

**Fanellan Hub 400 kV Substation and  
Converter Station  
Environmental Impact Assessment Report  
Volume 2 | EIA Report  
Chapter 6 – Scope and Consultation**

**February 2025**





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## 6. SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 In general, the EIA Regulations require that an EIA should describe the likely significant effects of a proposed development on the environment. Scoping of potential likely significant effects provides a basis for ensuring that the assessment of environmental effects is appropriately limited to issues of genuine potential significance. This ensures a proportionate approach to EIA that is focused on likely significant effects to be considered and assessed. Consultation and engagement with stakeholders early in the process, with advice and input from key consultees being sought at the early stages of a project, helps greatly to inform decisions about the design and EIA work for a proposed development.
- 6.1.2 This Chapter describes the pre-application consultation, the Scoping process and further consultation that was undertaken to determine the scope of the EIA Report, and the consultations that were undertaken to inform the local community of the Proposed Development. This Chapter also includes a brief description of the environmental receptors of potential significance associated with the Proposed Development which are addressed in detail in the EIA Report, and those that are scoped out.

### 6.2 Consultation

- 6.2.1 SSEN Transmission has sought to maintain an open dialogue with local communities within the vicinity of the Proposed Development throughout the evolution of the project. This has included carrying out consultation events during the site selection stages and pre-application stages, engaging with local elected members such as MPs, MSPs, Ward Councillors and Community Councils and engaging with landowners, residents and businesses that may be affected by the Proposed Development. These events have taken place at a formative stage of the proposals and the feedback has informed the further development proposals. Prior to these events, specific proposals have been published so to allow consultees to provide a proper and informed response.
- 6.2.2 During the site selection stage, a virtual consultation event and face to face public consultation events were held in March 2023 with comments received duration a feedback period running until May. Following this, a Site Selection Consultation Document<sup>1</sup> was published in September 2023. A “storymap” with interactive maps of the proposed sites was also published on the SSE website.
- 6.2.3 Comments received from stakeholders in response to the Site Selection Consultation Document (September 2023), were documented in a Report on Consultation (RoC), published in November 2023.<sup>2</sup>
- 6.2.4 SSEN Transmission also maintained dialogue with all Community and Ward Councils in the vicinity of the site and has sought to keep members up to date on project progress, and any upcoming consultation events. In addition to regular update meetings with MPs and MSPs, SSEN Transmission has also hosted a number of meetings with local elected members and community forums. These are discussed in **Table 6.1** in section 6.3.2. The Beaully Community Liaison Group (CLG) was established at the time of the Beaully to Denny overhead line project and had continued to operate and serve to discuss other developments in the area, listen to feedback and incorporate improvements to visual aspects and noise mitigation measures. The CLG comprised representatives from 5 community councils - Kilmorack, Kiltarlity, Kirkhill & Bunchrew, Beaully, Strathglass Community Councils, some Kilmorack residents and was open to other interested parties who had an Agenda item. Quarterly meetings were held to discuss the proposals up until May 2024 when the CLG disengaged.

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<sup>1</sup> *Beaully Area 400kV Substation and Western Isles HVDC Converter: Site Selection Consultation Document: Alignment Selection (September 2023)*, produced by SSEN Transmission

<sup>2</sup> *New Beaully Area 400kV Substation and HVDC Converter Station: Report on Consultation (November 2023)*, produced by SSEN Transmission

**Table 6-1 Summary of Consultee Engagement - Site Selection Consultation**

Consultee	Date	Summary of Engagement
Public	February and March 2023	A Consultation Booklet and a feedback form for public consultation events
Public	March 2023	One in person public event and one online virtual consultation event held
Public	February 2023	Newspaper adverts in the Press and Journal, Caithness Courier, Northern Times, Ross-Shire Journal and Inverness Courier
Public	March and April 2023	Postcards were sent to 28,309 homes and 1,133 businesses and communities potentially impacted by the Proposed Development
Public	March and April 2023	Posters and communications with community councils
Public	April 2023	Virtual Storymaps published on SSEN website

