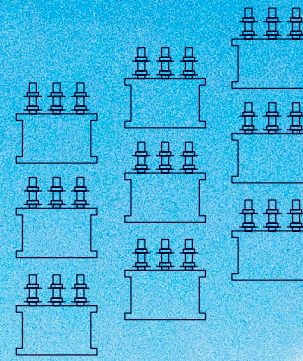




Scottish & Southern  
Electricity Networks

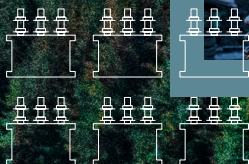
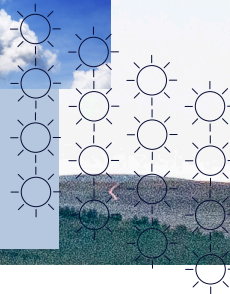
TRANSMISSION



# Tomatin Substation Extension

Pre-Application Consultation

November 2024



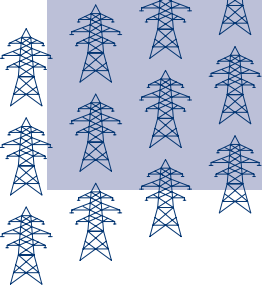
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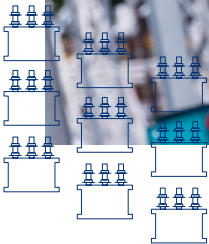
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## The Consultation Event will be taking place on:

Tuesday 12 November, 2–7pm  
Strathdearn Hall, Tomatin, IV13 7YN



# Powering change together



The time has come to further enhance Scotland’s energy infrastructure, providing power for future generations as we move towards net zero.

The shift to a cleaner, more sustainable future is about more than climate change. It’s about ensuring future generations have the same opportunities to thrive as we have all had.

Countries around the world are investing in their energy infrastructure to support the demands of modern economies and meet net zero targets. The UK is leading the way in building a modern, sustainable energy system for the future.

## We all have a part to play

When it comes to net zero, we have to be in it together. The UK and Scottish governments have ambitious net zero targets, and we’re playing our part in meeting them.

We work closely with the National Grid Electricity System Operator to connect vast renewable energy resources—harnessed by solar, wind, hydro and marine generation—to areas of demand across the country. Scotland is playing a big role in meeting this demand, exporting two thirds of power generated in our network.

**But there’s more to be done. By 2050, the north of Scotland is predicted to contribute over 50GW of low carbon energy to help deliver net zero. Today, our region has around 9GW of renewable generation connected to the network.**

At SSEN Transmission, it is our role to build the energy system of the future.

**We’re investing £20 billion into our region’s energy infrastructure this decade, powering more than ten million UK homes and 20,000 jobs, 9,000 of which will be here in Scotland.**

## Who we are

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

## What we do

We manage the electricity network across our region which covers a quarter of the UK’s land mass, crossing some of the country’s most challenging terrain. We connect renewable energy sources to our network in the north of Scotland and then transport it to where it needs to be. From underground and 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 our host communities. So we’re committed to minimising our impacts and maximising all the benefits that our developments can bring to your area. We’re regularly assessed by global sustainability consultancy AccountAbility for how we engage with communities. That means we provide all the information you need to know about our plans and how they will impact communities like yours. We want to hear people’s views, concerns, or ideas and harness local knowledge so that our work benefits their communities: today and long into the future. You can share your views with us at: [ssen-transmission.co.uk/talk-to-us/contact-us/](https://ssen-transmission.co.uk/talk-to-us/contact-us/)



All of this work brings a significant economic opportunity– from our ambitions with community benefit funding, to creating green careers and new homes across the north of Scotland.

Find out more about what we do from our project webpage:



# Project overview

## Project Requirement

As Transmission Operator for the north of Scotland, we enable electricity generators to connect to the transmission system by providing their connections which allow the electricity generated to be transported to areas of demand.

We are currently required to provide connections for four proposed new wind farms and wind farm extensions in the Tomatin area, and together these projects are referred to as 'The Tomatin Cluster'.

We are therefore proposing to extend the existing Tomatin Substation to house the transmission infrastructure required to facilitate this renewable generation.

