

Western Isles Connection Project

HVDC cable route selection consultation
and converter station site selection update

November 2023



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

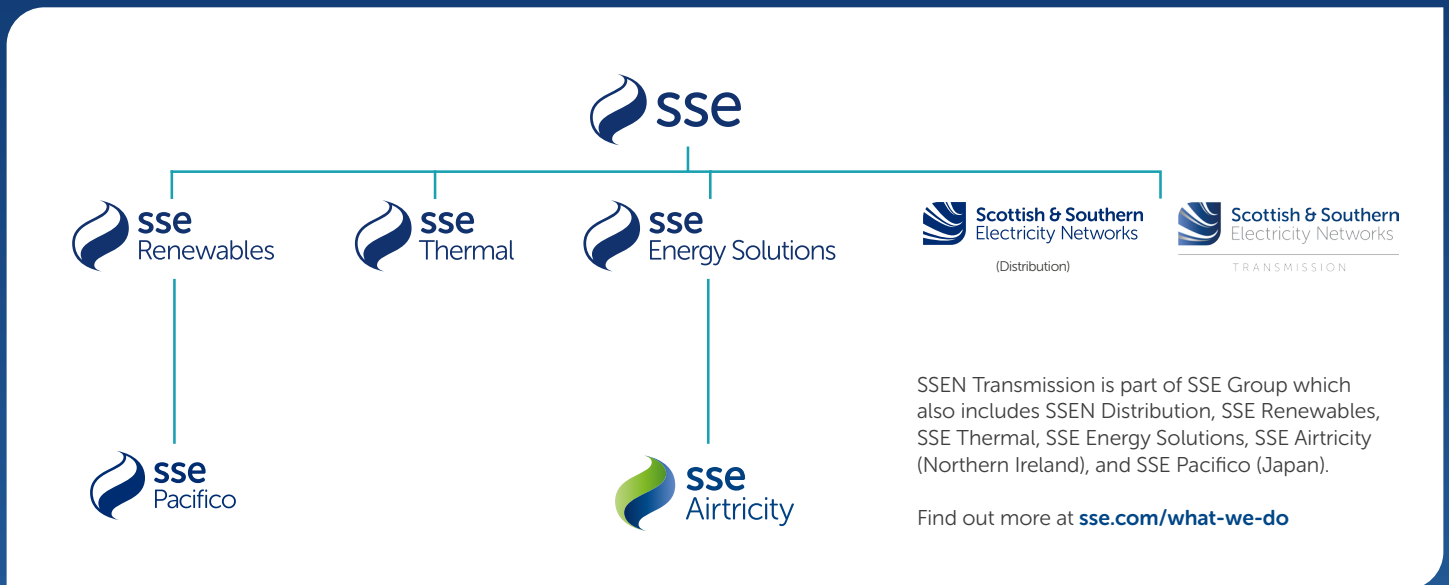
TRANSMISSION

Contents

- 03 Who we are
- 04 Project need and overview
- 05 What this means for the Western Isles
- 06 Our process of engagement
- 07–08 HVDC Converter station and AC substation site: Responding to feedback from the Spring 2023 consultation
- 09–10 Arnish North (deselected site)
- 11–12 Creed North (selected site)
- 13 Peat management
- 14 HVDC converter station and AC substation
- 15 Underground cable: cable landfall and corridor route
- 16 Underground cable: Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)
- 17 Social and environment
- 18 Biodiversity net gain
- 19 Marine route
- 20 2030 delivery project timeline
- 21 Working with landowners
- 22 What happens now and how do I have my say?
- 23–24 Cable corridor route: your feedback

Who we are

We are SSEN Transmission, the trading name for Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission. We are responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland, maintaining and investing in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network.



Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles or steel towers, and electricity substations. It extends over a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of its most challenging terrain.

Our first priority is to provide a safe and reliable supply of electricity to our communities. We do this by taking the electricity from generators and transporting it at high voltages over long distances through our transmission network for onwards distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.

Our operating area is home to vast renewable energy resources and this is being harnessed by wind, hydro and marine generation. Working closely with National Grid, the GB transmission System Operator, we also enable these electricity generators to connect to the transmission system by providing their connections and allowing the electricity generated by them to be transported to areas of demand across the country.

Scotland's transmission network has a strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the UK and Scotland's Net Zero targets. We're already a mass exporter of renewable energy, with around

two thirds of power generated in our network area exported to demand centres further south. By 2050, the north of Scotland is expected to need 40GW of low carbon energy capacity to support net zero delivery. For context, we currently have around 9GW of renewable generation connected in the north of Scotland.

As a natural monopoly, we are 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 in the north of Scotland. These costs are shared between all those using the transmission system, including generation developers and electricity consumers.

As a stakeholder-led business, SSEN Transmission is committed to inclusive stakeholder engagement, and we conduct this at an 'Advanced' level as assessed by AccountAbility, the international consulting and standards firm.

Following a minority stake sale which completed in November 2022, we are now owned 75% by SSE plc and 25% by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board.



Find out more

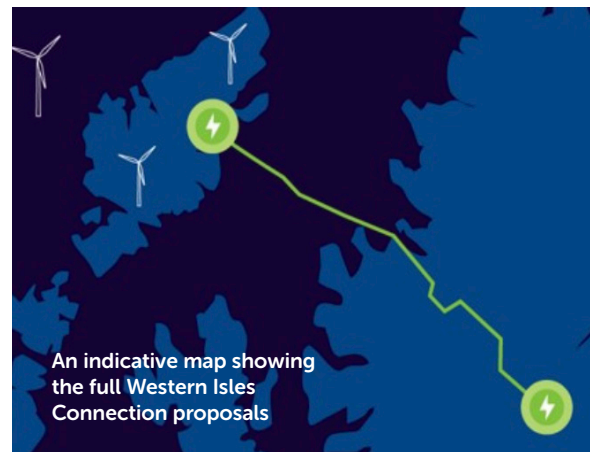
Project need and overview

The Western Isles connection project - project need

The Western Isles is home to some of Scotland’s greatest renewable energy resources, particularly onshore and offshore wind. As the existing Western Isles electricity network is at full capacity, no new electricity generation can connect without significant network reinforcements. The Western Isles connection is therefore required to connect onshore and offshore wind in and around the Western Isles to the GB transmission system, unlocking the significant renewable potential of the Western Isles. The Western Isles transmission link will also enhance local network reliability and security of supply, reducing reliance on diesel-powered electricity generation station at Battery Point in Stornoway.

Project elements include:

- A High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Converter Station and an Alternating Current (AC) Substation located near Stornoway.
- Circa 4km of underground HVDC cable from the new HVDC converter station and AC substation to the landfall at Arnish Point, Stornoway.
- 81km of HVDC subsea cable from Arnish Point, Stornoway to Dundonnell on the Scottish mainland.
- Circa 80km of onshore underground HVDC cable from Dundonnell to a mainland HVDC Converter Station near Beaulieu.
- A mainland HVDC Converter Station near Beaulieu.



