

# New Deer 2 Substation

## Report on Consultation

November 2023



**Scottish & Southern**  
Electricity Networks

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TRANSMISSION

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this Report on Consultation (RoC) is to document the consultation responses received as part of the site selection consultation process for the proposed New Deer 2 substation, and where appropriate, show how the option taken forward to the next stage has been informed by this process.

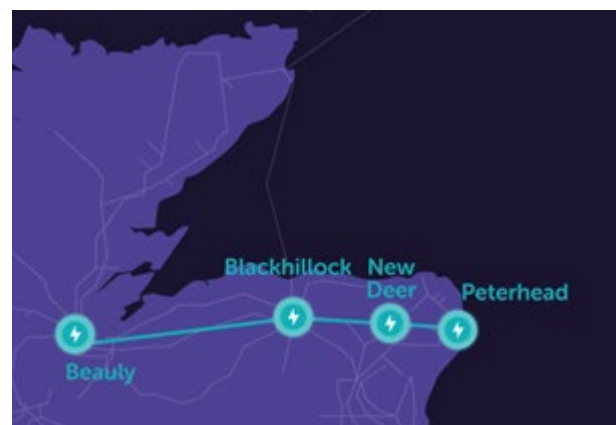
This Report details the consultation process undertaken, including details of consultation methods and advertising, those consulted and/or contributing to the process and it also documents the feedback received, including objections, concerns, questions and statements of support. It sets out clearly how stakeholder feedback has influenced decisions made regarding the option taken forward. The document confirms which Site option is being progressed to the next stage of development and provides information on the next steps that we are implementing, leading to the next public consultation events.

## 1.2. Project Overview

Based on the requirements outlined in National Grid ESO's Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design, we have developed proposals to reinforce the transmission system between Beaulieu and Peterhead, via Blackhillock and New Deer. To facilitate this, we are proposing to establish a new 400kV overhead line (OHL) between Beaulieu, Blackhillock, New Deer and Peterhead. This also requires four new 400kV substations to be constructed near Beaulieu, Blackhillock, New Deer and Peterhead to enable future connections and export routes to areas of demand. These are being progressed as five separate projects but projects which are intrinsically linked, and which were all presented during the consultation process. This Report on Consultation relates to the proposed New Deer 2 400kV Substation.

Please refer to the summary Report on Consultation and project-specific Report on Consultations for details on the proposed Beaulieu to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV OHL, proposed Beaulieu Area 400kV substation, Blackhillock 2 400kV substation and Netherton Hub 400kV substation, near Peterhead via the relevant project webpages:

- [Beaulieu Area 400kV Substation](#)
- [Beaulieu to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV OHL](#)
- [Blackhillock 2 400kV Substation](#)
- [Netherton Hub](#)



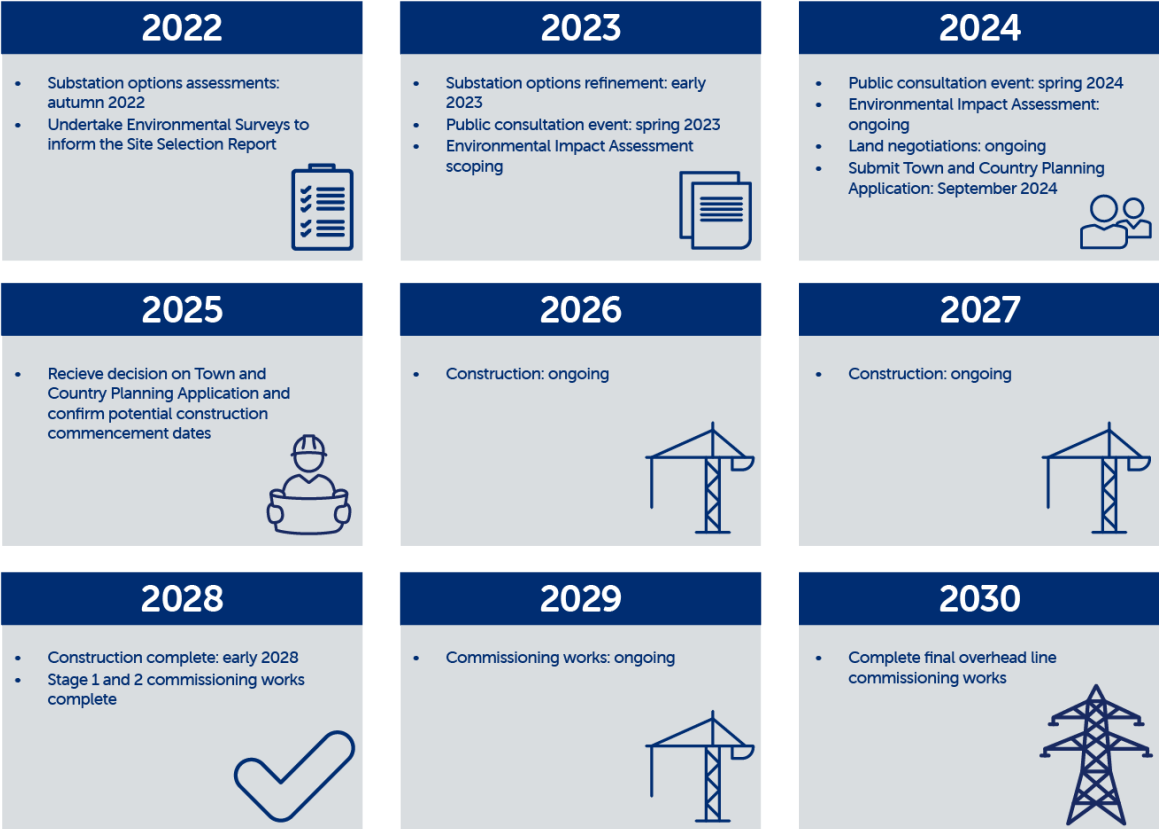
New SSEN Transmission projects between Beaulieu and Peterhead.

The proposed New Deer 2 400kV Substation forms part of the Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment (ASTI) projects. The new substation is required to be built near the existing New Deer substation, near Turriff, Aberdeenshire.

