Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

Public Information Session

December 2026



ssen-transmission.co.uk/shetland2

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Executive summary

Earlier in 2026 we introduced proposals for the Strathbogie Hub, a combined HVDC converter station and AC substation site to the north-east of Huntly. We shared the site options considered, and shortlisted Cruchie and Rivestone for more detailed assessment.

Part of our site selection process included significant engagement with local groups. Over 400 people attended our public information events in Huntly and Forgue, and we received over 200 feedback forms. Our Report on Consultation summarises the main themes which were raised and this booklet includes our responses. Thank you to everyone who has taken time to share their views.

Following further assessment and consideration of local feedback, we are proposing Cruchie as the least constrained site for the Strathbogie Hub. We welcome your views on this proposal.

We have discounted the site at Rivestone for a combination of reasons. The majority of feedback forms strongly opposed development at this site, there is a significantly constrained road network for access, and there are various environmental constraints.

Cruchie offers space and flexibility for the required infrastructure. It is well located in relation to the 400kV transmission network and public road network, and our assessment identified less potential for environmental effects than at Rivestone. However, there are still constraints that need careful assessment and measures to address them. Taking environmental, community, engineering, planning and delivery considerations together, Cruchie provides the best overall balance for the Strathbogie Hub.

This booklet includes images showing what the Hub could look like to help you understand and comment on the proposals. We have also added a third consultation event in Rothiemay in response to stakeholder feedback from previous engagement.

As the project develops, we expect to share information about the cable route to landfall in Banffshire and how the Hub would connect to the 400kV transmission network. We hope to make much of this information available in the first half of 2027. We will continue to keep you informed at every stage of the process and there will be further opportunities for you to have your say. Thank you for your ongoing engagement.



Powering change together



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

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

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

We all have a part to play

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

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

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

At SSEN Transmission, it is our role to build the energy system of the future. To do that, we are planning to invest around **£29 billion** in the coming years to upgrade the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. It's an investment that will unlock cleaner, more secure energy for homes and businesses now, and for generations to come.

By 2050, annual electricity demand is expected to at least double - our investment will support the connection of more clean power to meet that demand to the GB electricity network, supporting up to **17,500 jobs in Scotland,** with more than **8,000** of those in the north of Scotland, along the way.

Who we are

We are responsible for maintaining and investing in the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. We are part of SSE plc, one of the world's leading energy companies with a rich heritage in Scotland that dates back more than 80 years. We are also closely regulated by the GB energy regulator Ofgem, who determines how much revenue we are allowed to earn for constructing, maintaining and renovating our transmission network.

What we do

We manage the electricity network across our region which covers a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of the country's most challenging terrain. We connect renewable energy sources to our network in the north of Scotland and then transport it to where it needs to be. From underground/subsea cables and overhead lines to electricity substations, our network keeps your lights on all year round.

Working with you

We understand that the work we do can have an impact on communities and we are committed to minimising our impacts and maximising all the benefits that our developments can bring to your area.

To do that we provide all the information you need to know about our plans and how they will impact communities like yours. The way we consult is also a two-way street and we want to hear people's views, concerns, or ideas – and harness local knowledge – so that our work benefits communities today and long into the future. You can share your views with us at: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/talk-to-us/contact-us/**

Help shape our plans

At SSEN Transmission, we are committed to delivering a robust and transparent consultation process underpinned by inclusion and accessibility. As a stakeholder led business, we understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process.

This period of engagement in the development phase of the project is vital in shaping our proposals. To do this effectively, we need to capture feedback from stakeholders and harness local knowledge to identify key risks.

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.

We want you to share your thoughts and opinions on our plans, including where you think we can make improvements and any concerns you have about the impact of our work.

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

If you require additional support to submit your views, please contact our Community Liaison Team **(shetlandengagement@sse.com)** who will happily assist you.

What to expect from this event

The aim of today's event is to:

- Share progress made on the project with the local community and other key stakeholders
- Provide a summary of feedback received from the information sessions held in May 2026 and outline how we have responded to this
- Gather your feedback on the least constrained site to help inform the development of the project
- Give you the opportunity to ask questions and share local knowledge, concerns and ideas to help shape our proposals

We will have experts on hand to answer any questions you may have.

Your feedback today has the power to influence outcomes. Across our wider portfolio, local insight has already led to changes in routing and design. By sharing your views, you're helping us to understand what matters most to the people who live and work here.

Whether you have detailed feedback or just a first impression, we would really value your input.



Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

The story so far

The Strathbogie Hub in Aberdeenshire is an integral part of the Shetland HVDC Link 2 project. The Shetland Islands have a vital role to play in the UK's clean energy future. This has been formally recognised through independent national planning. In March 2024, the National Energy System Operator (NESO) Beyond 2030 report confirmed that additional transmission infrastructure is needed, both on Shetland and to the Scottish mainland to connect future renewable generation and to support security of electricity supply across Great Britain.

This assessment forms the basis of the Shetland Strategy - NESO and Ofgem have tasked us with providing a coordinated response to a confirmed need.

From National Plan to Local Action

NESO's findings were based on a comprehensive assessment of how the electricity network must evolve to:

- Meet net zero targets;
- Manage increasing demand;
- Support economic growth and
- Maintain resilience

Shetland was identified as a strategically important location, not because of any one single project, but due to its long-term potential and critical role in the future energy network.

In December 2024, Ofgem, the GB energy regulator, endorsed this position by approving funding for early-stage development works in Shetland. This sits alongside Ofgem's assessment of NESO's broader Clean Power 2030 recommendations, with further decisions expected shortly.

Why this matters

The Shetland Strategy proposes a technologically robust solution, that is coordinated across the region and is shaped by local engagement and insight. The strategy serves Shetland's known energy needs as well as provision of headroom for future growth. We have looked to minimise the amount of infrastructure to reduce the impact on communities and the environment.