Project elements we’re currently engaging on:

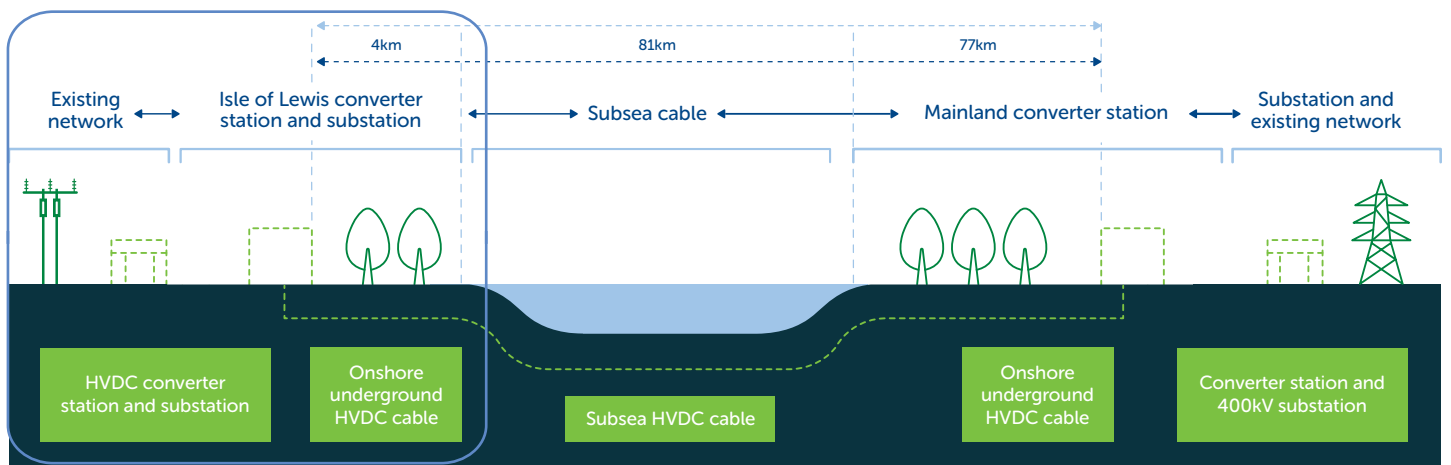
Providing an update on the HVDC converter station and AC substation site

- The HVDC Converter Station and AC Substation form an essential part of the proposed Western Isles connection; a critical strategic investment in our grid network. You can read more about why they are required, our consultation to date and our proposed site between pages 7 and 14.

Consulting on the Underground Cable to Arnish Point

- The onshore underground HVDC cable will transport the energy from the HVDC Converter Station to the landfall at Arnish Point, where the onshore cable will connect with the subsea cable. This will be laid across The Minch to the landfall location on the Scottish mainland. You’ll find more details on the underground cable on pages 15 to 16. We’re keen to hear your views on our proposals for the Lewis section of the underground cable and welcome your feedback, a form is available at the back of this booklet and online.

Project diagram



What this means for the Western Isles

Development history

The Western Isles does not currently have a transmission connection to the Scottish mainland and this highly anticipated project has been in the making for over 15 years, requiring Ofgem, the independent GB energy regulator's approval, before it could be fully progressed. Last year, the Holistic Network Design (HND) published by the independent Electricity System Operator (National Grid ESO) confirmed the need for a new 1.8GW HVDC link from the Western Isles, replacing the previously planned and historically consulted upon plans for a 600MW HVDC link. Ofgem then approved the need for this as part of their Accelerated Strategic Transmission Investment framework decision, meaning regulatory approval has now been secured. Please note that regulatory approval is separate to the planning approval process and following project development and associated public consultations, relevant planning permissions will be required.

Unlocking renewable potential

Providing this 1.8GW HVDC connection will allow large volumes of electricity generated by commercial and community-owned schemes to access the main GB electricity market, which local developers and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have been calling for since 2005.

Greater energy security

This investment will play a critical role in improving network reliability and security of supply for homes and businesses across the Western Isles, reducing reliance on the back-up diesel-powered electricity generation station at Battery Point in Stornoway. It will also support national efforts to deliver greater energy independence and energy security, reducing the country's dependence on volatile global wholesale energy markets.

Delivering a community benefit fund

We recognise the vital role local communities will play in hosting this critical infrastructure and are committed to delivering ambitious and transformational community benefit schemes that have the potential to change lives and create a sustainable and positive legacy. We recently set out plans for our first ever Community Benefit Fund, which will see us working with communities across the north of Scotland to channel funds into vital local projects. Earlier this year we consulted on our plans for this community benefit scheme, and we are committed to working collaboratively with local communities as we continue to progress proposals for the fund.

Maximising social and economic opportunities

We are committed to maximizing the significant local economic opportunities and benefits these investments will unlock. Over and above a wide range of opportunities for the local supply chain, benefits vary from project to project based on type of works and local requirements during the construction process. We are working closely with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Western Isles renewable developers to explore collective opportunities to leave a lasting legacy through maximising social and economic opportunities. We are also committed to build on the learnings and local benefits from other projects, such as our ongoing Shetland HVDC link project.

£ £30 million local expenditure on Shetland

For some context on the potential extent of local expenditure the project could deliver, the Shetland 600MW HVDC Link project, which has a similar but smaller scope and level of investment to the Western Isles Connection, is now reaching the £30 million mark for direct local expenditure. From local vehicle and plant hire to the use of local civil engineering and catering contractors, Shetland's supply chain has played a vital role during the construction phase of the project. With still 10 months to go before the project is operational this number will continue to grow on a daily basis and we are committed to build on the learning and local benefits from the Shetland HVDC link project for the Western Isles Connection project.

We'd welcome any suggestions regarding how we can maximise social and economic benefits to suit local needs. If you have any suggested initiatives, please contact our Community Liaison Manager: lisa.marchi@sse.com

Our process of engagement

As a stakeholder-led business, we understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process. We are committed to delivering a robust and transparent process of engagement and as such are here to provide a project update on our HVDC converter station and AC substation site selection and to consult on our underground cable route.

Engagement with stakeholders, including local communities, is vital in helping shape our project proposals. To do this effectively, we need to capture feedback, harness local knowledge to explore potential mitigation and community benefit opportunities.

We are currently presenting our approach to developing this project, taking into account social and environmental considerations and community feedback along with technological solutions, route selection and conceptual designs. Using examples of similar infrastructure along with 3D modelling of the proposed site we aim to give stakeholders and community members a better visual representation of the development. As well as all the above-mentioned considerations it is important to understand that our site selection process needs to comply with regulatory and statutory requirements.

Updating stakeholders on our HVDC converter station site

Following our previous round of consultation in April 2023 on our HVDC Converter Station and AC Substation, we have reviewed all feedback received regarding our Marybank site, assessed and further discussed potential alternatives with stakeholders, and are now in a position to confirm our proposed site location.

Our site selection process took into account a broad range of feedback from stakeholders including but not limited to residents, landowners, businesses, non-statutory consultees, and statutory consultees. Feedback from these stakeholders has helped us make informed decisions about the development of this project.



Consulting on our underground cable corridor route

We have also now completed a period of more detailed desktop studies and field surveys to identify and assess a potential route option for the underground cable from Arnish Point to the proposed HVDC Converter Station.

We are keen to hear stakeholder views regarding this route option and if there are any further considerations that need to be taken into account during the next stage of the development process.

HVDC converter station and AC substation site: Responding to feedback from the Spring 2023 consultation

Identifying a site:

When the scope for the Western Isles connection was changed from 600MW to 1.8GW, we needed to identify a new HVDC Converter and AC Substation site large enough to accommodate the increased capacity of this connection. As part of an updated site selection process, our project team identified a number of potentially viable sites in close proximity to Arnish Point where the subsea cable will come onshore. These sites were subject to a site selection assessment which evaluated environmental, social and engineering performance aspects. This required site surveys such as habitat, peat probing, noise, visual and topographic surveys to be undertaken.

Our consultation process

Three shortlisted sites were taken forward to the next stage of the site selection process, and based on analysis we identified the Marybank site as preferred. We carried out public consultation to seek views on this in April 2023, and held a follow up meeting with the Marybank and Maryhill Community Association in July 2023.