### 6.3 Pre-application Consultation and Further Consultee Engagement

- 6.3.1 Pre-application consultation was undertaken at various stages throughout the project, including the formal Scoping exercise, Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) events and consultation with community councils, statutory consultees and non-statutory consultees as required.
- 6.3.2 Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing since the early stages of the project and has continued throughout the scoping and EIA process. During the site selection stages of the project, stakeholders were given the opportunity, following publication of specific proposals, to provide feedback, all responses received were considered and summarised in the relevant Report on Consultation document<sup>3</sup>. Following PAN submission in February 2024 pre-application consultation events were held in March 2024 and June 2024. Stakeholders, including the public, were given the opportunity, following publication of specific proposals, to provide further feedback. All responses received were considered and summarised in the **Volume 4, Appendix 6.1: Pre-application Consultation (PAC) Report** which provides detail of the pre-application consultation events and engagement that has been undertaken. This is summarised below (see **Table 6.1: Summary of Further Consultee Engagement**).
- 6.3.3 **Table 6.1** provides a summary of some of the key meetings and engagement that has been undertaken by the Applicant with consultees during the EIA stages of the project.

**Table 6.1 – Summary of Consultee Engagement - Pre-application Consultation**

Consultee	Date	Summary of Engagement
The Local Authority, Community Councils and MSPs	21 February 2024	Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) submitted to The Highland Council (THC)
Public	14 March 2024 and 7 June 2024	In respect of the both PAC consultation events, newspaper notices were published in the Press and Journal Newspaper

<sup>3</sup> New Beaulay Area 400 kV Substation and HVDC Converter Station: Report on Consultation (November 2023) produced by SSEN Transmission

<b>Public</b>	2 March 2023 and 27 April 2023; 19 and 23 March 2024; 4 and 10 June 2024	Public consultation posters providing general information on the proposals and advertising the planned public events were published in The Press and Journal, Highland Edition
<b>Public and Community Councils</b>		Posters advertising the public consultation events were circulated to the Kilmorack, Kiltarlity, Kirkhill & Bunchrew, Beaully Community Councils for sharing with their communities and for upload onto their social media platforms.
<b>Public</b>		Maildrops were delivered to all properties within a 10-mile radius of the proposed development, encompassing 4786 properties - residential and business.
<b>MSPs, CLG, and Community Councils</b>		Email notifications of the events were sent to Ward 12 Aird & Loch Ness elected Councillors and MSPs and the Beaully Community Liaison Group including the Community Councils and stakeholder sign-ups.
<b>Public</b>		Press Releases were Issued to relevant press and uploaded onto the SSEN Transmission website and social media channels, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
<b>Public</b>	March 2024 and June 2024	Public event notification was uploaded onto the project website together with consultation materials (figures, booklets, posters, banners)
<b>Public</b>	March and June 2024	Pre-Application Public consultation events held with consultation booklets, 3D modelling and information banners made available. Consultation booklets were available in hard copy at the events and also online with contact details, key dates, and information on how to provide feedback and comments both online through the project webpage, by completing the hard copy feedback form and by emailing the Community Liaison Manager. Feedback forms, including the closing date for feedback
<b>The Local Authority and Statutory Consultees</b>	September 2023 and March 2024	Pre-Application meetings with THC

## 6.4 EIA Scoping

- 6.4.1 No screening opinion was sought for the proposed development, on the basis that the Applicant has elected to treat the Proposed Development as an 'EIA Development' requiring an EIA Assessment. This was based on the development being required to connect proposed Schedule 1 EIA OHL developments from Spittal and Peterhead. As such an EIA Scoping Report was issued to The Highland Council in June 2024 (see **Appendix**

**6.3: Scoping Report**). A Scoping Opinion was provided by The Highland Council on August 06, 2024 with further follow up on August 15th and is included in **Volume 4: Appendix 6.4: Scoping Opinion**.

