

# Skye Reinforcement – Area Community Liaison Group 1

Struan, Glendale, Dunvegan, Waternish, Skaebost, Uig,  
Kilmuir, Staffin, Portree & Braes

Inaugural Meeting – 30 Oct 2025



# **Agenda:**

**Introductions**

**Purpose of this Community Liaison Group**

**Project Update**

**Discussion and agreement of Terms of Reference**

# Purpose of Community Liaison Group

## Building Strong Connections with local communities

- The aim of the CLG will be to establish a platform for meaningful engagement between SSEN Transmission and representatives of the local community during construction, where updates can be provided, concerns raised, questions answered, and input provided.
- This engagement should work to minimise the impacts of our construction works and maximise local opportunities.
- Allows for effective two-way communication between communities, developers and contractors.
- Whilst SSEN Transmission would usually offer to run CLGs for any of our construction projects, the formation of CLG(s) is a condition of our Section 37 consent for the Skye Reinforcement Project and also the Town & Country Planning Consents for Broadford and Edinbane Substation.

# CLGs on the Skye Reinforcement Project

## Building Strong Connections with local communities

- The project covers a wide geographical area from Fort Augustus to Ardmore on Skye
- Coordination is required across multiple communities with unique needs, priorities, and expectation.
- Some communities may experience greater construction impact due to location and local infrastructure.
- To support meaningful engagement across all of Skye, we propose the following CLG set up:
  - Skye Area CLG 1: Struan, Glendale, Dunvegan, Waternish, Skaebost, Uig, Kilmour, Staffin, Portree
  - Skye Area CLG 2: Minginish, Sconser, Raasay, Kyleakin & Kylerhea, Sleat, Broadford & Strath
  - Broadford CLG (due to the nature of the substation works and potential Accommodation Village)
- Additional and close liaison with individual communities across the area will supplement the CLG activities.

# Additional Communications Platforms

## Building Strong Connections with local communities

We will work collaboratively with communities to identify the most effective and meaningful communications approach which may include:

- Regular information provision
- Local resident meetings and attendance at Community Council meetings as requested
- Project newsletter & open information events
- Email updates (sign up option for update for specific community council area)
- Dedicated Community Liaison Manager, contact details publicly available
- Letter drops and door knocking

# Project Update



# About the project

- The existing single circuit 132kV overhead line (OHL) from Fort Augustus to Ardmore provides the sole connection from the mainland electricity transmission system to Skye and the Western Isles and is essential for maintaining the security of supply.
- The existing OHL was constructed between 1956 and 1989 is now reaching the end of its operational life.
- To ensure security of supply and facilitate the connection of new renewable energy to the grid, the Skye Reinforcement project will cover the construction of a new double circuit 132kV overhead line, which will comprise of steel lattice towers, wood pole overhead line and sections of underground cable.
- The steel lattice towers will be comparable in size to those already in situ.
- Extensions of Broadford and Edinbane substations will be required to facilitate the new electrical infrastructure, with smaller upgrades also to be delivered at Dunvegan and Ardmore substations (within existing compounds)
- All existing Transmission OHLs will be removed once the new line is operational

# Skye Reinforcement Planning Consent

## Overhead Line Element

- Required Section 37 planning consent
- The respective application was submitted to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit in September 2022 and consent was received in June 2025.

## Substations

- Required Town and Country planning consent
- Planning consent received in 2024 (Edinbane) and 2025 (Broadford)
- The upgrades at Dunvegan and Ardmore are of a nature and size that they don't require planning consent.

## Underground Cable

- Underground Cable development does not require planning consent for this project.

## Ancillary Planning applications

The delivery method of the project is determined by the contractors, who, at planning application stage had not been confirmed. As contractors are progressing their delivery models further planning applications have been submitted/will be submitted covering:

- Workers accommodation
- Access tracks
- Borrow Pits
- Improvement of public infrastructure (roads)

# Pre-Construction Activity

## Overhead Line (OHL)

- Public road improvement works, maintenance of existing access tracks, including vegetation management
- Ground Investigation works (e.g. trial holes) & surveys, landowner engagement
- Accommodation Villages Planning

## Substations

- Public road improvements,
- site set up at Edinbane Substation
- Vegetation management
- Accommodation Village Planning

## Underground Cable (UGC)

- Ground Investigation works
- Site mobilisation (Fort Augustus)

Key Contractors						
Fort Augustus UGC section	OHL Glengarry-Luib (steel lattice)	Broadford Substation extension	Cuilins UGC section	OHL Cuilins to Edinbane Substation (steel lattice)	Edinbane substation extension	OHL Edinbane to Ardmore (wood pole)
Wood Group	Balfour Beatty	GE Vernova	Balfour Beatty	Balfour Beatty	GE Vernova	Norpower

# Next Steps & Construction

No construction will commence until planning conditions are satisfied. In the meantime, works will continue where these can be delivered under separate consent (e.g. permitted development).