Community feedback:

The feedback from the public consultation along with our meeting with the Marybank and Maryhill Community Association, highlighted the following feedback from the local community:

- Visual impact of the shortlisted sites to both Stornoway and Marybank.
- Noise impact of the shortlisted sites to both Maryhill/Marybank.
- Peatland habitat impact, peat restoration and reinstatement.
- Construction impact, primarily from vehicular movements and traffic disruption in Maryhill/Marybank.
- Access to Creed River for recreational activities including fishing.

Exploring alternative options: Arnish North

We expanded our search to include an additional site we've named Anish North which was examined at length and put through a full feasibility study.

Adapting existing options: Creed North

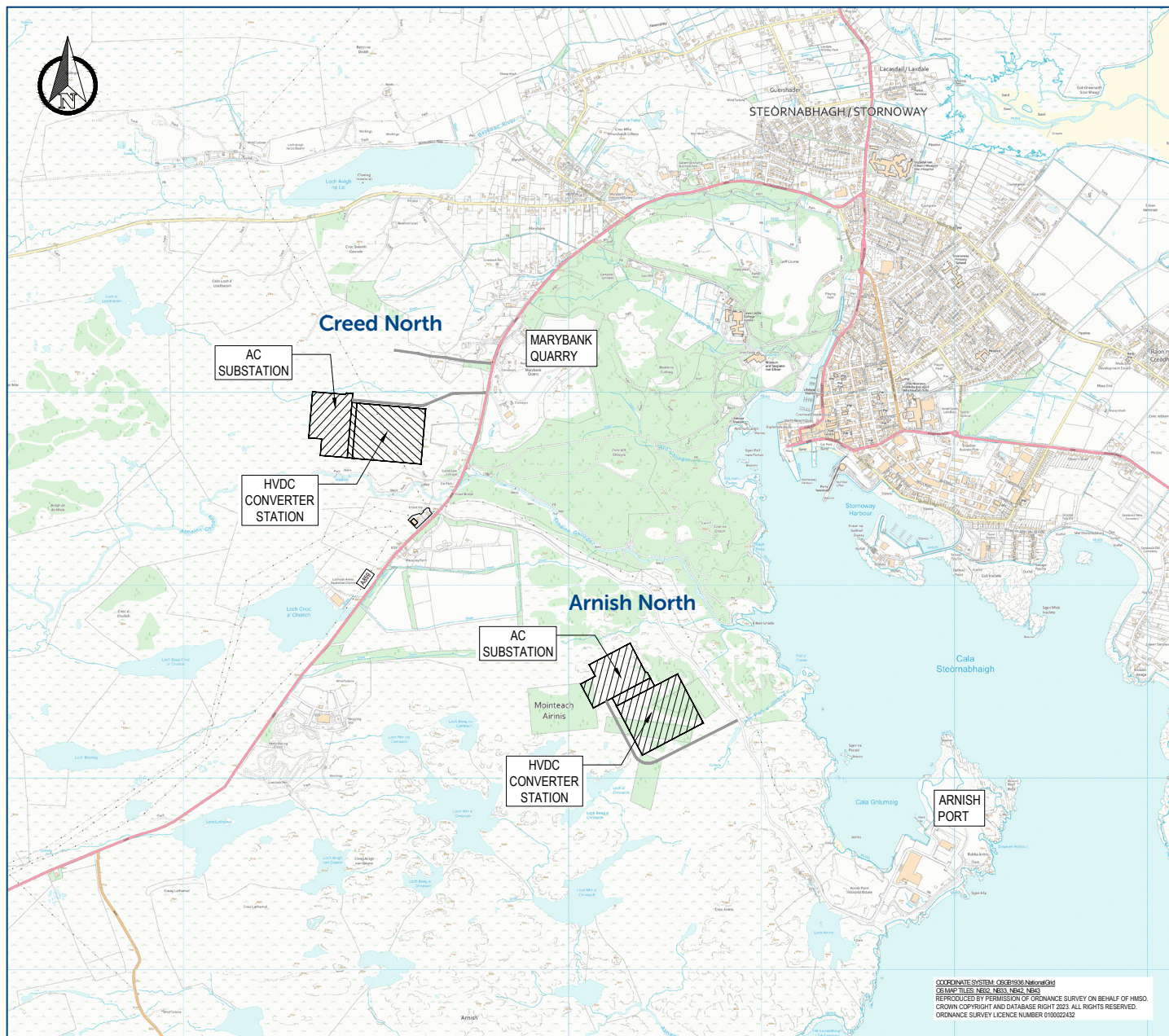
We also looked at refining the previously preferred Marybank site, which has now been adapted and named Creed North. The layout of the HVDC converter station and AC Substation buildings has been optimised to help mitigate the previously raised visual impact concerns.

In fully assessing these two options we have considered and sought to balance a range of factors. This includes the social impact of our sites on the local community, where we have actively optimised the site layouts and orientations intended to help reduce visual impact concerns. We have also carried out noise and visual surveys and a sensitive habitats assessment, particularly the presence of peat and impacts on other environmental factors. Finally, we have also considered engineering constraints and the connection requirements of third party renewable developers, whilst also acknowledging the need for the project to represent value to the GB consumer in line with our transmission licence obligation to ensure our investments are economic and efficient.

Our selected site: Creed North

The results of these processes allowed the team to make an informed decision on the selected site concluding with **Creed North** being selected as the new HVDC Converter station location. Arnish North site proved to be an unfeasible solution primarily due to statutory and regulatory requirements protecting sensitive habitats and endangered species located within the main site location, preventing further development and mitigations. Please refer to page 9 for further rationale behind our site selection.

HVDC converter station and AC substation site: Responding to feedback from the Spring 2023 consultation



Map illustrating the additional Arnish North site as well as the evolution of the Creed North site which were created and assessed in response to feedback received during the Spring 2023 consultation.

Arnish North (deselected site)

Arnish North was considered as a combination between Arnish West and Creed Business park sites to provide a workable solution with the aim to address public concerns regarding the original Marybank site. The site was evaluated against key criterion with regards to Social, Environmental and Engineering aspects. The study also considered future connectivity and availability of space to allow wind farm developers to connect to the station. The outcome of these assessments indicated significant challenges with regards to the site's proximity to protected species, ground topography, available space and connectivity. These factors prevented further development of Arnish North site as a feasible option.



Engineering

Site conditions:

- Steep gradients and rough terrain require significant blasting and earthworks that will increase local disturbance and prolong the construction phase.
- The site does not offer space for local peatland restoration and off-site solutions will need to be utilised increasing vehicular movements.

Connectivity:

- While offering a shorter cable route to the Arnish Point, the substation location would prove more difficult for generators to connect in to.

Construction:

- The site requires almost double the amount of earthworks which will prolong the construction period for over 9 months.

Hazards:

- Small lochs constrain the available site layout options.



Social and environmental

Landscape and visual:

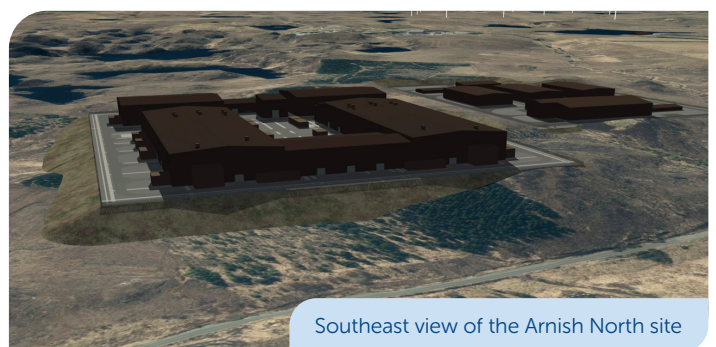
- Due to the topography of the Arnish North location, the buildings on the site will be elevated on the landscape and be visible from prominent locations in Stornoway and surrounding notable landmarks.

Peat:

- Peat helps maintain carbon storage, preserves biodiversity, regulates water and can protect unique habitats.
- The site is situated on deep pockets of undisturbed peat and surrounded by small natural lochs.