## The 'Tomatin Cluster' currently comprises of the following proposed wind farms:

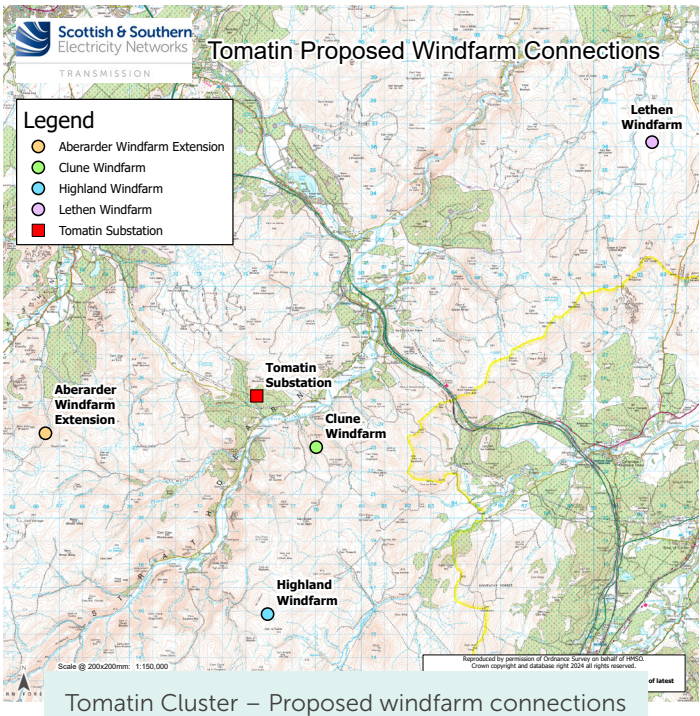
- Highland (168 Megawatts (MW)) wind farm, link to webpage: [www.highlandwindfarm.co.uk/](http://www.highlandwindfarm.co.uk/)
- Lethen (114 MW) wind farm, link to webpage: <https://fredolsenrenewables.com/windfarm-collection/united-kingdom/lethen/>
- Clune (150 MW) wind farm, link to webpage: <https://www.clune-windfarm.co.uk/>
- Aberarder Extension (138 MW) wind farm, link to webpage: <https://www.carnnasaobhaidh-windfarm.co.uk/>

## The Proposed works for Tomatin Substation Extension include:

- Installation of 275kV gas insulated switchgear (GIS) in a dedicated building.
- Expansion of 132kV switchgear in existing building.
- The installation of two additional 275/132kV super grid transformers;
- Relocation of one existing 275kV OHL tower and;
- Landscaping and biodiversity requirements.

All connections are to be provided at 132kV and are proposed to be accommodated on steel trident pole overhead line (OHL) technology, with the alternative option of wood pole and steel lattice.

The average height of the steel trident pole is 13 metres (m), with an average span of approximately 100 metres.



# Help shape our plans

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

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

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

By telling us what you think, you will help shape our proposals. We want to harness your local knowledge so that we spot any unforeseen challenges early and maximise the potential benefits and opportunities for your communities.

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

## What are we consulting on?

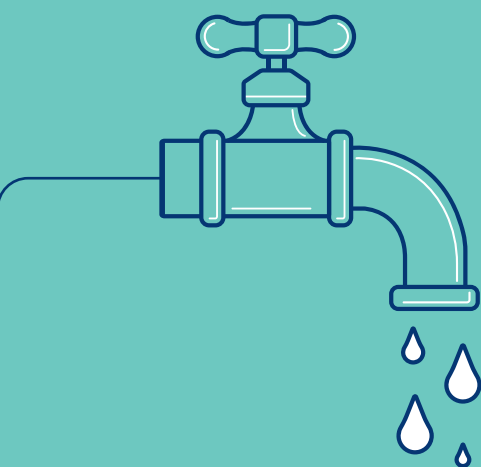
We want you to share your thoughts and opinions on our potential site for the Tomatin Substation extension, where you think we can make improvements, concerns about the impact of our work and as we develop the project, what you think of any changes and refinements we make.

We are also sharing our proposals for the connection of Highland Wind Farm, and will engage on the other Wind Farms that form part of the 'Tomatin Cluster' once proposals have been developed.

## Who we are consulting with

As well as communities, we are keen to hear feedback from a broad range of other stakeholders such as landowners, businesses, non-statutory consultees and statutory consultees.

# Project elements

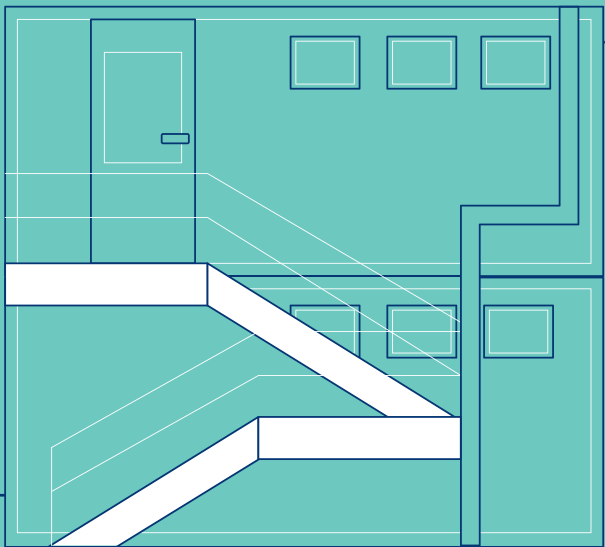


## Drainage

Drainage arrangements as part of the substation extension works will extend out with the existing substation boundary and will be included in the planning application.

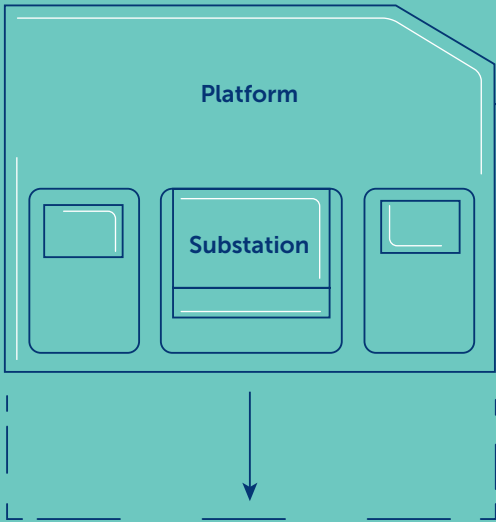
## Temporary compounds

Temporary construction compounds and laydown areas will be located in the vicinity to support the construction phase. Additional temporary construction compound and laydown areas, if needed, will be identified by the construction contractor prior to commencement of works.