Currently planned construction start dates						
Fort Augustus UGC section	OHL Glengarry-Luib	Broadford Substation extension	Cuillins UGC section	OHL Cuillins to Edinbane Substation	Edinbane substation extension	OHL Edinbane to Ardmore (woodpole)
October 2025	Quarter 2 2026	Quarter 4 2025	Quarter 2 2026	Quarter 2 2026	Quarter 4 2025	Quarter 2 2026

*\* As currently programmed; dependant on satisfactory discharge of conditions*

## Works to take place between now and construction start

- Contractors will continue to work on detailed designs and delivery models
- Development of construction traffic management plans (including stakeholder engagement) and access strategies
- Ground investigation works across the project area
- Continuation of public road improvements
- Ancillary planning applications by contractors (e.g. borrow pits, access tracks)
- Site mobilisation

# Edinbane Substation

The construction phase of Edinbane Substation has started.

## Works complete:

- Public Road Improvements completed on the Balmeanach Road
- Resurfacing of the C1245 (this route will be used for construction traffic to minimise traffic through the village along the A863)
- Initial Site set up at Edinbane Substation – Site Offices and Welfare (Temporary cabins within the existing Substation compound)
- The wider working area is now fenced in with public access along the track facilitated through pedestrian gates (this will change to the whole site being secured and access managed within the next few months, notice will be given)

## Works currently ongoing:

### Watercourse diversion at Edinbane Substation

The watercourse to the west of the substation lies within the footprint of the new substation and therefore requires diversion further west. Work on this diversion has commenced, beginning with the creation of access to the upper section of the watercourse. A typical watercourse diversion involves excavating a new channel, installing erosion and sediment control measures, and redirecting the flow into the newly formed path to maintain hydrological function and environmental integrity. In parallel, peat management and storage measures are being implemented to ensure responsible handling of excavated peat. This includes careful excavation, temporary storage in designated areas, and reuse where feasible to support habitat restoration.

### Access Tracks works at Edinbane Substation

The main access track currently running along the Substation's southern edge will need to be relocated approximately 26 metres further south. Stripping out of peat for the new route is currently being undertaken on site.

# Trident Woodpole Line Edinbane - Ardmore

## Scope of Works

- Replacement of existing trident woodpole line
- Follows existing alignment closely
- Same style & height (132kV)
- Approx. 300 poles

## Programme

- Construction starts Q2 2026
- Duration: ~24 months

## Key Requirements

- Site compound: offices, welfare, yard (**no accommodation**) (Dunvegan Estate)
- Up to 20 'helidump' locations (exact number subject to wayleave agreements)
- Poles delivered by HGV (spread deliveries)
- Helicopter lifts: poles in bundles, conductor cable drums, other material
  - Stop/go traffic management might be required during take-off/landing in some locations
  - Helicopter use will be sporadic, not constant
- light vehicles + diggers
- No new access tracks (use existing)
- Environmental surveys ongoing

## Contractor

- Norpower
- Workforce: up to 50, staying in local accommodation, working in different squads along the alignment

# Skye Reinforcement Project

## Community Liaison Group

## Terms of Reference (ToR)



# Proposed Terms of Reference

## Background:

SSEN Transmission received planning consent in June 2025 for the Skye Reinforcement Project, replacing the overhead line from Fort Augustus to Ardmore. CLGs are a condition of the Section 37 consent and also of the Town and Country planning consent for Broadford and Edinbane substation.

## Purpose of CLG:

A non-statutory forum for constructive dialogue between SSEN Transmission and local communities during construction.

- Share updates on construction stages and activities.
- Discuss Construction Traffic Management Plans and mitigation of traffic impacts.
- Understand and respond to local concerns.
- Identify opportunities to reduce impacts and maximise local benefits.

## Membership:

- Representatives from Community Councils from the CLG 2 area.
- Local Councillors (should they wish to and be able to attend)
- Other community representatives/stakeholders as agreed (e.g. business representatives)

# Proposed Terms of Reference (continued)

## Meetings & Agenda:

- Frequency and scheduling agreed by members, suggested quarterly.
- Agendas issued in advance, focused on construction lookaheads, mitigation, and community benefits.
- Members can suggest agenda items or raise issues during meetings.

## Group Structure:

- Chair election instigated at first meeting; responsible for managing discussions and actions.
- Membership includes SSEN Transmission, local councillors, community councils, and relevant associations.
- Attendance may rotate based on agenda topics.
- Contractors and relevant SSEN project staff will join the meetings

## Communications & Minutes:

- Circulation of minutes within two weeks.
- Agendas and mutually agreed minutes are shared via email and published online on SSEN Transmissions project website.
- SSEN will engage in further communication activities with Community Council meetings.

# The Project Team

## Project Management

Project Director	Paul Higginbotham
Lead Project Manager – Overhead Line	Simon Roberston
Lead Project Manager – Underground Cable	Russel Maxwell
Lead Project Manager – Substations	Simon Johnstone

## Community Engagement

Community Liaison Manager    Maren Ebeling

Contact details                    SSEN Transmission, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN  
M: +44 (0)7721 462 330  
E: maren.ebeling@sse.com

## Project Contact Details

[skye-reinforcement@sse.com](mailto:skye-reinforcement@sse.com)  
[www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/skye-reinforcement](http://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/skye-reinforcement)  
Sign up for local and wider project updates on the project website.