Biodiversity:

- The site is situated on sensitive bog habitat and near sensitive habitats with regards to bird species protected by environmental legislation. This sets out the parameters within which we must comply including how close we can develop to these sensitive areas.
- The site is very close to a small tributary of the Creed limiting micro-siting options.



Creed North (selected site)

Following feedback from the public consultation and the community association meeting and in an effort to minimise/reduce the visual impact to local communities, the project team has developed an evolution of the previously presented Marybank option—Creed North. The repositioned site was again evaluated with regards to Social, Environmental and Engineering aspects this process highlighted its better performance against the original Marybank North site with regards to visual and noise impact to the Marybank and Maryhill area. Furthermore, it outperformed the Arnish North site in terms of both peat volumes and total earthworks required. Overall, it offers a solution that is further away from sensitive habitats. Considering these factors, it was decided that this will be the selected site for the HVDC Converter station on Lewis.



Engineering

Site conditions:

- Less volume of earthworks compared to the Arnish North site. The site reduces the amount of disturbance associated with the handling of rock.
- Potential for platform micro siting offering space for peatland restoration and optimised site configuration.
- The site offers better layout options that will enable the mitigation of the potential noise impact to individual residential properties nearby.

Connectivity:

- It offers good overall connectivity both for the SSEN Transmission services as well as the third-party connections from wind farm substations.

Construction:

- Site optimisation has reduced the amount of earthworks required to prepare the site and in turn requiring less construction vehicle movements during the construction phase.

Hazards:

- There are three known utilities that would need to be diverted including water and power service lines.



Social and environmental

Landscape and visual:

- The Site is located further away from the original Marybank option with a reduced visual impact to the local communities, including Marybank and Maryhill.
- This site is located near individual residential properties. We are fully committed to minimising any localised effects on these properties through considered mitigation measures.

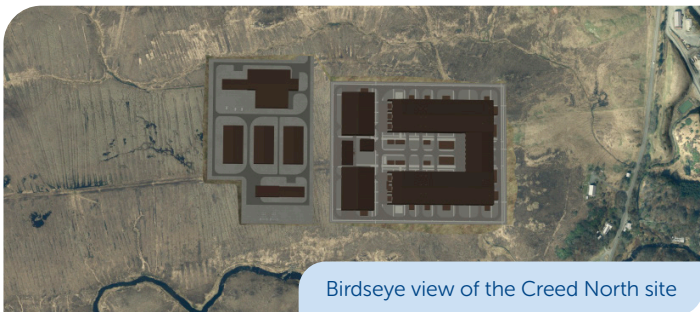
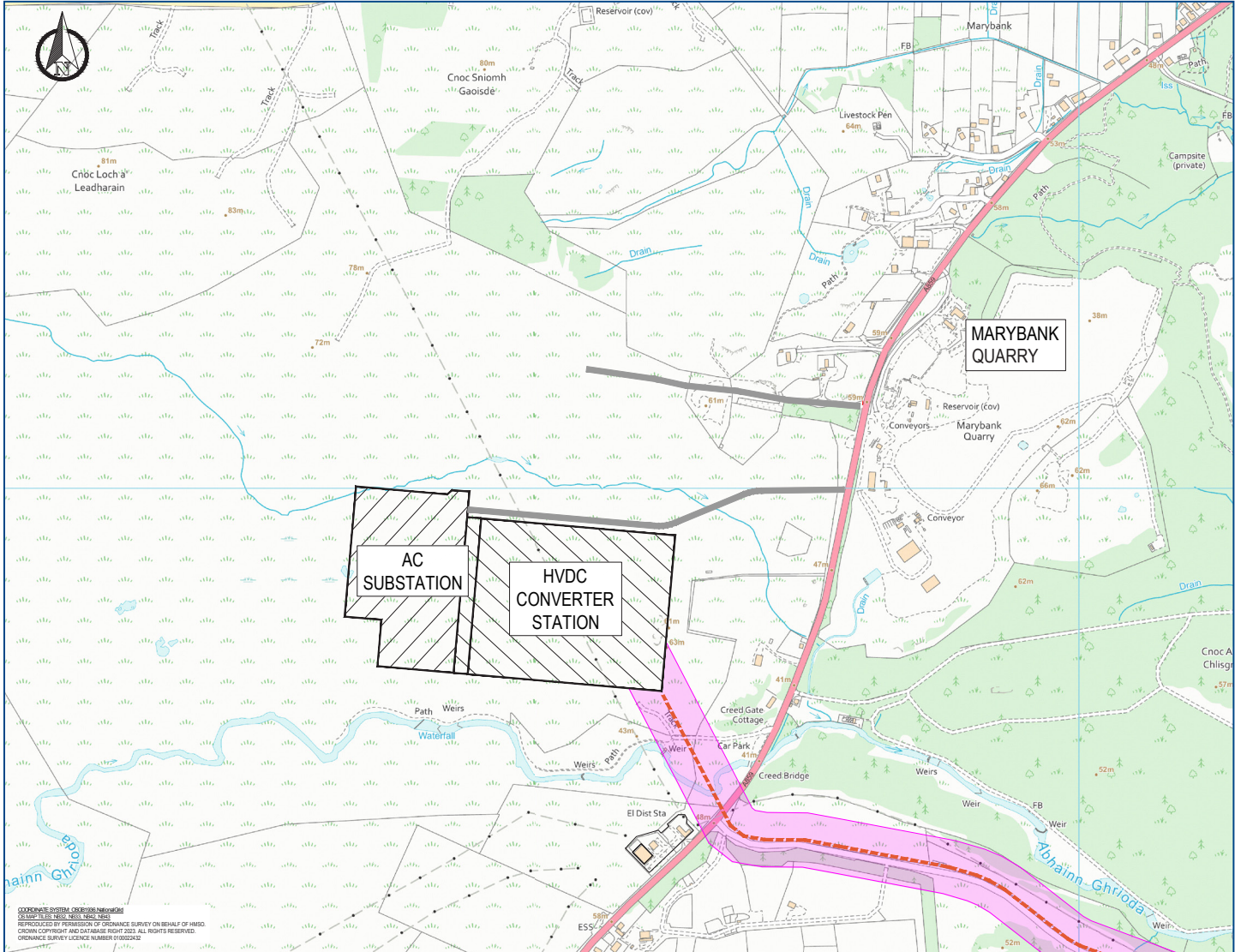
Peat:

- Peat helps maintain carbon storage, preserves biodiversity, regulates water and can protect unique habitats. This site has shallower peat in general in comparison to others assessed, so it is estimated lower levels of peat volumes would need to be managed.
- There is potential for the peat reinstatement/restoration to be managed within or in proximity to the site boundaries. Less disturbance during the construction phase.

Biodiversity:

- The site has sensitive habitats present including bog and it is in close proximity to the Creed and one of its tributaries. A buffer zone between the Creed river and the site will be maintained.
- Although the site is comparative with regards to sensitivities in relation to ornithology, in particular raptor and diver species it offers better opportunities for micro siting to mitigate the impact to these sensitive species and their habitats.

