



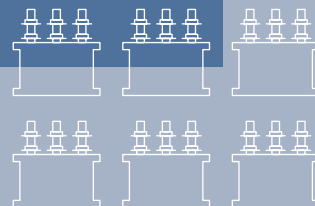
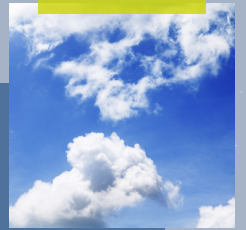
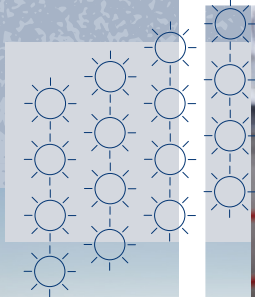
Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Black Bridge Project

Pre-Application Consultation - PAC 2

September 2026



ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

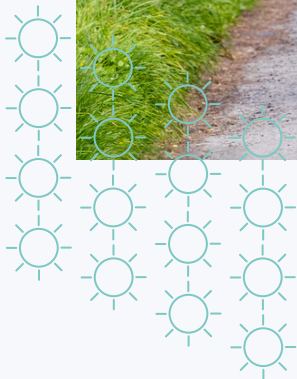
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The consultation events will be taking place on:

Thursday 17 September, 12–2.30pm
Phipps Hall, Beaulie, IV4 7EH

Thursday 17 September, 4–6.30pm
Kiltarlity Village Hall, IV4 7HH



Powering change together



If we want to deliver on clean power and energy security targets and provide power for future generations, upgrade to Scotland’s electricity transmission infrastructure is needed.

The shift to a cleaner, more sustainable future is about more than tackling the impact of climate change, it’s about ensuring that future generations can thrive.

Countries around the world are investing in their energy infrastructure to support increasing electricity demands and to deliver on clean power targets and the UK is leading the way in building a modern, sustainable energy system for the future.

We all have a part to play

The UK and Scottish governments have set ambitious energy security and clean power targets, and we all have a part to play in delivering them.

At SSEN Transmission, we work closely with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) to connect vast renewable energy resources - like solar, wind, hydro and marine generation — to areas of demand across the country. Scotland will play a particularly big role in meeting increasing electricity demand.

But there is more to be done. By 2050, the north of Scotland is expected to contribute more than 50GW of low carbon power to the GB energy system. Today, the region has around 11GW of renewable generation connected to the network.

At SSEN Transmission, it is our role to build the energy system of the future. To do that, we are planning to invest around **£29 billion** in the coming years to upgrade the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. It’s an investment that will unlock cleaner, more secure energy for homes and businesses now, and for generations to come. **By 2050, annual electricity demand is expected to at least double** - our investment will support the connection of more clean power to meet that demand to the GB electricity network, supporting up to **17,500 jobs in Scotland**, with more than **8,000** of those in the north of Scotland, along the way.

Who we are

We are responsible for maintaining and investing in the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. We are 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/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 communities and we are committed to minimising our impacts and maximising all the benefits that our developments can bring to your area. To do that, we provide all the information you need to know about our plans and how they will impact communities like yours. The way we consult is also a two-way street and we want to hear people’s views, concerns, or ideas – and harness local knowledge – so that our work benefits communities today and long into the future. You can share your views with us at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/talk-to-us/contact-us/

Project Overview

We’re leading some exciting projects to power change in the UK and Scotland. To support the delivery of 2030 offshore wind targets set by the UK and Scottish Governments, and to power local communities, we need to upgrade our existing network. In some key areas, we need to develop entirely new infrastructure.

Fanellan 400kV Substation and Converter Station

In March 2025, we submitted a planning application (25/00826/FUL) to The Highland Council for the Fanellan 400kV substation and converter station. We have since appealed The Highland Council’s determination of that application which is currently under consideration with the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA).

Find out more about the Fanellan project here:



ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

The proposed Black Bridge project is being taken forward as an independent development, recognising the importance of the bridge as a local transport route and its role in supporting safe and reliable access in the area.

To inform the design and assessment of the proposed bridge, we have continued with planned surveys and site activities that began prior to the Fanellan planning appeal outcome. This work ensures we have robust and up to date information to support the development of the bridge proposals, including consideration of design, environmental background and mitigation, alongside construction planning.

By taking construction traffic over the River Beaully, this would also help reduce traffic movements through Kiltarlity, supporting safer and more resilient transport infrastructure for the local area.