The New Deer 2 400kV substation project requires:

- Construction of a new outdoor, Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS), 400kV substation.
- The approximate dimensions of the proposed substation are 800m x 300m, not including the groundworks required to create a level platform.
- Space provision to allow for connection of future renewable energy generation projects.
- Areas for drainage, landscaping/screening and habitat enhancement.
- Temporary areas will also be required during construction for laydown and welfare.
- Provision for the underground cable connection between existing New Deer Substation and proposed New Deer 2 Substation.

### 1.3. Project Timeline



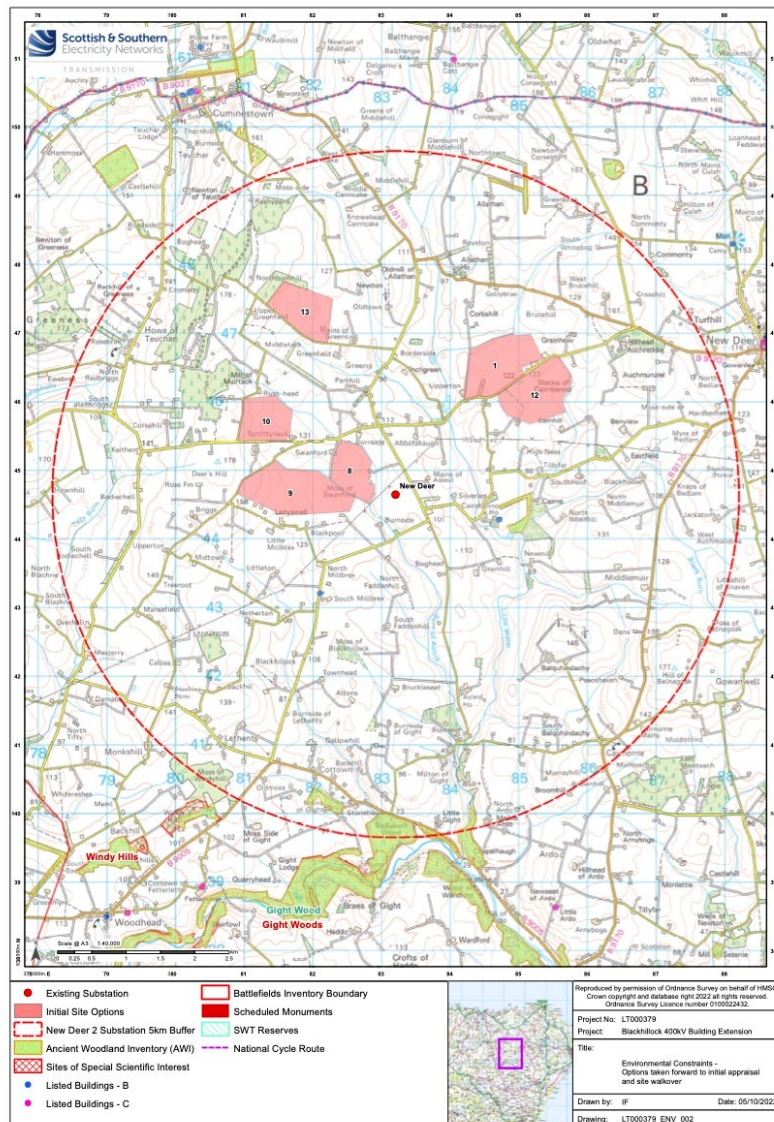
Find out more about our 2030 projects: [www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects/](http://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects/)

## 1.4. What we were consulting on

As a stakeholder-led business, we understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process. Relevant and insightful stakeholder feedback collected during consultations is critical to ensuring that our decision making is informed, and stakeholder concerns are taken into consideration at each stage of the project’s development.

During this consultation, we presented options regarding our site selection for the proposed New Deer 2 substation (see Figure 1 below). The consultation included information regarding technology options, environmental and technical considerations, the project development process and explained the factors which were taken into consideration in the selection process. The output of our internal Substation Site Selection Process, prior to the March 2023 Public Consultation, identified Site 13 as the preferred site. Site 13 provides the best balance of environmental and technical considerations from our internal assessments, while the site location is within a 5km radius of the existing New Deer Substation.

Figure 1 – Substation Site Selection Options



## 2. The Consultation Process

### 2.1. Who we consulted with

Our consultation process sought to capture the views of anyone who had an interest in our proposals, and we invited comments from all. During our engagements we aimed to ensure that we captured the views of:

- statutory consultees
- non-statutory consultees
- community members and local organisations; including local elected members
- landowners and occupiers

### 2.2. Consultation feedback period

The public consultation period was open from 22 March until 22 April 2023. However, as some residents stated that they did not receive a postcard invite and were unaware of the event, we included another substation consultation event in New Deer Public Hall in April 2023 and subsequently extended the feedback period until 30 June 2023.

Statutory Consultees were invited to provide feedback on our Consultation Document between 28 February and 14 April 2023. Where possible, affected landowners were contacted ahead of the consultation period opening to the public to discuss land related considerations or concerns.

### 2.3. The advertising process

The consultation events were advertised extensively using the following methods:

- Press & Journal and Strathspey Herald newspapers
- Our social media channels and the dedicated project webpage.
- Community Councillors and Local Elected Members were emailed in advance with information they could share within their local area.
- Postcards were sent to 4,439 homes and businesses within communities potentially impacted by our proposals. A copy of the postcard invite can be found in Appendix C.
- An email was sent out to the Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV project mailing list with details of the New Deer 2 event in March.

## 2.4. Stakeholder participation

In March 2023, we launched our initial consultation on site selection for the proposed New Deer 2 400kV Substation, providing an introduction and starting our engagement process. The consultation event was due to take place on Wednesday 8 March but was postponed due to severe weather. The rescheduled event took place in New Deer Public Hall on 22 March 2023.

Date	Event	Recorded attendance
22 March 2023	Site Selection Consultation, New Deer Public Hall, New Deer	175
18 April 2023	Route Options Consultation with additional site selection presentation. New Deer Public Hall, New Deer	137

Attendance figures reflect the number of people who had registered attendance at a consultation event. For busier events, the number of attendees can often be considerably higher than recorded.

### Stakeholder meetings

In the weeks before, during and after the consultation events, various meetings were held with other key stakeholders such as landowners, statutory consultees and councillors to discuss the project proposals.