- 6.4.2 The responses contained within the Scoping Opinion were considered in detail during the EIA process. **Volume 4: Appendix 6.5: Scoping Matrix** of this EIA Report includes a matrix detailing the key issues that were raised in the Scoping Opinion and how and where they are addressed in the EIA Report.
- 6.4.3 The Scoping Opinion makes reference to site specific issues of interest to The Highland Council, to be considered and addressed in addition to those laid out in responses from consultees. The issues raised are reported in the individual topic based technical chapters within **Volume 2** of this EIA Report (**Chapters 8 to 16**).

## **6.5 Issues Scoped out of Assessment**

- 6.5.1 It is considered that the topics summarised below do not require to be the subject of detailed EIA work as it is considered that they are not likely to give rise to significant effects. They were referred to in the Scoping Report (see **Volume 4: Appendix 6.3**) as topics to be scoped out from further consideration within the EIA Report. There was general agreement amongst consultees, as detailed within the Scoping Opinion (see **Volume 4: Appendix 6.4**), as to the proposed scope of the EIA Report.
- 6.5.2 The elements scoped out of the individual topics considered within the EIA are discussed in the individual technical chapters within **Volume 2** of this **EIA Report (Chapters 8 to 16)**.

### *Land Use and Agriculture*

- 6.5.3 A review of the Land Capability for Agriculture Map<sup>4</sup> showed that the site is predominately located within Class 4.1 agricultural land, defined as land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops and cereal. The Proposed Development encroaches on land classed 5.1, defined as land capable of use as improved grassland. As the Proposed Development is not located on high quality agricultural land, there would be a minor potential for impact.
- 6.5.4 There is one core path (track) located approximately 800 m south of the Proposed Development, including the Home Farm to Hughton by Lonbuie. However, this core path is not directly affected by the Proposed Development and therefore recreational activities are likely to remain unaffected.
- 6.5.5 There is one water body, namely the River Beaully, located approximately 1.2 km north-east of the Proposed Development. The site is located in an area managed by the Beaully District Fishery Board.
- 6.5.6 There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located near the Proposed Development.
- 6.5.7 Apart from land take impacts which are assessed for the construction phase and are permanent, the effects during operation are expected to be limited to impacts associated with regular maintenance activities. Therefore, impacts to Land Use and Agriculture are scoped out for the operation stage of the Proposed Development.
- 6.5.8 Based on the above information, significant effects on Land Use and Agriculture during both construction and operation are unlikely, and therefore, have been scoped out from further assessment in the EIA.

### *Population and Human Health*

- 6.5.9 The Population and Human Health Topic was originally scoped out, as per justifications stated in the Scoping Report (See **Volume 4: Appendix 6.3: EIA Scoping Report**). However, the Scoping Opinion has requested

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government (2022) Land Capability for Agriculture Map Viewer. Available at (online): <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/capability-maps/national-scale-land-capability-for-agriculture/> [Accessed September 2024].

that a Socio-Economic Tourism and Recreation chapter is included in the EIA due to the scale of the project and duration of the works associated with the Proposed Development.

6.5.10 The chapter will estimate who may be affected by the development, in all or in part. This may require identifying individual households, local communities or wider socio-economic groups such as tourists and tourist-related business, recreational groups, attractions and events (e.g. Belladrum – Tartan Heart Festival), and any other local sporting interests. The application will include relevant economic information connected with the Proposed Development, including the potential number of jobs and economic activity associated with the procurement, construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. This will set out the impact on the local, regional and national economy. Any mitigation proposed will address impacts on the local and regional economy.