Project Need – Black Bridge

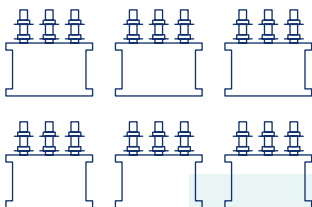
The existing Black Bridge currently operates with single-lane restrictions and has known limitations in relation to carrying heavier vehicle loads. As a key part of the local road network, the bridge already faces constraints in its current form. It is also not capable of accommodating the type of heavy construction vehicles that would be required for major infrastructure projects in the area. An improved crossing of the River Beaully would be required to support future construction activity while maintaining safety for road users and helping to manage traffic impacts on local communities.

Based on the community feedback and recent surveys, assessments and engineering work, an offline replacement bridge has emerged as the preferred solution and is the updated proposal being presented as part of this consultation. This approach would allow a new crossing to be constructed alongside the existing bridge, helping to maintain connectivity during construction and reducing disruption for local communities.

Through earlier engagement, local residents highlighted the importance of maintaining access across the River Beaully and minimising disruption during any future construction works, including avoiding prolonged road closures and impacts on daily travel. These considerations have helped inform and reinforce the choice to develop the offline option.

An offline replacement bridge would provide a new crossing of the River Beaully capable of accommodating construction traffic, reducing reliance on the existing bridge and helping to minimise through traffic in Kiltarlity. This would help reduce impacts on local residents and support the continued operation of the local road network.

The proposal is being delivered by us as a long term public asset, developed through a separate planning process and subject to its own environmental assessment and consultation process.



Project elements



Construction of new bridge
An in-situ steel truss bridge would be constructed, offset circa 10m downstream from the existing bridge, to reduce impact to road users as far as practicable.



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



Traffic management
Will be required for existing structure investigations and whilst the construction of the bridge is underway; including traffic diversions and approach road works.



Existing Bridge
We are continuing discussions with The Highland Council to understand and explore the future of the existing bridge and how this should be considered as part of the wider proposals. Long-term options remain under consideration, including retention of the bridge and the potential need for future removal, informed by maintenance, safety and value considerations.



Why we’re here today:

The main legislation that governs the consenting of our substation and converter station projects 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 second and final statutory PAC event. Following the first events, held in December 2025, the project team have sought to ensure that comments and concerns raised have helped to inform, where possible, the further development of the bridge design.

During this feedback event we are presenting our developed proposals and set out our responses to feedback received to date.

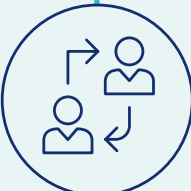
We will continue to receive feedback throughout this ongoing consultation period until **Thursday 22 October**.

The story so far



2025

- **November:** Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) boundary drawing issued to The Highland Council
- **December:** PAC 1 public information events held in Beauly and Kiltarlity



2026

- **January:** Feedback period closes
- **Ongoing:** Design development and continued assessments
- **September:** PAC 2 public information events in Beauly and Kiltarlity, followed by feedback period (**we are here**)
- **December:** Submission of Town and Country planning application and accompanying EIA



What we are seeking views on:

