

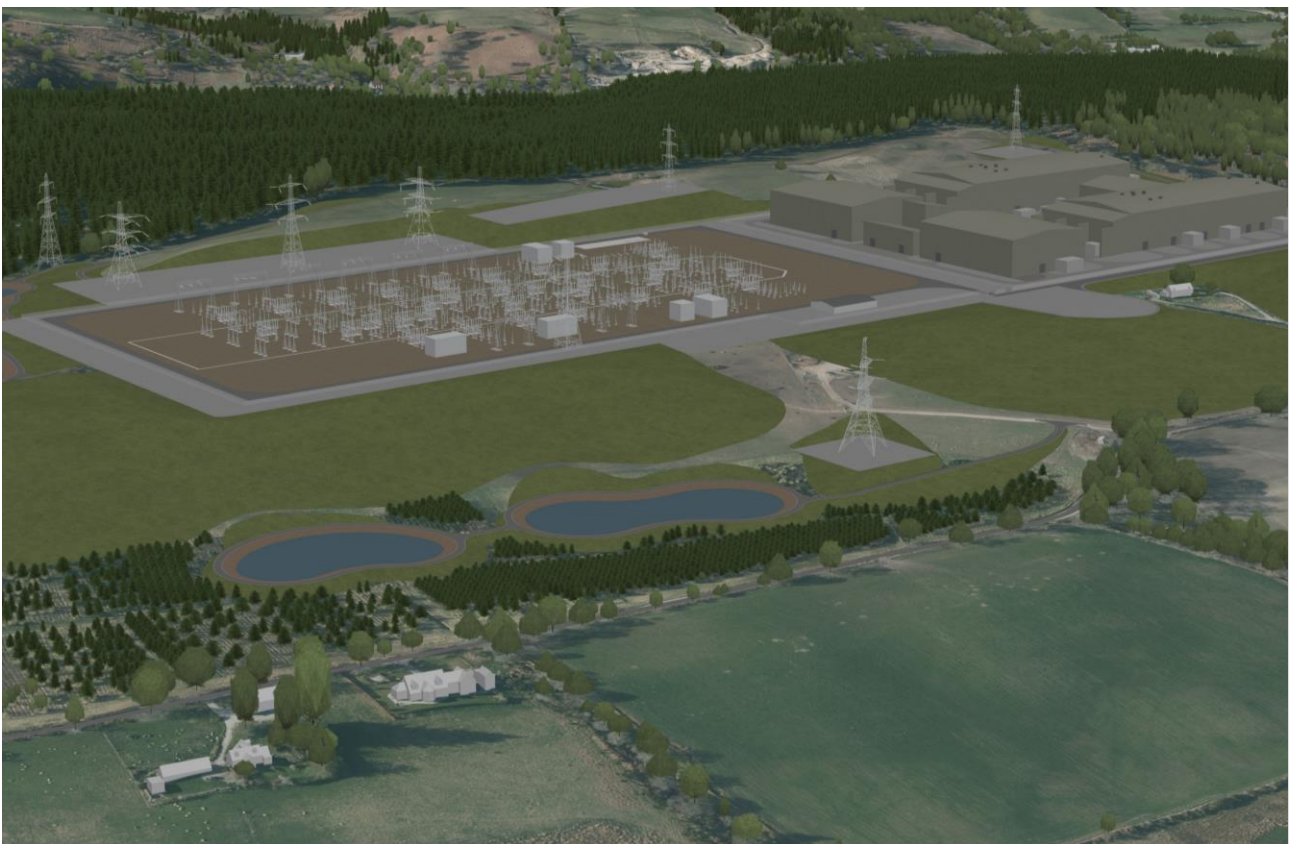
**Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks**

# SSEN Transmission – Fanellan 400kV Substation and Converter Station

## Outdoor Access Plan

Reference: LT459

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

Following a consultation response from The Highland Council's (THC) Access Officer this Outdoor Access Plan (OAP) has been prepared by ARUP on behalf of SSEN Transmission (the Applicant) to confirm how public access rights will be managed for the proposed Fanellan Substation (Proposed Development).

This OAP will be reviewed by the Principal Contractor in advance of construction and should any changes be required this OAP would be updated and submitted to The Highland Council Access Officer for consultation.