Date	Meeting Type	Stakeholder group in attendance
12 April 2023	Councillors Information Event (Microsoft Teams Meeting)	Local Ward Councillors
12 April 2023	Virtual Statutory Consultee Meeting (Microsoft Teams Meeting)	Statutory Consultees including the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit, Aberdeenshire Council, Historic Environment Scotland and NatureScot
04 September 2023	Virtual Statutory Consultee Meeting (Microsoft Teams Meeting)	Aberdeenshire Council
08 November 2023	Virtual Statutory Consultee Meeting (Microsoft Teams Meeting)	SEPA

## 2.5. Feedback volume

Feedback from our stakeholders was welcomed via a range of methods. This included online or hard copy feedback forms, email or letters, notes from the consultation events or stakeholder meetings or from any relevant telephone conversations.

### Responses to public consultation



### Responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

The following statutory bodies were contacted and requested to provide feedback on the proposals.

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- NatureScot
- Historic Environment Scotland

Responses were received, with a summary of each listed in the Specific Project Related Feedback, with the SEPA response provided in detail in Appendix A.



## 3. Consultation Feedback and Our Response

### 3.1. Common Themes

Across all of our Pathway to 2030 project consultations, we received feedback covering a number of common themes. Although some of this feedback related to topics which fell outside of the scope of our consultations, we recognise that it is important to address the points that our stakeholders took the time to raise, which we have summarised in this section. In addition, we have also developed a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that can be viewed [here](#).

#### Project Need

The need for these projects has been independently assessed by both the GB Electricity System Operator, National Grid ESO (ESO); and the GB energy regulator, Ofgem.

Some responses questioned whether these projects are needed at all. In many cases, those questioning the need have done so as the electricity these projects will connect and transport is not all needed in the north of Scotland.

Under our licence, we have a legal obligation to provide connections to electricity generators looking to connect to our network and we do not determine the location of new electricity generation. This is led by generators themselves, often underpinned by Government targets and policies.

These projects - which are part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission network across Great Britain - are needed to unlock the north of Scotland's vast renewable electricity resources and transport that power to demand centres across the UK.

The renewable electricity these projects will transport will play a key role in meeting UK and Scottish Government renewable energy and climate change targets. They will also help secure the country's future energy independence by reducing dependence on imported power from volatile wholesale energy markets.

For more details on why these projects are needed and how this need has been assessed, we have published [a short briefing paper](#).

#### Technology Choice

Several respondents have questioned the technology choice, particularly why the infrastructure cannot all be installed subsea or underground, instead of overhead line steel lattice towers.

Due to the significant volume of power we need to connect and transport from generation source to areas of demand the ESO concluded that there is a need for both onshore and offshore network reinforcements.

The ESO's and Ofgem's independent assessment of need for this project and our wider Pathway to 2030 programme was also based on the technology choices we are progressing.

Underground cabling is highly sensitive to ground conditions and terrain. There can be significant and lasting environmental impacts and future land use constraints associated with undergrounding; together with the technical challenges of operating, maintaining and in the event of a fault, restoring power.

Cost is also an important consideration, with subsea and undergrounding significantly more expensive than overhead. As the cost of investing in the electricity transmission network is ultimately recovered by electricity bill payers across GB, cost is one of the key factors in the ESO's and Ofgem's assessment of need, and in Ofgem's future assessment of the costs we are allowed to recover for these projects.

### Environmental impacts

We have received feedback highlighting concerns about potential environmental impacts, particularly on local biodiversity.

As one of the greatest risks to our natural environment and biodiversity is climate change, these projects are part of the solution if we are to tackle the climate emergency and deliver net zero emissions in Scotland and across the United Kingdom.

However, we do recognise that in delivering these critical projects, there will be unavoidable impacts and we would like to reassure stakeholders that we take our environmental responsibilities extremely seriously.

To deliver our projects in the most sensitive way possible we ensure environmental factors are considered at every stage in the development of each project, along with technical requirements and economic considerations. A key way we do this for the environment is to follow the mitigation hierarchy. Firstly, we seek to avoid sensitive areas wherever possible and where impacts are likely to occur we seek to minimise these, provide mitigation and identify opportunities to restore.

In addition, all of our consent applications will be accompanied by detailed environmental assessments which are prepared by external specialists. These assessments will consider impacts on a wide range of environmental topics (many of which have been highlighted in the stakeholder responses to this consultation) and identify measures that may be required to mitigate any impacts.

We also acknowledge that minimising impacts is not enough on its own, and we have therefore committed to delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all our projects; as well as compensatory planting for any trees felled during the construction phase, where possible with native species. Where our projects are unable to completely avoid irreplaceable habitats (for example peatland or ancient woodland), we have also introduced a commitment to restore more habitat than we affect.

You can find out more about how we are delivering a positive environmental legacy by [clicking here](#).

In the following section of this Report on Consultation, we will address any specific environmental feedback relevant to the options we consulted on.

### Socio-Economic impact

Several community responses highlighted concerns about the impact on the local community, including visual and tourism impacts. We have also been asked what local benefits these projects will provide.

We acknowledge that there will inevitably be a visual impact on some local communities and are committed to do all that we can to minimise and mitigate this as part of the ongoing development of this project. The environmental assessment that will accompany our consent applications will also consider landscape and visual impacts.

From a tourism perspective, as part of our consent application, we intend to consider socio-economic and tourism impacts as part of the suite of documentation to be submitted to relevant consenting authorities. This will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to these issues in the consenting process.

These projects will also provide significant benefits to local and national economies. Independent socio-economic analysis undertaken on our Pathway to 2030 projects has estimated that they will collectively support around 20,000 jobs across the UK, around 9,000 of which are expected in Scotland, [adding billions of economic value](#) to the economy.

We also expect these projects to deliver significant local benefits, including direct and indirect job opportunities, alongside supply chain opportunities for local businesses. We will set out more details of these opportunities in due course, including ‘Meet the Buyer’ events to introduce local businesses to the opportunities presented through our main supply chain partners.

We are also committed to introducing community benefit funding, recognising the important role host communities will play in delivering the infrastructure required to meet our national endeavours to build a cleaner, more secure and affordable energy system for homes and businesses across Scotland and Great Britain in the long-term.

In the following section of this Report on Consultation, we will address any specific community feedback relevant to the options we consulted on.

### Consultation process

We have received some feedback that our consultation process was not well promoted to affected communities or wider stakeholders and concerns around the timescale provided for feedback to be given.