## Cable

The extension and existing Tomatin Substation platforms shall be electrically connected via underground cable.



## Platform extension

The proposed substation extension is looking to extend directly west of the existing main Tomatin Substation, to house the new additional electrical infrastructure. These works will form part of the planning application.

## Compensatory Planting

The proposed development interacts with an area of commercial conifer forestry, to the North of the existing substation, in order to facilitate a new access track and regrading of the existing access tracks as part of the planning application. We committed to meeting Scottish Government's CoWRP objective of no net loss of woodland for the proposed development. On this basis, we will replant the area quantity (hectares) of woodland removed to facilitate the proposed development. This will be achieved by way of Compensatory Planting Scheme agreements with landowners within the regional land boundary of the local authority, of where the proposed development is geographically located.

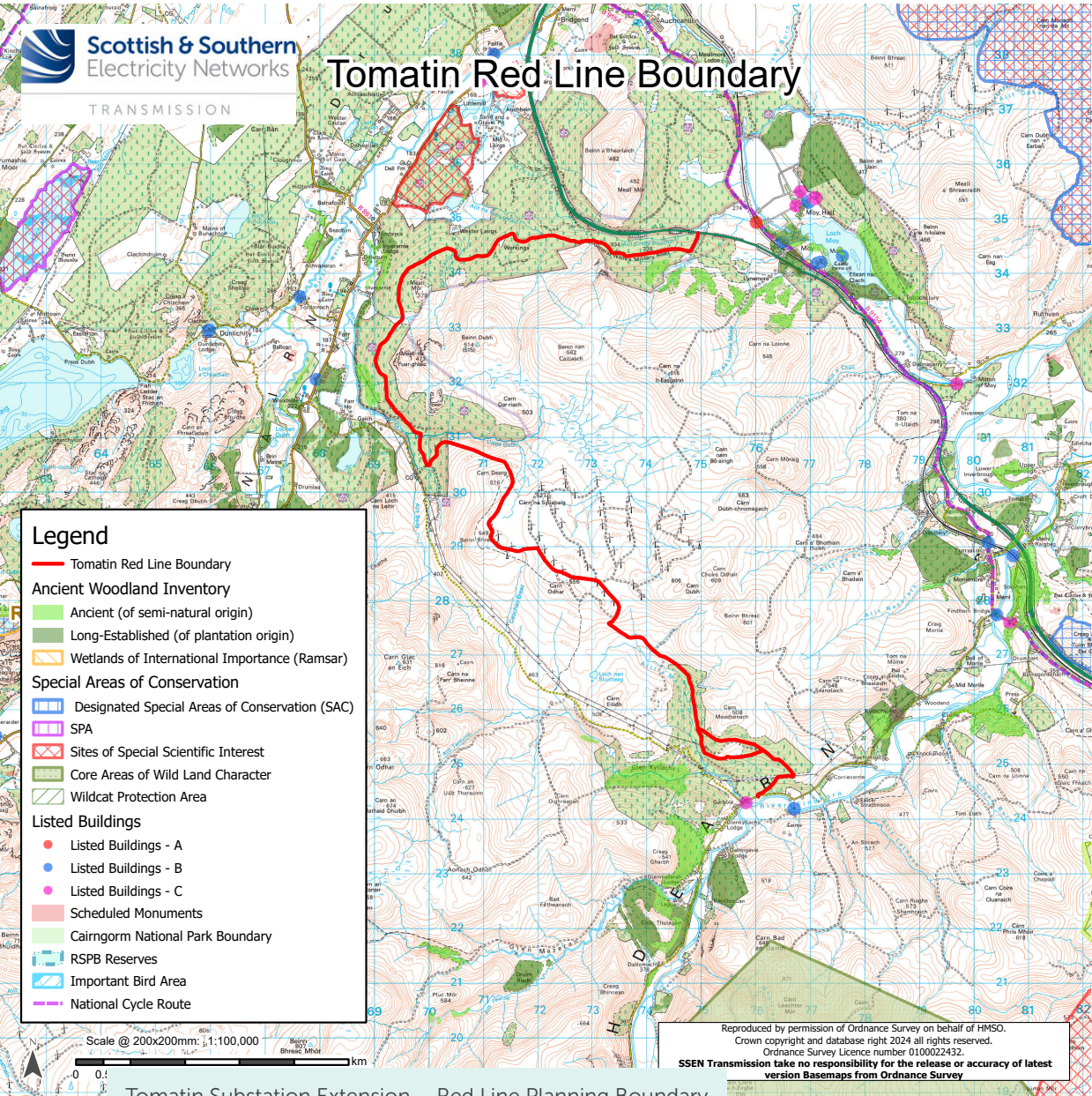




# Red Line Boundary Map

## Extension plans and anticipated size

The project is proposing to extend the existing 275kV/132kV Substation at Tomatin to facilitate the connection of renewable generation. The extension will span approximately 100 metres in width and 110 metres in length (and no greater than 150 x 160m), which will integrate with the existing site layout. This expansion will primarily serve to accommodate new electrical plant, switchgear and the equipment necessary for the implementation of two new super grid transformers, along with the relocation of one 275kV overhead line tower in the north of the site (to the east).



