Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Report on Consultation

Substation Site Selection

East Coast 275kV Substation

Ref: LT542



Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION

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GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	A dataset identifying areas of ancient woodland, typically continuously wooded since at least 1750
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	An approach to development that aims to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development.
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	A document outlining how environmental effects will be managed and mitigated during construction.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
Drinking Water Protection Area (DWPA)	An area designated to protect sources of drinking water from pollution and contamination.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
European Protected Species (EPS)	Species protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations and associated legislation.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes lists those gardens or designed landscapes which are considered by a panel of experts to be of national importance.
Geographic Information System (GIS)	A digital mapping and analysis system used to manage, analyse and display spatial information.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	A category used to classify landscapes based on distinct physical and visual characteristics.
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Long Established Plantation Origin Woodland (LEPO)	Woodland that originated from long-established plantations and is recognised for its ecological value.
Megawatt (MW)	One million watts

Term	Definition
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA)	A method of appraising options against a range of environmental, technical and economic criteria.
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)	Scotland's national spatial development strategy and planning policy framework.
Red, Amber, Green (RAG)	A rating system used to indicate levels of risk, constraint or performance during option appraisal.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Areas of national importance. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive74/409/EEC) to protect important bird habitats. Implemented under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SHE Transmission works.
Study Area	The area within which the corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)	A programme aimed at conserving and enhancing biodiversity within the UK.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Water Framework Directive (WFD)	Legislation aimed at protecting and improving the water environment.
Watt	The international unit of power, equal to one joule of energy transferred or used per second.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	A computer-generated map showing the areas from which a development may theoretically be visible.

PREFACE

This Report on Consultation has been prepared by AECOM on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission). SSEN Transmission, operating under licence held by the Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc., owns, operates, and develops the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands.

This Report provides a summary of the responses received from key stakeholders (including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and members of the public) during consultation held in May 2026. The consultation presented site options identified for a new 275kV substation and associated infrastructure, referred to as the 'Proposed Development', and the proposed routes of the overhead line (OHL) required for the connection from the Proposed Development to the existing transmission network.

Four in-person consultation events were undertaken to seek the views of the local community regarding the Proposed Development. These events took place at the following locations:

- Monday 25 May 2026, 2–7pm
  Inglis Memorial Hall, Edzell, Brechin, DD9 7TF
- Tuesday 26 May 2026, 2-7pm
  Stracathro Parish Hall, Inchbare, Brechin, DD9 7QJ
- Wednesday 27 May 2026, 1-6pm
  Craigo Community Hall, Craigo, DD10 9JZ
- Thursday 28 May 2026, 2-7pm
  Brechin City Hall, 9 Swan Street, Brechin, DD9 6EE

The Consultation Document and consultation materials were made available online at the project website:

New East Coast 275kV Substation.

This Report on Consultation describes how the feedback from the consultation has informed the identification of a proposed substation site and proposed routes of the OHL to be taken forward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SSEN Transmission is proposing to construct a new East Coast 275kV Substation and associated infrastructure in Angus and Aberdeenshire (the 'Proposed Development'). The project is required to facilitate future renewable generation connections and support reinforcement of the East Coast transmission network.

This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken between May and July 2026. The programme of consultation was designed to engage with and inform stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners, and individual residents and to allow for feedback on the substation site and route options under consideration.

The consultation sought views on the shortlisted substation site options (Sites 2 and 16) and associated overhead line (OHL) Tie-in route options, together with any additional environmental, technical and community considerations that should be taken into account before identifying a preferred site and routes. Consultation responses highlighted a number of key themes, including the loss of agricultural land, preference for brownfield development, residential amenity, ecology and biodiversity, traffic and access, and cumulative infrastructure impacts. Consultees also identified a range of environmental and technical considerations requiring further assessment as the project develops.

The consultation feedback was reviewed alongside the environmental, technical, engineering and economic assessments undertaken as part of the site and route selection process. Following consideration of all feedback and appraisal findings, Site 2 was identified as the preferred location for the proposed East Coast 275kV substation. The routeing assessment and consultation process also informed the identification of Tie-in 2 and Tie-out 3 as the preferred OHL route options to be taken forward to alignment stage.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Document

1.1.1 This Report has been prepared by SSEN Transmission. SSEN Transmission, operating under licence held by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc., has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 (the 'Electricity Act'), to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical electrical transmission system in its licence area.

1.1.2 This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process undertaken between May and July 2026 on potential sites for a 275 kilovolt (kV) substation and associated infrastructure in Angus and Aberdeenshire (the 'Proposed Development'). The consultation was conducted during Stage 2 of the substation site selection process and the routeing stage for the required overhead line (OHL) connections.

1.1.3 The programme of consultation was designed to engage with key stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and members of the public in order to invite feedback on the site options identified within the *East Coast 275kV Substation Consultation Document*[1], prior to identifying a proposed site and OHL alignment to be taken forward to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

1.1.4 This Report summarises the responses receives and details the actions taken in response to the issues raised.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The objectives of this Report are:

- To document the consultation process undertaken between May and July 2026;
- To summarise feedback received from stakeholders;
- To document actions undertaken in response to feedback where relevant; and
- To clearly set out how the proposed site and OHL route options has been informed by the consultation process.

