

# **Pre-Application Consultation and Engagement Strategy**

*For submission to the Energy Consents Unit of the Scottish Government*

***Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh and Nant 132kV***

***Overhead Lines Reinforcement***



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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (the 'prospective Applicant'), operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission), owns, operates and develops the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands. SSEN Transmission holds a license under the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission.
- 1.1.2 The prospective Applicant intends to seek consent under Section 37 to the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) to install and operate approximately 13.2km of 275kV Overhead Line (OHL) spanning between existing Taynuilt substation and the currently under construction Creag Dhubh substation. Also, to install and operate approximately 5.1km of 132kV Overhead Line between Nant substation and the proposed Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh Overhead Line. This is to be located in Kintyre, approximately 15km east of Oban and approximately 10km north of Inveraray, in the Council area of Argyll and Bute.
- 1.1.3 In May 2025, the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) published 'Electricity Act 1989 pre-application consultation and engagement guidance for electricity transmission line projects which require Environmental Impact Assessment' (S37 PAC Guidance).<sup>1</sup> This document recommends how ECU would like Transmission Operators to undertake PAC, and in section 3 (page 9), it describes the drafting and submission of a PAC Strategy in alignment with this guidance.

### 1.2 About the Project

The project comprises two main elements, the replacement of the Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh 132kV OHL and the replacement of the Nant 132kV OHL. The existing Taynuilt to Inveraray 132kV overhead line and Nant 132kV overhead line, commissioned in 1961, were built to historic design standards and incorporates lightweight towers, reduced electrical clearances, and limited lightning protection. These inherent design constraints restrict future reinforcement, increase fault susceptibility and limit the network's ability to support future generation connections.

The replacement of the Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh 132kV OHL, spanning between Taynuilt substation and Creag Dhubh substation that is currently in construction, will have capacity to run at 275kV. This upgrade is required to increase capacity and future proof the network for renewable energy generation projects as the assets condition of the existing OHL is approaching end of operational capability.

The replacement of the Nant 132kV single circuit OHL, spanning between the Nant substation and hard teeing into the proposed Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh OHL is required due to the assets condition and age reaching end of operational capability.

Additionally, there will be a short extension/tie in from the existing 132kV Fernoch OHL into the proposed Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh OHL.

All elements of the project are required to be an offline build, meaning all existing infrastructure will remain in situ whilst the proposed elements are constructed and connected to the network. The old infrastructure will then be decommissioned and removed.

- 1.2.1 A Notification of Project Establishment form was sent to the ECU in November 2025, and a pre-application meeting was held January 2026.

### 1.3 EIA Development Status

- 1.3.1 Compliance with the ECU's S37 PAC Guidance is only required for proposals for EIA Development.
- 1.3.2 This project will consist of the construction of overhead powerlines:
- Taynuilt to Creag Dhubh OHL will initially operate at 132kV however, to be designed and having the capacity to operate at 275kV, at an estimated length of 13.2km;

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<sup>1</sup> See [Electricity Act 1989 pre-application consultation and engagement guidance for electricity transmission line projects which require Environmental Impact Assessment](#) (May 2025)

- Nant OHL with the voltage of 132kV at an estimated length of 5.1km.

It is considered that this development would fall within the definition of Schedule 2 (c)(iii) development of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The development is for the transmission of electrical energy by overhead cables and is to be an electric line installed above ground with a voltage of 132kV or more, the installation of which required consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Schedule 2 development may require an EIA if they are likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

In this instance, EIA Screening is not being pursued as SSEN Transmission are of the opinion that this development will require an EIA. The intention is to go straight to EIA Scoping stage for this proposal.

SSENT Transmission have come to this conclusion due to the nature of the development and the environmentally constrained location.

#### **1.4 PAC Notice**

1.4.1 We intend to submit a PAC Notice to the ECU, Argyll and Bute Council Local MP and MSPs, local councillors, the Taynuilt Community Council, Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council; and Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council, as required by the S37 PAC Guidance. We will undertake this following the approval of this PAC Strategy with ECU.