As we set out in the ‘Consultation Process’ section of this Report on Consultation, we held a number of public consultation events, public meetings and bilateral and group engagements, using a range of methods to promote our consultations to our stakeholders.

Even at this early stage of development, where our consultation activities are voluntary, we fully recognise the importance of gathering stakeholder input to help inform our development plans. In response to stakeholder feedback, we introduced extensions to our consultation period to encourage anyone interested in these projects to provide their feedback. In addition, we would like to highlight that there will be further opportunity to comment on our proposals through the consenting process and would encourage all stakeholders to fully engage in that formal consultation exercise.

We fully recognise there is always room for improvement and as we look forward to the next round of public consultations, we are committed to apply learning from our first round of consultations to increase awareness, accessibility and coverage of consultation events. We will continue to welcome feedback on how we can further improve how we consult with our stakeholders on our projects.

## 3.2. Specific Project Related Feedback

### Introduction

This section of the report provides our responses to the questions and themes emerging from the public consultation and the responses provided by statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. During each event, the project team directed members of the public to the feedback forms to encourage residents to provide their comments. A follow up email was sent to remind attendees and interested parties to encourage them to provide feedback before the end of the feedback period.

Feedback was analysed by the project teams, supported by Information Analysts, to produce relevant data and key themes outlined in the table below.

Consultation responses have been grouped by the following project themes, 'Community Impact', 'Environmental Impact', and 'Economic Impact'.

The stakeholders have been grouped into the categories outlined in the table below:

Stakeholder Group	Examples
Statutory Consultees	Historic Environment Scotland (HES), SEPA, NatureScot, Local Authorities
Non-Statutory Consultees	RSPB, Scottish Water, Forestry and Land Scotland
Community members and local organisations	Homeowners, local businesses, Residents Associations, elected members
Landowners & occupiers	Landowners, crofters, tenant farmers, occupiers of properties in closest proximity to substations

### Community Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
You quote in the booklet that the site was assessed but no RAG report is available to view.	Community members and local organisations	

<p><u>Aberdeenshire Council</u> Details of the other discounted sites could have been included, It is noted that a RAG assessment has been incorporated into other SSE projects ongoing at this time – could this be applied again to fully justify this site selection?</p>	<p>Statutory Consultees</p>	<p>We can confirm that the same rigorous RAG assessment approach has been taken with this project as with other projects, however, the detail was not included in the consultation material on this occasion. For transparency, the RAG Ratings for each site option are included in <b>Appendix B</b>.</p> <p>We will take this feedback on board for future consultation events.</p>
<p><u>NatureScot</u> NatureScot highlight the landscape design importance for mitigating visual effects.</p>	<p>Statutory Consultees</p>	<p>NatureScot’s feedback is noted and we will continue to include them in consultation as the project progresses. We will be working closely with landscape architects to ensure the substation design is appropriate in the landscape. A Landscape and Habitat Management Plan will be produced as part of the EIA.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the time it would take for tree screening to sufficiently mature such that it would be able to provide a suitable visual screen. Alternative suggestions included lowering the platform to help reduce the visual impact of the infrastructure; and having an earth bund with trees on top at the roadside.</p>	<p>Landowners &amp; occupiers Community members and local organisations</p>	<p>Whilst it is accepted any proposed screening / landscape proposals will take time to establish on site, the landscape strategy for the site would fully consider the requirement for effective screening in the short term to provide more immediate mitigation for the development. The landscape strategy would identify the most appropriate species types, locations, densities and maturity levels to achieve the most effective screening possible.</p> <p>In addition to any landscape strategy for the site, it is envisaged the design will involve a scheme of earthworks (cut &amp; fill) to create the proposed development platform, which will result in a substantial amount of the platform being below existing sites levels. This change in site levels will provide natural screening for those elements of the site below ground level. Where excess spoil is generated consideration will be given to its reuse on site as part of landscaping proposals.</p>
<p>It was stated that the proposed development should be in a place with less houses round about.</p>	<p>Landowners &amp; occupiers</p>	<p>In terms of the proximity of existing residential properties, whilst it is acknowledged that some individual properties are situated close to the site, this is also the case for all alternative sites.</p>

		<p>After careful assessment the preferred site has been identified as offering the most appropriate balance of environmental, technical and costs considerations. Further consideration will be given to minimising the potential for impacts to sensitive residential receptors through the EIA process.</p>
<p>Maps used in your consultations are outdated.</p>	<p>Community members and local organisations</p>	<p>It was brought to our attention during the consultation events that the illustrative Ordnance Survey base maps utilised during the consultation events were outdated. The Ordnance Survey base maps utilised were from early 2022. Ordnance Survey update their maps on an ongoing basis, but only issue new versions of the map tiles once there are several changes within a map tile extent. Therefore, although some areas (e.g. new housing) may have been there for several years, Ordnance Survey may not yet have issued an updated version of the map tile showing this.</p> <p>The Site and Route assessment work used OSAddressBase data which presents all properties held by Ordnance Survey at the time but is also subject to ‘missing’ properties due to delays in the data being made available as above. Following survey work and planning application review, additional properties have been added to our internal residential property data-set which has been used for route and site selection work.</p> <p>We’d like to apologise for any alarm this may have caused and offer assurances that these Ordnance Survey base maps did not inform project assessments. Going forward, we will commit to ensuring illustrative maps used for consultations are based on the most recent Ordnance Survey data sets available.</p>
<p>How was the Preferred Option decided upon?</p>	<p>Community members and local organisations</p>	<p>Identifying potential substation sites is conducted through a process of multi-criteria analysis from documented information of the areas. This is followed up with site visits to ascertain suitability of the locations in terms of landscape, topography, environmental impact and locality of properties that may be affected. The consultation materials published as part of the consultation exercise provided a summary of the site selection process, along with the relevant environmental and engineering considerations identified.</p>