6.5.11 This chapter will also address public access and the effects on existing access routes.

*Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) and Radio Frequency Interference (RFI)*

6.5.12 EMF Electromagnetic fields (EMFs) are emitted from the operation of substations but is typically contained within the boundary of the substation development. EMF from the Proposed Development would not have a likely significant effect on population and human health. Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) arise from electric charges. To prevent known effects of EMFs on health, the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) developed health protection guidelines in 1998 for both public and occupational exposure. In the UK, the National Institute for Health Protection's (NIHP) Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) has set out guidelines for exposure to EMFs. In March 2004, the UK adopted the ICNIRP 1998 guidelines on the advice of the National Radiological Protection Board (now part of NIHP CRCE). These guidelines set conservative exposure levels for the public to electric and magnetic fields, and they are endorsed by the World Health Organisation and the UK Government. The NIHP CRCE keeps under review emerging scientific research and/or studies that may link EMF exposure with health problems and provides advice to the Department of Health and Social Care on the possible need for introducing further precautionary measures. All new transmission and related infrastructure is required to comply with the government policy of adopting the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) on exposure to EMF.

6.5.13 The Applicant ensures at all times that it complies with relevant legislation, which in turn is based on the advice of the UK Government's independent scientific advisers, to ensure the appropriate level of protection for the public from these fields. In determining the level of impact, SSEN Transmission closely observe these independent guidelines which in conjunction with a Code of Practice, published in 2012 by industry and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (now part of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero), sets out all the practical details needed to apply the exposure limits for substations. EMF resulting from the Proposed Development are compliant with National Policy and Industry Standards as specified with the Energy Network Association Code of Practice and Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002. Consequently, in setting out the scope of an EIA, SSEN Transmission can demonstrate that levels of exposure are within the limits set within these standards, within the exposure guidelines as specified in the Code of Practice on compliance, and with the policy on phasing as specified in the Code of Practice on optimal phasing, no significant effects are likely to result from radiation and EMFs. Therefore, an assessment on EMF has been scoped out of this EIA Report.



### *Major Accidents and Disasters*

- 6.5.14 Given the nature of the Proposed Development, the potential for effects related to the vulnerability to major accidents and disasters are likely to be limited to those associated with unplanned power outages, due to extreme weather or structural damage.
- 6.5.15 Crisis management and continuity plans are in place across the SSE Group. These are tested regularly and are designed for the management of, and recovery from, significant energy infrastructure failure events. Where there are material changes in infrastructure (or the management of it) additional plans are developed.
- 6.5.16 Potential significant effects on the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to Major Accidents and Disasters has therefore been scoped out of the EIA Report.

### *Air Quality and Climate*

- 6.5.17 Local air quality is a combination of background air quality, representative of general levels of pollution away from busy roads and industrial activity and added emissions from local emissions sources such as road traffic.
- 6.5.18 Due to the generally rural nature of the Proposed Development, and sparse distribution of sensitivity receptors, impacts of pollution from road traffic and other industrial sources are minimal. The Proposed Development is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The closest AQMA is located approximately 18 km east at Inverness City Centre, which has been declared for exceedances of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) air quality standard limits.
- 6.5.19 The Proposed Development has the potential to give rise to some localised and temporary construction related releases associated with dust (foundation construction, passage of vehicles along access tracks) and construction plant and traffic exhaust emissions. However, the nature of the construction activities is that these would be localised, short term for individual activities and intermittent. Any potential for nuisance effects on residential or recreational amenity during construction would be strictly controlled in accordance with a CEMP and relevant GEMPs.
- 6.5.20 During operation, due to the nature of the Proposed Development as a strategic transmission hub there is limited potential for emissions to air from the Site components, and there will be no permanent staff based at the Site, only intermittently e.g. for maintenance, which would not generate a significant amount of traffic emissions.
- 6.5.21 In regard to climate, in the context of the EIA process, climate is assessed both in relation to the contribution of the Proposed Development to increasing or decreasing the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions, and the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to climate change.
- 6.5.22 The contribution to climate change is not assessed further in this EIA Report. The integrated impact assessment produced for NPF4, led to the following conclusion within NPF4:
- “the lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions assessment concludes this development [Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission] will likely have an overall net positive impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets”<sup>5</sup>.*
- 6.5.23 This is because of the role that renewable energy, and the necessary transmission infrastructure, provides in meeting the national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.
- 6.5.24 In relation to climate adaptation, the design and location of the Proposed Development has considered the potential risk posed by increased flood risk (further details provided in Volume 2, Chapter 12: Hydrology,

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<sup>5</sup> National Planning Framework 4 ([www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)).



Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils). The Proposed Development has been designed to provide adequate capacity to contain flooding within the drainage network for a critical 1 in 30 year storm event, and flood water generated for up to a 1 in 200 year (plus climate change allowance of 42 %) storm event. There is 1 in 1000-year rainfall return period protection for critical equipment, which the Proposed Development platform is classified as. The intention is to reduce potential risks to the electricity assets so that repairs and upgrades are less frequent. Therefore, likely significant effects are not anticipated.

6.5.25 Based on the above, air quality and climate has been scoped out of the EIA Report.

#### *Disposal and Recovery of Waste*

6.5.26 The materials and waste associated with construction activities will be captured and addressed within a Materials Management Plan and Site Waste Management Plan which will form part of the Principal Contractor's CEMP. This will include use of recycled materials, efficient use of materials to minimise waste, and other waste management measures.

6.5.27 To minimise the generation of waste, the Site's design seeks to reduce the quantity of material excavated to create the platform and aims to reuse suitable material on site as far as is practicable in the new landscaping. This will help minimise the off-site deposition of material as far as is practicable. Surplus materials are likely to comprise soils and rock, and it is expected the Contractor would seek suitable off-site facilities to allow the material to be re-used or recycled, in line with the Waste Hierarchy. Considering the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, significant effects on material assets and waste are not anticipated and are therefore not assessed further in this EIA Report.

#### *Decommissioning*

6.5.28 As detailed in **Volume 2: Chapter 3 - Description of the Proposed Development**, in the event of decommissioning, or replacement, it is anticipated that the level of effect would be similar but less than during construction. Decommissioning would follow best practice processes and methods applicable at that time and would be managed through a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan agreed with the relevant authority. This EIAR does not include a separate assessment of decommissioning.

## **6.6 EIA Regulations**

6.6.1 The 2017 EIA Regulations introduced a number of factors to be considered within an EIA Report; specifically, those factors listed under Regulations 4(3) and 4(4), and Schedule 4. **Table 6.2** describes how this EIA Report has addressed these factors.

**Table 6.2 – Assessment of Factors Identified in Regulations 4(3), 4(4) and Schedule 4**

Topic	Potential for Significant Effects
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 16 Socio-economics</b> considers the potential effects on population. <b>Volume 1: Chapter 6 - Scope and Consultation</b> considers potential effects on air and climate under Part 6.5: Scoped-out Issues.
<b>Biodiversity (in particular species and habitats protected under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora)</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 9 – Ornithology</b> and <b>Volume 2: Chapter 10 – Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> considers the potential effects on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
<b>Water, Land and Soils (and natural resource availability)</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 13 - Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils</b> considers the potential effects on the water environment.

Topic	Potential for Significant Effects
<b>Air and Climate</b>	<b>Volume 1: Chapter 6 - Scope and Consultation</b> considers potential effects on air and climate under Part 6.5: Scoped-out Issues.
<b>Material Assets</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 11 - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage</b> , includes an assessment of the potential for significant effects on material assets and cultural heritage including archaeological assets and historic landscapes.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 11 - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage</b> , includes an assessment of the potential for significant effects on cultural heritage including archaeological assets and historic landscapes.
<b>Landscape</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 8 - Landscape Character and Visual Amenity</b> considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape.
<b>Major Accidents and Disasters</b>	<b>Volume 1: Chapter 6 - Scope and Consultation</b> considers potential effects relating to major accidents and disasters under Part 6.5: Scoped-out Issues.
<b>Interaction Between Factors (cumulative effects)</b>	<b>Volume 2: Chapter 5 - EIA Process and Methodology</b> outlines the approach to cumulative effects, which is considered within each of the technical chapters ( <b>Volume 2 and 6</b> ), where appropriate. It is also considered in <b>Volume 2: Chapter 17 – Cumulative Effects</b> (Effect Interactions).