1.4.2 This will be uploaded to the project website for reference, and it will be attached to the PAC Report.

#### **1.5 SSEN Contact Details**

1.5.1 Community Liaison Manager: Caitlin Marini,  
Email: [caitlin.marini@sse.com](mailto:caitlin.marini@sse.com),  
Mobile: 07901135758

#### **1.6 Technical experts**

1.6.1 Technical experts will be available to answer questions at each of the PAC Events across both stages and will be available to respond to written questions received online through the online consultation portal as required. Normally, we will have the following core team of technical experts available to answer questions at PAC events, among others: Community Liaison Manager, Project Manager, Land Manager, Engineer, and a Consents and Environment Manager.

1.6.2 Where it is not possible to answer a question from an attendee at an event, the project team will be able to record a question and contact details in order to respond at a later date.

#### **1.7 Recording of Comments**

1.7.1 Any information or feedback given during the consultation process, through direct feedback, the use of consultation forms provided at PAC events or via the online feedback forms, will be recorded in comments register by the project team for the purposes of providing feedback in reports on consultation and at later events. They will also be used to inform the contents of the Pre-Application Consultation Report (PAC Report) that will be submitted with the application.

#### **1.8 Information to be made available online**

1.8.1 The following information will be made available online on the project website:

- PAC Strategy and appendices once approved. We will upload updated versions of this document as necessary
- PAC Notice

1.8.2 The project website will be updated to include up to date information as the project develops. Our project webpages contain tabs with the following headings:

- Overview – to include information on the need for the project and how it has been identified.

- Project updates – to include information on when consultation will be taking place, how to access the online consultation portal, and submit feedback
- Documents – as consultation materials are developed and the PAC events are held we will also use the project websites to host digital versions of our consultation materials, including information on potential environmental effects
- FAQs – this currently links to a webpage containing a series of answers prepared for FAQs: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/2030faqs>

1.8.3 This will include information on the need for the project and how it has been identified. As consultation materials are developed and the PAC events are held we will also use the project websites to host digital versions of our consultation materials, including information on potential environmental effects, and how to access the online consultation portal, and submit feedback.

## 2. STAGE 1: DEFINITION OF THE PROPOSED ROUTE

### 2.1 What will be consulted upon in Stage 1

- 2.1.1 During Stage 1, we intend to undertake one PAC event to provide information on the need for the project, routing constraints, technology options and issues that need to be taken into account in developing the proposed route.
- 2.1.2 We will seek specific feedback on all potential route options. This will include an initially proposed least constrained route along with other route options. We will seek views on the relevant local issues that will help to inform the decision making relating to the development of any proposed route following assessment of technical constraints and any feedback given.

### 2.2 PAC Event 1 / Duplicate events

- 2.2.1 We intend to hold the PAC Event for Stage 1 at the following dates and locations

<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Taynuilt Village Hall at Taynuilt, Argyll and Bute, PA35 1JH
12 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Portsonachan Village Hall at Portsonachan, Argyll and Bute, PA33 1BJ

- 2.2.2 The hours of the events will be 2-7pm.
- 2.2.3 Due to the length of the proposed OHL, we intend to undertake duplicate PAC 1 events at the locations listed above.
- 2.2.4 Taynuilt Village Hall can be reached by car and has a car park with disabled parking, is wheelchair accessible and with toilet facilities. The venue can be also reached via local public transport and is very close to the main town centre.
- 2.2.5 Portsonachan Village Hall can be reached by car only and has parking and toilet facilities.