1.3 Document Structure

1.3.1 This Report is comprised of eight sections as follows:

1. Introduction – setting out the purpose and objectives of the Report on Consultation;
2. Project Overview – outlines the background to the project and provides a description of the key elements;
3. Option Selection – summarises the site selection process;
4. The Consultation Process – describes the framework for consultation and methods which have been employed;
5. Consultation Responses from Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees – summarises the response from these bodies;
6. Community Consultation Responses – summarises responses received from the local community;
7. Identification of the Proposed Site and Routes – describes how the comments and issues raised during consultation have helped inform the identification of a proposed site and routes; and

[1] SSEN Transmission (May 2026) New East Coast 275kV Substation. Available Online at: New East Coast 275kV Substation - SSEN Transmission

8. Conclusions and Next Steps – provides a summary of the conclusions reached and actions going forward.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 The Need for the Project

2.1.1 Where there is a requirement to extend, upgrade or reinforce its transmission network, SSEN Transmission's aim is to provide an environmentally aware, technically feasible and economically viable solution which would cause the least disturbance to the environment and to people who use it.

2.1.2 In order for SSEN Transmission to deliver a network for net zero, strategic network investments must be delivered at the right time to reduce investment regret and to continue to operate a safe, secure and reliable network.

2.1.3 The New East Coast 275kV Substation and Connections Project is required to enable a new connection location of the upgraded Bridge of Dun GSP substation and to enable the removal of over 82km of existing 132kV OHL throughout Aberdeenshire and Angus. The proposed 275kV East Coast substation is also required to allow future generation to connect into the East Coast Network. There are currently over 540 megawatts (MW) of contracted low carbon generations (over 1300MW including battery connections) within our East Coast area which cannot contribute to the UK and Scottish Governments' commitments to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and 2045 respectively without completion of the East Coast network investment strategy.

2.2 National Planning Policy

2.2.1 Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) was published by the Scottish Government on 13th February 2023. NPF4 is a long-term strategy for Scotland (to 2045) that guides spatial development, sets out national planning policies, designates national developments and highlights regional spatial priorities. Alongside adopted local development plans, NPF4 now forms part of the statutory development plan for decision making in Scotland. In NPF4, transmission infrastructure is supported in both National Development ND3 'Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure' and in Policy 11 Energy however proposals are required to be assessed against all relevant development plan policies.

2.2.2 The Proposed Development would form a vital element to deliver network and grid infrastructure required to deliver the UK and Scottish Government's legally binding targets for net zero emissions and renewable energy electricity generation objectives.

2.3 Preferred Technology Solution

Substation Design

2.3.1 The substation design requires provision for a minimum nine bay 275kV substation platform. Land would also be required for access, landscaping and screening, Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) and for habitat enhancement to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) at the site.

2.3.2 It is anticipated that an additional area of approximately 200m x 80m would also be required for temporary welfare and laydown areas during construction, located in close proximity to the site. This area would be restored following construction.

2.3.3 For the purpose of the site selection process, an indicative substation layout was assumed with a footprint area of approximately 25 hectares (ha) and a wider site footprint of approximately 100 ha to provide space for these additional land requirements.

Overhead Line (OHL) Design

2.3.4 The OHL design comprises the tie-in and tie-out routes connecting the proposed East Coast substation into the existing Kintore - Tealing 275kV network via two sections of new 275kV OHL between 2km and 7km in length.

2.3.5 The proposed OHL would consist of steel lattice towers with an average height of 46m with foundations of approximately 2.5m by 3m across.

2.4 Proposal Overview

General Substation Construction Activities

2.4.1 To facilitate the substation design, the following components would be included in the design:

- Large, levelled platform area, sized approximately 500m x 500m;
- Control building;
- 2 x bus couplers;
- 2 x bus sections;
- 4 x Feeder Bays to enable connections for the new 275kV XT1/XT2 Circuits between Kintore and Tealing;
- 4 x Future Feeder Bays;
- Perimeter fence, potentially up to 4.0m height, including energised top section;
- Permanent earthworks and site drainage provisions, including SuDS basins;
- New and upgraded permanent access to / from the proposed Substation Site;
- Hard and soft landscaping for screening and biodiversity requirements;
- Clearance of vegetation;
- Establishment of suitable laydown areas for material and installation of temporary track solutions and drainage as necessary;
- Delivery of structures and materials to site;
- Construction of foundations and installation of new lattice towers and lines;
- Remedial works to reinstate the immediate vicinity of the works and any ground disturbed, to pre – existing use; and
- Temporary welfare units/compound.

General OHL Construction Activities

2.4.2 Construction activities to facilitate the OHL design are anticipated to consist of the following:

- Alterations to the existing transmission and distribution networks;
- Enabling work (forestry clearance and establishment of temporary construction compound(s);
- Erection of support structures;
- Conductor stringing (including construction of temporary scaffolding);
- Inspections and OHL commissioning; and
- Removal of temporary works and site reinstatement.
- Demolition of part of the existing OHL infrastructure
- Clearance of vegetation
- Establishment of suitable laydown areas for material and installation of temporary track solutions and drainage as necessary;

- Delivery of structures and materials to site;
- Construction of foundations and installation of new lattice towers and lines
- Remedial works to reinstate the immediate vicinity of the works and any ground disturbed, to pre – existing use; and
- Temporary welfare units/compound.

