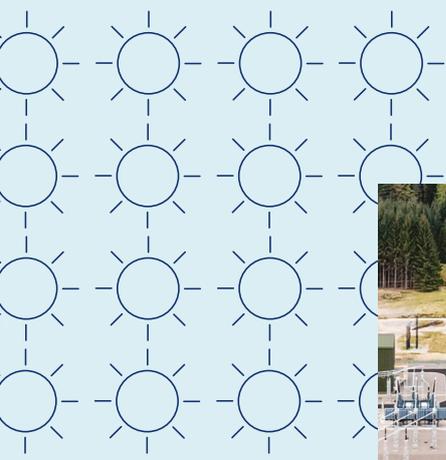


New Spittal area 400kV substation and HVDC converter station (Banniskirk Hub)

Pre-Application Consultation

March 2024

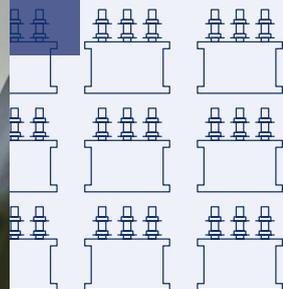


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The consultation event will be taking place on:

11 March 2024 - Ross Institute, Halkirk, KW12 6XZ - 2pm-7pm



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 National Grid Electricity System Operator 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 £20 billion into our region's energy infrastructure this decade, powering more than ten million UK homes and 20,000 jobs, 9,000 of which will be here in Scotland.



Find out more

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to find out more about how these policies have been assessed and determined. bit.ly/3SYgNFs

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/subsea cables, and overhead lines (OHL) 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

The Pathway to 2030

Building the energy system of the future will require delivery of significant infrastructure over the next few years. In partnership with the UK and Scottish Governments, we're committed to meeting our obligation of connecting new, renewable energy to where it's needed by 2030.

Achieving net zero

By 2030, both the UK and Scottish Governments are targeting a big expansion in offshore wind generation of 50GW and 11GW respectively. The Scottish Government has also set ambitious targets for an additional 12GW of onshore wind by 2030.

Across Great Britain, including the north of Scotland, there needs to be a significant increase in the capacity of the onshore electricity transmission infrastructure to deliver these 2030 targets and a pathway to net zero.

Securing our energy future

And it's not just about net zero. It's also about building a homegrown energy system, so that geopolitical turmoil around the world doesn't severely impact the UK and push up energy prices. The UK Government's British Energy Security Strategy further underlines the need for this infrastructure, setting out plans to accelerate homegrown power for greater energy independence.

The strategy aims to reduce the UK's dependence on and price exposure to global gas wholesale markets through the deployment of homegrown low carbon electricity generation supported by robust electricity network infrastructure.

Meeting our 2030 targets

In July 2022, National Grid, the Electricity System Operator (ESO), published the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND).

This set out the blueprint for the onshore and offshore transmission infrastructure that's required to support the forecasted growth in the UK's renewable electricity.

It's an ambitious plan that will help the UK achieve net zero.

What does this mean for you?

The north of Scotland will play a key role in meeting these goals. The extensive studies that informed the ESO's Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design confirmed the requirement to reinforce the onshore corridor between Spittal and Beaulieu, and an offshore subsea cable link between Spittal and Peterhead.

Providing a 400kV overhead line and high voltage subsea cable (HVDC) connection between these sites provides the significant capacity required to take power from large-scale onshore and offshore renewable generation (mainly wind farms), connecting into the north of Scotland before transporting power to areas of demand.

As part of these plans, we're proposing to build a new 400kV overhead line (OHL) between Spittal and Beaulieu via Loch Buidhe. This requires three new 400kV substations to be constructed at Spittal, Loch Buidhe and Beaulieu to enable future connections and export routes to areas of demand. In addition, high voltage converter stations are also required to convert AC electricity to DC (and vice versa), from the offshore subsea connection from between Spittal and Peterhead. These connections will also allow offshore and onshore renewable generation to connect to the reinforced electricity network.

As such, these projects have been highlighted as critical to enable the delivery of the UK and Scottish governments' 2030 net zero targets, with a requirement for accelerated development and delivery.

Future network investment requirements

Our 2030 targets will only get us so far on the transition to net zero. The UK Government has a target to decarbonise our electricity system by 2035 and fully decarbonise our economy by becoming net zero by 2050, with the Scottish Government committing to net zero five years earlier, by 2045.

To achieve these targets, further investment in new low carbon electricity generation and the enabling electricity transmission network infrastructure will be required. The next stage of strategic network planning across Great Britain is underway and we expect the independent Electricity System Operator, National Grid ESO, to publish details of this in March this year. It is expected this will include a combination of new onshore and offshore network requirements.

New Spittal area 400kV substation and HVDC converter station (Banniskirk Hub)

-  New infrastructure
-  Upgrade/replacement of existing infrastructure
-  Existing network



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.

We are proposing to construct a new strategic transmission hub approximately 12km to the south of Thurso, near the settlement of Spittal in Caithness. Currently, the majority of the site comprises rough grassland used for cattle/ sheep grazing, with a small (approximately 6 ha) area of coniferous woodland present along the western edge, bordering the A9 trunk road.

The hub will allow the proposed new 400kV substation and HVDC converter station to be located on the same site.

The proposed development is being progressed as a separate project from other SSEN Transmission projects such as the proposed new 400kV Spittal to Beauly Overhead Line and the Spittal to Peterhead HVDC subsea cable link.

We are keen to hear your feedback regarding our strategic hub and if there are further considerations you believe need to be taken into account during the next stage of the development process.

Key components of the Banniskirk Hub

400kV substation

A 400kV substation is required to support offshore and onshore electricity generation. The substation will be based on Construction of a new outdoor, Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) design.

HVDC converter station

This converter station and associated high voltage direct current (HVDC) underground and subsea cable will transport renewable energy from generators in the north of Scotland via Spittal in Caithness to the Nethererton Hub near Peterhead and on to demand centres throughout the UK.

Naming our site

To avoid confusion with the nearby Spittal 275kV substation, the name for this new hub was selected as Banniskirk Hub.

Going forward, for the next consultation and submission of our planning application, the name will be formally changed to Banniskirk Hub.



Aerial view of proposed Hub site



Example of an outdoor AIS substation

Banniskirk 400kV substation

The substation is required to support offshore and onshore electricity generation and transmission, and future generation from third-party developers.

The 400kV substation platform will be a level area of approx. 580m by 350m. The Alternating Current (AC) substation will contain switchgear, transformers and synchronous condensers with control buildings.

The proposed development will also consist of:

- Security fencing;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for drainage;
- Internal roads for access and maintenance;
- Planting for the purposes of visual screening, landscape improvement and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG);
- Cut and fill earthworks as required to enable the above;
- Temporary construction compounds and material storage areas for the duration of the construction phase.



Super grid transformer

What is a substation?

Substations play an essential role managing electricity flow around the country and improving the reliability of supply. They achieve this by connecting and disconnecting circuits and converting electricity into different voltages using large equipment called supergrid transformers.

A new 400kV overhead line between Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beaully is proposed to connect to the 400kV substation.