Please note that the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) red line represents a maximum extent of the land that is anticipated to be potentially included in the application site. Where possible, we will work to ensure this footprint is reduced or rationalised as the development proposal becomes finalised.

# Town and Country Planning

The legislation that enables the development and regulation of required projects like Tomatin Substation, is the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

## Engaging the right people

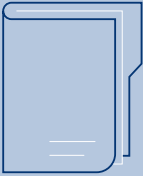
Local Planning Authorities determine the outcome of any applications made under the Town and Country Planning Act and establish the planning pathway our substation projects must take, including which consents are required. This includes 'screening' the proposal to confirm whether the project may trigger the requirement to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the relevant legislation. If the project is deemed non-EIA (due to its scale or potential environmental impacts), a voluntary Environmental Appraisal (EA) shall be produced by us to support the application for consent. These assessments and any associated background material would be made publicly available once submitted.

The Tomatin extension project is classed as "National Development" under the Town and County Planning process, due to the site area exceeding 2 Ha; therefore, pre-application consultation is procedurally required with the public and interested parties.

## The pre-application process

A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to The Highland Council on 1 November 2024. This is the first stage in the planning application process, and the beginning of a consultation period that must allow for at least 12 weeks between the start of the pre-application consultation and feedback, and submission of a planning application.

The plans we are consulting on at this event may change between now and the submission of a planning application. The red line boundary that has been submitted with the PAN represents the maximum extent of the land potentially included in the application site, but this area may be reduced or rationalised as the development proposal is refined and finalised. There is a requirement to hold at least two events to provide the opportunity for members of the public to comment on the proposals. This public event is the first event. A second event is forecast to be held around April 2025 at which feedback will be given on the views obtained at the first event. There will also be a short opportunity for comment after this second event and comments will be included in a Pre-application Consultation (PAC) Report.



## Submitting a planning application

The planning application is planned to be submitted to The Highland Council (THC) in August 2025. A Pre-application Consultation Report will accompany the planning application, providing details of the consultation undertaken and communicating how the consultation process has influenced the proposed development. Where comments are received that cannot be addressed in the final proposal, it is intended that an explanation will also be given why this is the case.

Please note that comments made through the pre-application consultation process are not formal representations to THC. When the planning application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make formal representations to The Highland Council via the planning portal or in writing.

## Section 37 – for any replacement tower and downloads

Where overhead line elements are required, a similar application will be made to the Scottish Ministers, under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. This will specifically cover the overhead line and associated downloads and not the main substation extension proposals. In this regard, a separate small scale S37 application is anticipated to be required for a replacement tower and associated downloads to re-direct one of the existing OHL connections. This is intended to follow in parallel with the planning submission timelines, forecast to be submitted in August 2025.



# Our site selection process

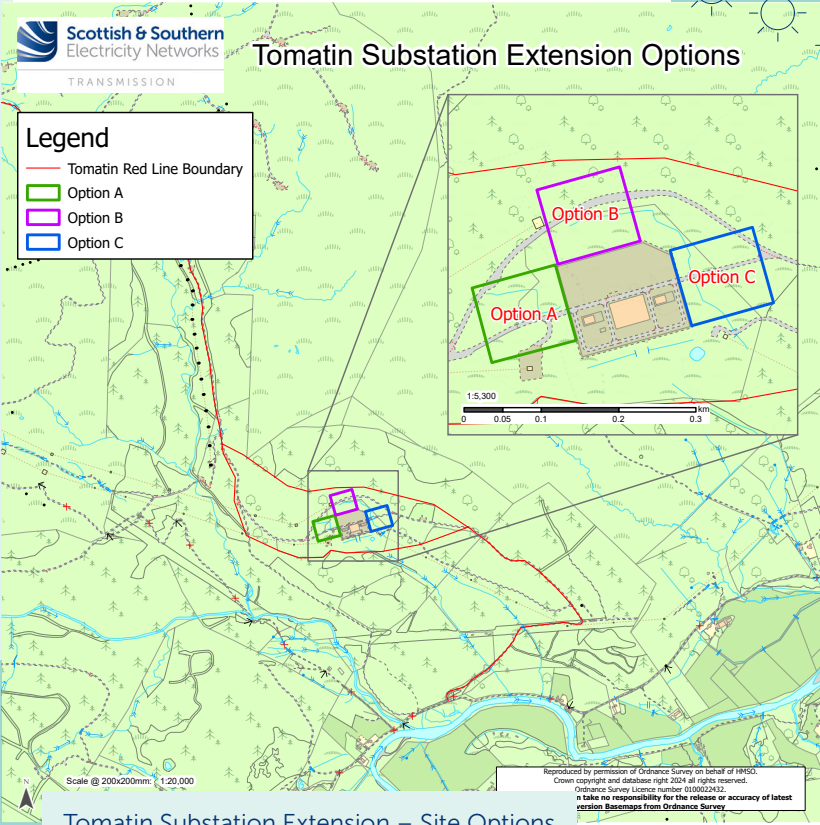
Our site selection process seeks to ensure the design, consenting, construction and operation of our projects are undertaken in a manner, which on balance, causes the least disturbance to the environment and the local community, while ensuring the solution taken forward is economically and technically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