OHL Access Strategy

2.4.3 The access strategy had not yet been determined, however where possible existing access tracks will be used and upgraded as required. New access tracks may be required for the OHL infrastructure and where there is a justified long-term requirement, they will be left in place. Where ground conditions permit, it is preferable to construct the infrastructure without an access track (e.g., on dry and level pasture). Temporary matting may be used in sensitive areas subject to an assessment of gradient and ground conditions.

2.4.4 New access (permanent or temporary) would generally be constructed using geotextile, with approximately 200mm of crushed and compact stone laid on top. Tracks may be floated over areas of peat, or may use cut and fill approaches, subject to ground conditions and gradients.

Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

2.4.5 All construction activities will be undertaken in accordance with a CEMP which will define specific methods for environmental survey, monitoring and management throughout construction. A CEMP will be produced by the Principal Contractor and agreed with statutory stakeholders prior to the commencement of construction.

Programme

2.4.6 It is anticipated that construction of the project would take place over an approximately 2-to-3-year period following the granting of consents, although detailed programming of the works would be the responsibility of the Principal Contractor in agreement with SSEN Transmission.

Biodiversity Net Gain

2.4.7 BNG is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was pre-development. SSEN Transmission has developed a BNG toolkit based upon the Natural England metric[2], which aims to quantify biodiversity based upon the value of habitats for nature. It is an efficient and effective method for demonstrating whether development projects have been able to maintain or increase the biodiversity value of a development site after construction works.

2.4.8 The BNG toolkit would be applied to the project to quantify the overall potential biodiversity impacts; this includes a biodiversity baseline assessment, analysis of habitat losses due to temporary works and permanent infrastructure, and analysis of biodiversity gains following reinstatement of habitats in areas of temporary construction work.

SSEN Transmission's Biodiversity Ambition

2.4.9 SSEN Transmission is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment by minimising the potential impacts from their construction and operational activities. As part of this approach, SSEN

[2] Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.1 (2022), Natural England [Available Online] https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5450039124819968

Transmission has made commitments within its Sustainability Strategy (2024)[3], Sustainability Action Plan (2024)[4] and RIIO-T2 Business Plan[5], for new infrastructure projects to:

- Ensure natural environment considerations are included in decision making at each stage of a project's development;
- Utilise the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts by consideration of biodiversity in project design;
- Positively contribute to the UN and Scottish Government Biodiversity strategies by achieving Net Gain on all new projects gaining consent; and
- Work with their supply chain to gain the maximum benefit during asset replacement and upgrades.

2.4.10 The design and evolution of this grid connection project will be carried out in line with these commitments.

[3] Sustainability Strategy: Pathway to 2030 (2024), SSEN Transmission [Available Online] ssen-transmission-sustainability-strategy-2024
[4] Sustainability Action Plan 2024-2031 (2024), SSEN Transmission [Available Online]: sustainability-action-plan.pdf
[5] A Network for Net Zero (2029), SSEN Transmission [Available Online], A Network for Net Zero - SSEN

3. OPTION SELECTION

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Consultation Document sets out the approach to site selection which is informed by SSEN Transmission's internal guidance. This guidance provides a framework to ensure environmental, technical and economic considerations are identified and appraised at each stage of the routeing process.

3.1.2 The substation site selection process has three key stages, each increasing in detail and definition. Technical, environmental, and cost considerations are brought together in a way which seeks the best balance in accordance with SSEN Transmission's Network Operator' s Licence and the Electricity Act. This staged process leads to the identification of a finalised proposed substation site, which will be taken forward for planning.

3.1.3 For the OHL route, separate SSEN Transmission internal guidance has been followed to provide a consistent approach to routeing. The principal objective of the routeing process is to balance technical and cost considerations with environmental considerations, to select a proposed alignment which is economically viable, technically feasible, minimises impacts on important resources or features of the environment and reduces disturbance to those living in it, working in it, visiting it or using it for recreational purposes.

3.2 Appraisal Methodology

3.2.1 Each stage is an iterative process and involves an increasing level of detail and resolution. The stages carried out can vary depending on the type, nature and size of a project and consultation is carried out at each stage of the process as appropriate.

3.2.2 The Substation Site Selection is currently at Stage 2 with the OHL Route Selection currently at Stage 3; the objective of which is to identify a potential substation site and alignment within the chosen preferred route which avoids where possible physical, environmental and amenity constraints, is likely to be acceptable to stakeholders and is economically viable when taking into account engineering and connection requirements. As set out within the Consultation Document, two potential site options were identified within a 'Site Options Area'.