Creed North (selected site)

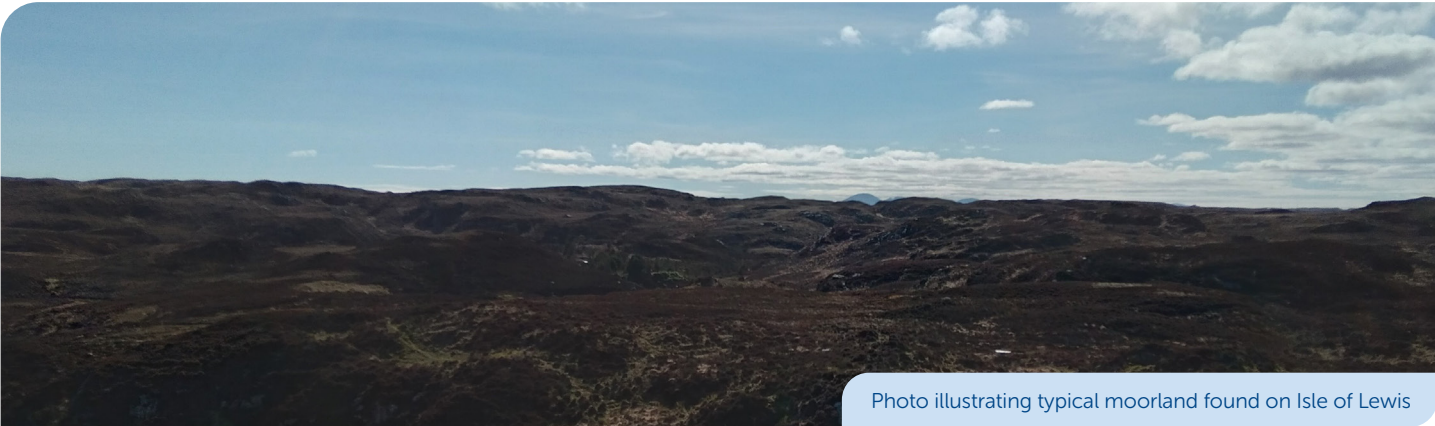
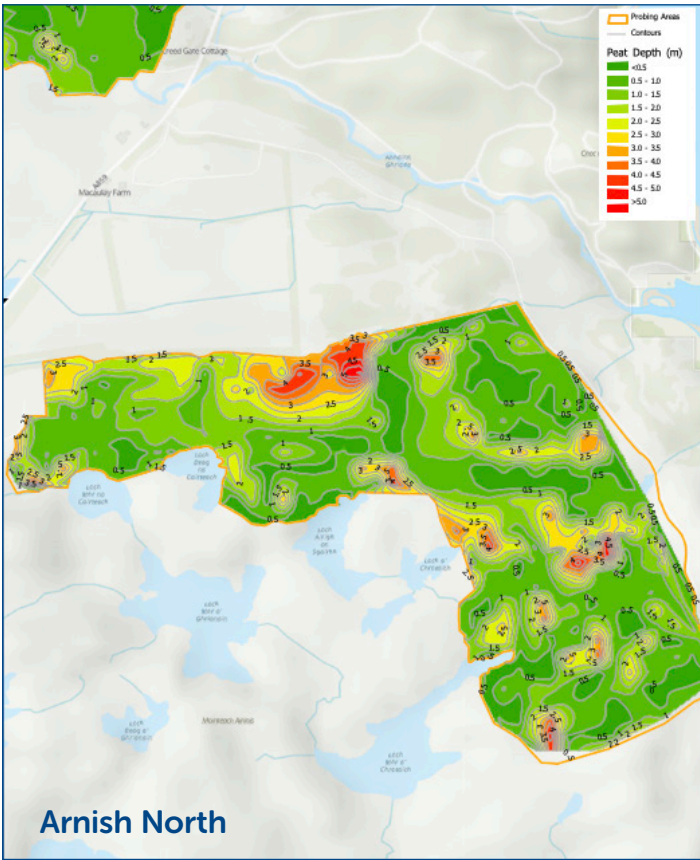
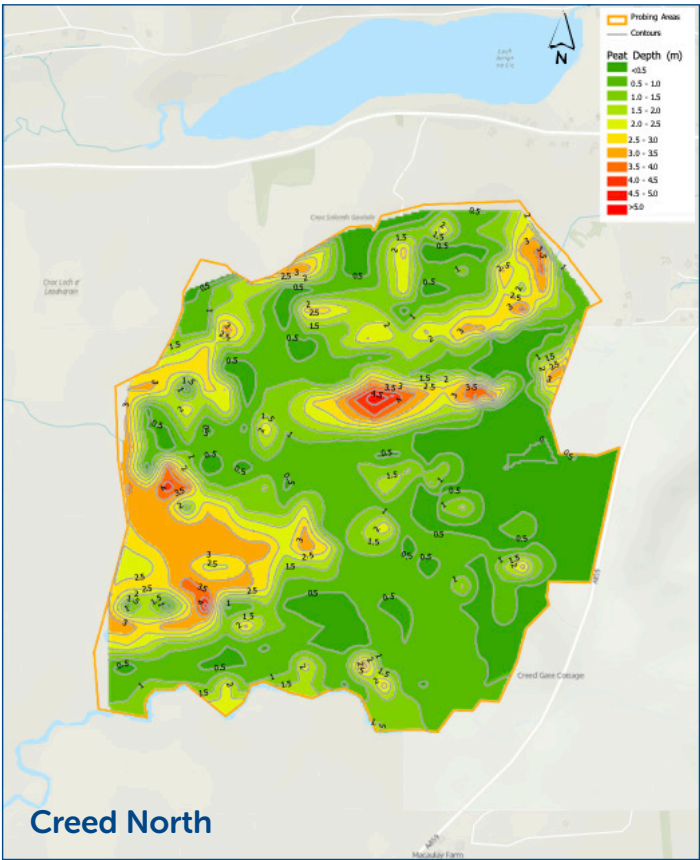


Peat management

The peat probing results below informed the site selection and micro siting within the potential site locations. We will continue to build on this, developing our understanding of the volume and extent of peat and earthworks associated with the project.

We are conscious of the environmental impact of disturbing peat habitats; and aim to work with all stakeholders and interested parties to ensure the use of best practices and optimal environmental solutions are adopted where working in peatland habitats is unavoidable.

We are and will continue to work with the key statutory stakeholders and interested parties on the Island to explore viable options for managing peat which may include reinstatement, restoration and enhancement opportunities.



HVDC converter stations and AC substation

What is a HVDC converter station?

A converter station converts Direct Current (DC) to Alternating Current (AC) or AC to DC. AC is how our houses and businesses use electricity from the grid. High Voltage DC (HVDC) is a well established technology that allows the efficient transmission of large quantities of electricity across long distances with much reduced electrical losses compared with AC. It also introduces greater flexibility and resilience in the operation of the network and the management outputs from renewable generation.

A Converter Station needs to connect a HVDC Converter Building to an AC substation or switching station to access the network. A Converter Station will contain two primary buildings containing a HVDC building and AC Substation on a large area of generally level ground approximately 300m x 600m. Please see a schematic layout in Fig.01.

All of the finished building designs and external site layouts are subject to approval with the local authority.

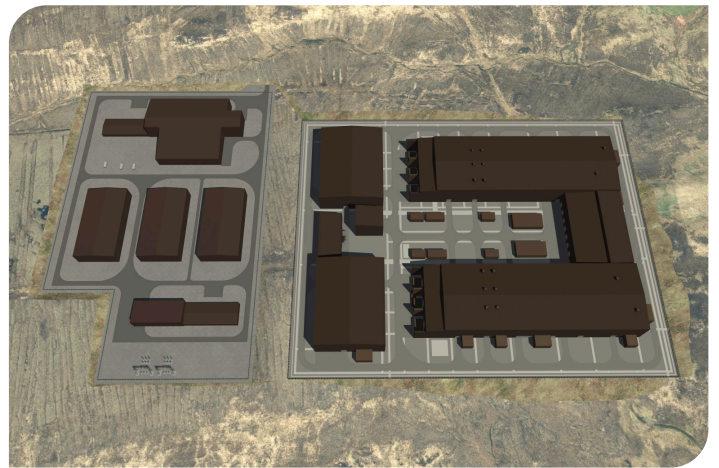
The proposed permanent infrastructure at the chosen site:

A new platform footprint of approx. 600x300m for the HVDC Converter Station and AC Substation, within the overall site the following will be constructed:

- Main HVDC Converter Buildings comprising Valve Hall, Direct Current Hall, Reactor Hall, Transformer Hall, and Control Rooms.
- AC Substation comprising separate buildings for 400kV Switchgear, 132kV Switchgear, and three 400/132kV Transformers.
- Smaller ancillary and support buildings.
- Access road(s) from the public road to the site and within the internal site boundary, internal cabling and drainage.
- 2.4m high metal palisade security fence for security and public safety.
- Landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.
- Connection to the subsea cable landfall at Arnish Point and local distribution networks.
- New connection facilities for future renewable energy generation projects (e.g. 3rd Party wind farms).