		<p>There are many factors contributing to the decision to take Site 13 forward as the Preferred Option. From an environmental perspective the potential for lower noise impact, due to lower numbers of residential properties in close proximity to the site, being one of the key differentiators following the assessment of all sites.</p> <p>Additionally, from an environmental perspective, Site 13 offers the opportunity for lower impacts on landscape character and visual amenity when compared to some of the other sites, and there is less interaction with prime agricultural land in comparison to the other site options. At the time of the initial site selection survey work no conclusive signs of protected or notable species were found at the Site and there are no known Annex 1 or irreplaceable habitats such as peat. However, following community feedback and preliminary ground investigation work undertaken on site, we are aware of the presence of badger setts within the site and immediate area. Consequently, the necessary precautions were taken to ensure no adverse impact during the ground investigations works and full protected species survey work will be undertaken, and appropriate mitigation identified as part of the EIA for the proposed development.</p> <p>From an engineering perspective, Site 12 and Site 13 performed similarly through the RAG assessment process, however Site 13 offered the opportunity to provide an underground cable connection between the new substation and existing New Deer substation thereby avoiding the need for an overhead line connection, which was seen as a major benefit in terms of landscape and visual impact. This opportunity elevated Site 13 above Site 12 as the Preferred Option.</p>
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## Environmental Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
<p><u>NatureScot</u> NatureScot do not have specific advice or comments regarding the Preferred Options. NatureScot suggest measures to improve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) via opportunities to work with the communities most affected.</p>	<p>Statutory Consultees</p>	<p>NatureScot’s feedback is noted and we will consider BNG opportunities as the project progresses.</p> <p>Please refer to the Common Themes Section above.</p>
<p><u>Historic Environment Scotland (HES)</u> Given the location of the proposed developments HES does not consider there to be a potential for significant impacts and have no further comments regarding the proposal at this stage.</p>	<p>Statutory Consultees</p>	<p>Historic Environment Scotland’s comments and guidance are noted and we will continue to include them in consultation as the project progresses.</p>
<p><u>Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)</u> SEPA has concerns regarding the Preferred Option due to potential impacts to the water environment.</p>	<p>Statutory Consultees</p>	<p>SEPA’s comments and guidance are noted, and we will continue to work with them as the project progresses.</p> <p>See <b>Appendix A</b> at the end of this document for more detail.</p>

<p>See <b>Appendix A</b> at the end of this document for more detail.</p>		
<p>Concern was raised regarding the local wildlife, with specific mention of badgers, bats, water vole, barn owls, geese, swans, red kites and migratory birds either on-site or nearby.</p>	<p>Community members and local organisations</p>	<p>Please refer to the Common Themes Section above. Additionally, to date the potential existence of protected species and other wildlife has been identified through a combination of desktop assessment and site surveys.</p> <p>We welcome the feedback received from the local community regarding the ecological value of the site and surrounding area and can confirm that these matters will be fully considered during the EIA process, and where protected species, other wildlife and habitats are present and will potentially be impacted upon, appropriate mitigation will be identified.</p>
<p>Concern expressed over the safeguarding of property's private water supplies</p>	<p>Landowners &amp; occupiers</p>	<p>As the project progresses discussions will be held with landowners and surveys completed to locate private water supply sources and infrastructure. Where there is the potential for impacts on private water supplies, assessment will be undertaken which will be detailed within the EIA Report, with mitigation measures identified where required to safeguard private water supplies.</p>
<p>A query was raised regarding the ditch that runs down the middle of the two fields and how this will be dealt with.</p>	<p>Community members and local organisations</p>	<p>We have been investigating the ditch in detail and preliminary findings indicate that it is man-made as part of a field drainage system. From a design perspective the ditch would either be diverted or incorporated within the substation drainage system, discussions with SEPA are ongoing on this point.</p> <p>See <b>Appendix A</b> at the end of this document for more detail.</p>

## Economic Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Request for clarification of landowner remuneration and compensation	Landowners & occupiers	<p>In terms of compensation for the construction of Overhead Lines and Substations, this is governed by law - Electricity Act 1989 and Land Compensation Act 1973. Each compensation case will be reviewed individually based on these laws. We aim to limit the impacts and welcome feedback to help in this effort.</p> <p>Wherever necessary we seek to enter into a wayleave with owners of land that will be directly affected by an Overhead Line e.g. where towers are located on the land. Our Wayleave Payment Rates are reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>For new substation developments, we will seek to acquire land rights through the direct acquisition of the land upon which the substation will be constructed. In this scenario the landowner will not be eligible for separate remuneration or compensation, beyond the agreed purchase price of the land.</p> <p>For further information please refer to our Pathway to 2030 <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a>.</p>
This project will potentially impact property values. How will SSEN compensate us for this?	Community members and local organisations	<p>Please see above clarification on landowner remuneration and compensation. The terms of compensation is governed by law - Electricity Act 1989 and Land Compensation Act 1973. Under these regulations only the owners of land or property upon which transmission infrastructure will be constructed will qualify for compensation.</p> <p>Each compensation case will be reviewed individually based on these laws. We aim to limit the impacts and welcome feedback to help in this effort.</p> <p>For further information please refer to our Pathway to 2030 <a href="#">Frequently Asked Questions</a>.</p>

## 4. Summary of Key Decisions

This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken between 22 March 2023 and 10 November 2023 for the project. This report has described the consultation events and the key responses received and provides detail on our responses to the point raised.

Site 13 was the only option to have no 'Red' RAG (Red; Amber; Green) ratings against our Site Selection criterion, with 'Red' representing least preferred. The Summary RAG Ratings table (shown in Appendix B) details RAG ratings for each site. Having reviewed and considered the stakeholder feedback, in conjunction with the results from our detailed site selection process, there have been no issues raised that we believe would be of such a scale to reconsider the preferred site for the proposed New Deer 2 Substation.

As a result of the initial Statutory Consultee feedback received from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) regarding an existing ditch present at Site 13 (see Appendix A for the full response), we have worked closely with the project environmental consultant WSP to further investigate this issue. In response, a Hydrogeological Study was undertaken, comprising of a detailed desktop study and site walkovers. The Study concluded that the existing watercourse has been extensively modified over time, most likely to ensure the site drainage was suitable for the agricultural farming it has been used for over the past 100+ years and that as such the principle of further modification (through diversion) should be acceptable.

The project team have subsequently undertaken further engagement with SEPA (08 Nov 2023) to discuss the findings of the hydrogeology work and explore the options for the realignment of the existing ditch. Subject to further detailed design work as part of the drainage strategy for the site it is anticipated that a positive solution can be identified, and we will continue to work with SEPA during both design and construction phases to ensure that the necessary regulatory approvals and licenses are secured and abided by. This early, proactive stakeholder engagement will ensure key inputs can be identified and incorporated as part of the development design process.