3.2.3 Appraisal of each site option was undertaken against a number of environmental, engineering and cost criteria set out within the SSEN Transmission guidance, as follows:

Environmental Criteria

- Natural Heritage (Designations, Protected Species, Habitats, Ornithology and Geology, Hydrogeology and Hydrology);
- Cultural Heritage (Designations and Cultural Heritage Assets);
- People (Proximity to Settlements, Visual and Physical Effects);
- Landscape and Visual (Designations, Character and Visual Impact); and
- Land Use (Agriculture, Forestry and Recreation).

Engineering Criteria

- Environmental Design (e.g. altitude, route complexity, length);
- Topography (e.g. terrain, waterbodies, slope);
- Ground Conditions (e.g. peat, rock and potential for flooding);
- Access and Existing Infrastructure (e.g. existing road network and access tracks);
- Existing Network (e.g. connectivity and outages); and

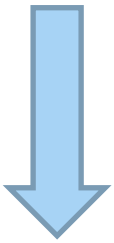
- Operational (e.g. maintenance, flexibility for future development, and faults).

Economic Criteria

- Construction;
- Diversions;
- Public Road Improvements;
- Felling; and
- Land Assembly.

3.2.4 Red, Amber, Green (RAG) matrix was used for the appraisal, with the ratings compared, across the criteria, to examine which has the greatest and least potential for the development to be constrained. This rating is based on a four-point scale shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 RAG Matrix

Performance	Appraisal
Most Preferred  Least Preferred	No potential for the infrastructure design development to be constrained
	Low potential for the infrastructure design development to be constrained
	Moderate potential for the infrastructure design development to be constrained
	High potential for the infrastructure design development to be constrained

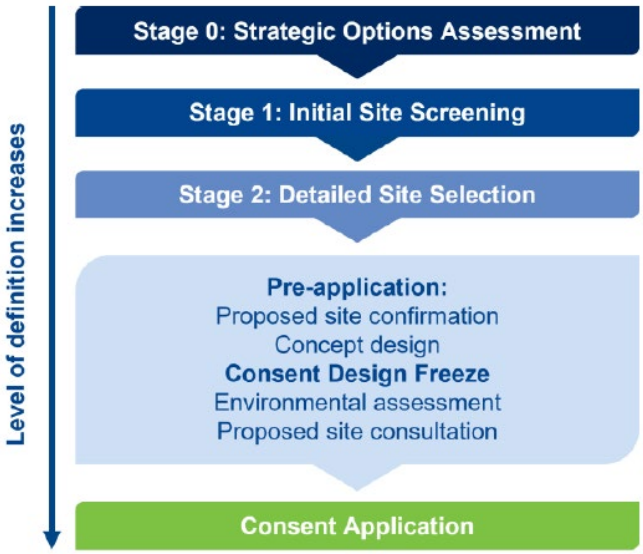
3.2.5 The overall objective throughout the appraisal has been to take full consideration of all environmental, engineering and economic factors to minimise any potential adverse impacts on the environment whilst considering technical and cost implications.

3.3 Substation Site Selection Process

3.3.1 The guidance splits the routeing stage of a project into three principal stages, as follows:

- Stage 0: Strategic Options Assessment
- Stage 1: Initial Site Screening
- Stage 2: Detailed Site Selection

Image 1 Overview of the Optioneering Process



3.3.2 **Stage 0: Strategic Options Assessment:** The starting point in all substation site selection projects is to establish the need for the project and to select potential engineering options that can deliver this need. This process will be triggered by the preparation of several internal assessment s and documents.

3.3.3 **Stage 1: Initial Site Screening:** This stage seeks to identify technically feasible, economically viable and environmentally acceptable site options within a defined area. The search area may vary depending on terrain, other infrastructure, designated areas and features and connection opt ions. The aim is to identify several potential sites which are initially assessed for suitability and to identify which of the identified sites can be shortlisted for further assessment.

3.3.4 **Stage 2 Detailed Site Selection:** This stage seeks to identify a potential substation site, which avoids where possible physical, environmental and amenity constraints, is likely to be acceptable to stakeholders and is economically viable, taking into account engineering and connection requirements.

3.4 Substation Site Selection Summary

Stage 0 – Strategic Options Assessment

3.4.1 The Strategic Options Assessment established a series of criteria to identify potentially suitable locations for the proposed substation. These included proximity to the existing transmission network, avoidance of designated environmental and cultural heritage sites, separation from residential properties, accessibility, flood risk, existing infrastructure constraints and the ability to accommodate the substation platform and associated infrastructure requirements.

Stage 1 – Initial Site Screening

3.4.2 During Stage 1, 18 potential site options were identified within the study area using GIS analysis, desk-based studies and site appraisal. These sites were assessed against environmental, technical and economic criteria, resulting in Sites 1, 2 and 16 being shortlisted for further assessment at Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Detailed Site Selection

3.4.3 At Stage 2, Site 1 was identified as having the greatest environmental sensitivities due to its proximity to the Montrose Basin designated sites, ecological constraints associated with habitats and protected species, heritage assets in the surrounding area and its location on prime agricultural land. Site 1 was therefore discounted from further consideration.