## 1.2 Methodology

This OAP has been prepared in line with the requirements set out in the NatureScot's "A Brief Guide to Preparing an Outdoor Access Plan" (SNH, February 2010). The NatureScot guidance stipulates that there should be five steps set out within an Outdoor Access Plan, notably –

- **Step 1:** Identify purpose, aims & objectives of the Outdoor Access Plan.
- **Step 2:** Establish access baseline affected by the development proposal.
- **Step 3:** Identify predicted development impacts on the outdoor access baseline.
- **Step 4:** Mitigate the predicted development impacts, and design potential enhancements.
- **Step 5:** Manage and monitor the implementation of the outdoor access plan.

This OAP has been structured to broadly follow the steps detailed above.

# 2. Description of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is a new 400kV substation and a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) converter station to be located at a single site at Fanellan, near Beaully within the Highland Council local authority area. The Proposed Development includes:

- The creation of a platform approximately 810 x 305 metres (m) (comprising 305 x 525m substation platform and 305 x 285m converter station platform);
- A new 400kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) and busbar Substation;
- An AIS control building of 50m x 26m, with a maximum height of approximately 7m;
- Step-Down Transformers which will provide the site with Low Voltage Alternating Current (LVAC) supply;
- 525kV 1.8GW High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Converter Station comprising Valve Hall, Direct Current Hall, Reactor Hall, Transformer Hall with adjacent Service and Control Rooms with largest building approx. 160m x 80m, max height 27.5 m);
- Smaller ancillary and HVDC support buildings;
- Connection to the AC site via overhead busbar;
- Connection for the Underground Cable (UGC) for the associated development (that will run approximately 80km from Dundonnell to Fanellan) that forms part of the Western Isles HVDC Link;

- Creation of a new permanent access track and junction to public road;
- Creation of additional access tracks for construction and operation;
- Creation of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including maintenance access;
- Security fencing around the platform area at total 4.2 m in height;
- Site clearance activities including some tree felling;
- Creation of temporary construction compound and lay down areas; and
- Earthworks, Landscaping mitigation and biodiversity enhancement.

## 2.1 Other development

Associated development of the Beaully Denny OHL Diversion at Fanellan is also considered in this OAP. That development will form part of a separate Section 37 Electricity Act 1989 application but is in close proximity and associated with the Proposed Development.

Public access for works at Black Bridge, which will form part of the access route for the Proposed Development will be considered separately as part of that package of works but where relevant are referred to throughout this OAP.

# 3. Access Baseline and Potential Impacts

Although rights of way do exist in Scotland, they are not identified as such on Ordnance Survey maps. Instead, they may be shown simply as paths or tracks, without any formal legal designation. Unlike in England and Wales, there is no definitive map of rights of way in Scotland, and these routes can be lost through non-use over a period of 20 years or more. The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays) is responsible for investigating suspected rights of way, but this often requires evidence of continuous public use over the past two decades. To gather this information, ScotWays may distribute questionnaires to local residents and users of the path.

In addition to rights of way, Core Paths form an essential part of Scotland's access network. Defined by local authorities under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and supported by ScotWays, Core Paths are intended to provide reasonable public access across each council area. These routes often include rights of way but also encompass other paths and tracks that are important to local communities and visitors alike.

Ramblers' paths, while not a formal legal category, refer to well-used walking routes that are popular with the public. These may follow traditional rights of way, Core Paths, or informal tracks across open countryside. Although not always legally protected, ramblers' paths are vital for recreational access and are often maintained by local authorities, community groups, or walking organisations such as Ramblers Scotland. Their regular use can also serve as valuable evidence when establishing or defending a right of way.

## 3.1 Core Paths

There are no core paths that will be impacted by the Proposed Development. Core paths identified within 1km of the Redline Boundary (RLB) are shown in Figure 3-1 and Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Core Paths**

Core Path	Route Reference	Distance from Site Boundary
East Lodge to West Lodge, Beaufort Castle	IN20.05	100m
Home Farm to Hughton by Lonbuie	IN20.11	700m



Core Path	Route Reference	Distance from Site Boundary
Lovat Bridge to Black Bridge	IN03.04	350m
Old Mill Track	IN20.08	1000m

### 3.2 Other Recreational Routes

Several forestry tracks are located within 1 kilometre of the Proposed Development and associated development of Beauly Denny OHL diversion. These tracks are likely used for recreational activities such as hiking, horse riding, and mountain biking, as well as access to the River Beauly for water sports and fishing. Notably, one path within the Red Line Boundary (RLB) to Ruttle Wood from the Fanellan Road, which is listed on the Ramblers' paths, splits into two distinct routes as shown in Figure 3-1 Core and recreational paths.