### 2.3 Publicity

- 2.3.1 We intend to publish an advert publicising the events in Oban Times and the Argyll Advertiser at least 21 days prior to PAC event in Stage 1, containing the information required on page 19 of the S37 PAC Guidance.
- 2.3.2 We will also undertake a mail drop to properties along the route and will typically mail properties within a defined distance of our developments ahead of all of our events in any case. We will, in addition, advertise on our social media channel and directly contact interested parties who have attended previous events that we have held out with the formal PAC process. We will also directly contact anyone who has signed up for project updates on our website.
- 2.3.3 We will retain a copy of this advert and any other publicity materials to attach to the PAC Report.

### 2.4 Feedback period for comments

- 2.4.1 Following the event(s), we confirm that the feedback period will be open for a minimum of 28 days, meaning the feedback period will close on 23 April 2026.
- 2.4.2 Comments will be recorded at the event and those attending will be given the opportunity to take materials away and to comment in private via email or in writing. There will also be opportunity to comment via the dedicated online consultation portal.

## **2.5 Report on Consultation**

- 2.5.1 A report on consultation outlining the feedback from PAC event 1 will be made available via the project website online in May 2026.

### **3. STAGE 2: DEFINITION OF THE ALIGNMENT**

#### **3.1 What will be consulted upon in Stage 2**

3.1.1 Stage 2 will consult on detailed alignment considerations that will help inform the final alignment. In the events we will seek specific feedback on the proposed alignment and the location of structures and construction arrangements.

3.1.2 Any alignment will be informed by EIA survey information and studies that will feed into the EIA Report that would accompany any application submitted to the ECU.

#### **3.2 PAC Event 2 / Duplicate events**

PAC 2 Events are intended to be held in the same locations as the PAC 1 events, if the spaces are available. The dates for these events have not yet been confirmed.

Please Note, the Consent and Environment Manager for the project would contact the ECU two months in advance of the PAC 2 events to confirm details.

#### **3.3 PAC Event 3 / Duplicate events**

PAC 3 Events are intended to be held in the same locations as the PAC 1 events, if the spaces are available. The dates for these events have not yet been confirmed.

Please Note, the Consent and Environment Manager for the project would contact the ECU two months in advance of the PAC 3 events to confirm details.

#### **3.4 Publicity**

3.4.1 We intend to publish an advert publicising the events in Oban Times and the Argyll Advertiser at least 21 days prior to the second and third PAC events, containing the information required on page 19 of the S37 PAC Guidance.

3.4.2 We will also undertake a mail drop to properties along the route and will typically mail properties within a defined distance of our developments ahead of all of our events in any case. We will, in addition, advertise on our social media channel and directly contact interested parties who have attended previous events that we have held out with the formal PAC process. We will also directly contact anyone who has signed up for project updates on our website.

3.4.3 We will retain a copy of this advert and any other publicity materials to attach to the PAC Report.

#### **3.5 Feedback period for comments**

3.5.1 Following the events, we confirm that the feedback period will be open for a minimum of 28 days.

3.5.2 Comments will be recorded at the event and those attending will be given the opportunity to take materials away and to comment in private via email or in writing. There will also be opportunity to comment via the dedicated online consultation portal.

#### **3.6 Report on Consultation**

A report on consultation outlining the feedback from PAC event 2 will be made available via the project website online date tbc.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### 4.1 PAC Strategy Approval and Future Amendments

- 4.1.1 The S37 PAC Guidance explains that, following submission, ECU will review and approve the proposed PAC Strategy within three weeks, or, if any modifications are sought to the PAC Strategy to ensure compliance with this guidance by the ECU these will be communicated within 2 weeks following submission. We look forward to feedback from ECU in either case.
- 4.1.2 This PAC Strategy is intended to be a live document should amendments be required. Any subsequent amendments to the PAC Strategy will be agreed with the ECU case officer in writing. This document, once approved, and any future revised versions, will be published on the project website in due course.

### 4.2 PAC Report

- 4.2.1 Having carried out the PAC contained in this document, we also commit to submitting with the application for S37 consent a PAC Report with the contents prescribed on pages 19-20 of the S37 PAC Guidance.