Our assessment, supported by stakeholder feedback from the consultation process, has confirmed Site 13, shown in Figure 2, will be the Proposed substation site to be taken forward to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and consenting stage.

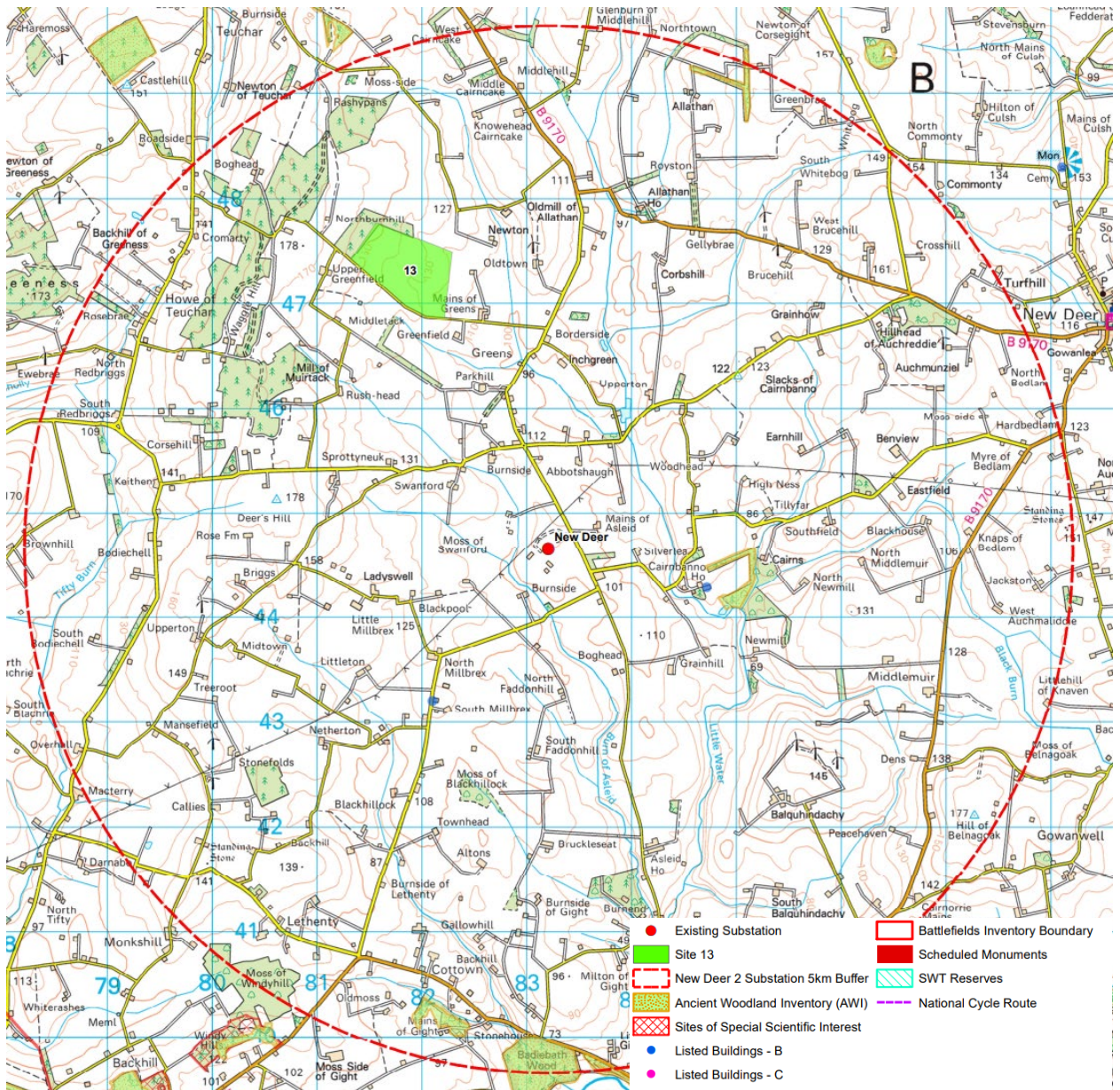


Figure 2 - Proposed Option Location Plan

# 5. Next Steps

## 5.1. Ongoing Engagement

The period of consultation described in this report is part of an ongoing engagement process that spans the full development cycle for the project, where feedback is sought at different stages and engagement with stakeholders is continuous as we refine our proposals.

Early Engagement	Ongoing Detailed Engagement	Advanced Engagement	Ongoing Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project webpage live</li> <li>Early meetings offered to elected members</li> <li>Early discussion with statutory consultees</li> <li>Initial Project Consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of feedback received from consultation</li> <li>Proactive and responsive stakeholder follow up meetings</li> <li>Engage community working groups</li> <li>Publish FAQs, project updates and next steps</li> <li>Publish a Report On Consultation</li> <li>Engage on the report on consultation e.g. Webinar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-consultation engagement</li> <li>Further project consultation</li> <li>Analysis of feedback received from consultation</li> <li>Follow up meetings</li> <li>Publish FAQs, project updates and next steps</li> <li>Publish a Report On Consultation</li> <li>Engage on the report on consultation e.g. Webinar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-submission information sharing event</li> <li>Targeted engagement with those most affected</li> <li>Working group meetings</li> <li>Ongoing project updates</li> <li>Post consent and construction</li> </ul>

Following publication of this Report, we, alongside specialist consultants and contractors, will further develop the design of the site.

In Spring 2024, we will hold our first formal Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) event, following the statutory requirements of the planning process. As part of this PAC process, we will present the rationale for the selection of New Deer 2, and present indicative information on the likely extent, layout and appearance of the proposed Substation, and give stakeholders and the community the opportunity to comment on our proposals. This event will be followed by a second PAC event, where we will present our analysis of the consultation feedback and explain how that has informed our final design and proposals that will be the focus of our subsequent planning application.

A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion will be made to Aberdeenshire Council and an EIA Scoping Report will be prepared and submitted to support the request. 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 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report which is prepared and submitted with the Planning Application for consent.

## 5.2. Feedback

If you have any further views at this stage, then please get in touch with the Community Liaison Manager [rob.whytock@sse.com](mailto:rob.whytock@sse.com).