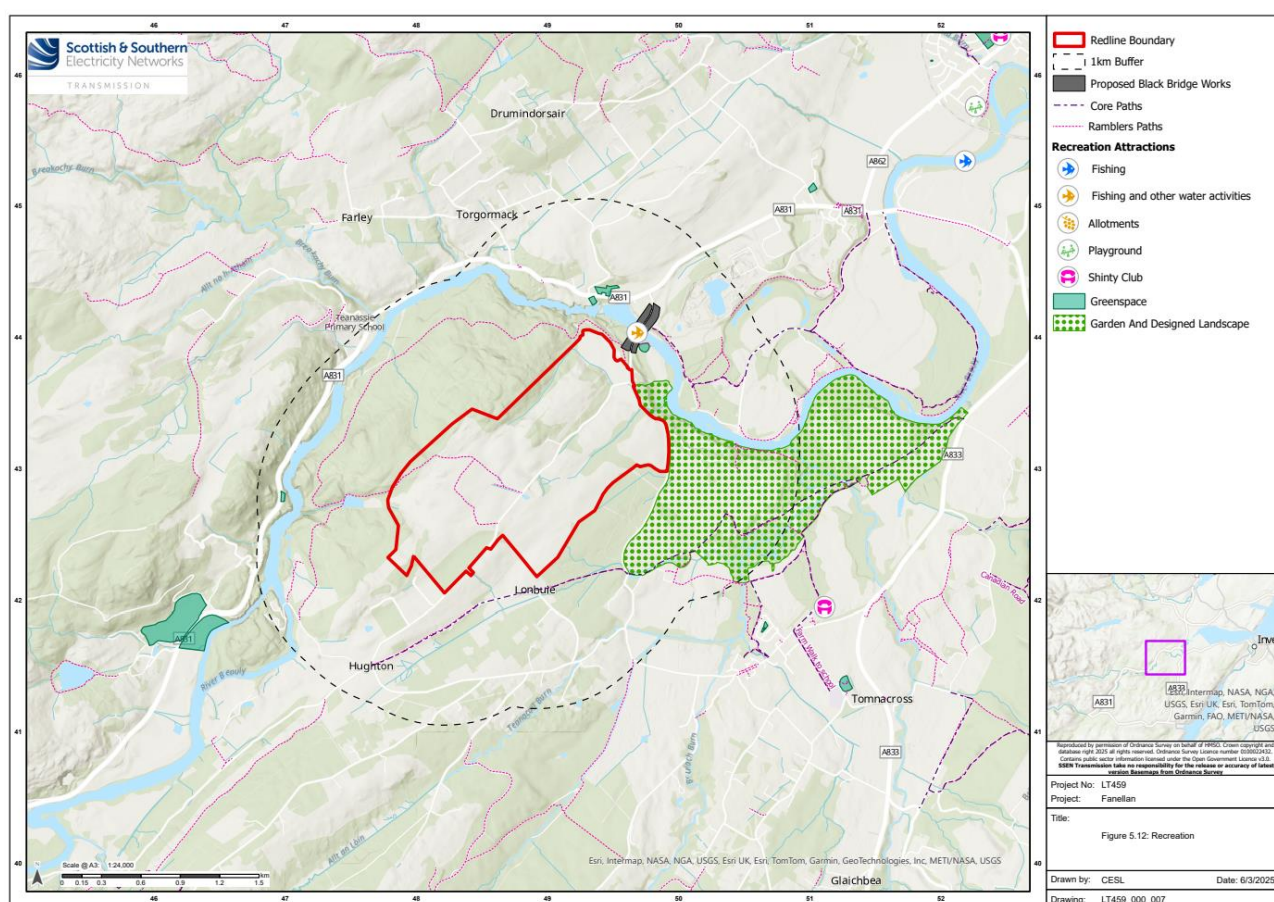


Figure 3-1 Core and recreational paths

### 3.3 Potential Access Impacts

The main access impact will occur during the construction phase. No permanent access restrictions are expected during the operational phase. SSEN Transmission and its contractors are committed to minimising disruption.