Project overview

Spittal to Peterhead HVDC converter station

A High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) converter station is proposed for the Banniskirk Hub. Spittal to Peterhead HVDC converter station and over 200km of HVDC underground and subsea cable will transport renewable energy from generators in the far north of Scotland via Spittal in Caithness to the Netheron Hub near Peterhead for onward transmission to demand centres throughout the UK.

You can find more information on this major subsea project here: ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/spittal--peterhead-subsea-cable-link/

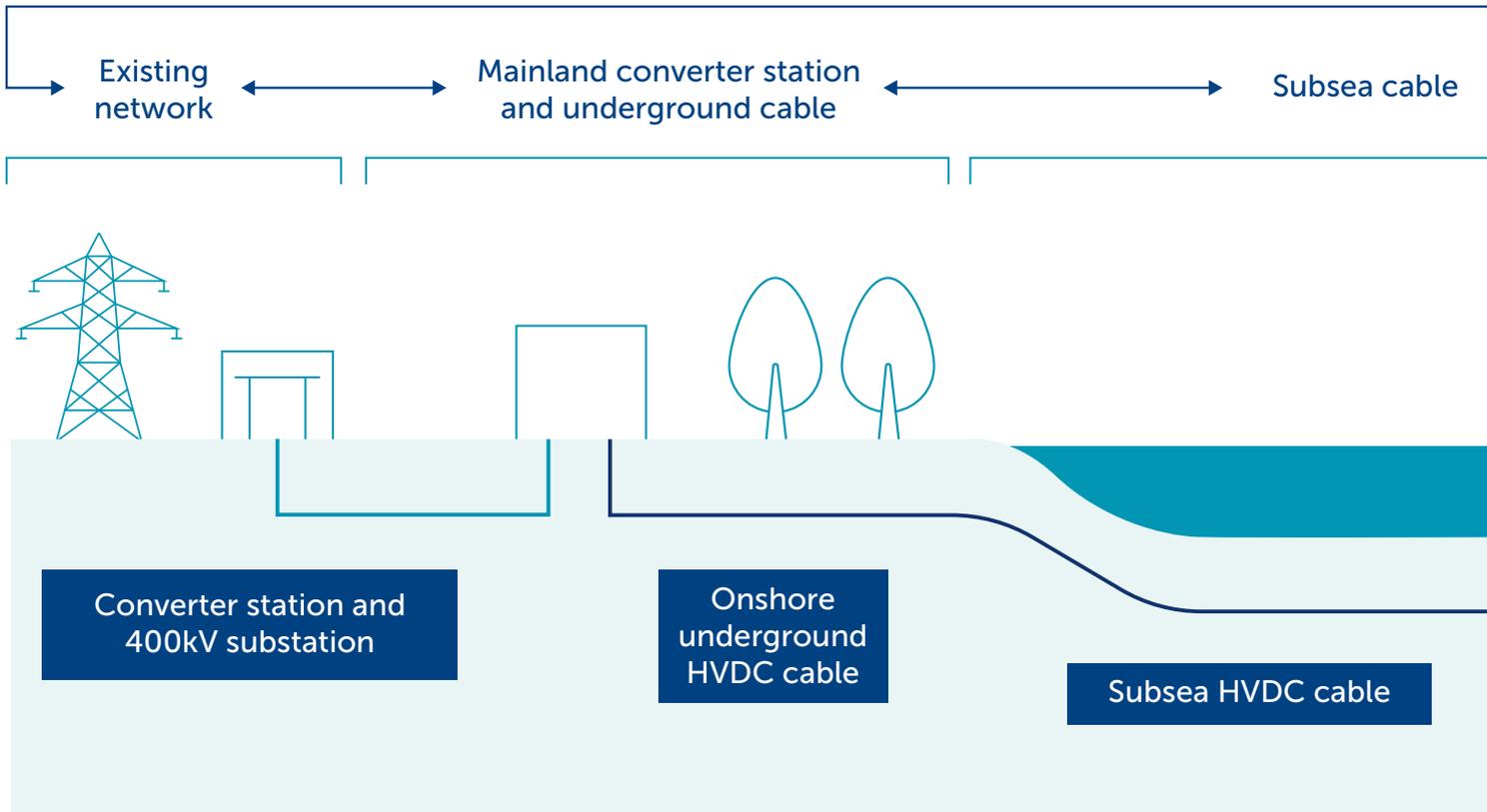
What is a converter station?

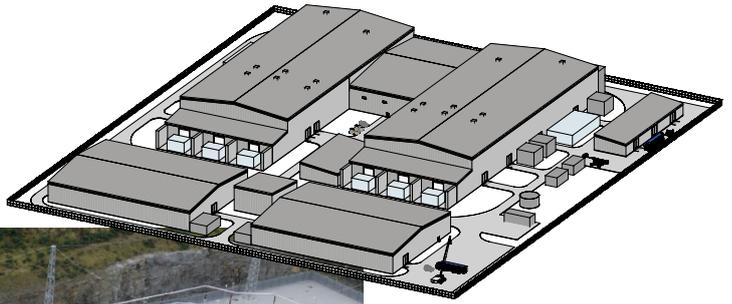
Converter stations change electricity from alternating current (AC) to direct current (DC), or vice versa.

Alternating current is used in households, whereas direct current is used to efficiently transport electricity over long distances, such as via subsea cables, with fewer electrical losses.

Dimensions of a standard converter station design are 200m by 170m by 29m in height. The final dimensions will depend on the final design and technology choice.