Community Liaison Manager  
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks  
200 Dunkeld Road,  
Perth  
PH1 3GH

Further information about the project is available on the project website:

<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/new-deer-2-400kv-substation/>

## 6. Glossary

Term	Definition
Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation	An AIS substation is constructed with switchgear which relies on open air components, which can require large clearance areas for operation and safety, which takes up a larger area of land than Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS).
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line OHL, along with location of key angle structures.
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland	Defined in National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 as " <i>land that has maintained continuous woodland habitat since at least 1750</i> ".
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	AWI is a provisional guide to the location of Ancient Woodland. It contains three main categories of woodland, all of which are likely to be of value for their biodiversity and cultural value. These include Ancient Woodland, Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO), and other woodlands.
Area of Search (Study Area)	A broad geographical area within which possible sites might be capable of identification within approximately 5km of the required connectivity point; usually determined by geographical features such as coastlines or hill/mountain ranges, or designation boundaries, such as National Park boundaries.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was pre-development. It focuses on the change in the biodiversity value of a site, comparing the pre and post construction biodiversity values to ensure a positive impact overall.
Conductor	A metallic wire strung from support structure to support structure, to carry electric current.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
Double circuit	A double circuit transmission line comprises of two independent circuits each made up of three sets of conductors (cables).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.



Engagement	The establishment of effective relationships with individuals or groups.
Electricity System Operator (ESO)	National Grid is the Electricity System Operator (ESO) for Great Britain. The ESO balances electricity supply and demand to ensure the electricity supply.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes lists those gardens or designed landscapes which are considered by a panel of experts to be of national importance.
Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation	A GIS substation is constructed with switchgear with gaseous reliant components which allows operation and safety clearances to be reduced compared to an AIS substation.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Holford Rules (as modified)	Principles developed by the late Lord Holford in 1959 which continue to be employed as the basis for routing high voltage overhead lines and include additional notes on the siting of substations.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in a landscape that differentiate the area from another.
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
National Scenic Area (NSA)	A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value.
Offshore Integrated Link	Offshore cable connection between the onshore network and offshore network being developed as part of the Coordinated Offshore Network. This is being developed as a result of the Holistic Network Design (HND) publication in summer of 2022 produced by National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to facilitate greater co-ordination and efficiency for offshore windfarms. In the autumn of 2022 Ofgem published their Asset Classification findings which in turn meant SSENT were tasked with delivering large parts of the Coordinated Offshore Network.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or wooden poles.

Planning Application	Used in this context to describe an application for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from intentional planting.
Preferred Option	The option which SSEN Transmission believes offers the best balance of technical and environmental impact considerations identified through initial assessment. This is then subject to consultation with stakeholders, where local and previously unknown considerations may confirm or alter the initial preference. Once confirmed, this becomes the Proposed Option to take forward to the next stage of project development.
RAG Rating	A Red, Amber, Green rating provided to allow for a comparison between different options being appraised.
Red Line Boundary (RLB)	This area should include all land necessary to carry out the Proposed Development.
Riparian Woodland	Natural home for plants and animals occurring in a thin strip of land bordering a stream or river.
Route	A linear area of approximately 1 km width (although this may be narrower/wider in specific locations in response to identified pinch points / constraints), which provides a continuous connection between defined connection points.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.
Section 37 Application	An application for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop an overhead electricity line.
Semi-natural Woodland	Woodland that does not obviously originate from planting. The distribution of species will generally reflect the variations in the site and the soil. Planted trees must account for less than 30% of the canopy composition
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Designated area of national importance for natural heritage. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Span	The section of overhead line between two structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by The Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.

Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive74/409/EEC) to protect important bird habitats. Implemented under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SHE Transmission works.
Study Area	The area within which the corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
Substation	A node on the network to allow safe control of the electricity network. This could include convergence of multiple circuits, transformation of voltage or other functions to maintain and operate the electricity network.
Substation Site Area	Site area identified as necessary to deliver all the substation infrastructure requirements e.g. platform, access tracks, temporary construction area, drainage including SUDS, landscaping.
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)	Drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses.
Terminal Structure	A structure (tower or pole) required where the line terminates either at a substation or at the beginning and end of an underground cable section.
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in the Great Britain.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)	The UK BAP was published in 1994 after the Convention on Biological Diversity. It summarised the most threatened species and habitats in the UK and gave detailed plans for their recovery.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between a landowner, upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed, and SHE Transmission
Wild Land Area (WLA)	Those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland.
Works	Constructing new transmission infrastructure such as substations, overhead lines, underground cables; major refurbishment of these; the dismantling and removal of any parts of the system; and associated works, which may include formation of access tracks, bridge and road improvements, tree cutting, drainage etc.

# 7. Appendices

## Appendix A - SEPA Consultation

Summary of feedback	Our Response
<p>SEPA confirmed that NPF4 will form part of the statutory development plan, along with the LDP applicable to the area at that time and its supplementary guidance.</p> <p>SEPA were content with the explanation of the project and project need.</p> <p>It was commented that any earthworks associated with landscape screening of the proposal should not include any landraising within a future flood extent (1 in 200 plus climate change).</p> <p>Regarding Site 13, SEPA do not agree that Option 13 is the Preferred Site due to potential detrimental impacts to the water environment relating to a watercourse running through whole length of the site from west to east, a historically straightened natural watercourse.</p> <p>SEPA would seek for the watercourse to be diverted as an open channel to avoid the need for culverting which is against local planning policy for watercourses. An open channel diversion would create a longer channel and there may be some opportunity to introduce channel morphology that is an improvement on the current straightened channel, however they believe it could be very challenging given the topography and layout of the site. Also there is likely to be a very steep section required to tie back into the watercourse at the downstream end which will require very careful design and leaves a permanent risk of triggering long term channel instability, with the resultant downstream issues, in years to come.</p> <p>SEPA note SSE commitment to net biodiversity net gain and are concerned that culverting could have a potential impact on possible associated wetlands and would not help fulfil this commitment. SEPA would object to this watercourse being culverted for land gain should this site be brought forward.</p> <p>It also may be a challenge to identify all the sources feeding into the watercourse and provide a route for them to the new watercourse.</p>	<p>SEPA’s comments and guidance regarding NPF4 and earthworks are noted.</p> <p>Regarding the ditch within the site, we are fully aware of the presence of this feature and as a result have been undertaking hydrogeological investigations of the ditch and preliminary findings indicate that the existing drainage system is considered to be primarily artificial in nature and in our opinion cannot be considered to be representative of a natural system. As a consequence, it is believed that the ditch can justifiably be modified again for the purposes of the proposed substation development and we are currently developing layout proposals that will divert or potentially incorporate the ditch within the substation drainage system.</p> <p>In addition, we have sought to rationalise the extent and location of the platform as much as possible to minimise the impact on the existing water environment, which will allow for a realignment of the ditch as an open channel diversion and should offer the opportunity to introduce channel morphology that will provide an improvement on the current straightened channel.</p>