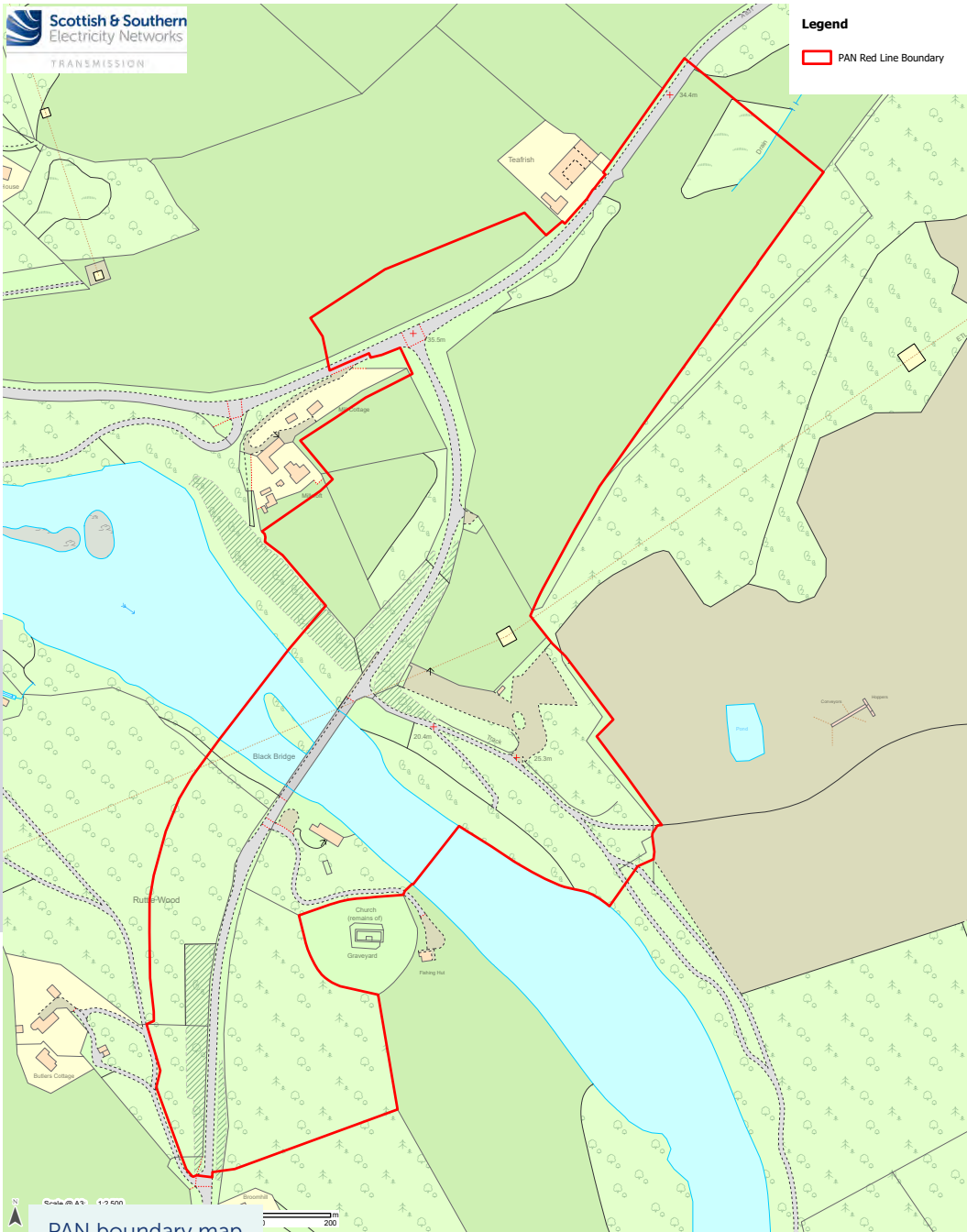
We want you to share your thoughts and opinions on our plans, where you think we can make improvements, concerns about the impact of our work and what you think of the refinements or changes we've made.

This event is the second of two planned, sequential, public consultation events following the submission of the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN). The PAN submission triggered the initial formal Town and Country Planning (major application) consultation process for this site, including the 12-week (minimum) pre-application consultation period.

Following the initial consultation event, the project team has sought to ensure that comments or concerns raised have informed, where possible, the primary considerations for the designs as they have progressed. Outside of the formal consultation periods and events, we have continued to provide updates on the project webpage and liaised with a wide range of stakeholders to help inform the development and design. We are therefore holding this feedback event to present our proposed bridge design and set out our responses to feedback received to date. By telling us what you think, you will help shape our proposals. We want to harness your local knowledge so that we spot any unforeseen challenges early and maximise the potential benefits and opportunities for your communities.

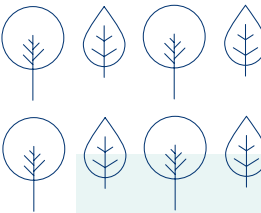


PAN boundary map



Please note: As well as the bridge 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, 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.



What you Told Us - Feedback Received

Our first PAC events were held at Phipps Hall and Kiltarlity Village Hall on 4 December. A total of 275 attendees were recorded across the two events. Feedback was collected and noted during these events.

During the feedback period which closed on 13 January 2026, 17 formal responses were received specific to this project through feedback forms and emails. However, many attendees utilised the post-it notes, pens and sheets available during the events themselves, which the project team used in summarising feedback, alongside the formal forms and emails.

Summaries of both written and verbal feedback received at events and during this consultation period are presented in the following pages. This includes feedback from both local residents and statutory stakeholder feedback.