3.4.4 The detailed assessment identified a number of constraints associated with both Site 2 and Site 16. Site 2 is located on prime agricultural land and contains areas of Long-Established Plantation Origin (LEPO) woodland, with nearby ecological, heritage and residential receptors. However, the site benefits from a comparatively shorter and simpler connection to the existing transmission network.

3.4.5 Site 16 benefits from being predominantly brownfield land associated with the former RAF Edzell site and would avoid the loss of prime agricultural land. However, Site 16 was identified as having a number of constraints including its proximity to residential properties at Edzell Woods and West Drumhendry, the presence of existing businesses operating within the site, areas of woodland and watercourses within the site boundary, potential contamination associated with former military activities and longer transmission connection requirements.

3.5 OHL Routeing Process

3.5.1 The route selection process follows similar principles to the site selection process. The guidance splits a project into the following principal routeing stages:

- Stage 0: Routeing Strategy Development;
- Stage 1: Corridor Selection;
- Stage 2: Route Selection; and
- Stage 3: Alignment Selection.

3.5.2 The stages that are carried out can vary depending on the type, nature of and size of a project and consultation is carried out at each stage of the process.

3.5.3 **Stage 0: Routeing Strategy Development:** The routeing strategy development stage seeks to set out the overall approach to the routeing study, the methods which will be adopted to identify, appraise and select options at each stage, and the overall consultation strategy. It will also highlight any departures from the Routeing Guidelines that are required.

3.5.4 **Stage 1: Corridor Selection:** The corridor selection stage seeks to identify a series of linear areas (corridors) capable of providing a continuous connection between the defined connection points and delivering the required transmission connection. Due to the close proximity of the two connection locations, this project did not undertake Stage 1 – Corridor Selection, rather went straight to Stage 2 – Route Selection.

3.5.5 **Stage 2: Route Selection**: The route selection stage seeks to identify a preferred route within the wider corridor area.

3.5.6 **Stage 3: Alignment Selection:** The alignment selection will seek to identify an alignment within the chosen preferred route and to define the access arrangements adapted in terms of, for example, the nature and extent of temporary and/or permanent tracks and road improvements. This stage will be subject to further study and consultation.

3.6 OHL Routeing Summary

Stage 0 – Routeing Strategy Development

3.6.1 Stage 0 established the key requirements for the routeing study. These included achieving connectivity between the proposed substation sites and the existing transmission network, avoiding settlements where possible, and avoiding designated ecological and geological sites.

Stage 2 – Route Selection

3.6.2 Stage 2 involved a comparative assessment of the route options associated with Sites 2 and 16 against environmental, technical and planning criteria. Following the identification of Sites 2 and 16 as the preferred sites for consultation, route options were developed for these locations only. Three tie-in and three tie-out route options were identified for Site 2, while two tie-in and two tie-out route options were identified for Site 16.

3.6.3 For Site 2, the route options principally crossed agricultural land and the River North Esk catchment, with constraints including designated and non-designated cultural heritage assets, areas of LEPO woodland, watercourse crossings, potential effects on protected species, and the presence of nearby residential properties and settlements including Logie Pert, Rosehill and Brechin. Several route options also required crossings of the A90 and local road network.

3.6.4 For Site 16, the route options were generally longer and passed in closer proximity to settlements including Luthermuir, Edzell Woods, Stracathro, Inchbare and Newtonmill. Constraints identified along the Site 16 route options included extensive areas of woodland, multiple watercourse crossings including the River North Esk, Luther Water, Cruick Water and Black Burn, a greater number of Scheduled Monuments and listed buildings, geological designations including the North Esk and West Water Palaeochannels SSSI, and increased potential for effects on residential amenity.

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 In accordance with SSEN Transmission's internal guidance, a process of consultation at the Detailed Site Selection stage has been undertaken.

4.2 Methods for Consultation

4.2.1 The following methods were used to consult on the potential site options and route options.

Consultation Document

4.2.2 The *East Coast 275kV Substation* Consultation Document was published in May 2026 detailing the appraisal of substation site options across Stage 1: Initial Site Screen and Stage 2: Detailed Site Selection, and OHL Route Selection across Stage 0: Routeing Strategy Development, Stage 1: Corridor Selection, Stage 2: Route Selection and Stage 3: Alignment Selection. This takes account of environmental, economic and technical factors. The Consultation Document, and a summary Consultation Booklet, were made available via the project website: New East Coast 275kV Substation.

4.2.3 **Table 4-1** details the stakeholders in the receipt of the Consultation Document or Consultation Booklet, or otherwise informed of the website or public consultation event details:

Table 4-1: List of Stakeholders

Stakeholders	
Statutory Consultees	
Angus Council	Aberdeenshire Council
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	NatureScot
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	
Non-statutory Consultees	
British Horse Society	British Telecoms (BT)
Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)	Crown Estates Scotland
Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)	Esk District Salmon Fisheries Board/ The Esks Rivers & Fisheries Trust
Fisheries Management Scotland	John Muir Trust
National Air Traffic Services **(**NATS) Safeguarding	National Gas
National Farmers Union (NFU) Scotland	National Trust
Network Rail	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Scotland Gas Networks (SGN)	Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)
Scottish Wildlife Trust	Scottish Canoe Association
Scottish Water	Scottish Forestry
Transport Scotland	Visit Scotland
Woodland Trust	