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

## Site Options

- Site Option A**  
This option is located adjacent West to the existing Tomatin substation, with the western access track for the existing substation and grassland habitat present within the boundary of this site option. **This is currently our potential site option.**
- Site Option B**  
This option is located immediately North and was discounted due to the topography of the land immediately North of the Existing site. Furthermore, existing network infrastructure in the area would need to be removed prior to construction, resulting in extensive outages to the circuits entering Tomatin.
- Site Option C**  
This Site option is located adjacent East to the existing Tomatin substation, with the eastern access track for the existing substation and grassland habitat present within the boundary of this Site Option

Options to the south of the existing site were immediately discounted due to the presence of deep peat, wider ground conditions, and situation of a wildlife pond which was developed and is an ongoing long term commitment of the original planning permission.



Tomatin Substation Extension – Site Options

## Our potential site: Option A Why this site?

Site option A, to the West, was selected as the potential site due to several key factors, including but not limited to:

- Access routes established and in place.
- Available land in vicinity of the existing site.
- Consolidation and rationalisation of land take and impact on environment.
- Minimising impact on surrounding area (i.e. by building an independent new site).
- Good understanding of existing baseline and conditions through the original Tomatin Substation.

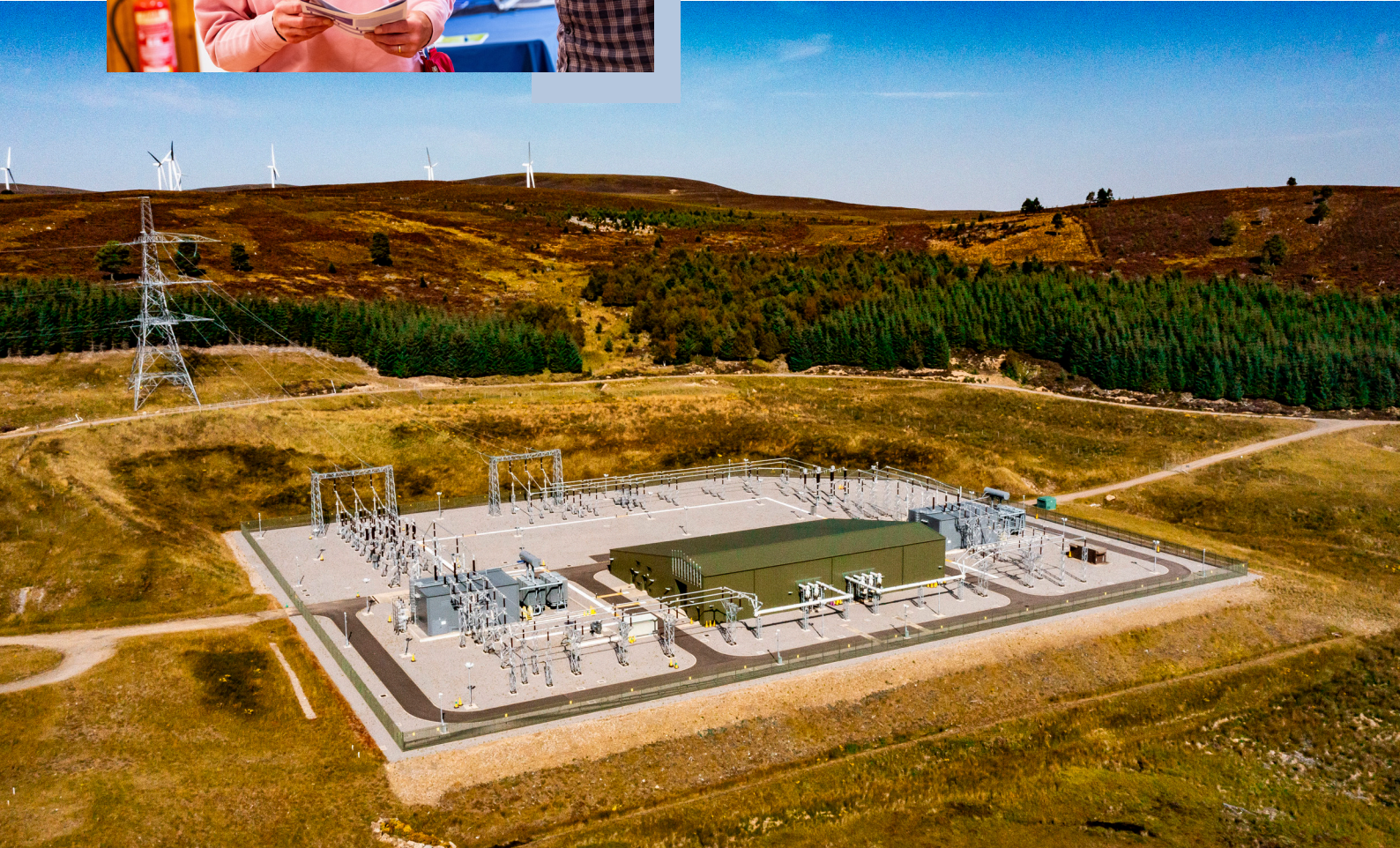
## Environmental constraints and considerations

All Site Options have similar environmental risk profiles which is unsurprising given the relative geography and historic Tomatin Substation site development context.