Diagram illustrating HVDC converter station and subsea cable projects

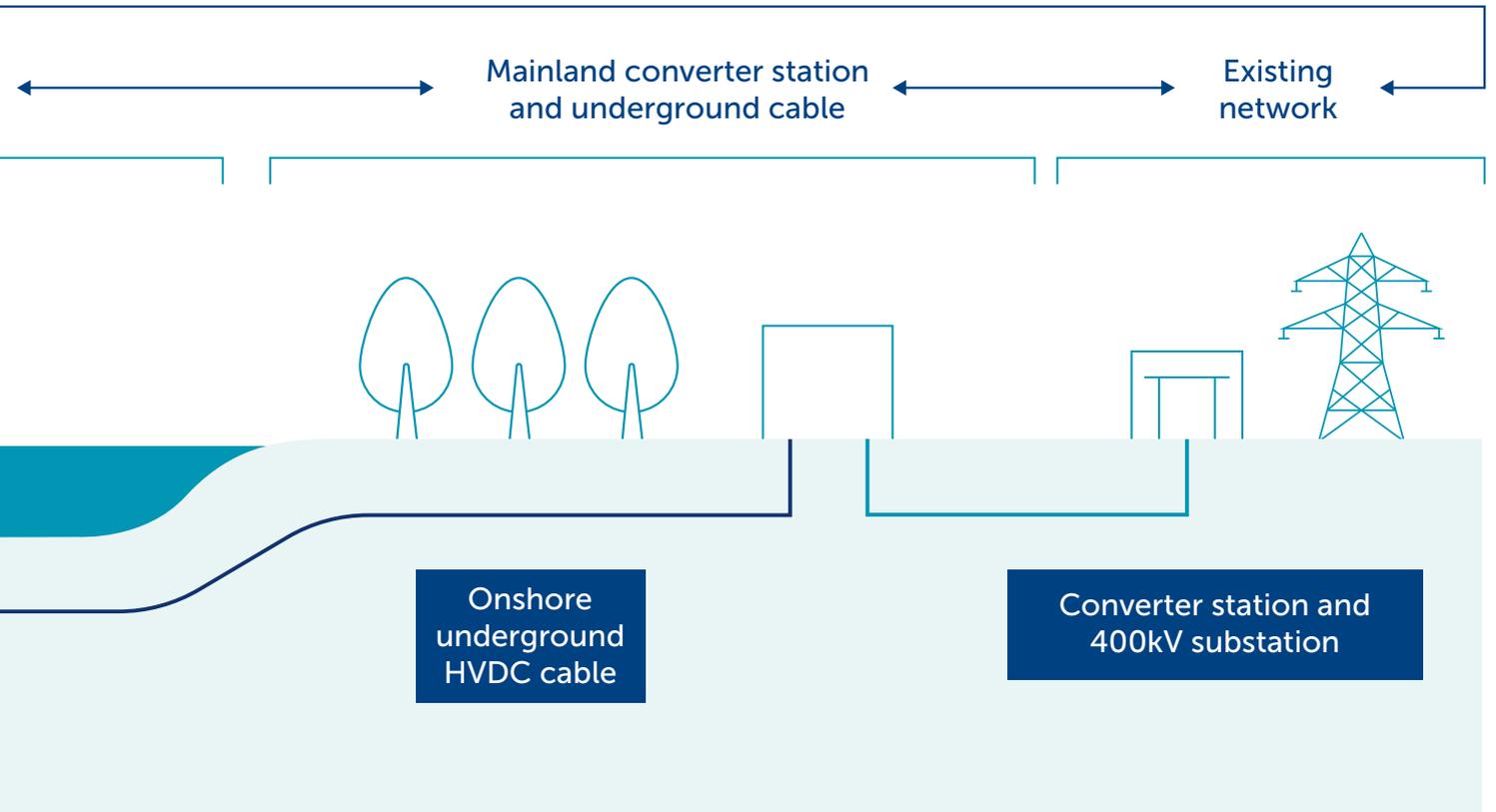




Indicative conceptual design for 2GW 525kV Bipole converter station.



The 320kV DC 1200MW Blackhillock HVDC converter station



Help shape our plans

The work we have planned is significant and has the potential to deliver massive benefits in your community, Scotland, and beyond. Yet we know that achieving our goals will require a lot of work that will impact your lives. That's why we want to work with you every step of the way throughout the planning and delivery stages of these essential and ambitious works.

We're committed to delivering a meaningful consultation process that actively seeks the views of everyone affected by our plans. That means making our plans clear and easily accessible, so that you can give us input throughout each stage of the development process.

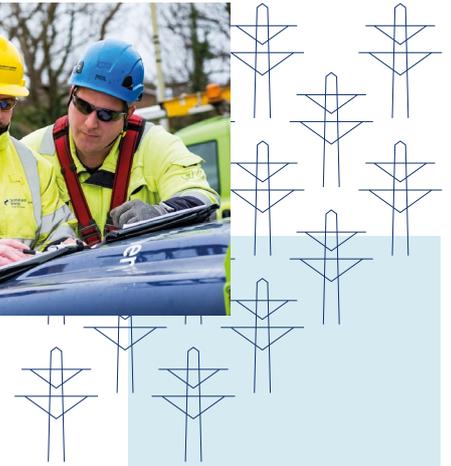
Throughout the consultation, we'll present our approach to developing the project, including changes made since we last consulted with you. We will also provide some visualisations and maps to show you where everything will be located.

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 any changes and refinements we've made. 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.

Because, ultimately, we want you to work with us to ensure that the energy infrastructure we build will be the best it can possibly be.

Who we are consulting with

As well as communities, we are keen to hear feedback from a broad range of other stakeholders including but not limited to landowners, businesses, non-statutory consultees and statutory consultees such as local authorities, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES).



The Town and Country Planning process

The legislation that enables the planning of projects like Banniskirk Hub, is the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Engaging the right people

Local Planning Authorities determine the outcome of any applications made under the Town and Country Planning Act and establish the planning pathway our substation and HVDC converter station projects must take, including which consents are required.

To accompany the Town and Country Planning application, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. This will identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of the proposed development and set out mitigation measures designed to reduce the potential impacts.

A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion was submitted to The Highland Council in December 2023. The request for a Scoping Opinion is made to identify the scope of impacts to be addressed and the method of assessment to be applied in the EIA Report which is prepared and submitted with the Planning Application.

The Banniskirk 400kV substation project is classed as "National Development" under the Town and County Planning process; therefore, pre-application consultation is required with the public and interested parties.

The pre-application process

A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to The Highland Council on 26 January 2024, with an addendum submitted on 13 February 2024. This is the first stage in the planning application process, and the beginning of a consultation period that must allow for at least 12 weeks between the start of the pre-application consultation and feedback, and submission of a planning application.

The plans we are consulting on at this event might change between now and the submission of a planning application. The red line boundary that has been submitted with the PAN represents the maximum extent of the land potentially included in the application site, but this area may be reduced or rationalised as the development proposal becomes finalised.

There is a requirement to hold at least two events to provide the opportunity for members of the public to comment on the proposals. This public event is the first event. A second event will be held in June 2024 at which feedback will be given on the views obtained at the first event. There will also be a short opportunity for comment during this second event and comments will be included in a Pre-application Consultation Report.

Submitting a planning application

The planning application is due to be submitted to The Highland Council in summer 2024. A Pre-application Consultation Report will accompany the planning application providing details of the consultation undertaken and communicating how the consultation process has influenced the proposed development. Where comments are received that cannot be addressed in the final proposal, an explanation will also be given why this is the case.

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.



How we've selected the hub site

Our site selection process makes sure the design, consenting, construction and operation of our projects are undertaken in a manner, which on balance, causes the least disturbance to the environment and the local community, while ensuring the solution taken forward is economically and technically practical.

To do this we follow an internal process supported by third party environmental and technical experts. This has many key stages, each increasing in detail and definition and bringing technical, environmental, people, and cost considerations together to find a balanced outcome.

Our proposed site: Option 12

Following our last consultation on the proposed Spittal area 400kV substation and HVDC converter station in February 2023, where we asked for your views regarding shortlisted sites, in December 2023 we confirmed that the site we were proposing to progress with was Option 12.

Why this site?

The consultation process, held last year, confirmed that the proposed site option 12 for the Spittal area 400kV substation and HVDC converter station is most appropriate to be progressed through the EIA and subsequent consenting stages:

- Located 0.6 miles from the existing Spittal 275kV substation minimising the amount of new overhead lines or cabling required to connect to the network
- Large enough to accommodate the proposed joint 400kV substation/HVDC converter station footprints, together with associated landscaping, contractor compounds, access and new connection routes
- Area does not contain environmental designations
- Enable connection routes for the proposed new 400kV overhead lines and HVDC cables
- Good access to the A9.

What has changed since we last consulted?

The site presented previously remains the same, however, the layout of the site has been revised and refined through development.