March 2024

NESO publishes transitional Centralised Strategic Network Plan (tCSNP2) (Beyond 2030) confirming Shetland requirements

December 2024

Ofgem approves early stage development funding

July 2025

Ofgem publishes Clean Power 2030 minded to position.

2026/2027

Further Ofgem decisions expected to support Clean Power 2030

You can read the NESO Beyond 2030 report here

Shetland HVDC Link 2 project need and overview

Why is the project required?

The Shetland HVDC Link 2 is needed to provide a secure, long-term connection between Shetland and the GB (Great Britain) electricity network. It will enable new renewable generation, such as onshore and offshore wind farms, and support demand projects such as green hydrogen production. By reinforcing the existing Shetland HVDC Link 1, it also provides resilience for the islands' electricity supply.

The project will include the construction of new HVDC converter stations on Shetland and Aberdeenshire, together with associated substations and underground cables to connect them to the wider electricity transmission network.

A subsea cable will link the two landfall points, carrying clean, renewable electricity over these longer distances efficiently and reliably.

In addition to the HVDC subsea cable, key elements of the project include:

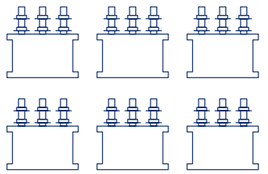
Northern Shetland:

- HVDC converter station
- 220kV AC substation
- 400kV AC substation
- Underground cable and landfall

Scottish mainland:

- HVDC converter station
- 400kV AC substation
- Underground cable and landfall

Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

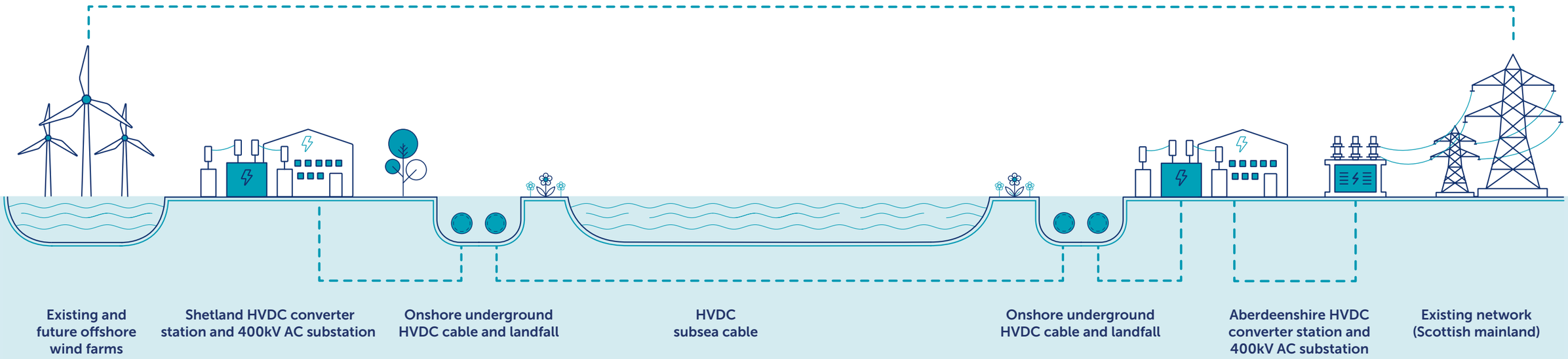


Why HVDC?

High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) technology offers the most efficient means of transmitting large amounts of power over long distances.

It helps minimise energy losses, reduce the environmental footprint, and improve the stability of the wider electricity network. Using HVDC also ensures the new Shetland HVDC Link 2 is compatible with the first Shetland HVDC link and any other future subsea connections, providing a coordinated and future-proof solution.





Project overview

We are proposing a new converter station and substation hub to the north-east of Huntly to facilitate the connection of the Shetland HVDC Link 2 project to the transmission network.

The hub will consolidate all major infrastructure on a single site, minimising local impact while supporting the UK's wider energy strategy. It will include an HVDC converter station, AC substation, substation buildings, terminal tower platforms, lighting, access roads, landscaping and screening, and temporary construction facilities.

400kV Substation

A 400kV substation is required in the area to facilitate offshore and onshore electricity generation connections in addition to the connection for the Shetland HVDC Link 2 project. The substation will connect into the 400kV transmission network.

Dimensions
Approximately 760m x 315m, with building heights up to 15m.

HVDC Converter Station

A 2GW bi-pole, 525kV HVDC link is proposed between Aberdeenshire and Northern Shetland, enabling the efficient, high-volume transmission of renewable electricity from Shetland and the north of Scotland directly into the wider UK transmission network. This project element consists of two HVDC converter stations, one at each end of the link, connected via a subsea and underground HVDC cable circuit.

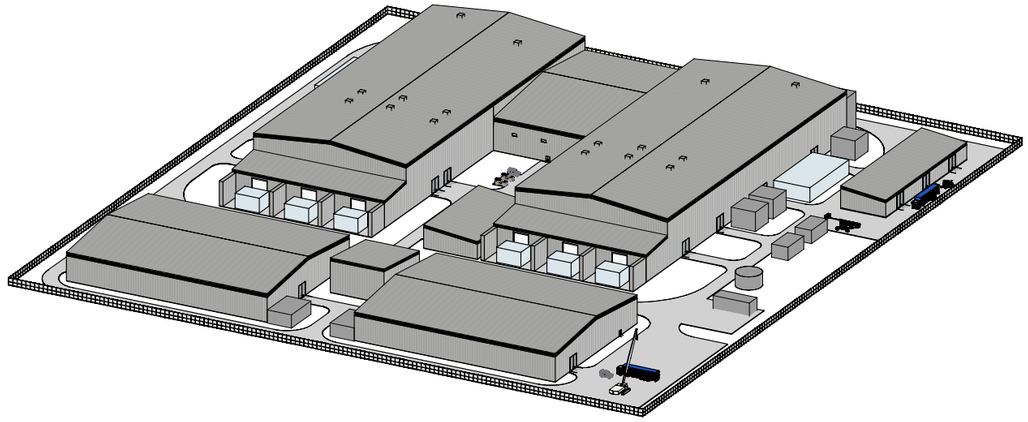
Dimensions
Approximately 360m x 320m, with building heights up to 27m.