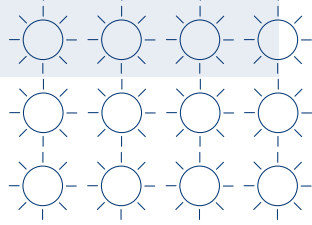
Option A is close to blanket bog which will have to be carefully managed. Site Options B and C have the potential to contain groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems and more sensitive habitats dependant on the plant collections present.

## What next?

We are now at the 'pre-application' stage of our site selection process and following this consultation, we will engage again in early 2025, to share feedback from this consultation and any subsequent changes to design prior to submitting a planning application to The Highland Council.







# Site Option Considerations

The table below outlines the key considerations for both Site Option A and Site Option C in a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) scoring process based on numerous Engineering, Environmental and People factors. Justification for discounting Site Option B is given above in the site selection process.

Following the RAG engineering optioneering appraisal, Site Option A is our potential site due to several design, safety and constructability issues associated with the other options.

Category		Site Option A: West of Substation	Site Option C: East of Substation
Environmental	Designations	G	G
	Protected Species	A	A
	Habitats	A	A
	BNG	G	G
	Ornithology	A	A
	Geology, Hydrology and Hydrogeology	A	A
	Designations	G	G
	Cultural Heritage Assets	G	G
	Designations	G	G
	Character	G	G
	Visual	G	G
	Agriculture	G	G
	Forestry	G	A
	Recreation	A	A
Engineering	Policy	A	A
	Proposals	G	G
	Distance and feasibility of connecting existing circuits/network	G	G
	Outages	A	A
	Future development	A	A
	Interface with SSE Distribution and Generation	G	G
	Proximity to LVAC Supplies	G	G
	Technology	G	G
	Adjacent land use	G	G
	Space availability	A	A
	Hazards	G	A
	Topography	A	A
	Geology (Superficial Deposits – Peat)	G	A
	Geology (Site testing to verify properties)	A	A
	Elevation	R	R
	Salt Pollution	G	G
	Flooding	G	G
	SF6	G	G
	Contaminated land	G	G
	Noise	G	G
	Construction Access	G	G
	Operation and Maintenance	G	G

# Meeting our obligations

## Environmental assessments

Desk-based assessments using available mapping and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data, together with initial site walkovers by specialists, have been undertaken to gather baseline information. This is crucial to enable us to understand the key environmental constraints and sensitivities within the area of search around the substation. This work has been undertaken during 2024 and has helped to identify key environmental issues including; landscape and visual amenity, sensitive habitats, protected ecology and ornithology, forestry, hydrology, hydrogeology, recreation and cultural heritage. Following the confirmation of a preferred site selection for the substation extension, further detailed studies and assessments are ongoing to support the consenting process.



## Consenting

Before a project progresses to consent application stage and depending on its scale and nature; an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) ‘Screening’ is to be undertaken. If the project meets or exceeds certain criteria, then it is deemed to be an EIA Development and any application for consent must be accompanied by a formal EIA Report. If it is not EIA Development, we will provide equivalent, proportionate environmental information through a voluntary Environmental Appraisal (EA) Report.



## Engineering and economic considerations

In addition to the suite of environmental assessments undertaken, the following engineering and economic considerations form a key part of our site selection process:

- Construction costs and buildability (largely affected by ground conditions, such as peat/rock/flooding/contaminated land, etc).
- Operations and maintenance requirements.
- Outage requirements and network constraints.
- Vicinity to other electrical assets
- Vicinity to any other utility, overhead or underground.
- Urban development.
- Forestry and biodiversity.
- Technology costs and design parameters.
- Site accessibility.



# Development Considerations

During the site selection development, we have taken into account many engineering, environmental and social considerations to establish a practical proposed site for the substation extension.

Now that we have identified a preferred site, we are able to share further details regarding many of our development considerations.