Area	Feedback	Response
Design of the bridge Concerns with the colour and overall design of the bridge	Design and appearance: Feedback focused on ensuring the bridge design, finish and colour are appropriate for the local landscape, with some respondents asking for a design that reflects rural or traditional Scottish bridges while remaining modern and fit for purpose.	Through the consent process, the final finish of the bridge will be agreed between SSEN Transmission and The Highland Council with input from external stakeholders, taking a holistic view of appearance, lifetime operation and maintenance. The overall design seeks to strike an appropriate balance between providing a safe and resilient crossing and ensuring the structure is proportionate to its setting, with any site specific requirements identified through the planning process considered as part of the ongoing design review.
	Size: Feedback was mixed, with some questioning the need for a two-lane bridge and others asking for improved pedestrian and cycle provision.	The bridge has been designed in line with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) to provide a safe, resilient crossing that can accommodate local traffic, including larger vehicles (where required). A two-lane arrangement helps reduce conflict between vehicles and supports safer movement across the bridge, while the dedicated walkway improves provision for pedestrians. The design seeks to remain proportionate to the rural setting and will continue to be reviewed through the planning process.

Area	Feedback	Response
Access and Safety Concerns around access, during and following construction and whether a bridge can be built adjacent.	Recreation: Respondents asked about access for horse riders, pedestrians and cyclists during construction, including whether paths could remain open or alternative access be provided.	We recognise the importance of maintaining recreational access. If any short-term bridge closures are required, access across Black Bridge will not be available during the works period. Temporary parking is proposed on the north side of the bridge, and the new bridge design includes a shared -use walkway linking to the surrounding path network.
	Cemetery: Respondents urged that parking for the cemetery needs to be maintained.	Access to the cemetery will remain available throughout the works, and parking requirements will be considered as part of construction planning. Where funerals or services are scheduled, nearby site activities will be managed appropriately to minimise disturbance and maintain a respectful environment.
	Safety: Concerns were raised regarding emergency vehicle access during construction, adequate clearance for agricultural vehicles, and opportunities to improve cycle path connections at the T-junction to enhance safety for users.	The replacement bridge is designed to accommodate appropriate vehicle loads, including agricultural traffic. Emergency access and traffic management arrangements will be developed through detailed construction planning and agreed with relevant stakeholders.
Wildlife Concerns around salmon fishing, migrating birds and red squirrels within the area.	Fishing: Concerns were raised about potential impacts on fish, spawning areas and opportunities for environmental enhancement.	We will continue to work with the fishing syndicate to understand local conditions and identify practical opportunities to support and enhance the river environment. This includes ongoing discussions with the team to ensure that any improvements we can make are informed, practical, and aligned with the needs of those who use and care for the river.
	Local wildlife habitats: Residents highlighted the need to protect local wildlife from noise, lighting and construction activity.	Species protection plans and environmental controls will be in place throughout the works to manage potential impacts and minimise disturbance alongside any site specific mitigation measures identified. Site teams will receive briefings on wildlife protection, including measures to safeguard fish and river habitats where required.
	Lighting impacts: Questions were raised about lighting during evening periods and the potential impact on local wildlife.	No permanent lighting is currently proposed. Lighting may be required at certain times of the construction phase for health and safety reasons, particularly during winter. Lighting will be designed and positioned to ensure safe working while restricting impacts on wildlife and aquatic life where practicable.

Area	Feedback	Response
Communication around project and progress Request for more regular feedback and clear comms around stages of project and the reasons why.	Residents asked for clearer project information, including visualisations of the proposed bridge, school bus timings, the reason for preparatory works before planning approval, access to Fanellan, contact details and how the preferred site option was selected.	We recognise the importance of clear and timely communication. Visualisations have been provided to help show how the proposed bridge may look, and further information on site selection and project development will be shared through the final planning submission. We will continue to keep communities and key stakeholders informed on any key developments/milestones through statutory consultation, local engagement, a project webpage and shared project mailbox.
Traffic Impacts to residents Concerns with traffic safety, the robustness of existing roads and maintenance were raised alongside questions regarding traffic management and improvement plans	Diversion Concerns: Concerns were raised about potential diversion routes and the resilience of local roads during weather events, incidents and periods of disruption.	The project team recognises these concerns. Following further development of the construction methodology, the existing Black Bridge is aimed and anticipated expected to remain open during construction, reducing the impact on local road users. Any short-term closures required for specific activities will be communicated in advance, with appropriate traffic management in place.
	Compensation: Residents raised concerns about the potential cost and inconvenience of longer diversions.	As the existing bridge is anticipated to remain open during construction, significant diversion -related impacts are not foreseen. The project team will continue to work to minimise disruption to residents, businesses and visitors.
	Traffic impacts: Residents asked how construction traffic would be managed, particularly during busy local periods such as Belladrum weekend.	A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be developed to manage construction traffic safely and minimise disruption. Traffic impacts will also be assessed through the Environmental Impact Assessment and presented alongside the planning application.
Property Value and Compensation Concern for impact on house value in and around red line boundary.	Property values and compensation: Residents raised concerns about potential impacts on nearby properties and asked how compensation would be considered.	We understand these concerns. Potential impacts on nearby properties (including residential amenity) will be considered through the design and as part of the planning process. Where compensation is applicable, this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with the relevant statutory framework.