*“In summary, there is huge uncertainty around whether an open channel diversion is feasible at this site, and therefore this site may be unsuitable from an impact on the water environment perspective. We are therefore likely to object to development of the substation on this site unless further information is provided on how you are intending to deal with this issue and how you are going to achieve biodiversity net gain and comply with current planning policies in relation to culverting and flood risk associated with small watercourses. We note there may be similar issues on some of the other sites although open watercourse diversions maybe more easily achievable and acceptable on these sites. This is likely to be the case for Options 1, 2, and 8 for example. In relation to the other option sites, we would agree Option 10 would not be our Preferred Site due to potential impact on private water supplies, and Options 8, 9 and 10 could potentially have detrimental impact on the drainage of the existing areas of Class 1 and Class 3 peat and the associated habitats within and adjacent to these sites.”*

We met with SEPA (8th November 2023) to present the findings of the Hydrogeological Study and potential layout options carried out on site, at which point the principle of a diversion was discussed and agreed. Following the meeting, we have agreed to work in close consultation with SEPA to identify an appropriate engineering design solution that will ensure that the necessary regulatory approvals and licenses are secured and abided by.

## Appendix B – RAG Table

The Summary RAG Ratings table below sets out the criteria and provides a RAG (Red; Amber; Green) rating for each site against our Site Selection criterion, with ‘Red’ representing least preferred and ‘Green’ representing most preferred. Our assessment, supported by stakeholder feedback, concluded that Site 13 was the only option to have no ‘Red’ RAG ratings.

In summary, Site 13 allows multiple technology options to be considered to interconnect the proposed site to the existing New Deer Substation and is unconstrained at both the north and south, allowing routes for the connection to the transmission network. No evidence of protected or notable species were found at Site 13 at the time of survey, and there are no known Annex 1 or irreplaceable habitats, such as peat. Site 13 was not as close in proximity to watercourses shown on 1:50k OS mapping and therefore has less potential to compromise the quality or quantity of groundwaters. Additionally, with appropriate siting of the substation within Site 13 there is potential to limit its prominence within the local landscape and character type, away from residential properties. This is not possible with the other Site options identified. Lastly, Site 13 was found to have a moderate potential for impact on prime agricultural land and limited conflict with existing proposals known to the Aberdeenshire Council planning system, where other Sites have an increased risk. Further details of the assessment can be found in the New Deer 2 Substation Consultation Booklet April 2023, which is available for download on our project website.

Category	Site 1	Site 8	Site 9	Site 10	Site 12	Site 13
<b>Engineering</b>						
<i>Connectivity:</i>						
Existing Circuits/Networks	A	G	G	A	G	A
Future Development Possibilities	G	A	A	A	A	A
Interface with SSEN Distribution and Generation	G	G	G	G	G	G
DNO Connection	G	G		G		
<i>Footprint Requirements:</i>						
Technology	G	A	G	A	G	G
Adjacent Land Use	G	G	G	G	G	G
Space Availability	G	A	G	G	G	G
<i>Hazards:</i>						
Unique Hazards	A	G	G	A	G	G
Existing Hazards	A	A	G	A	G	G
<i>Ground Conditions:</i>						
Topography	A	A	A	A	A	A
Geology	G	G	G	G	G	G
<i>Environmental Conditions:</i>						
Elevation	G	A	A	A	G	A
Salt Pollution	G	G	G	G	G	G
Flooding	G	A	G	A	G	G
Carbon Footprint	G	G	G	G	G	G
SF6	G	G	G	G	G	G
Contaminated Land	G	G	G	G	G	G

Noise	A	R	R	G	A	G
<i>Construction Access:</i>						
Substation Access Road (from public road)	G	G	G	G	G	A
Transformer Delivery Route	G	G	G	A	G	A
<i>Operation and Maintenance:</i>						
Access	G	G	G	G	G	G
<b>Environmental/Consent</b>						
<i>Natural Heritage:</i>						
Designation	G	G	G	G	G	G
Protected Species	G	G	G	A	A	G
Habitats	G	A	A	A	G	G
Ornithology	G	G	G	G	G	G
Hydrology/Geology	R	R	R	A	R	A
<i>Cultural Heritage:</i>						
Designation	G	G	G	G	G	G
Cultural Heritage Assets	G	G	G	G	G	G
<i>Landscape and Visual:</i>						
Designation	G	G	G	G	G	G
Landscape Character	R	G	A	R	A	A
Visual	R	A	A	R	A	A
<i>Land Use:</i>						
Agriculture	R	R	A	A	R	A
Woodland/Forestry	A	A	A	G	G	G
Recreation	G	G	G	G	G	G
<i>Planning:</i>						
Policy	A	A	A	A	A	A
Proposals	A	R	A	R	R	A
<b>Cost</b>						
Capital	G	G	G	G	G	G
Operational	G	G	G	G	G	G

## Appendix C – Postcard invite to public consultation



# New Deer 2 400kV Substation Rescheduled Public Consultation Event SSEN Transmission invites you to share your views with us

**What is happening?**  
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN Transmission) are holding a consultation exhibition event for the proposed New Deer 2 400kV Substation. This consultation is focused on SSEN Transmission's site selection for the project.

**We would like to extend an invitation to local members of the community and all interested parties to attend an exhibition to discuss our plans with the project team and let us know your thoughts on our proposals.**

**At this event, attendees will also be able to interact with our bespoke 3D model, offering a 360 degree view of the proposed substation site.**

<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/new-deer-2-400kv-substation/>

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The face to face consultation will be held at the following location:

**Wednesday 22 March 2023**  
**2-7pm**

New Deer Public Hall, New Deer, AB53 6WE

**Scan me**



This is an open door drop in session, open to all members of the public and interested parties.

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Community Liaison Manager:



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