## Water/water soils and drainage Noise

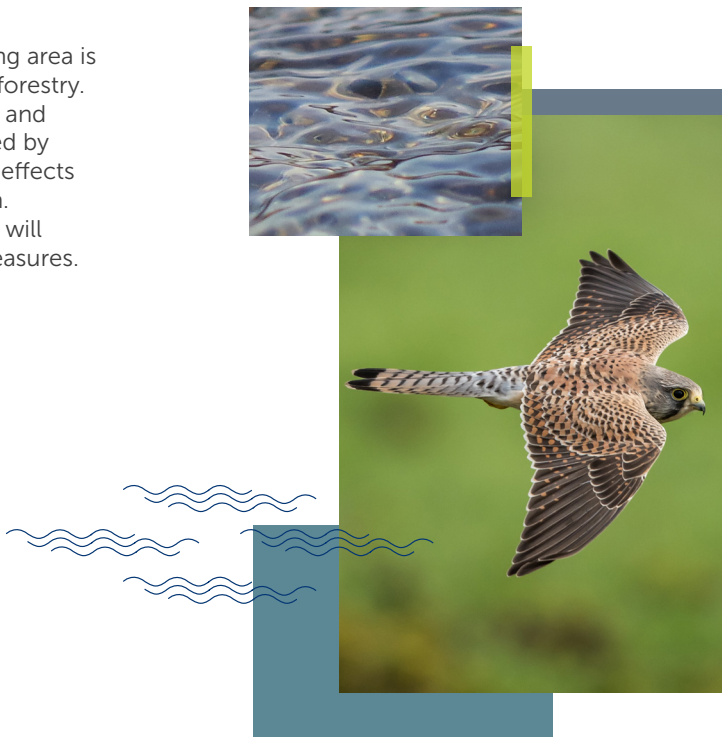
- The following hydrological aspects are being considered as part of the site selection process for the substation extension:
- Private Water Supplies
  - Groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE's)
  - Flood risk potential
  - An appropriate site drainage plan for both the construction and operational phases will be developed to ensure no adverse impacts on the surrounding water environment.

## Local wildlife and ecology

The site has been surveyed to identify habitats, protected species including birds. The surrounding area is dominated by native woodland and commercial forestry. The proposed development will seek to maintain and enhance any protected habitats which is impacted by the proposed design. At this stage, no significant effects are anticipated as a result of the proposed design. Ecology and habitat appraisals are underway and will be reported alongside any relevant mitigation measures.

The current daytime noise climate in the wider rural area is low, consisting primarily of operational noise from the existing Tomatin Transmission substation, with distant road traffic noise and local land users (agriculturalgamekeeping). Construction noise is considered to be short term and intermittent and can be controlled through the implementation of a noise management plan, which would include working hours agreed with The Highland Council.

A noise impact assessment has been commissioned to appropriately inform the planning submission. This will include Baseline noise monitoring surveys at noise sensitive receptors within the vicinity of the site to inform an operational noise assessment. Appropriate mitigation measures will be considered dependent on the results of the assessment.



## Woodland and Forestry

The Site is surrounded by commercial woodland and forestry. All tree felling will be compensated by an equivalent area of new tree planting. It is not anticipated that any Ancient Woodland Inventory will be affected as a result of the proposals.

## Material cut/extraction

In order to provide a level platform alongside the existing Tomatin substation platform; a volume of site material is required to be cut/removed and redistributed locally, in agreement with SEPA as regulator.

## Traffic & Access

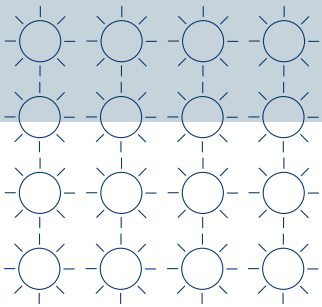
The construction of the proposed development will require vehicles to deliver plant, machinery and workers to the site. Access would use the existing established routes. An appropriate construction traffic management plan will be developed to ensure road safety for all other road users during the construction works including suitable management of all abnormal loads and vehicle movements. A new access track will be required to be created/diverted to the north of the existing substation as a result of the extension proposals.

## Landscape and visual

The appearance and character of the landscape is already influenced by transmission infrastructure, including the existing Tomatin Substation, nearby steel lattice towers and overhead lines. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be carried out to understand how the proposed development will be viewed within the surrounding area, to identify any significant effects and propose recommendations to mitigate these effects. The assessment will be included in support of the planning application.