However, two ramblers paths through the centre of the site will be permanently removed to accommodate the Hub platform. Once operational, public access will be rerouted along the new permanent access track around the Hub, connecting Ruttle Wood and to the new bellmouth at Butlers Field, as shown on Figure 5-1 Access Map.

The key access points affected are:

- Two ramblers paths (permanently)
- Forest tracks through Ruttle Wood (temporarily)

Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, public access may be temporarily restricted for construction, civil engineering, or demolition works. Accordingly, access to construction areas will be restricted during works to ensure public and worker safety. Temporary fencing and clear signage will be used to enforce this.

The two central ramblers' paths will be permanently closed as part of the development. Public access through Ruttle Wood will be maintained, with temporary diversions and signage guiding users around the site. Once construction is complete, access will be restored via the new site access track.

Consultation with the Local Access Officer and stakeholders will determine the extent and format of signage. Examples are provided in Appendix A2.

Regarding Core Path IN03.04, the Highland Council's Access Officer raised concerns about potential impacts in relation to works required on the Black Bridge. These works are not part of the current Fanellan planning application, and access to the Core Path will remain unchanged for now. For future works affecting the bridge, they will be addressed under a separate planning process. Should SSEN Transmission be responsible for work to Black Bridge they will ensure continued access to Core Path IN03.04 and associated parking, with further consultation as needed.

## 4. Access Mitigation

Measures to mitigate potential safety issues arising from the interaction between outdoor access users and construction traffic are set out in this section of the OAP and shown in Figure 5-1 Access Map.. These include a 15 mph speed limit for all construction vehicles on private roads and tracks, enforced with temporary signage. Warning signs will also be placed to alert the public to construction activities and vehicle movements, particularly during periods of heavy traffic.

The main public interface will be the ramblers' paths through the centre of the site, where advance warning signage will be installed, including contact details for further information. The temporary diversion route through the woods will be established and clearly signposted on existing paths, to ensure the diversion connects the ramblers paths in Ruttle Wood and Fanellan Road. Signage will guide users along the diversion and indicate any closures or restrictions. Once construction is complete, the public will be able to use the new permanent access track around the Hub as a replacement for the removed ramblers' paths, connecting Butlers Field to the south side of Ruttle Wood.

Fanellan Road will remain open to all users, managed with appropriate health and safety signage. Due to the proximity of Ruttle Wood and the existing ramblers' paths, all site personnel will be briefed to keep perimeter fencing secure and to ensure the track between Ruttle Wood and the closed ramblers' paths remains inaccessible. At the same time, all other paths through Ruttle Wood will remain open and unobstructed.

In the event of an incident or change in circumstances, key stakeholders—including the THC's Outdoor Access Officer—will be notified to assess the situation and agree on any necessary changes to the plan. Throughout construction, the site boundaries will be clearly marked and signed to prevent unintentional or unsupervised public access.

At key work locations, construction teams will be briefed to direct any members of the public to a designated contact person. Any public interactions or incidents will be reported to site management, reviewed weekly, and addressed as needed. Health and safety signage will be installed at the site entrance, along with additional signs displaying the site name, construction period, and directions to avoid the site boundary.

Efforts will be made to maintain public access to existing routes and trails throughout construction, except for the central ramblers' paths, which will be permanently removed for safety reasons. These will be replaced by the new access track during the operational phase.

To keep the public informed, access arrangements and safety information will be communicated before construction begins through the community liaison group, project website, signage, and local mailings. Any short-term access restrictions will be communicated through the same channels. These measures aim to ensure that the public is aware of construction hazards and that workers are trained to manage public access risks and minimise disruption.