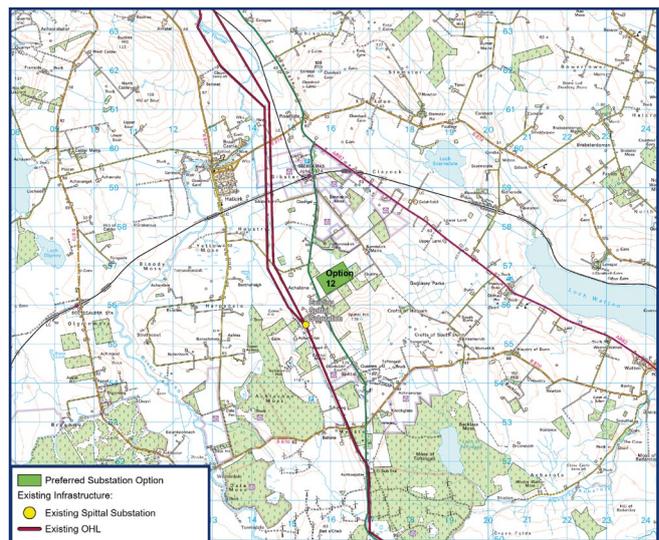
Naming our site – Banniskirk Hub

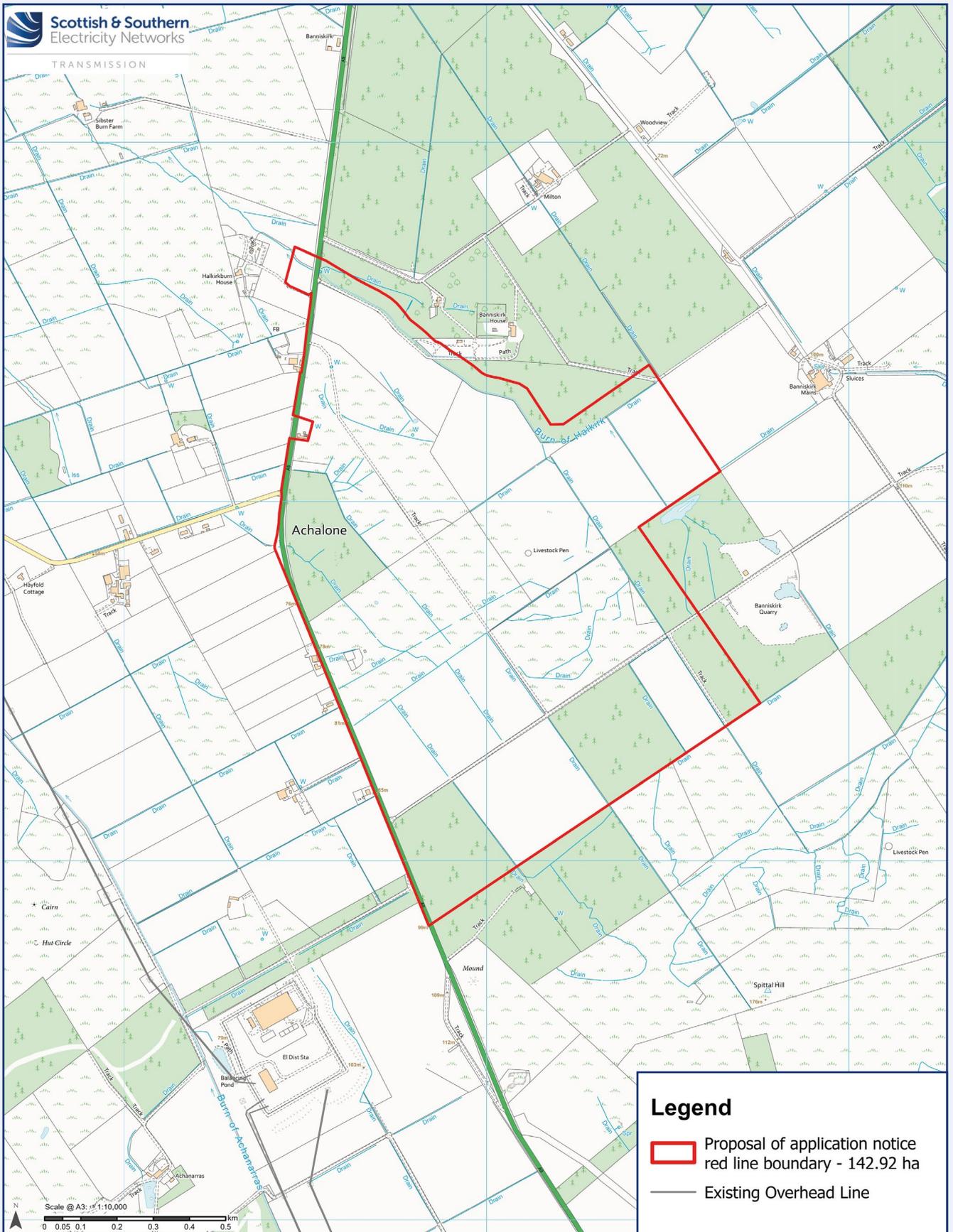
To avoid confusion with the nearby Spittal 275kV substation, the name for this new substation was selected as Banniskirk 400kV hub comprising of the 400kV substation and HVDC converter station which provides a more accurate name in relation to its location.

Going forward, for the next consultation and submission of our planning application, the name will be formally changed to Banniskirk 400kV hub.

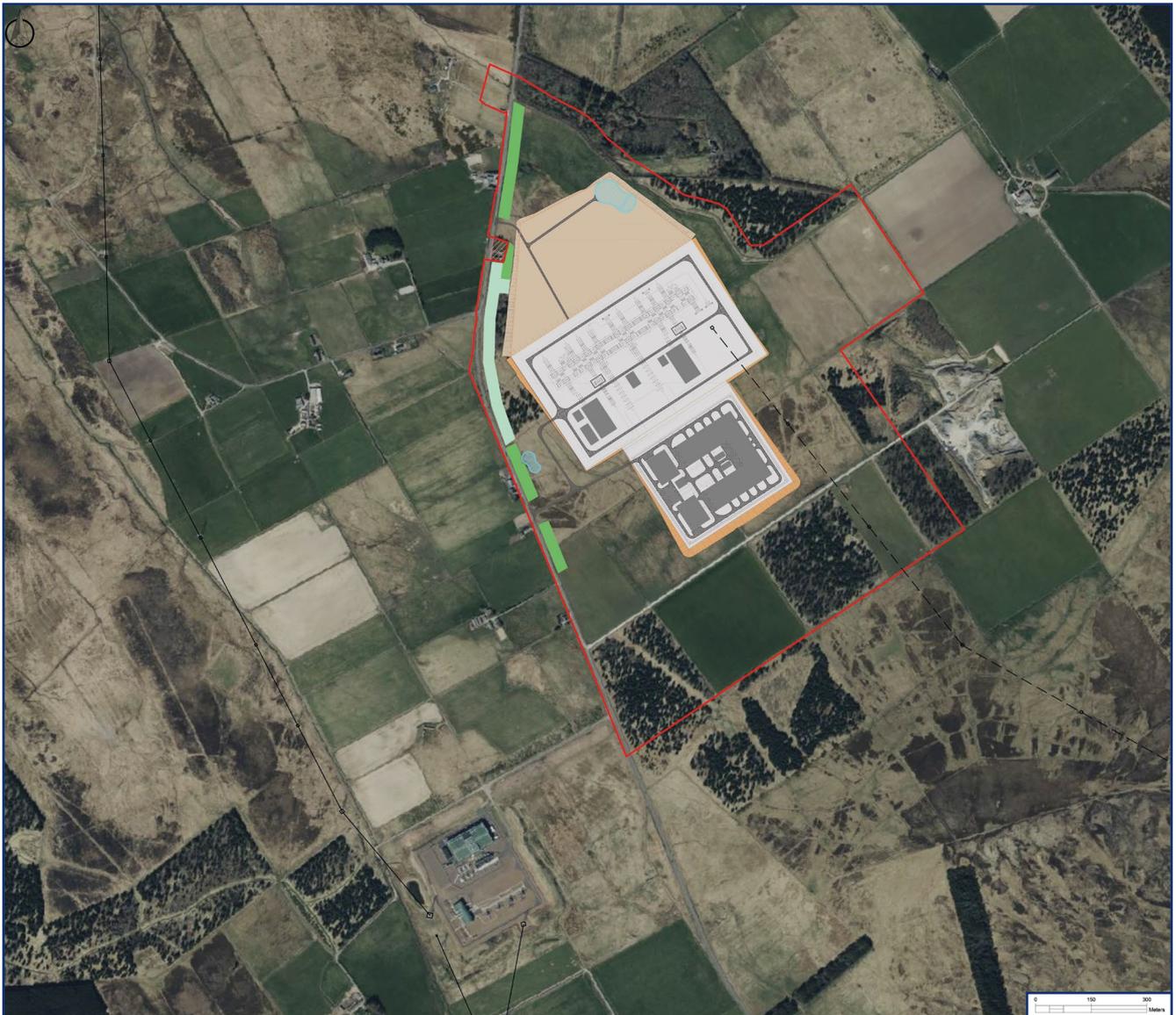
What next?