Area	Feedback	Response
Local Disturbance Concerns around noise and light impacts from 24hr construction work and traffic. Request for more information on noise mitigation measures.	Working times: Residents asked for clarity on working hours, noise management and the potential for extended or 24-hour working.	Construction hours are being developed as part of the planning application. Noise and lighting impacts will be assessed through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, with appropriate mitigation, monitoring and management measures put in place during construction.
Community Benefit Opportunities Opportunities for Community Benefit Funding shared including provisions for cyclists in the area; funding and compensation; landscaping and replanting, as well as vehicle speeding mitigations.	Wildlife environments: Residents suggested opportunities to enhance the river environment, support fish habitats and include wild flower planting during reinstatement.	We welcome the suggestions received regarding habitat enhancement, including improvements to fish habitats and opportunities for wild flower planting. These will be considered as the design develops and set out as part of the planning submission (as appropriate). SSEN Transmission is committed to delivering a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on projects that receive consent. The project will therefore seek opportunities (both on and) to enhance biodiversity, restore habitats where required and leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before development, where practicable and appropriate.
	Road improvements: Residents asked about cycle path improvements, road safety, speeding concerns and whether additional monitoring or mitigation could be considered.	The proposed bridge includes a shared-use walkway for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Feedback on local cycle routes, road safety and speeding has been noted, and the project team will continue to work with The Highland Council and other stakeholders on appropriate traffic management measures.
	Wider socioeconomic benefits: Residents asked what wider benefits the project could bring to the community.	The replacement bridge will provide a more resilient long term crossing option, supporting safer two-way traffic movements and improve access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders through the shared-use walkway. The project also has the potential to create wider benefits through local employment, skills development and opportunities for local businesses during construction. In addition, nearby SSEN Transmission projects that receive consent may also provide community benefit funding, helping communities invest in local priorities and deliver lasting benefits.

What has changed since the last consultation

Since our first Pre-Application Consultation events in December 2025, we have reviewed the feedback received from local residents, stakeholders and statutory consultees.

A key concern raised was the disruption that could be caused by replacing the bridge on its existing alignment, particularly the potential length of any road closure and the impact this could have on local access.

In response, the project team has continued to review how a new bridge could be delivered while reducing disruption where possible. This included considering an offline bridge option, where a new crossing would be built separately from the existing bridge. This could help maintain local access during construction and reduce the impact of a prolonged closure.

We are also continuing to assess the condition of the existing Black Bridge, including its structural integrity, capacity and future maintenance requirements. Further assessment will be required to better understand the bridge's condition and inform consideration of its long-term future. This work is being undertaken in consultation with The Highland Council.

The feedback received has helped shape our work in the following areas:

- **Construction approach and working hours**
Feedback on the potential use of extended or 24 hour working has been considered in the context of reducing overall construction duration and limiting the length of disruption. These views are informing how construction options and mitigation measures are being assessed.
- **Design and approach to providing an alternative crossing**
Comments on the design and scale of the proposals, including concerns about the impact of a full bridge replacement and prolonged road closures have led the project team to explore alternative options. This includes the alternative provision of an offline bridge to reduce impacts on local residents and maintain local access where possible.
- **Mitigation, local considerations and environmental features**
Feedback highlighting the importance of traffic management, access, noise, lighting, ecology and the local environment has informed ongoing design development and mitigation planning. These considerations continue to be reviewed as the proposals are refined.
- **Wider concerns and queries about the proposals**
General concerns relating to access, safety, disruption and communication have helped shape how information is presented and how future engagement is approached, including providing clearer explanations and visual material.