4.2.4 Feedback on the Consultation Document was requested by **Thursday 9th July 2026**.

4.2.5 In the Consultation Document, stakeholders were asked a series of a questions on specific aspects of the project as follows:

- Have we adequately explained the need for this project? (Yes / No / Unsure)
  - Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand what is being proposed and why? (Yes / No / Unsure)
  - Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand the site selection process that has been carried out? (Yes / No / Unsure)
  - Do you agree with the sites and routes identified as part of our site and route selection? If not, why? (Yes / No / Unsure)
  - Are there any factors, or environmental features, that you consider may have been overlooked during the site selection process?
  - Do you have any other comments (positive or negative) or concerns in relation to the project?

4.2.6 A feedback form was also provided on the project webpage allowing users to submit comments.

Public Consultation Events

4.2.7 In person consultation events took place for this project at the following locations and times:

- Inglis Memorial Hall Consultation: Monday 25th May 2026 – 2pm to 7pm – Inglis Memorial Hall, Edzell, Brechin, DD9 7TF;
- Stracathro Parish Hall Consultation: Tuesday 26th May 2026 – 2pm to 7pm – Stracathro Parish Hall, Inchbare, Brechin, DD9 7QE;
- Craigo Community Hall Consultation: Wednesday 27th May 2026 – 1pm to 6pm – Craigo Community Hall, Craigo, DD10 9JZ; and
- Brechin City Hall Consultation: Thursday 28th May 2026 – 2pm to 7pm – Brechin City Hall, 9 Swan Street, Brechin, DD9 6EE.

4.2.8 Consultation events were advertised in the local press, SSEN Transmission's social media channels, through email update lists for SSEN projects within the wider area and the dedicated project website. A mail drop informing approximately 15,330 households of the event was also carried out the local area ahead of the consultation events.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEES

5.1.1 **Table 5-1** sets out a summary of the feedback received by statutory and non-statutory consultees following the end of the consultation period (May 2026). A response to the feedback is also provided by SSEN Transmission, together with confirmation of the action to be taken, where relevant.

Table 5-1: Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultee Feedback

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
Statutory Consultees		
SEPA	SEPA highlighted that flood mapping was updated in February 2025, including revisions to small watercourses and surface water mapping, and requested that all future site analysis uses the most up-to-date Flood Maps. SEPA welcomed continued pre-application engagement and referred SSEN Transmission to its standing advice and development management guidance. No additional comments were raised at this stage.	SSEN Transmission note that the Flood Maps have been updated and will take cognisance of SEPA's standing advice as the detailed design and environmental assessment of the proposed substation and OHL progresses.
HES	HES note that, in the absence of detailed alignments and ZTV information, they are unable to provide detailed advice on setting impacts at this stage. HES identify several Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings and Gardens and Designed Landscapes that may be affected by the proposed development and advise that direct impacts on Scheduled Monuments should be avoided through the design process. HES request that potential effects on designated heritage assets are considered through the EIA and that further consultation is undertaken as the project develops.	SSEN Transmission have taken the heritage assets identified by HES into consideration during the Site Selection and Routeing assessment stages. The potential effects on designated heritage assets will be further considered through the ongoing OHL alignment and detailed design processes and cultural heritage assessment. Further consultation with HES will be undertaken as the project develops.
Non-Statutory Consultees		
BT	BT reviewed the preferred substation sites and connection options and confirmed that the proposals are not anticipated to interfere with its existing or planned radio network. BT requested further consultation once final structure locations and heights become available.	SSEN Transmission note BT's response and will provide further information on structure locations and heights as the detailed design progresses.
SGN	SGN confirmed that there are no high-pressure gas assets within the vicinity of the proposed sites and raised no objections to the proposals at this stage	SSEN Transmission note SGN's response and that no constraints have been identified in relation to SGN infrastructure.
Transport Scotland	Transport Scotland noted that the preferred OHL route options would require crossings of the A90 trunk road. Transport Scotland advised that impacts on the trunk road network should be assessed and that methodology statements would be required for any proposed crossings.	SSEN Transmission note Transport Scotland's comments and will continue engagement to ensure any interactions with the trunk road network are appropriately assessed and agreed as the project design develops.
British Horse Society	The British Horse Society provided supporting guidance documents relating to the proposed substation and associated overhead line infrastructure for consideration during the design process.	SSEN Transmission note the information provided by the British Horse Society and will consider relevant recommendations as part of the ongoing design and assessment process.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
Network Rail	Network Rail advised that any works affecting or crossing the railway would require further discussion and agreement. Network Rail highlighted the need to ensure construction activities do not adversely affect railway operations and infrastructure	SSEN Transmission note Network Rail's requirements and will continue engagement to ensure all necessary approvals and technical requirements are addressed through detailed design. At this stage no works are proposed which would affect or cross the existing railway network.
National Gas	National Gas raised a holding objection due to the presence of Major Accident Hazard Pipelines within the proposed development area of Site 2. National Gas advised that potential electrical interference effects, pipeline easements, utility crossings and access requirements would need to be considered through the design process and requested early engagement	SSEN Transmission note National Gas's holding objection and will continue engagement to assess potential interactions with existing gas infrastructure and agree any necessary mitigation, assessments and approvals.

6. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

6.1.1 Table 6-1 sets out the feedback received by the local community and public following the end of the consultation feedback period (**Thursday 9 July 2026**), including comments received during the consultation events. Responses by SSEN Transmission are also included, setting out the action to be taken where relevant.

Table 6-1: Public and Local Community Feedback by Topic

Feedback Theme	Summary of Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
Agricultural land and food security	A significant proportion of respondents objected to Site 2 due to the loss of prime agricultural land and its contribution to food production. Concerns were raised regarding the permanent loss of productive farmland and the perceived conflict with sustainable land management and food security objectives. Several respondents considered Site 16 preferable as it is a previously developed site.	SSEN Transmission note concerns regarding the permanent loss of agricultural land and potential implications for food production. Agricultural land was a key consideration throughout the site selection process and will continue to be considered through the detailed design and environmental assessment of the Proposed Development.
Brownfield versus greenfield development	Many respondents expressed a preference for Site 16 due to its brownfield status and the opportunity to utilise previously developed land. However, respondents also identified concerns regarding Site 16 including proximity to residential properties, potential land contamination associated with the former RAF Edzell site, impacts on existing businesses and additional OHL infrastructure requirements	SSEN Transmission note the preference expressed by some respondents for the use of previously developed land at Site 16, alongside concerns relating to residential amenity, site contamination and existing land uses. Site 16 and Site 2 were assessed against a range of technical, environmental, engineering and planning criteria. Following this assessment, Site 2 was identified as the preferred option over Site 16 due to potential impacts on the residential properties near to Site 16 and the businesses located within the site as well as the potential for significant contamination on the site.
Residential Amenity	Respondents raised concerns regarding visual impacts, , operational noise, lighting and effects on residential amenity. Concerns were particularly focused on Site 16 due to its proximity to Edzell Woods and West Drumhendry.	SSEN Transmission note concerns regarding potential visual, noise and lighting effects on residential properties. The proximity of Site 16 to residential properties at West Drumhendry and Edzell Woods is a consideration in the site selection process. Landscape and visual effects, operational noise and lighting impacts will be assessed through the EIA and will continue to inform the detailed design of the Proposed Development.
Visual and landscape impacts	Concerns were raised by respondents regarding pylons and OHLs industrialising the countryside, affecting scenic views and changing the rural landscape character.	SSEN Transmission note concerns regarding the potential visual and landscape effects associated with the proposed OHL route, including impacts on scenic views, rural character and the perceived industrialisation of the countryside. Landscape and visual considerations formed a key part of the routeing assessment process and have informed the identification and refinement of route options.

Feedback Theme	Summary of Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
		Further landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken through the EIA process, with findings used to inform the detailed design of the Proposed Development and identify appropriate mitigation measures where required
Ecology, biodiversity and designated sites	Concerns were raised regarding potential impacts on wildlife, protected species, ecological connectivity and designated sites, including Dun's Dish Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Montrose Basin Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site. Respondents also identified concerns relating to badgers, bats, birds and woodland habitats.	The site selection and route selection process to date has been informed by a series of surveys undertaken in 2025 and 2026. As the project progresses, design will be guided by both desk-based review, surveys results and further ecological and ornithological surveys as required, and SSEN Transmission will liaise with NatureScot, and other statutory and non-statutory bodies to ensure ecological concerns are considered.
Traffic and construction disruption	Respondents raised concerns regarding construction traffic, road safety, impacts on local roads, access to residential properties, school transport routes and access to Stracathro Hospital. Concerns were also raised regarding the suitability of local roads for construction traffic and potential disruption during construction.	Traffic and access requirements will be assessed as part of the design and environmental assessment process. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared and consultation undertaken with the relevant roads authorities to identify any required mitigation measures.
Consultation process and trust	A number of respondents raised concerns regarding the consultation process, including the level of information provided, transparency in the site selection process, landowner engagement and notification, and a perception that decisions had already been made.	SSEN Transmission note comments regarding the consultation process and requests for additional information. The assessment methodology used to inform the site selection and routeing processes is in line with SSEN Transmission's guidance. Feedback received through consultation has been reviewed and has informed the ongoing development of the project. Further opportunities for engagement will be provided as the project progresses.
Cumulative infrastructure impacts	Respondents raised concerns regarding the cumulative effects of multiple transmission projects in the area, additional OHL infrastructure, and the potential for future energy developments to connect to the proposed substation.	SSEN Transmission note concerns regarding cumulative effects and OHL infrastructure. The need for the Proposed Development and associated connection infrastructure has been considered through the site and route selection process. Cumulative effects will be assessed through the EIA where relevant.
Underground cables	Many stakeholders preferred underground cables to reduce visual, landscape and environmental effects associated with overhead lines.	The routeing process has been undertaken in accordance with SSEN Transmission's established routeing methodology, which considers technical, environmental, engineering and economic factors when identifying transmission solutions.