We are now at the pre-application stage of our site selection process and following this consultation, we will engage again in June, to share feedback from this consultation and any subsequent changes to design prior to submitting a planning application to the Local Authority.



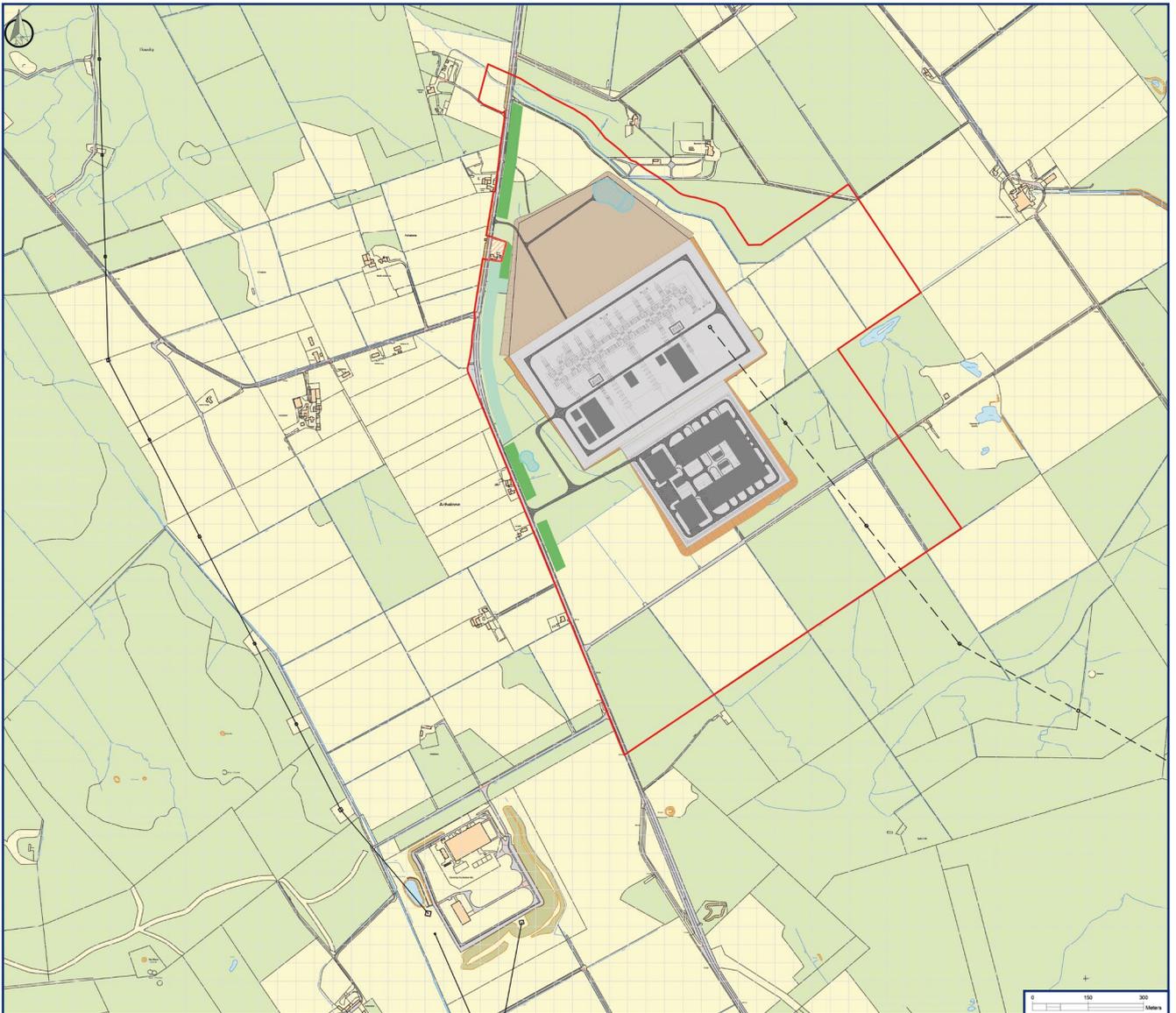


Proposed Banniskirk Hub site layout

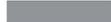


Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  PAN BOUNDARY |  POTENTIAL MOUNDED AREA |
|  INDICATIVE LOCATION OF SUDS FACILITY |  RESIDENTIAL AREA |
|  PROPOSED SUBSTATION PLATFORM |  PROPOSED SUBSTATION SUPERGRID TRANSFORMERS |
|  PROPOSED SUBSTATION PLATFORM EARTHWORKS |  PROPOSED SUBSTATION ACCESS ROADS |
|  PROPOSED EARTHWORKS FILL |  PROPOSED OVERHEAD LINE TOWER |
|  PROPOSED SUBSTATION BUILDINGS |  PROPOSED OVERHEAD LINE |
|  PLANTING MITIGATION |  EXISTING OVERHEAD LINE |



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | PAN BOUNDARY |  | POTENTIAL MOUNDED AREA |
|  | INDICATIVE LOCATION OF SUDS FACILITY |  | RESIDENTIAL AREA |
|  | PROPOSED SUBSTATION PLATFORM |  | PROPOSED SUBSTATION SUPERGRID TRANSFORMERS |
|  | PROPOSED SUBSTATION PLATFORM EARTHWORKS |  | PROPOSED SUBSTATION ACCESS ROADS |
|  | PROPOSED EARTHWORKS FILL |  | PROPOSED OVERHEAD LINE TOWER |
|  | PROPOSED SUBSTATION BUILDINGS |  | PROPOSED OVERHEAD LINE |
|  | PLANTING MITIGATION |  | EXISTING OVERHEAD LINE |

Connections into Banniskirk Hub

Connections into Banniskirk Hub are in various stages of development and are not part of this consultation process. We are presenting information below to provide an overall picture.

Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly 400kV overhead line

Extensive studies have confirmed the need for a new 400kV transmission connection between Spittal and Beauly, connecting into substation site near Loch Buidhe. This connection will be provided via an overhead line (OHL), approximately 167km in length and consisting of steel lattice towers (commonly referred to as pylons) likely to average around 57m in height.

ssen-transmission.co.uk/SLBB

Local renewable developments

We know that local stakeholders are keen to understand the full extent of renewable developments being proposed in their local area.

Applications from the likes of wind farms to connect to the transmission network are made to National Grid ESO and undergo a lengthy process before we begin to develop a network connection for developments applying in our license area.

We aim to be transparent about the renewable developments looking to connect to our network but are not permitted to disclose any details of these developments until they are in the public domain.

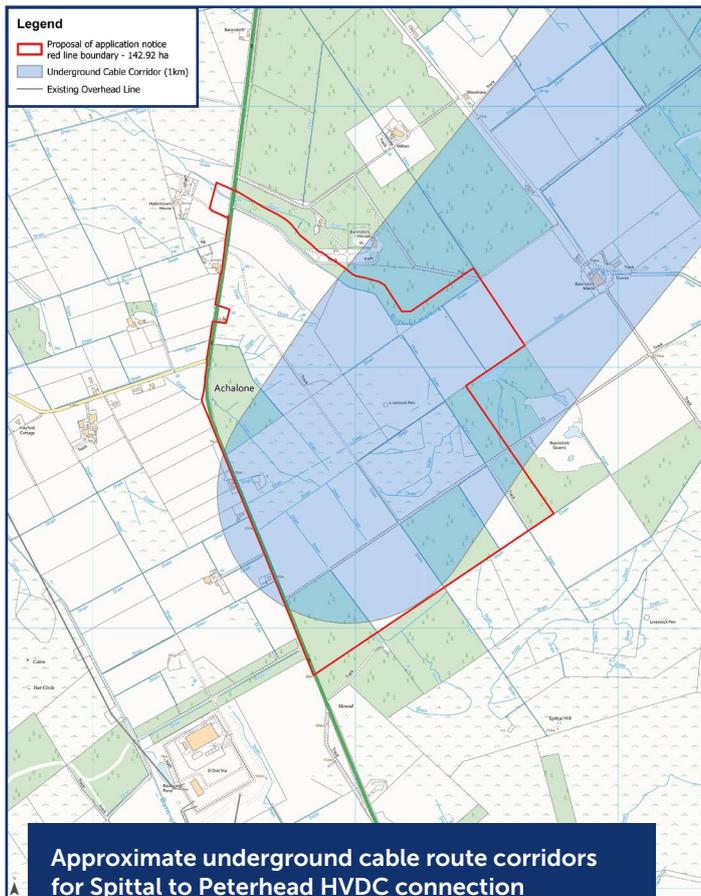
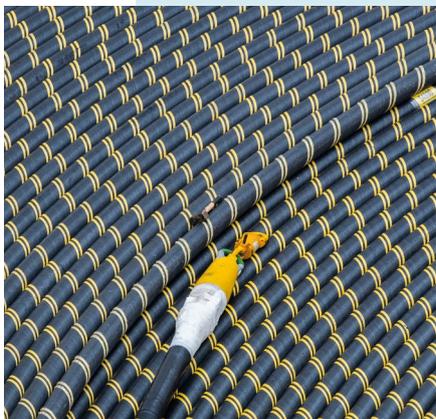
A list of projects that hold contracts for Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) with National Grid, the Electricity System Owner is available from their website: nationalgrideso.com/data-portal/transmission-entry-capacity-tec-register



Find out more

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to find out more about our other projects.

ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects



Spittal to Peterhead HVDC connection

At each end of the HVDC link, 400kV AC substations will supply power to (or receive power from) newly constructed high voltage AC/DC converter stations, depending on the directional flow of the power. This project will use the latest technology to provide a 2GW bi-pole, 525kV HVDC link between Banniskirk Hub in Caithness and Netherthon Hub near Peterhead. This will enable the efficient transmission of high volumes of power from the north of Scotland to the network at Peterhead.

The preferred underground cable corridor from Sinclairs Bay to Banniskirk Hub has been identified, however, the cable route refinement within that corridor is still in progress, with ground investigation works currently underway.

The underground cable works are classed as 'Permitted Development' and therefore do not require a planning application to the Local Authority. The approximate route corridor into Banniskirk Hub is shown here for information, and discussions with

landowners and other stakeholders will continue while we further refine the alignment. We will update the project's webpage with the latest developments as well as informing statutory stakeholders of any significant developments.

Similar to the underground cables, a marine cable corridor has been selected and surveys of this corridor are underway. The information obtained from these surveys will allow us to determine our preferred route within this corridor.

Marine survey consultations are planned for 2024 following conclusion of the marine surveys and assessment of the data acquired. We will update the project's webpage with the latest developments as well as informing statutory stakeholders of any significant developments.

ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/spittal--peterhead-subsea-cable-link

3D visualisations

We understand that local stakeholders need to be able to visualise what the development may look like in their local area.

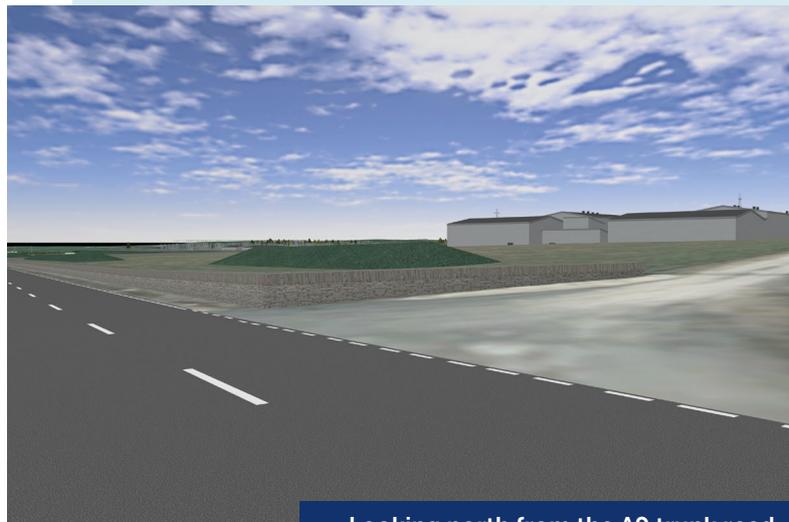
We've commissioned 3D visualisations which model the substation/HVDC converter station into the local landscape to help understanding of the proposals in terms of the visual impact, distance and height.

The following are some images taken from the 3D model created for the Banniskirk Hub. A flythrough video is also available to view from the project webpage via the QR code at the bottom of this page.