## 5. Conclusion

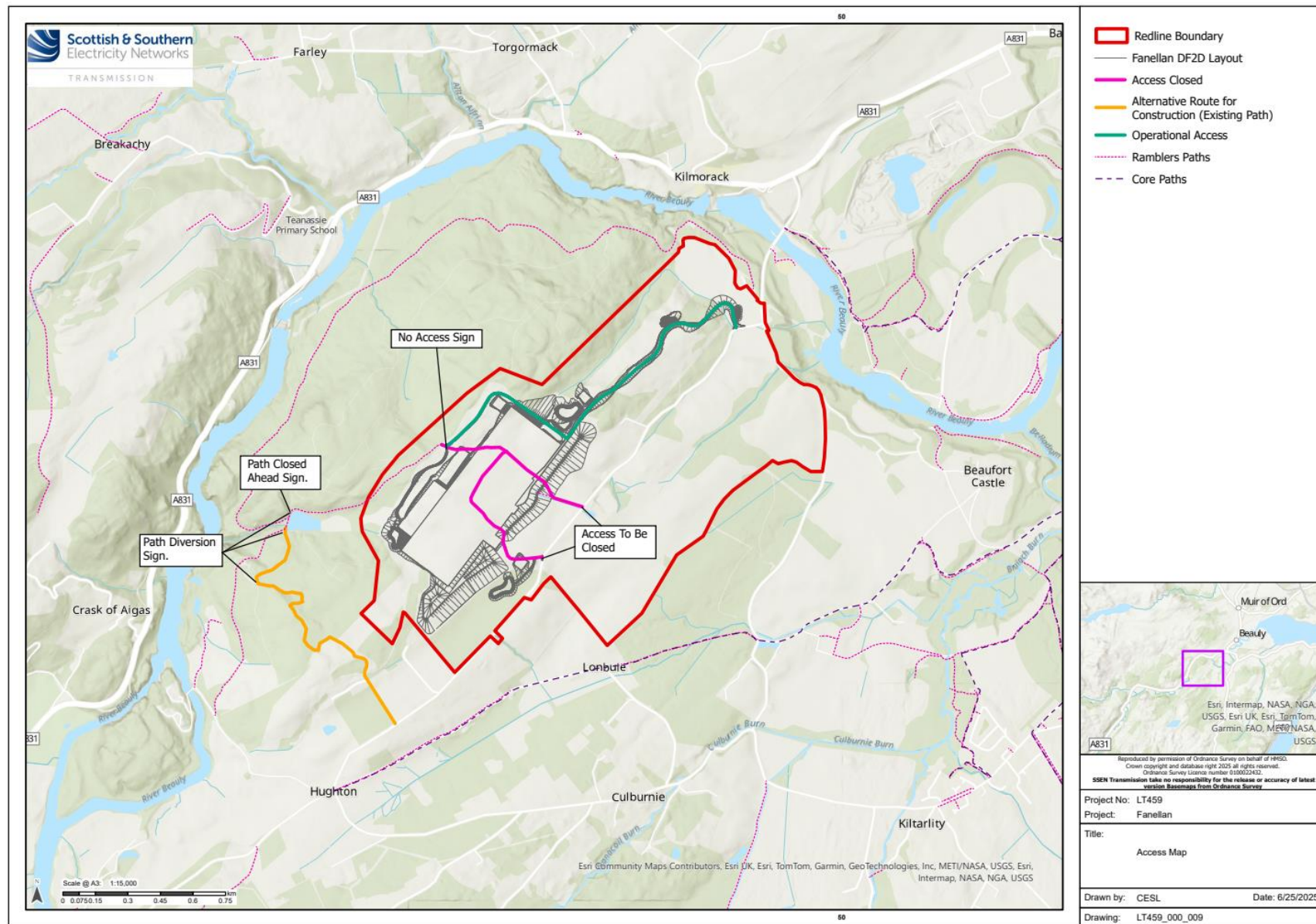
As outlined in this document, SSEN Transmission is committed to maintaining safe public access to the Ruttle Wood access tracks throughout the construction phase of the Proposed Development and after construction, during the operational phase. While part of the existing ramblers' paths through the centre of the site will be permanently removed—becoming part of the construction and operational footprint—alternative access will be provided to enable the continued use of the path network within Ruttle Wood. A new permanent site access track will be established around the Hub, ensuring continued public access once the Proposed Development is operational.

With the implementation of the outlined safety and access management measures, including clear signage, speed restrictions, diversion routes, and ongoing stakeholder communication, public access can be maintained wherever possible without compromising safety.

The Principal Contractor will review this OAP prior to the commencement of construction. Should any update to this OAP be required further consultation would be undertaken with THC's Access Officer prior to commencement of construction on site.



# A.1 Access Map



**Figure 5-1 Access Map**

## A.2 Sample Site Signage