Alyth AIS Substation

Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

Indicative conceptual design for 2GW 525kV bipole converter station





The Kergord HVDC converter station and AC switching station

What you told us

The first information sessions were held in Huntly and Forgue (May 2026). Some responses were general objections to the project itself and questioned the need for the project. Whilst this feedback is acknowledged, only specific feedback is summarised and responded to below. Many of the responses also posed general questions, these are covered in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page, which can be accessed at: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/2030faqs**. We have included summaries of both written and verbal feedback received during the consultation events and meetings with local residents and statutory stakeholders.

Feedback

The content below summarises the key themes raised and how these are being considered as the project design develops.

you said

Concerns were raised regarding the effects of the proposal on the local population and community, including visual impacts, noise, lighting, loss of rural amenity, health and wellbeing, and potential changes to community character and identity.

we did

A number of local and community topics were considered during the site selection stage, including:

- Landscape and Visual: designations, landscape character, visual including settlements and residential properties and vantage points where views and landscape appreciation is important.
- Land Use: Agricultural, Woodland/Forestry, Recreation including public footpaths, national cycle route, commercial Highland Sports.
- Noise: Including proximity to dwellings and residential properties.

Once a preferred site has been identified and confirmed an EIA will be carried out, which will inform potential impacts of the Strathbogie Hub on environmental receptors, including the local population and community.

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you said

Respondents called for greater transparency and more meaningful engagement throughout the consultation process, including fuller disclosure of assessment findings and greater use of local knowledge.

we did

Consultation with stakeholders is an essential part of the site selection process which provides SSEN with invaluable feedback that directly feeds into identifying a preferred site. For projects like Strathbogie Hub, a balance must be struck between providing stakeholders with as much detailed information about the site selection process as possible, while also not overwhelming participants with overly technical jargon or aspects of the assessment that would not help inform feedback. Feedback on how the consultation process can be improved is always greatly appreciated and will go on to inform how SSEN approach future projects.

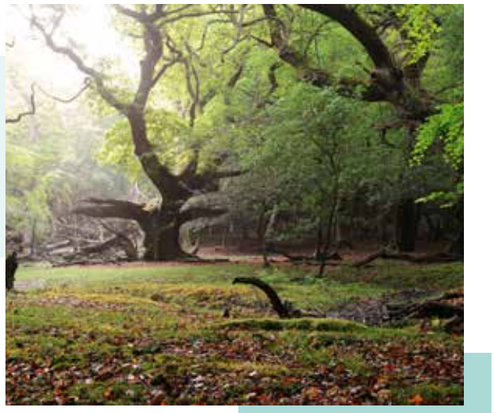
you said

Respondents raised concerns regarding the potential impacts on biodiversity, protected species, habitats and ecological connectivity at Site 14 (Rivestone), together with impacts on the River Deveron and wider water environment. Landscape and visual effects were also a key issue, particularly in relation to the Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA), rural character, tranquillity and dark skies.

we did

The purpose of the Site Selection process is to identify a site with the lowest potential to be constrained by a wide array of environmental, engineering, community and cost receptors. This is to ensure that only the most viable site is brought forward for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA involves detailed survey work across a wide range of scoped environmental factors (e.g. Landscape, Ecology, Noise, Local economy, etc.) to both identify the significant impacts of a proposed development, and provide a structured plan on how, if possible, they will be mitigated.

The detailed community feedback regarding these potential impacts is greatly appreciated and has been taken on board.



Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

you said

Responses raised concerns at a perceived lack of transparency in the site selection process. Some comments indicated that information provided on assessment criteria, weightings, scoring, and the reasons for why alternative sites were discounted was not clear.

Respondents additionally noted a belief that engineering and cost considerations had been prioritised over environmental, landscape, agricultural and community impacts, and questioned the rationale for progressing Site 14 (Rivestone).

we did

The Site Selection process has been carried out in accordance with SSEN's Site Selection procedure. The consultation booklets have summarised and provided further explanation about the options considered and the outcomes, including why options were or were not taken forward for further assessment. Engineering is not prioritised over other factors, instead the various competing issues are balanced when assessing the options.

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you said

Respondents requested the project should be assessed cumulatively alongside other existing and proposed energy infrastructure schemes.

we did

The Site Selection process identified the likely level of constraints posed by surrounding development proposals and schemes for both Sites 6 (Cruchie) and 14 (Rivestone), which has informed the assessment.

The EIA of the preferred site will assess in detail the inter-cumulative effects of Strathbogie Hub in relation to all other proposed developments of a similar nature and scale within the surrounding area.

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you said

Respondents called for greater transparency and more meaningful engagement throughout the consultation process, including fuller disclosure of assessment findings and greater use of local knowledge.

we did

Consultation with stakeholders is an essential part of the site selection process which provides SSEN with invaluable feedback that directly feeds into identifying a preferred site. For infrastructure such as the Strathbogie Hub, a balance must be struck between providing stakeholders with as much detailed information about the site selection process as possible, while also not overwhelming participants with overly technical jargon or aspects of the assessment that would not help inform feedback. There is also a progressive increase in information available as ongoing assessment continues, as design development is an iterative process. Feedback on how the consultation process can be improved is always greatly appreciated and will go on to inform how SSEN approach future projects.

you said

The potential loss of prime agricultural land was a key theme across feedback received, with concerns relating to farm viability, food production and impacts on multi-generational farming businesses. Respondents also highlighted potential effects on wider rural industries, including tourism, fisheries and other local businesses.

we did

Prime agricultural land refers to land with an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of 3.1 or higher. Based on the most up-to-date soil data available, Site 14 (Rivestone) has been assessed to be situated on land with an ALC of 3.2, meaning it is not considered prime. Site 6 (Cruchie) is also situated on majority 3.2 class land, however there are some pockets of 3.1 class land in its southwestern border region. This is reflected in the assessment of both sites, and it is acknowledged that the presence of this receptor at Site 6 (Cruchie) gives it a higher potential to be constrained.