In addition to the construction of the permanent infrastructure described above, construction works and activities at the site, are anticipated to include:

- Early site set-up to clear the site and form level platform.
- Peatland restoration and/or reinstatement sites.
- Temporary construction compounds and laydown areas
- Temporary site drainage.
- Delivery of plant, components and materials.
- Inspection, testing, and commissioning.



What will the buildings look like?

Most of the HVDC and AC equipment will be contained within large metal clad, climate-controlled buildings.

The primary building is likely to be U-shaped in plan, consisting of suitably coloured steel cladding and pitched roofs. The proposed main buildings are to be approximately 28m and 24m in height. This is due to the clearance distance required between the high voltage equipment and the building structure.



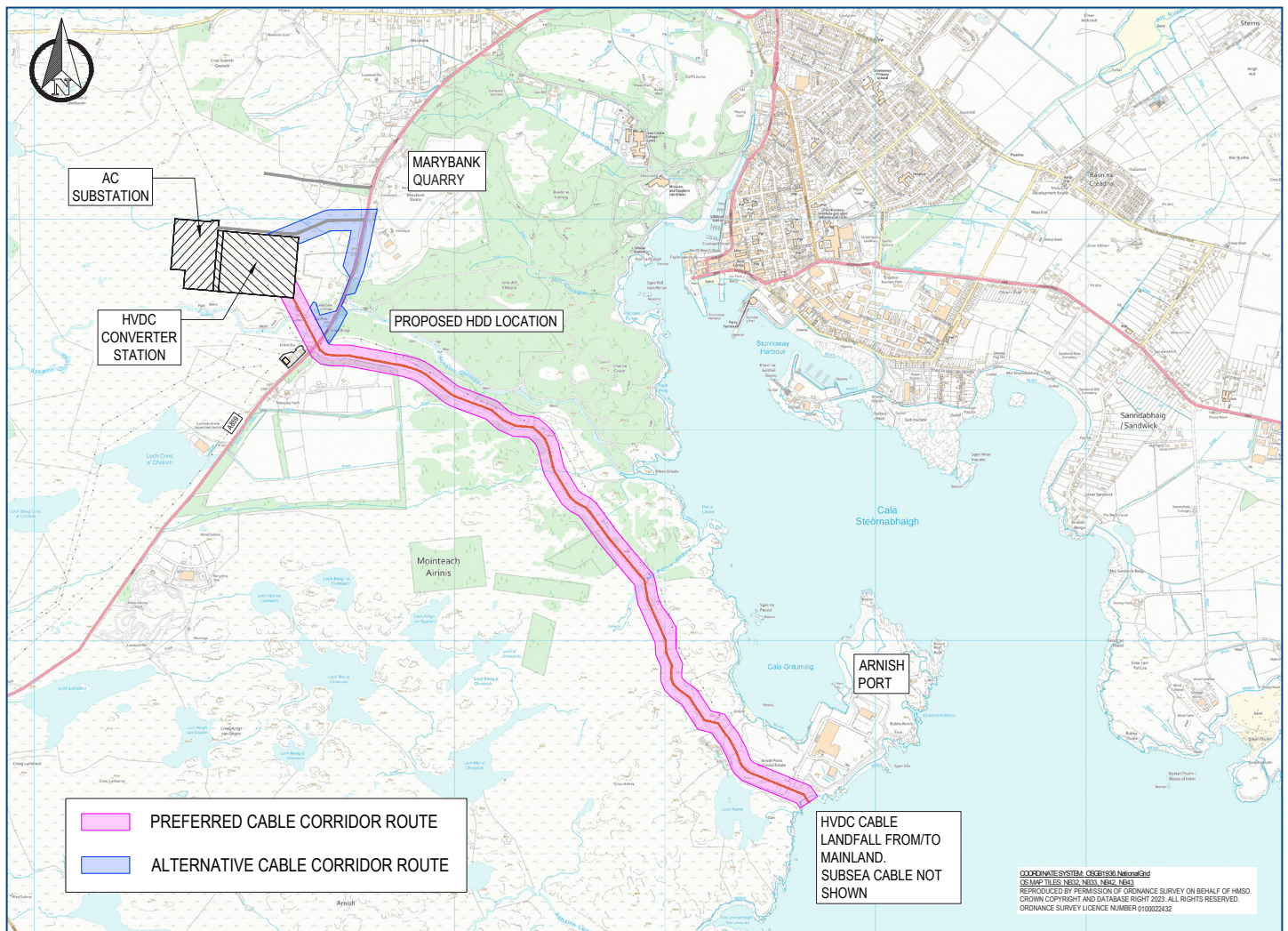
Operational 1200MW Blackhillock HVDC Converter Station.



HVDC Kergord Converter Station under construction in Shetland.

Underground cable: Cable landfall and corridor route

Previous consultation in April 2023 presented high level corridor connection options to the shortlisted sites. Based on this, potential cable route options to the Creed North site from the consented landfall at Arnish Point, have been developed. This is shown in the map below.



The HVDC cable route option(s) were selected with the aim of maintaining close proximity to the main access road from Arnish Point, to keep construction disturbance to a minimum. It is proposed that the cable follows the port access road from the consented landfall to the junction with the A859. From this point two options are being considered:

- Cross under the A859 and River Creed, entering the site boundary and HVDC Converter Station from the southwest.
- Routing along the A859 and entering the site from the north.

The optimal solution would be crossing under the A859 and River Creed as it avoids unnecessary traffic disruption and is a shorter cable route. Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), a trenchless method of installing the cable system, is planned to be utilised to install the new HVDC cable under the River Creed and/or the A859.

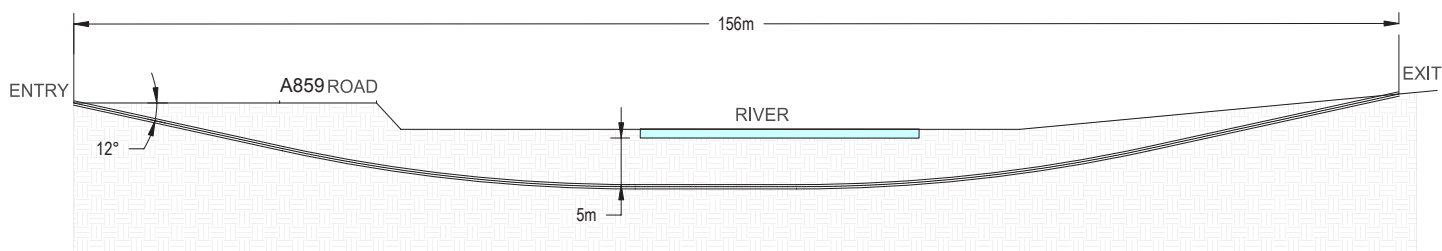
Stornoway Port Authority (SPA) propose to upgrade the Arnish Point Road from single-track to a single carriageway. We are in discussions with the SPA to work collaboratively in order to reduce disruption by installing the cable duct system at the same time as the new road construction. The exact alignment of the cable is still to be determined through the final stage of the routing assessment process.

Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)

HDD is a common trenchless construction method used as an alternative to traditional trenched method for installing pipelines and cables in sensitive or congested areas, below surface infrastructure and natural features. Use of HDD helps to minimise negative impacts to sensitive areas from pipeline and cable installation operations. The image below shows the proposed HDD under the A859 and River Creed that is planned to be undertaken to connect to the selected site. Final location to be determined during the detailed design stage.



Horizontal Direction Drill (HDD) for cables under A859 and River Creed



Social and environment

Local social and environmental aspects continue to be a key consideration in selecting the optimal site and route for the project. As part of site selection, environmental assessments and surveys have been undertaken to help inform the process.

This will continue as we move from site and route selection to the consenting process to support an application to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) for the site. The assessments will cover landscape and visual amenity, ecology/habitats, ornithology, geology/hydrogeology, hydrology, and cultural heritage.



Ecology, habitats and ornithology

We will continue to assess any potential impacts to species and habitats in the area and in consultation with the key stakeholders will give full consideration to any risks highlighted and resultant mitigation and restoration measures. These ongoing assessments will give full consideration to all relevant statutory legislation, policy and guidance which set many of the parameters to which we must comply. This includes but is not restricted to the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4, Nature Conservation Act, Water Environment and Service Act and many other local, national and international policies, guidance and legislation.

The sites considered were selected to avoid the environmental designations and other sensitive flora and fauna around Stornoway.

Peat and peat habitats are a key consideration for all assessments and future works. European Protected Species and Habitat surveys have been undertaken at the sites to inform the assessment. Previous projects in the area have undertaken extensive bird survey campaigns, the results of which we also utilised in the selection process. It is recognised that Ornithology in this location is a key sensitive receptor and we will continue to engage with NatureScot on this.



Landscape and visual

We look to assess whether an option may compromise the landscape character, view or visual amenity at a given location. Settlements and residential properties, key transportation and recreational routes, vantage points and tourist destinations from where views and landscape appreciation is important, are key factors considered during the site and route selection process.



Hydrology, hydrogeology and geology

Local social and environmental aspects continue to be a key consideration in selecting the optimal site and route for the project. As part of site and route selection, environmental assessments and surveys have been undertaken to help inform the process.

This will continue as we move from site selection to the consenting process to support an application to CnES for the site. The assessments will cover landscape and visual amenity, ecology/habitats, ornithology, geology/hydrogeology, hydrology, and cultural heritage.



Cultural heritage

Cultural heritage features in the vicinity of the sites and routes include the Lews Castle and Lady Lever Park GDL, Stornoway Conservation Area, scheduled monuments (e.g. Arnish gun emplacements and a dun within Loch Airinis) and listed buildings e.g. the Arnish monument (category C) and two buildings associated with the lighthouse on Arnish Point (category B). Part of the site also consists of the Stornoway Paraffin works local archaeological area.

Any potential to impact the cultural heritage of the area and its setting have been assessed as part of the site and route selection processes and will continue to be assessed throughout the next steps.

Biodiversity net gain

We recognise that we have significant interaction with the environment through the activities we undertake in Scotland as we seek to develop and improve the transmission network. With this work comes a legal responsibility to design and build our projects in a manner which protects the natural and built environment.

We are committed to protecting and enhancing the environment by minimising the potential impacts from our construction and operational activities on biodiversity. To this end, we have committed to no net loss of biodiversity in non irreplaceable habitats for all of our projects gaining consent from 2020 onwards, and a net gain of biodiversity on all projects gaining consent from 2025.

This means that during the development, construction and operation of our projects, we will leave a positive environmental legacy at all of our SSEN Transmission sites.

As this project progresses through the development process, we will actively seek ways to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity, through careful routing design to avoid areas of highest biodiversity value, to implementing habitat restoration and improvement measures in areas within and surrounding the proposed development.

Please let us know if you have ideas for biodiversity improvement projects in your local area that SSEN Transmission could get involved with.

Biodiversity at Spittal Substation

The habitats on the site will help to support the Great Yellow Bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*), one of the UK's rarest species of bumblebee. Its distribution has declined by 80% in the last century and the last mainland populations are found only in Caithness and Sutherland. The principle causes of decline are the loss of flower-rich meadows and the intensification of farming and grazing practices. These habitats are self sustaining and require little or no active management.

New wetland and ponds have been created. Surrounding areas have been sown with wet meadow wild flower seed mix for butterflies and bees.

SUDS pond provides foraging area for swallows and bats as well as nesting habitats for ducks.

SUDS outlet channel has been enhanced, incorporating in-stream woody structures, to increase diversity.

Swallows have successfully nested in the buildings during construction.

A mixed hedge has been planted on the south side of the access road. This includes hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel.

Wildflower Seeding

In line with the aims of the Scottish Government's Pollinator Strategy, the biodiversity strategy at the site has included wildflower seeding that will provide foraging and nesting habitat for pollinators such as the Great Yellow Bumblebee and other wildlife from moths to Goldfinches. There are 29 species in our wildflower mix which encourage long-lasting plant life and reduce the growth of grasses.

Rare scrub habitat

This habitat is being created using the following species: Eared willow, Grey willow, Goat willow, Hazel, Hawthorn and Blackthorn. It is hoped to encourage rare, local plants and invertebrates as well as valuable nesting, and feeding habitats for various birds.

Wetland Creation

A large area of pond and wetland has been established at the south west of the site which will be an important habitat for birds, aquatic insects, amphibians and foraging for bats.

Tree and scrub Planting

Swallows

Swallows use the pond and wetland to feed and nest around the buildings. British swallows spend their winter in South Africa - they travel through western France, across the Pyrenees, down

Pine Marten

Pine Marten can be found in the woodland adjacent to the site. The planted area will in time extend the available habitat. They prefer woodland habitats, climbing very well and living in tree holes, old squirrel dreys or old birds' nests. It feeds on small rodents, birds, eggs,

Example project: Spittal HVDC Biodiversity Net Gain

Spittal Converter and Substation was one of SSEN Transmission's first sites to deliver BNG. A mosaic of habitats were created around the site including wetlands, wildflower meadow, hedge, tree and rare scrub habitat. The habitats on the site help to support local fauna including pine martin, swallows and the great yellow bumblebee.

Example project: Thurso South substation

Creation of approximately 10 hectares of pollinator habitat to support the rare endemic great yellow bumblebee and contribute to wider conservation efforts for this species.



Marine route

A Marine License to install and operate an HVDC connection between Arnish Point on Lewis and Dundonnell on the Scottish mainland has been granted by Marine Scotland. The licence allows for the installation of the cable system and its associated protection, crossings and landfalls within a 200m wide corridor.



A detailed marine survey was undertaken to map the seabed, both depth and habitat data were collected and used to develop the cable route and subsequently, Marine Environmental Appraisal was drafted. Following application, to Marine Scotland, the route was refined to avoid, as far as possible, areas of shallow gas and Maerl beds. The final subsea route was granted consent in 2021.

