarding this?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:

Q2. **Have you any comments regarding the proposed design for the replacement of the Black Bridge?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:

Q3. **Are there any additional mitigation measures, factors or environmental features that you consider important and should be brought to the attention of the project team?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:

Q4. **Do you have any particular concerns or queries on the proposed Black Bridge replacement?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:

Full name: ..... **Email:** .....

Telephone: ..... **Address:** .....

We would like to send you relevant communications via email such as invitations to stakeholder events, surveys, updates on projects, services and future developments from the Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks group listed below. If you are happy to receive email updates please opt in by ticking the box below. You can unsubscribe at any time by contacting us at stakeholder.admin@sse.com or by clicking on the unsubscribe link that will be at the end of each of our emails.

☐ **If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the project, please tick this box**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.
Please submit your completed form by one of the methods below:

Post: SSEN Transmission, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

Email: fanellanengagement@sse.com

Online: www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

For information on how we collect and process your data please see our privacy notice available at today's event. This can also be obtained online at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/privacy

Comments forms and all the information from today's event will also be available to download from the project website.

We intend to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist our experienced teams in the analysis of your feedback, so we can categorise key points raised more quickly. You can learn more about how we're utilising AI at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/AIFAQ

Any information given on the feedback form can be used and published anonymously as part of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks consultation report. By completing this feedback form you consent to Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks using feedback for this purpose.

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Notes