The EIA for the preferred site would assess in detail the potential effects of any agricultural land loss and propose, if required, suitable mitigation measures. SSEN will continue discussions with relevant landowners regarding land use.

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you said

Respondents highlighted concerns about construction traffic, road safety and the suitability of the local road network, including single-track roads, bridges, school routes and impacts on walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

we did

Ensuring the continued safety of the road network surrounding the proposed Strathbogie Hub is a priority of any SSEN development.

As part of our site selection process, we have considered the engineering criteria "Construction Access" for each of the potential sites identified. This undertakes a high-level assessment of the suitability of the public road network used to access the site, including what public road improvements may be required.

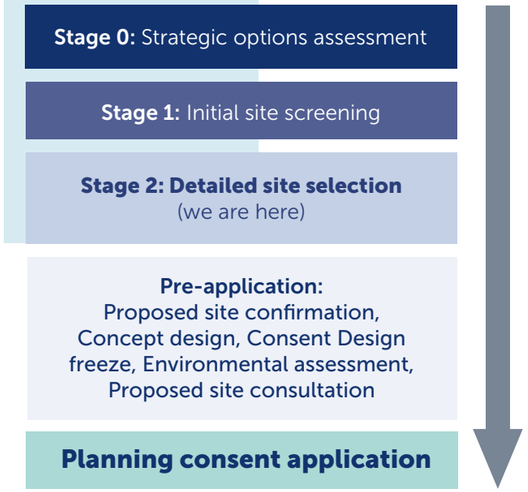
While any transport and traffic impacts will be assessed in the EIA with specific mitigation proposed, standard procedures would result in the production of a traffic management plan, which will ensure that the road network around the preferred site is disrupted as minimally as possible over the construction and operation phases of a development. This can come in the form of upgrades to existing routes, as well as the construction of new temporary or permanent access tracks.

Site selection process

SSEN Transmission has developed and implemented a formal process for the selection of sites for new substations and converter stations. The main aim of the process is to provide a consistent approach to the selection of new substation sites, underpinned by our statutory obligations to:

Develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical electricity transmission system within our licensed area and in doing so, to have regard to the desirability of preserving the natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of special interest and protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and do what we reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites buildings or objects as part of the Electricity Act 1989, Section 9 (2) and b.

Our site selection process ensures the design, consenting, construction and operation of a substation is done in a manner that is technically feasible and financially viable whilst, on balance, creating the least disturbance during construction and operation to the environment and the people who live, work, and use it for recreation. We aim to consult on this at various stages, ensuring key stakeholders have the opportunity to feed into the process.



For most new projects following pre-site selection activities, the approach follows two principal stages, each iterative and increasing in detail and resolution, bringing cost, technical and environmental considerations together in a way which seeks the best balance at both stages. This staged process leads to the identification of a preferred site, which will be consulted on and assessed further before determining the optimal arrangement.

What happens next: the planning application process

The outcome of the above site selection process will culminate in seeking planning consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act. The application will identify:

- The site boundary (the planning application boundary) including any access route (up to the public road, including junction improvements).
- The proposed development in relation to the site boundary, with dimensions of all permanent structures, buildings, perimeter fencing, and any key drainage features and electrical features, such as transformers.
- Any required landscape and biodiversity proposals (both in situ and remote to the proposed sites) will also be identified and detailed as part of each planning submission. In some cases, the application will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. This may result in further alterations to the proposed development to reflect outcomes of the EIA consultation process.

Further public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken to present our proposals ahead of submitting any planning applications.

Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

Environmental and social considerations

Environmental assessments and site surveys will be undertaken as we move through the stages of site selection to preferred site and consenting. This includes assessing landscape, visual and recreational amenity; ecology, habitats and ornithology; geology, hydrogeology and hydrology, noise, traffic/transport and cultural heritage of the potential options and then preferred sites. An assessment of environmental impact will be required as part of the Town and Country Planning consent application which will be subject to further rounds of consultation events.

Ecology, habitats and ornithology

Protected species and sensitive habitats could be present within the project area. However the least constrained site option has been selected to avoid environmental designations and known sensitive habitats. The project will assess the risk to species and habitats as it moves through the stages of site selection, aiming to select a site with the least risk to the environment overall. Achieving a Biodiversity Net Gain for the site will be an overall objective of the preferred sites.

Landscape and visual amenity

The project site selection process aims to position sites in locations that minimises the effect on landscapes and visual amenity. The process being followed for the Strathbogie Hub will look at the visual impact of all the potential site options and will consider landscape designations, landscape character and residential proximity to the site locations.

Cultural heritage

Scheduled, non-scheduled cultural heritage, archaeological features will be mapped and risk assessed through the stages of site selection. The project works will be designed and constructed to ensure these features are avoided, where possible.

Where this is not possible, further site assessments will be conducted in consultation with the planning authority.

Geology, hydrology and hydrogeology

The geological and hydrological sensitivities of a site will be risk assessed throughout the stages of site selection and further refined once a preferred site is selected. The site and access points will be selected to minimise effects as far as possible.