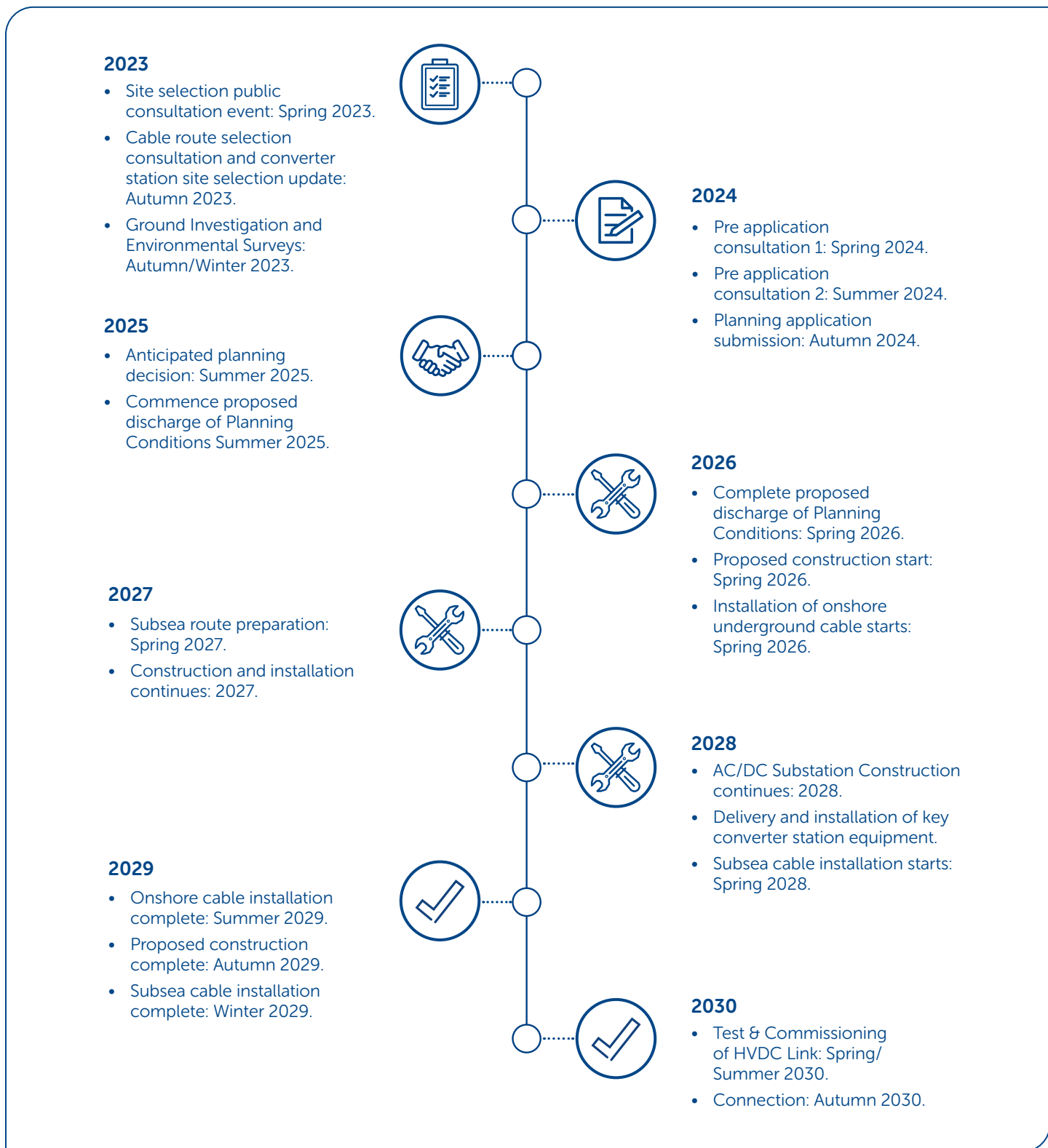
A new marine survey will be undertaken in late 2023/early 2024 to provide greater resolution and identify any changes to the seabed that have taken place since the original survey.

Following the engagement of an installation contractor, the route will be reviewed and a pre-lay survey completed, the pre-lay survey will allow for the refinement of the installation engineering and route.

A Horizontal Direction Drill (HDD) will be drilled from a land based drilling rig near the consented Arnish Point landfall site. The HDD bore will pass through the bedrock to emerge on the seabed in approximately 22m of water. An HDD will be drilled for each of the cables to be brought ashore along with a spare duct.



2030 delivery project timeline



Note: Proposed timeline based on current information subject to the project reaching key milestones and statutory consents.

Working with landowners and occupiers

SSEN Transmission recognises landowners and occupiers as key stakeholders in the development of our projects and is committed to consultation and engagement with all parties likely to have an interest in our proposals.

What this means for Western Isles:

As the project design develops, we will work with landowners and occupiers to mitigate the effects of our infrastructure on their properties. Our team of dedicated land managers will be on hand to answer queries and address concerns throughout.

We will be required to carry out various engineering and environmental surveys to inform the design process. Consent will be sought from affected landowners and occupiers in advance for these surveys.

Now that the location of the Converter and AC substation has been selected, we will work with the relevant landowners and users/occupiers to secure the appropriate land rights and consents from local authorities, Crofting Commission and Scottish land courts.

Our land managers will endeavour to reach a voluntary agreement with landowners and occupiers. However, in the unlikely event we are unable to reach a voluntary agreement and we have exhausted all other viable options, as a statutory undertaker, we may require to underpin voluntary discussions with an application to Scottish Ministers for a Necessary Wayleave or Compulsory Purchase Order.

Ultimately this is to ensure nationally significant infrastructure projects are delivered on time and in line with our licence obligations. We also have a duty to protect the interests of the GB bill payer.



Statutory powers are not used lightly as we aim to work with landowners and occupiers to secure the necessary land rights voluntarily and would like to reassure all stakeholders, that these powers will only be used as an absolute last resort.

All potentially affected landowners and occupiers have the opportunity to provide feedback at our in person consultation events or by submitting a feedback form. We would encourage all those with an interest to submit their views through this consultation.



Find out more

What happens now and how do I have my say?

We understand and recognise the value of the feedback provided by members of the public during all engagements and consultations. Without this valuable feedback, the project development team would be unable to progress projects and reach a balanced proposal.

To provide feedback on the proposal or to gain further information on the proposed sites or project as a whole, please complete a feedback form, or contact our Community Liaison Manager. Any comments made to Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc are not representations to the planning authority.

We are keen to receive your views and comments in regard to the following questions:

- Has the requirement for the Western Isles project been clearly explained?
- Do you have any comments with regards to the cable corridor route selected?
- Are there any additional factors in relation to the route that you consider important and should be brought to the attention of the project team?
- Following review of the provided information, how would you describe your understanding of the project?
- Overall how do you feel about the project?
- And finally, from your experience to date, can you rate the quality of consultation undertaken on the project?



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."

Comments

Your views and comments can be provided by completing the feedback form or by writing to our Community Liaison Manager. All feedback received will be assessed and reviewed by our project team.

Feedback

We will be seeking feedback from members of the public on this exhibition until **Friday 8th December 2023**.



Lisa Marchi-Grey
Community Liaison Manager



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Lisa Marchi-Grey
Scottish and Southern
Electricity Networks,
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Inverness, IV1 1SN

Additional information

Information will also be made available via the project webpage and social media channels:

Project website:

ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/western-isles

Follow us on Facebook:

[@ssencommunity](https://www.facebook.com/ssencommunity)

Follow us on Twitter:

[@ssetransmission](https://twitter.com/ssetransmission)

Cable Corridor Route - 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 Has the requirement for the Western Isles project been clearly explained?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q2 Do you have any comments with regards to the cable corridor route selected?

Yes No Unsure

Comments:

Q3 Are there any additional factors in relation to the route that you consider important and should be brought to the attention of the project team?

Comments:

Q4 Following review of the provided information, how would you describe your understanding of the project?

Comments:

Q5 Overall how do you feel about the project?

Comments:

Q6 And finally, from your experience to date, can you rate the quality of consultation undertaken on the project?

Comments:

Full name

Address

Telephone

Email

If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the project please tick this box.

If you would like your comments to remain anonymous 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: Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, 10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

Email: lisa.marchi@sse.com

Online: ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/western-isles

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

The feedback form and all information provided in this booklet can also be downloaded from the project websites.

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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