The layout and colour of our proposals may change based on feedback and further refinement of the design, if that happens, we'll update our model and video and share this on our webpage and with you at the next event.

Photomontages

Photomontage visualisations will also be produced as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Once the EIA is completed, we'll ensure these photomontages are easily available to view.



Looking north from the A9 trunk road



North entrance to Banniskirk hub from the A9



Find out more

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to watch a flythrough video.

ssen-transmission.co.uk/banniskirk

Finding common ground with landowners

We recognise that landowners and occupiers are key stakeholders in the development of our projects. At all levels, we will be transparent about our proposals and keep the conversation open and constructive when it comes to those affected and reaching effective compromise.

From the outset of the project, our land team have been identifying and contacting landowners and occupiers who may be affected by our proposals. If you are a landowner who is affected by the proposals and have not yet had contact from us, please get in touch via the contact details for the dedicated project land managers found on the relevant webpages: ssen-transmission.co.uk/banniskirk

We work with landowners and occupiers to mitigate the effects of our infrastructure on their properties and our team of Land Managers will be on hand to answer queries and address concerns throughout this process.

As part of this, we need to carry out various engineering and environmental surveys to inform what we design and how we build it. We will always seek consent from affected landowners and occupiers in advance for these surveys.

Once we have finalised the design, we will be required to secure the appropriate land rights from landowners and occupiers in order to secure planning consent.

Our land managers will endeavour to reach a voluntary agreement with landowners and occupiers, however, as a statutory undertaker, we might need to underpin voluntary discussions with an application to Scottish Ministers for a Necessary Wayleave or Compulsory Purchase Order.

Ultimately this is to ensure nationally significant infrastructure projects are delivered on time and in line with our licence obligations.

We also have a duty to protect the interests of the UK bill payer. Statutory powers are not used lightly as we aim to work with landowners and occupiers to secure the necessary land rights voluntarily.

All potentially affected landowners and occupiers have the opportunity to provide feedback at our in-person consultation events and by submitting a feedback form.

We would encourage all those with an interest to submit their views through this consultation.



Delivering a positive environmental legacy

On every project we deliver, we always need to consider how we impact the environment in that area. As we enhance the transmission network in the north of Scotland, we have a responsibility to design and build our projects to protect and enhance the environment.

We will always look to minimise the potential impacts from our activities and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). As the first developer to consult upon and implement an award-winning approach to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all new sites, we're committed to delivering a "greener grid", focusing on habitat restoration and creating biodiversity growth as we invest in our network.

We are committed to delivering 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on all sites gaining consent going forward. This ensures that we don't just restore our natural habitats but actively improve them for the benefit of local communities, wildlife, flora and fauna. During the development, construction and operation of our projects, we will leave the environment in

a measurably better state than before development started, ensuring a positive environmental legacy at all our sites.

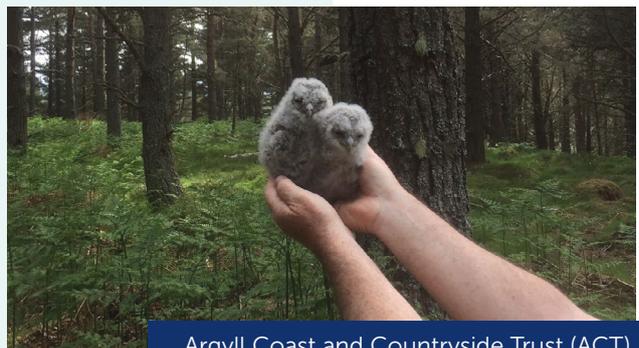
As this project progresses through the development process, we will actively seek ways to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity, through careful routeing and site design to avoid impacting areas of highest biodiversity value. Where avoidance is not possible, we will offset this by introducing new habitats along with restoration efforts. These can be achieved within the boundary of the development site, or by providing support to local groups involved with habitat restoration or creation projects, within the locale of the development site.

If there are biodiversity improvement projects in your local area that we could get involved with, please contact the Community Liaison Manager.

Example projects

Argyll Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT)

Argyll's rainforest is a unique and rare habitat of ancient and native woodland. This collaboration with ACT will help deliver SSEN Transmission's compensatory tree planting and BNG commitments in Argyll. It also aligns with ACT's woodland planting ambitions, supporting its charitable objectives including biodiversity gain, health and wellbeing, improvement for local people, outdoor learning opportunities and climate change workshops.



Argyll Coast and Countryside Trust (ACT)

Thurso South substation and The Bumblebee Conservation Trust

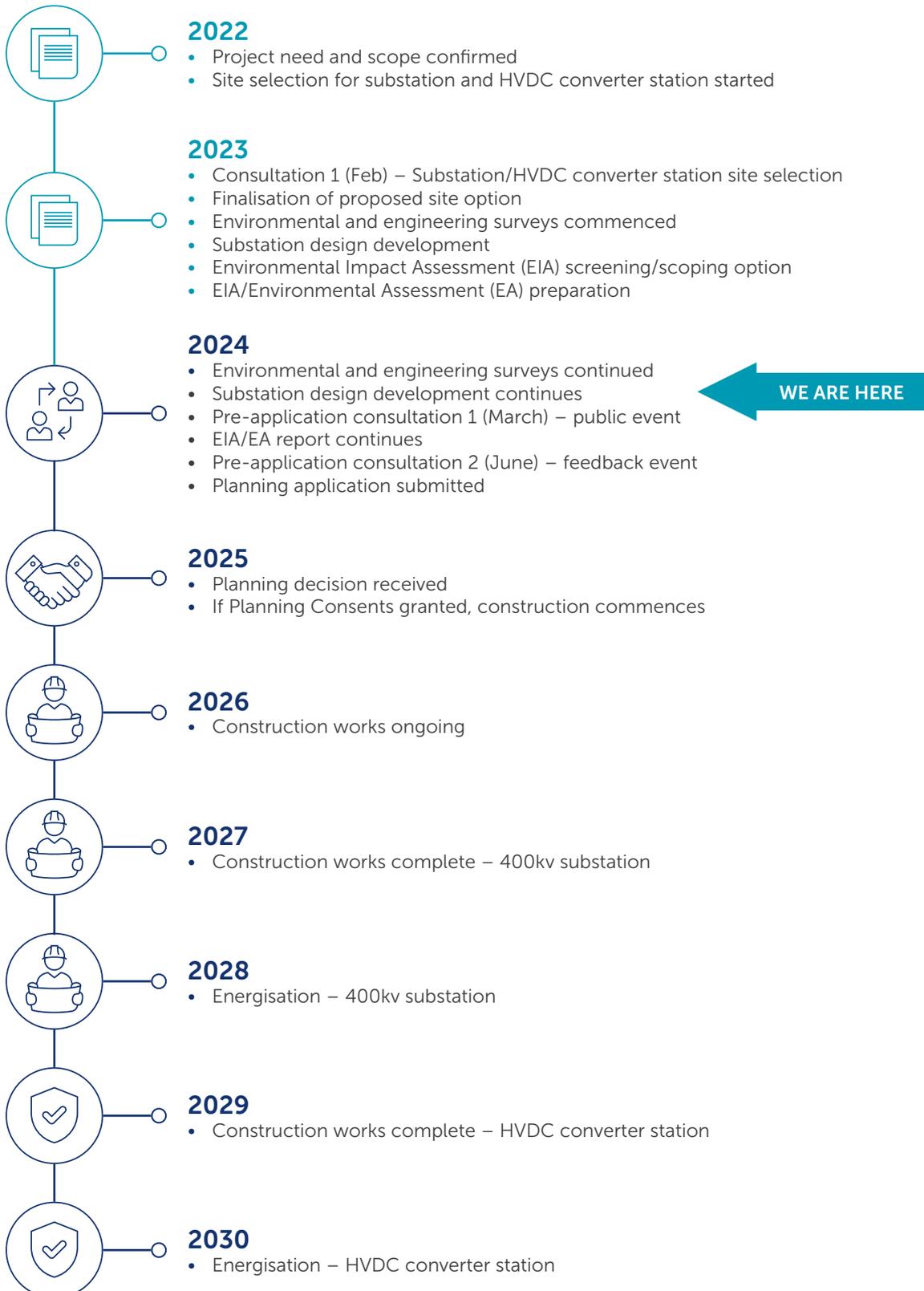
SSEN created approximately 10 hectares of bee-friendly habitat to support the pollination of the rare endemic great yellow bumblebee.