Strathbogie Hub

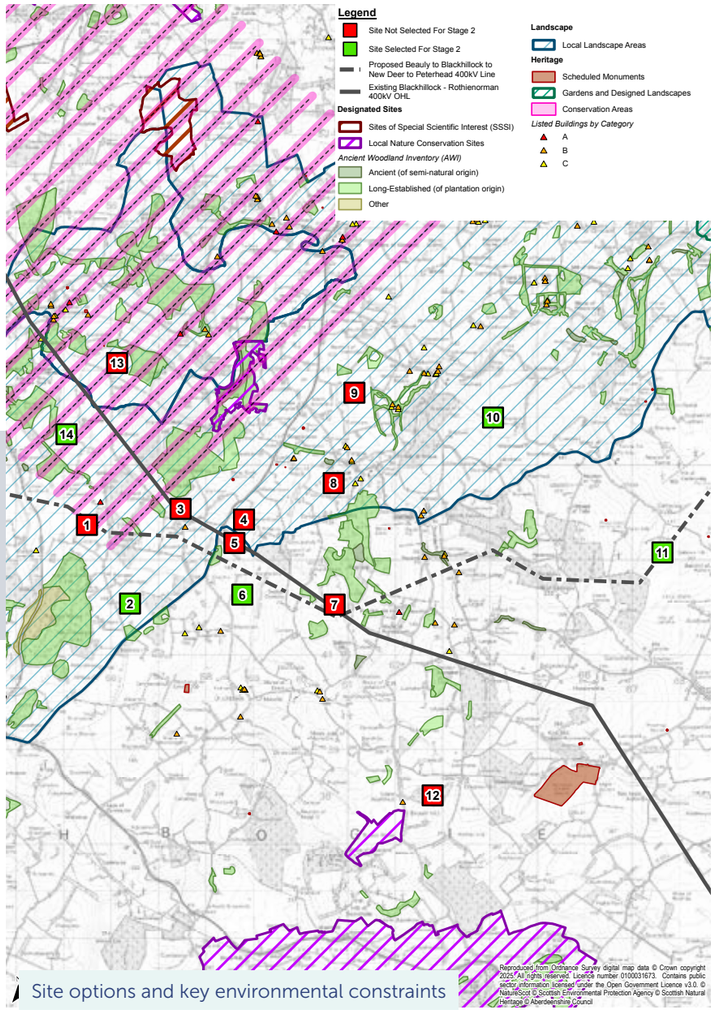
Stage 1: Initial Site Screening

A comparative assessment of 14 site options was carried out using refined selection criteria, supported by a multidisciplinary site visit in August 2025.

Nine sites were deemed unsuitable for progression to Stage 2 due to significant constraints. Site 1 is heavily constrained by existing infrastructure. Sites 3, 4, 5, and 13 lack sufficient land to co-locate both the converter station and substation. Site 7 would require complex connection arrangements, while Sites 8 and 9 are too close to Forgue. Site 12 presents challenging topography and an elevated position.

Sites 2, 6, 10, 11, and 14 were identified as less constrained and more aligned with operational and strategic requirements. These five sites advanced to Stage 2 for further detailed assessment.

Site	Proceed to Stage 2
1	No
2	Yes
3	No
4	No
5	No
6	Yes
7	No
8	No
9	No
10	Yes
11	Yes
12	No
13	No
14	Yes



Site options and key environmental constraints

Stage 2: Detailed Site Selection

The five remaining site options are undergoing detailed assessment, supported by engineering and environmental surveys as well as landowner engagement. The table below provides a summary of the key environmental and engineering aspects of each site.

Site	Environmental summary	Engineering summary
2	Watercourse within the site, areas of ancient woodland nearby and some landscape sensitivity, with no designated sites identified within the site.	Predominantly flat land, close to existing overhead lines and the strategic road network, with some nearby residential properties.
6	Several watercourses, nearby heritage features and use of prime agricultural land, with no designated sites or woodland within the site boundary.	A large site containing existing overhead lines, undulating landform and some disused buildings, accessed from local roads.
10	Agricultural land in active use and proximity to residential properties, with no designated sites, heritage assets or priority habitats identified.	Gently sloping land located further from existing overhead lines, with watercourses along site boundaries and longer access routes.
11	A watercourse, nearby scheduled monuments and areas of woodland and wet ground, with no landscape designations identified.	Slightly sloping agricultural land with overhead lines crossing the site and access provided by local roads.
14	Proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), adjacent areas of ancient woodland, landscape sensitivity and nearby heritage assets.	Flat land located between existing and planned overhead lines with an existing access track through the site.

Based on the detailed assessment, sites 2, 10 and 11 were discounted at this stage:

Site 2 - this site is highly constrained by the public road network and a watercourse, limiting development potential.

Site 10 - this site is a significant distance from the connecting overhead line infrastructure, making integration less efficient.

Site 11 - the surrounding topography of this site presents significant constraints, resulting in complex overhead line routeing challenges.

Based on the detailed assessment, sites 6 and 14 were taken forward for further assessment:

Site 6 (Cruchie)

- Good proximity to overhead line infrastructure, supporting efficient network connections.
- A large site area providing flexibility for layout and construction activities.
- No designated environmental sites within the site boundary.
- Access available via local roads, with scope to support construction and operation.

Site 14 (Rivestone)

- Strong strategic location between existing and planned overhead lines.
- Generally flat landform, well suited to a large hub layout.
- No designated environmental sites located within the site boundary itself.
- Fewer nearby residential properties compared with other options.

Strathbogie Hub Site Selection

From an initial longlist of 14 sites, several locations were discounted due to significant constraints, such as existing infrastructure, lack of sufficient land to co-locate both the converter station and substation, complex connection arrangements, proximity to Forgue, and challenging topography.

A shortlist of 5 sites was assessed in greater detail, reducing the site options to Site 6 (Cruchie) and Site 14 (Rivestone).

These remaining sites demonstrated the strongest balance between environmental sensitivity, engineering practicality, and planning alignment, warranting further assessment to identify the most suitable location.