Proposed bridge design

Following ongoing assessment and discussions with The Highland Council, the preferred option is a new steel truss bridge located approximately 10m downstream of the existing bridge. The bridge would provide a two-lane carriageway and a dedicated pedestrian and cycle crossing, supporting both project traffic during construction and future public use.

The proposed steel truss design has been assessed as the most time efficient solution to mitigate disruption to road users, whilst ensuring that the existing bridge can remain open whilst the construction of the new bridge progresses. The preferred structure incorporates a high degree of modular design, utilising off-site fabrication, to reduce on-site construction time.

The proposed structure shall be located offline from the current bridge alignment, at a 10m offset downstream from the current bridge location. This approach is intended to maintain use of the existing bridge and carriageway during construction of the new bridge. We are currently in dialogue with The Highland Council to determine the proposals for the existing structure, once the new bridge works are completed, although we anticipate The Highland Council's preference to be demolition.

This offline option allows for a significant reduction of impact on local access and road users, during and post construction of the project.

With a 6m carriageway width for two-way traffic, the structure will be a single span structure of 110m from riverbank to riverbank with new bridge abutments located on each river bank. A 2.5m walkway will be attached to the bridge structure on the downstream side providing segregated walkway.

Bridge Key Information

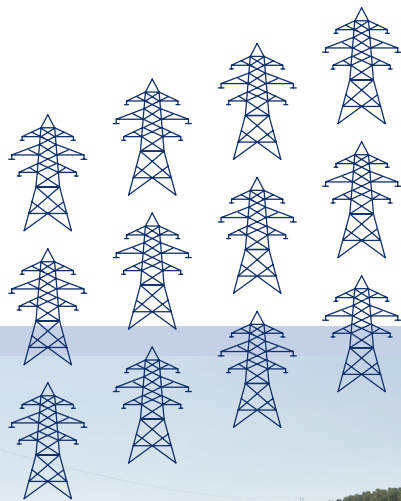
- Span** - 110m single span
- Carriageway Width** - 6m wide carriageway with 0.6m wide verges at both sides of carriageway for a total internal width between parapets of 7.2m and total width of 8.8m between vertical members.
- Bridge structure height** - circa 10m height
- Clear opening height** - 5.3m 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 truss girder design proposal may look like in situ



3D Visualisations and Imagery



North view of bridge before construction



Overhead view of bridge before construction

To view all project related imagery, scan the QR code or visit the following URL:



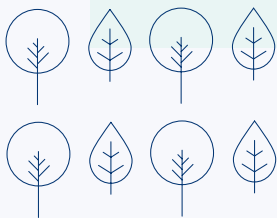
ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan



North view of bridge after proposed construction



Overhead view of bridge after proposed construction



Development considerations

Traffic and transport

The bridge works are expected to require temporary changes to local access arrangements during construction. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be developed and agreed with The Highland Council before works begin, setting out how construction traffic, materials, machinery and bridge components would be transported to and from site.

We will continue to work with emergency services, public and school transport providers, local fisheries and The Highland Council to identify appropriate mitigation measures, maintain access to recreational paths where possible, and reduce impacts on local access and road users during construction.

Water and drainage

A drainage system will be incorporated into the bridge design to collect and manage surface water from the bridge and approach roads. This will include drainage infrastructure designed to safely manage runoff and reduce potential impacts on the surrounding environment.

Wildlife and ecology

Environmental surveys have identified protected species and sensitive habitats within the area, including bats, otters, beavers, ospreys and freshwater pearl mussels. Further detailed surveys and assessments are ongoing to inform the final design and any necessary mitigation. Construction activities will be carried out in accordance with environmental legislation, agreed environmental management plans and species protection measures. This will include controls for dust, noise, lighting, pollution prevention and protection of the River Beaully and surrounding habitats.

Local wildlife

Protected species resting sites have been identified within the wider area, including bat roosts and an otter holt. Where works could affect these features, appropriate licences, protection measures and exclusion zones would be required before construction activities take place.

The project will also continue to explore opportunities to support biodiversity and environmental enhancement as the design progresses.

River Beaully

The River Beaully is an important local recreation and fishing resource. We will continue to engage with local users and fishing syndicate as the proposals develop and as mitigation measures are considered.

Noise

No significant operational noise impacts are anticipated once the bridge is in use. During construction, noise and vibration would be managed through appropriate mitigation measures and construction controls.