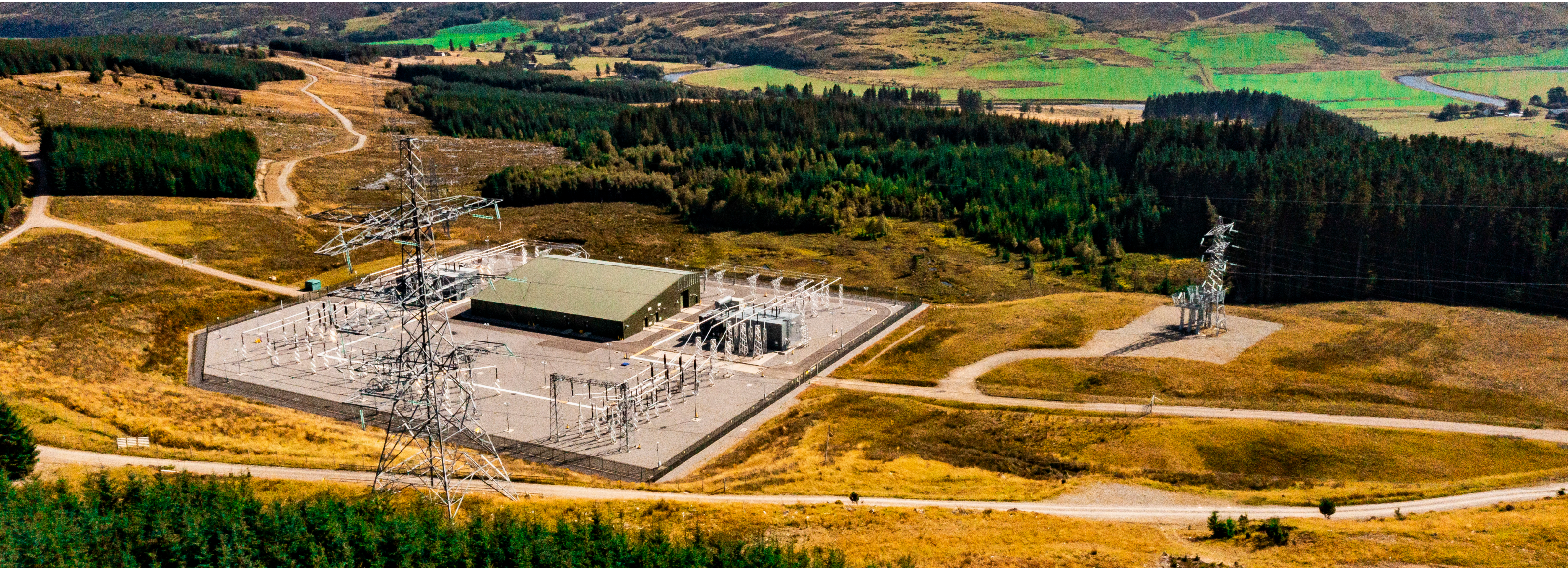
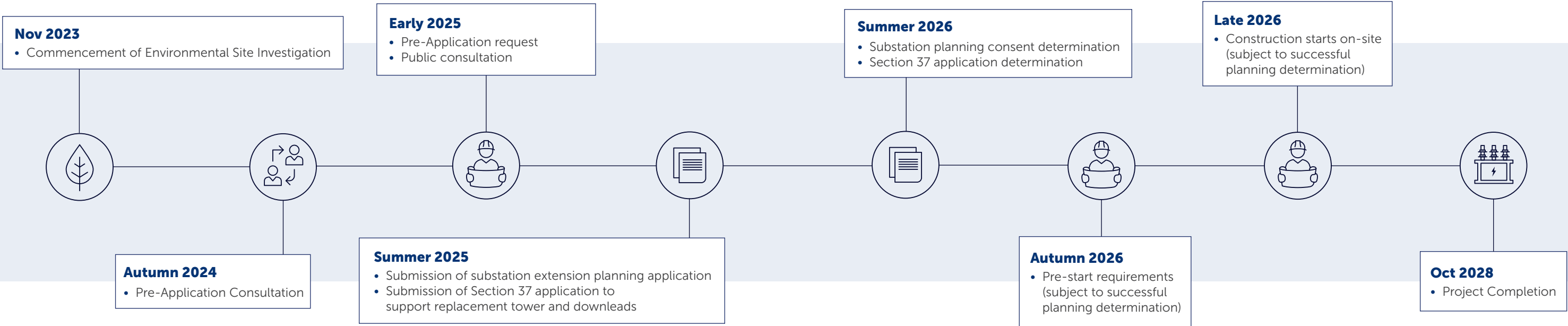
## Cultural heritage

A walkover survey of the site and surrounding area has been undertaken to understand any potential effects on the historic environment. Potential effects will be appraised and reported as part of the environmental assessment which will be submitted as part of the planning application. There are no designated assets identified within the proposed development boundary. Consultation will be carried out with The Highland Council to identify any on-site archaeological investigation that would be required before construction works commence, and if required a Written Scheme of Investigation would be prepared which would set out a strategy for archaeological mitigation in advance of the construction works.





# Project timeline





# Have your say

We understand and recognise the value of feedback provided by the community and stakeholders. Without this valuable feedback, we would be unable to progress projects and reach a balanced proposal.

## The Feedback Period

We will accept feedback from now until **13 December 2024**.

## How to provide feedback

Submit your feedback online by scanning the QR code on this page or via the form on our project webpage at: [ssen-transmission.co.uk/tomatin](https://ssen-transmission.co.uk/tomatin)

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

## 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.



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."

## What we're seeking views on

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

## Community Liaison Manager

**Kirsty McNamara**

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

 07586 295 274

 [kirsty.mcnamara@sse.com](mailto:kirsty.mcnamara@sse.com)

## 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/tomatin](https://ssen-transmission.co.uk/tomatin)

You can also follow us on social media:

 @assentransmission

 @SSETransmission

*NB: Comments made through the pre-application consultation process are not formal representations to the Highland Council. When the planning application is submitted there will be an opportunity to make formal representations to the Highland Council.*

# 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?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:

**Q2. Do you agree with our potential site (Option A), if not, why?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:

**Q3. Are there any factors, or environmental features, that you consider may have been overlooked during the site selection process?**

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Comments:



**Q4. Do you have any other comments (positive or negative) or concerns in relation to the project, or about the potential site (Option A).\***

Comments:

**Full name:** ..... **Email:** .....

**Telephone:** ..... **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](mailto: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:** [kirsty.mcnamara@sse.com](mailto:kirsty.mcnamara@sse.com)

**Online:** <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/tomatin>

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](https://www.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](https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/AIFAQ)

Any information given on the feedback form can be used and published anonymously as part of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks consultation report. By completing this feedback form you consent to Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks using feedback for this purpose.

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