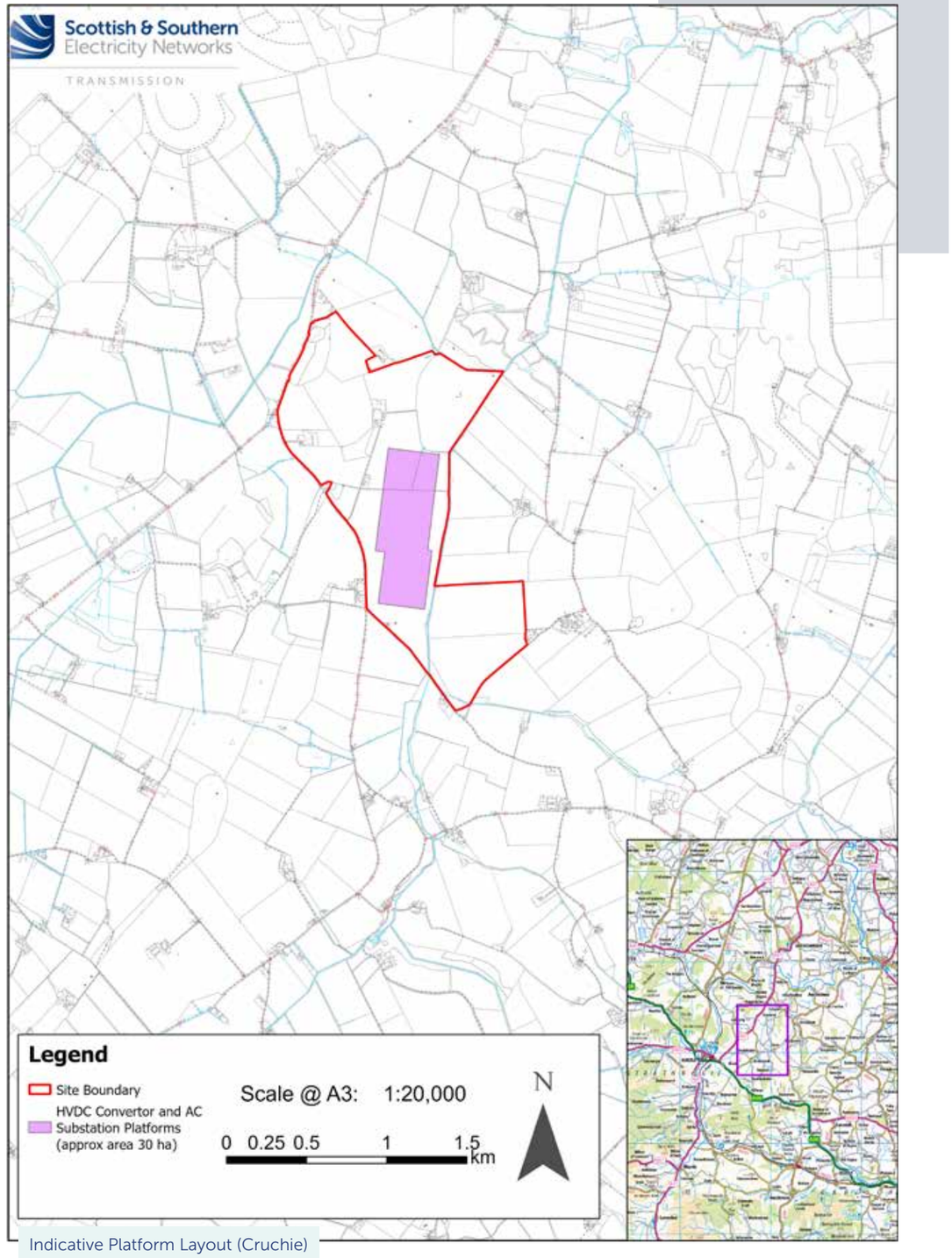
Least Constrained Option: Site 6 (Cruchie)

As part of Stage 2 of the site selection process, each potential location was assessed in more detail. Based on this assessment, Site 6 (Cruchie) is considered the least constrained option for the Strathbogie Hub.

The assessment considered environmental constraints, engineering feasibility, planning requirements, and the ability to deliver the programme on schedule. Although every location presents challenges, Site 6 (Cruchie) offers the best overall balance and the greatest potential for developing a viable solution.



Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub



Indicative Platform Layout (Cruchie)

Ongoing work and considerations

Further work is being undertaken to fully understand and manage the constraints associated with the site, including:

- Ground conditions
- Site layout development
- Environmental and planning considerations
- Landscape and community impacts
- Identification of mitigation measures, environmental buffers and potential design refinements
- Opportunities for habitat enhancement, biodiversity improvement, and long-term land management

The indicative boundary shown on the plan represents the maximum design envelope currently under consideration and does not indicate that the entire area will be permanently developed. Some areas may only be required temporarily and, where appropriate, land would be reinstated following completion of the construction works. This may include returning the land to agriculture or habitat creation where opportunities are identified.

The proposals will continue to be refined through ongoing environmental studies, engineering assessment and engagement with local communities and statutory stakeholders, helping to ensure that environmental, engineering and community considerations are appropriately balanced throughout the development process.

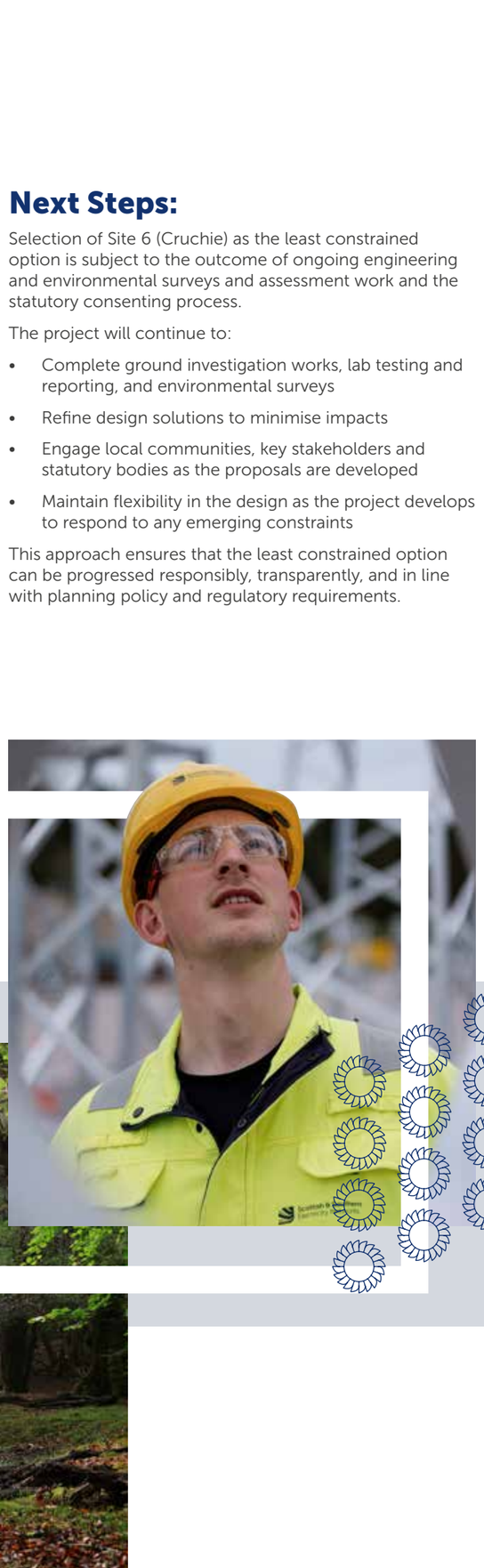
Next Steps:

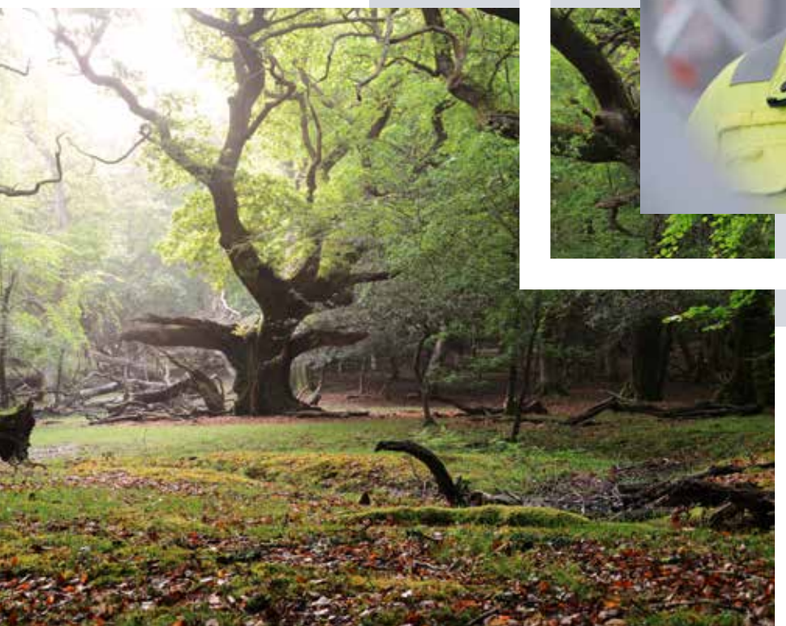
Selection of Site 6 (Cruchie) as the least constrained option is subject to the outcome of ongoing engineering and environmental surveys and assessment work and the statutory consenting process.

The project will continue to:

- Complete ground investigation works, lab testing and reporting, and environmental surveys
- Refine design solutions to minimise impacts
- Engage local communities, key stakeholders and statutory bodies as the proposals are developed
- Maintain flexibility in the design as the project develops to respond to any emerging constraints

This approach ensures that the least constrained option can be progressed responsibly, transparently, and in line with planning policy and regulatory requirements.







Indicative 3D Visualisation of the Substation Site Layout at Cruchie, showing the HVDC Converter Station, 400kV Substation, earthworks and drainage basin. This indicative site layout is subject to change, based on preliminary design information, and does not include environmental mitigation such as landscaping.

Building a lasting legacy

Our community benefit funds

Following an extensive stakeholder consultation exercise in 2023, we launched our first community benefit fund in 2024, to fund a range of community projects across the north of Scotland and the Shetland islands. These funds are open to applications from not-for-profit, constituted groups and organisations. There are two types of funds available:

Local funds

In anticipation of the expected UK government guidance on community benefit funding, we have launched four preliminary local funds connected to projects recently completed or currently under construction. These funds will vary to reflect the differing needs, wishes and priorities of each of the local communities.

Local Community Benefit Funds are intended for local communities close to our transmission infrastructure works. We will work with those communities to design a fund that can make a positive local impact. We will work with independent panels to make funding allocation decisions, and we will support local communities to ensure best use of the funding opportunities.

Regional funds

This fund is to be used to provide support for strategic projects in the region, and must meet one or more of the following themes:

People: Focusing on skills, training and employability;

Place: Emphasising the community and culture of the north of Scotland and the Shetland islands;

Alleviating fuel poverty: Looking at strategic ways to help people across the region.

Giving something back

Could your community use a helping hand?

SSEN Transmission employees have the opportunity to spend time volunteering in the communities where we live and work. If you're part of a community group, charity, school or local organisation in or around the Strathbogie area, you can ask for our support.

This could be anything from gardening, painting and environmental projects to helping at a community event or putting our team's skills and experience to good use.

Have an idea where we could help?

Visit **www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/volunteering** and complete the short Volunteering Nomination Form. Tell us what you need help with, and our volunteering team will see whether we can match your opportunity with colleagues who would like to get involved.

Indicative funding levels

UK government guidance sets out indicative levels of community benefit funding for transmission infrastructure. These figures provide a useful benchmark for the types of investment local communities should expect:

Overhead lines: £200,000 per km

Converter stations/substations: £530,000 each



Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

Lasting legacy

SSEN Transmission is committed to leaving a lasting, positive legacy for the Aberdeenshire communities where we operate. Alongside delivering new infrastructure, we invest in local priorities through community benefit funding, volunteering and outreach, and ongoing engagement with community groups across the region.

Recent examples include volunteering with Aberdeenshire North Food Bank and supporting improvements at New Deer Public Hall.