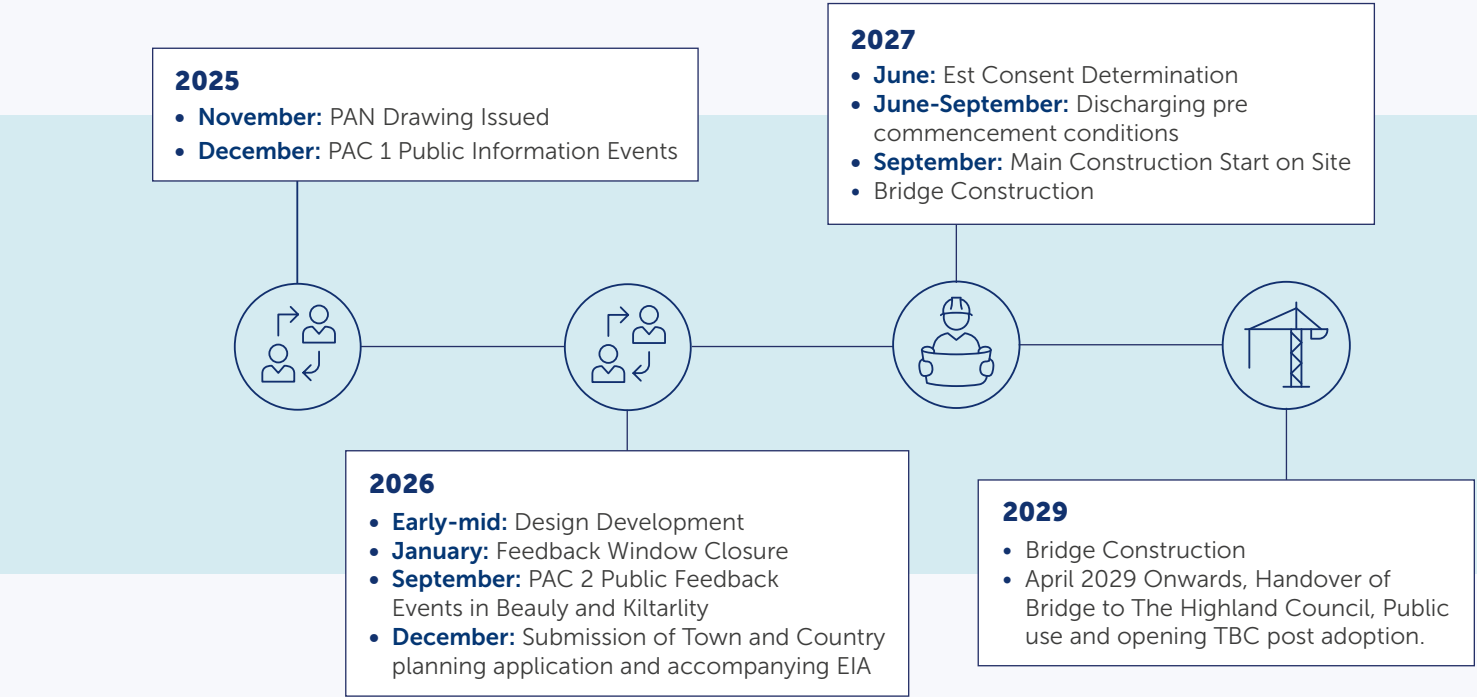
Landscape and visual

The proposed bridge is located within an area of enclosed farmland and woodland. Existing vegetation and landform provide natural screening from many viewpoints, although some nearby properties, path users and anglers may have views of the new structure.

The bridge design will seek to minimise visual impacts through the use of appropriate materials, colours (with The Highland Council input) and landscaping. Tree retention will be prioritised where possible, with replacement planting committed to where removal cannot be avoided.



Project timeline



*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 intend to submit our planning application in December 2026. We will continue to welcome final comments from members of the public, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders regarding our proposals until we submit our planning application. We will continue to receive and consider feedback formally until **Thursday 22 October 2026**.

How to provide feedback:

Submit any feedback or comment to the team via the project mailbox or via letter: ssen-transmission.co.uk/fanellan

What we're seeking views on

During our last public consultation event in December 2025, we asked for your views on the replacement bridge proposals to help us understand where improvements or changes could be made.

We are now asking for any final comments or feedback ahead of submitting our planning application for the replacement Black Bridge.

You can also email any feedback or notes to the Community Liaison Manager.



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."

Notes



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