This contributed to wider conservation efforts for this bee species. A collaboration with The Bumblebee Conservation Trust facilitated research on food availability for bumblebees, identifying the need for a diverse seed mix containing key flowering species to enhance early, main and late food supply to support the full lifecycle of bumblebees.



Thurso South substation and The Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Project timeline



Development considerations

During our last consultation, we outlined many of the engineering, environmental and social considerations we take account of when establishing a practical site for the substation. Now that we have identified a proposed site, we are able to share further details regarding many of our development considerations.

Size

Our proposed site layout map on page 12 and 13 shows the space needed to house the proposed infrastructure and ensure adequate room for, access, landscaping and drainage features. The AC substation platform will be a level area of approx. 580m by 350m. The AC substation will contain switchgear, transformers and synchronous condensers with control buildings. The approximate dimensions for the substation control building and synchronous condenser buildings are 48m x 20m x 5m and 35m x 20m x 10m respectively.

The DC Converter Station platform will be a level area of approx. 325m by 290m. The DC platform will contain the converter station building which will have approximate dimensions of 200m by 170m by 29m. We are currently reviewing the design with our equipment suppliers, and building designers, with a view to reducing and refining the building dimensions of the converter station.

Connections

There are a number of connections to be considered and they include:

- Spittal to Peterhead HVDC underground cable connection
- Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV overhead line
- Underground cable to connect to the existing Spittal 275kV substation
- Third-party renewable energy developer connections.

Noise

Background noise surveys took place at noise sensitive receptors (NSR) in the vicinity of the site Summer of 2023. Potential impacts on residents in the area from construction and operational noise will be evaluated within the EIA Report. Noise limits (in line with best practice guidance) will be agreed with The Highland Council and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure these limits will be met.

Landscape and visual

There are no national or local landscape designations within the proposed development. A landscape and visual assessment will be carried out to understand how the proposed development will be viewed within the surrounding area and its impact on the landscape character and value of the area. The assessment will identify any potential significant effects and propose recommendations to mitigate these effects. Mitigation will include soft landscaping such as planting and bunds to best fit the proposed development within the landscape, as far as possible.

Local wildlife

Effects in flora, fauna and habitats will be assessed and a Biodiversity Net Gain appraisal undertaken.

Traffic and transport

Potential impacts resulting from construction traffic and traffic once the site has become operational will be fully assessed as part of the EIA Report. Should the EIA identify significant impacts resulting from traffic and transport, appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented by the team to ensure any such impacts are reduced or minimised as much as possible. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be developed for agreement with The Highland Council prior to commencement of works on site.

The primary access to the site will be directly from the A9 trunk road which forms the western and northern boundary of the site. It is anticipated that the delivery of large items of plant, such as transformers, will be shipped to the port of Scrabster and transferred to site via the A9 through Thurso.

Potential impacts from construction traffic will be fully assessed as part of the EIA Report and a construction traffic management plan prior to commencement of works on site.

Traffic impacts during the operational phase are anticipated to be low.



Civil engineering

There are a number of civil engineering considerations that have been factored into the design to date and will be developed further as the project progresses. These include:

- Drainage, ensuring that the site can be drained without impacting proposed infrastructure or increasing flood risk downstream of the development
- Earthworks design, achieving broadly level platforms for proposed infrastructure and minimising the import and export of material from site
- Connection of utilities, the site will require electricity, water and telecommunications connections.

Archaeology and cultural heritage

There are no listed or scheduled structures within the proposed site, but there remains the potential for construction to affect to designated and non-designated cultural heritage assets. An appraisal including a walkover survey of the site and its surrounding area has been undertaken to understand the potential effects on the historic environment.

Water/water soils and drainage

A baseline understanding of the Site and Wider Study Area will be developed to determine overall sensitivity of hydrological, hydrogeological, and geological receptors in relation to the magnitude of effects. Mitigation will then be considered which will include a drainage strategy across the site.

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 accept feedback from now until 21 April 2024.

How to provide feedback

Submit your feedback online by scanning the QR code on this page or via the form on our project webpage at: ssen-transmission.co.uk/banniskirk

Email the feedback form to the Community Liaison Manager or write to us enclosing the feedback form at the back of this booklet.

What we're seeking views on

During our last public consultation events in Halkirk and Spittal, we wanted to know your thoughts on the substation and HVDC converter station sites under consideration and if you agreed with the one we'd identified as best.

Now that we have taken forward a proposed hub site, 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 any changes and refinements we've made.

We'll be actively looking to mitigate the impacts of the site as much as possible over the coming months, but it would be helpful to understand what you believe we should be doing to help minimise these impacts and if there are any opportunities to deliver a local community benefit you would like us to consider. We encourage all interested community members to fill in a feedback form when submitting feedback, however if you prefer, you can email us to provide your feedback or ask any questions.



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.

Our Community Liaison Team

Each project has a dedicated Community Liaison Manager who works closely with community members to make sure they are well informed of our proposals and that their views, concerns, questions or suggestions are put to our project teams.

Throughout the life of our projects, you will hear from us regularly. We aim to establish strong working relationships by being accessible to key local stakeholders such as community councils, residents' associations and development trusts, and regularly engage with interested individuals.

Community Liaison Manager

Martin Godwin
Community Liaison Manager

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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/banniskirk



You can also follow us on social media

 [SSEN-Transmission](#)

 [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. Now that we have shared updated design plans for this site, is there anything you'd like to bring to our attention that you believe we may not have already considered during project development?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q2. Are there any environmental features, that you consider important and should be brought to the attention of the project team?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q3. What suggestions for social or environmental community benefit opportunities do you have that you would like us to consider or are there any local initiatives you would like us to support?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q4. Is there anything regarding the Banniskirk Hub project that you feel you require more information about? If so, please detail below.

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Full name

Address

Telephone

Email

If you would like your comments to remain anonymous please tick this box.

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.

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

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: Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN **Email:** slbb@sse.com

Online: ssen-transmission.co.uk/banniskirk

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

The feedback form and all information provided in this booklet can also be downloaded from the dedicated website:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/banniskirk

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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