Feedback Theme	Summary of Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
		The rationale for the selected technology and route options will continue to be considered as the project progresses, with stakeholder feedback informing the ongoing design development.
Site contamination and former RAF Edzell site	Several respondents raised concerns regarding potential ground contamination, former military activities and the presence of unexploded ordnance at Site 16. Some respondents considered these issues to be constraints while others considered remediation to be a potential benefit of developing the site.	SSEN Transmission note the comments relating to historical site uses at Site 16. Potential contamination risks formed part of the site appraisal process and would require further investigation should the site have been taken forward.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF A PROPOSED SITE AND ROUTES

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 SSEN Transmission has reviewed and considered the responses provided by all stakeholders following the identification of a potential substation site, as set out within the Consultation Document (May 2026).

7.1.2 Responses and detail of any relevant SSEN Transmission action to each of the points raised by stakeholders through the consultation process are included in Sections 5 and 6 above.

7.2 Identification of the Proposed Site and Route

7.2.1 The consultation exercise sought feedback on the shortlisted potential substation site options and associated OHL route options. Responses from statutory consultees, non-statutory consultees, landowners and members of the public were reviewed alongside the environmental, technical, engineering, planning and economic assessments undertaken as part of the site and route selection process.

7.2.2 A key theme raised through public consultation was a preference by some respondents for the use of the former RAF Edzell site (Site 16) due to its brownfield status. However, consultation responses also highlighted concerns regarding the site's proximity to residential properties at Edzell Woods and West Drumhendry, the potential for land contamination associated with its former military use, and its potential impact on existing businesses operating from the site. Feedback relating to Site 2 primarily focused on the loss of prime agricultural land and associated concerns regarding food production.

7.2.3 The issues raised through consultation broadly reflected the constraints identified through the site appraisal process and informed the comparative assessment of the site options. Following consideration of consultation feedback and the findings of the detailed appraisal, Site 2 was identified as the preferred site and will now be taken forward as the Proposed Site for the Muir of Pert 275kV substation.

7.2.4 Consultation responses also informed the route selection process for the proposed OHL connections. Feedback highlighted concerns relating to residential amenity, landscape and visual effects, cultural heritage assets, ecological interests, agricultural land and infrastructure crossings. This information assisted in validating the key constraints identified through the routeing assessment and informed the identification of the preferred route options for further development.

7.2.5 Following completion of the route selection process, the preferred routes were further refined by combining Tie-in Routes 2 and 3 and Tie-out Routes 2 and 3 to provide greater flexibility during alignment development and to allow localised constraints to be avoided. The refined routes will be taken forward for detailed design and environmental assessment.

7.3 Further Considerations

7.3.1 Consultation responses identified a number of matters that will be considered further as part of the detailed design and environmental assessment of the Proposed Development. These include potential effects on agricultural land, residential amenity, landscape and visual character, biodiversity, cultural heritage assets and the local road network.

7.3.2 Statutory consultees highlighted several specific matters requiring further assessment. These include the use of the most up-to-date flood mapping and consideration of flood risk, potential impacts on designated cultural heritage assets and Scheduled Monuments, ecological surveys and assessment, impacts associated with crossings of transport infrastructure, and interactions with existing utility infrastructure including National Gas assets.

7.3.3 The matters raised through consultation will continue to inform the detailed design of the proposed substation and OHL alignment and will be considered through the EIA process where relevant. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders, consultees and landowners will also be undertaken as the project progresses towards submission of the necessary consent applications.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

8.1 Conclusion

8.1.1 This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken for the new East Coast 275kV substation and associated infrastructure in Angus and Aberdeenshire (the 'Proposed Development') and the proposed routes of the OHL. The programme of consultation was designed to engage with stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and individual residents in order to invite feedback in response to the site options identified through RAG assessment, as set out in the Consultation Document.

8.1.2 This Report summarises the key consultation responses received and describes how this feedback has informed the identification of the preferred substation site and OHL route options to be taken forward for detailed design, alignment development and environmental assessment. The consultation process provided SSEN Transmission with valuable feedback which has been considered alongside environmental, technical, engineering and economic assessments in identifying Site 2 as the proposed Site for the Muir of Pert 275kV substation. Following the completion of the route selection process, Tie-in Routes 2 and 3 and Tie-out Routes 2 and 3 were combined to form the refined preferred route options, providing greater flexibility to avoid localised environmental, technical and land use constraints during alignment development.

8.1.3 Further optioneering and engagement with SSEN Distribution confirmed that the upgraded Bridge of Dun Grid Supply Point can be incorporated at the Muir of Pert substation, avoiding the need for a separate substation and approximately 5 km of additional overhead line infrastructure.

8.2 Next Steps

8.2.1 The project will now proceed into the pre-application stage, commencing with the official confirmation of the preferred site option and leading to concept design. This will be informed by further consultation exercises, and through detailed surveys, which may identify any additional and / or currently unknown engineering, environmental or land use constraints.

8.2.2 Formal consultation will be organised on completion of the concept design to enable comments to be sought on the proposed site identified. It is anticipated that this will occur in late 2026 / early 2027.