Housing

Through our housing legacy initiative, we are helping to increase local housing supply while accommodating the workforce delivering major grid upgrades. In Aberdeenshire, our agreement with The Springfield Group supports 293 homes overall, including 69 at a new development in Turriff, alongside our wider commitment to deliver over 300 legacy homes across five sites.

Homes will initially support the construction workforce before being released for local use, with a mix of affordable, social and private housing for sale and rent.

Economy

Our Pathway to 2030 investment programme is expected to deliver significant benefits for Aberdeenshire, including up to £1bn of local spend and up to £820m in total Gross Value Added (GVA). The programme is also forecast to support around 1,140 jobs and could boost the local construction sector by up to 20% annually. We recruited almost 200 staff locally in the last year (including 38 'earn as you learn' roles) and expect a further 150 new staff in the area over the next five years.

Skills

We are working with our contractors and supply chain to grow regional skills through training, apprenticeships, graduate routes and 'earn as you learn' roles. In Aberdeenshire, this includes our learning partnership with Peterhead Academy (launched in 2025), linking pupils to industry experience connected to Eastern Green Link 2 (EGL2), and Pittodrie Pathways at Fraserburgh Academy with Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust. Across our business, we welcomed our largest-ever intake of 59 graduates, and have committed to creating 600 'earn as you learn' roles by 2030.

Our supply chain

We run competitive tenders to appoint contractors who share our commitment to delivering positive local outcomes. In Aberdeenshire, we encourage the use of local suppliers and services so project benefits are retained in the north east economy. Recent examples include Entier providing catering at our EGL2 site in Peterhead; David Smith Contractors Ltd (Fraserburgh) securing a major civil engineering contract creating nine new roles; and Nicol of Skene (Westhill) delivering onshore cabling works for the Spittal to Peterhead subsea project. We also apply clear environmental standards, including 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and no net loss of woodland.



Project timeline

We are currently in the Site Selection stage, which includes environmental assessments, technical studies, and early engagement with stakeholders and communities. While timelines may shift as the projects progress, our commitment to a collaborative approach will remain constant throughout every stage.

Strathbogie Hub will require an application for planning permission to be submitted to the relevant Local Planning Authority (Aberdeenshire Council) under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

This large scale project may be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This requires an application to be supported by a formal EIA Report together with robust consultation and mitigation proposals.

Should the proposed development be deemed non-EIA (due to its scale or potential environmental impacts), a voluntary Environmental Appraisal will be produced by SSEN Transmission to support the application.

2025
- Project need and scope confirmed
- Site Selection commenced
- Desktop environmental and engineering studies
- Preliminary environmental and engineering surveys
- Site selection option refinement

2026
- Public consultation event - site selection
- Public consultation event - least constrained site

2027
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Land negotiations
- Finalisation of proposed site design
- Planning application lodgement

2028–2032
- Receive consents
- Commence construction

2033
- 400kV substation construction complete
- 400kV substation commissioning

2034
- HVDC converter station construction complete
- HVDC converter station commissioning

2035
- Full system commissioning complete
- Full system energisation and integration into transmission network

Next steps

We value community and stakeholder feedback. Without this, we would be unable to progress projects and reach a balanced proposal.

The feedback period

Following our events, a consultation period will open until **Friday 15 January 2027.**

How to provide feedback

You can complete our feedback form online, using the feedback form at the back of this booklet or submit feedback in writing or email. The feedback will be analysed by the project team and a report on consultation produced and published on our website detailing our response to your feedback.

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.

What we're seeking views on

We want to know your thoughts on Cruchie as the least constrained site option. We'll be actively looking to mitigate the impacts of the project 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.

Recite me

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.

How to get in touch

SSEN Transmission, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

shetlandengagement@sse.com

You can also follow us on social media:

@ssentransmission SSENTransmission

SSEN Transmission

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/shetland2

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. **Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand what is being proposed and why?**

Comments:

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

Q2. **Please provide comment and any additional information regarding the least constrained site option we have identified for the Strathbogie Hub.**

Comments:

Shetland HVDC Link 2 Strathbogie Hub

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 that you would like us to consider supporting?**

Comments:

Q4. **Do you have any other comments in relation to the project?**

Comments:

Full name: .....

Telephone: .....

Email: .....

Address: .....

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.

☐ **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: SSEN Transmission, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

Email: shetlandengagement@sse.com

Online: ssen-transmission.co.uk/shetland2

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**

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

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.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks is a trading name of: Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution Limited Registered in Scotland No. SC213459; Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213461; Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in Scotland No. SC213460; (all having their Registered Offices at Inveralmond House 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ); and Southern Electric Power Distribution plc Registered in England & Wales No. 04094290 having its Registered Office at Number One Forbury Place, 43 Forbury Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3JH which are members of the SSE Group.



Glossary of terms

AC: Alternating Current - the type of electricity commonly used in homes and across much of the electricity network.

AIS: Air Insulated Switchgear - electrical equipment in a substation that uses air as insulation to safely control and switch high-voltage electricity.

Bipole: An HVDC system that uses two electrical poles, one positive and one negative, to transmit large amounts of electricity.

Converter station: A facility that converts electricity between alternating current (AC) and direct current (DC), allowing electricity to be transported efficiently over long distances using HVDC cables.

EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment - a process used to identify and assess the potential environmental effects of a proposed development before decisions are made.

GW: Gigawatt - a unit of electrical power. One gigawatt is equal to 1,000 megawatts (MW).

HVDC: High Voltage Direct Current - technology used to efficiently transmit large amounts of electricity over long distances, including through subsea cables.

kV: Kilovolt - a unit used to describe electrical voltage. One kilovolt equals 1,000 volts.

Substation: A facility that helps manage the flow of electricity around the network, including connecting circuits and changing electricity between different voltages.





The information sessions will be taking place on:

Monday 7 December, 3-7pm
Number 30, 30 The Square, Huntly, AB54 8BR

Tuesday 8 December, 3-7pm
Scott Hall, Forgue, AB54 6DQ

Wednesday 9 December, 3-7pm
The Village Hall, Rothiemay, Huntly, AB54 7LT