Beauly Mossford 132kV Transmission Replacement

Background

**SHETL**

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Limited (SHETL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of SSE (formerly Scottish and Southern Energy) and holds a license, under the Electricity Act 1989, for the transmission of electricity in the north of Scotland.

SHETL has a statutory duty to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical electricity transmission system in its licensed areas. Where there is a requirement to extend, upgrade or reinforce its transmission network, SHETL is also required to have regard to the environment and provide a technically feasible and economically viable solution.

The existing transmission network in the north of Scotland was originally designed to serve a rural area with low demand for electricity and to connect the hydro-electric schemes present in this area, to the north of Scotland load centres.

The framework of Renewables Obligation targets have led to many renewable generation developers requesting connections to the electricity network in the north of Scotland and this is placing a significant requirement on the transmission system.

**Proposed route of line upgrade**

The purpose of this event is to update members of the public on the final project design prior to submitting an application, under Section 37 of the Electricity Act, to the Scottish Government to construct and maintain the line. We expect the submission will be in the next few months.

Members of the project team are available to discuss the project with you and answer any questions or concerns that you may have.
The proposed development

The location
SHETL, as part of its general duties as a transmission licensee, requires to reinforce the existing electricity transmission infrastructure between Beauly (west of Inverness) and Mossford (by Loch Luichart), extending through parts of Strathconon and the Garve area.

We have detailed maps available for you to look at today showing the existing transmission lines and the proposed replacement for comparison.

Project overview

At present, the infrastructure consists of two 132kV alternating current transmission circuits predominately on two overhead tower lines (the existing overhead lines). There are 177 existing towers.

The replacement of this will comprise the construction of a new 132kV double circuit overhead tower line (the replacement overhead line). The capacity of the conductors (wires) on the replacement overhead line will be greater than those on the existing overhead lines. The replacement line will have 97 towers, a reduction of 80 towers.

The two existing overhead lines will be dismantled as part of the works.

A new substation will also be constructed in order to facilitate the connection of wind farms in the area, including the consented Loch Luichart and Corriemoillie wind farms, to the transmission infrastructure.

A site for the substation has been identified within Wester Corriemoillie Forest, near Mossford and this has been the subject of a separate planning application to The Highland Council, under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, submitted in January 2011.

Consent for the substation site was granted on 18 May 2011 and preparatory works for the construction phase have now commenced.

The Alternatives

Alternative proposals were investigated during development and consultation process. These included:

• Building a third 132kV line adjacent to the existing lines
• Construct a double circuit 275kV line with much higher towers
• Install additional 132kV underground lines, including upgrading the Beauly substation

Each of the alternative options was given due consideration and subsequently ruled out on various grounds including unacceptable visual impact, environmental impact and the significant additional costs associated with undergrounding works. Some options were ruled out on grounds of technical feasibility and because they would not be compliant with the various transmission obligations and standards.
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Development process

**CONSULTATION**

- **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**
  As the transmission licence holder, SHETL undertook a thorough option assessment to facilitate the connection of renewable generation.

- **ROUTE STUDY & CONSULTATION**
  Environmental and technical studies were carried out to examine route options. This lead to publication of a Consultation Document identifying a ‘preferred route’ on which we sought comments from statutory consultees and members of the public at exhibitions.

- **CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**
  Comments from the consultation process informed the ‘indicative proposed route’ which was taken forward to the Scoping process. In October 2010, the Scoping report was submitted to statutory consultees, to obtain feedback and help define the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

- **SCOPING**
  Environmental surveys are complete and their findings are assessed and presented in an ES which will accompany the Section 37 application when it is submitted.

- **ENVIROMENTAL STATEMENT (ES)**
  The environmental surveys are complete and their findings are assessed and presented in an ES which will accompany the Section 37 application when it is submitted.

- **INFORMATION EVENTS**
  Held locally to update interested parties on the final designs for the proposal before submission

- **CONSULTATION PERIOD**
  A statutory consultation period is undertaken by the relevant authorities. Consultees, interested parties and the public have the opportunity to comment on the proposed development. Comments are made directly to the Scottish Government.

- **SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION**
  The application and ES will be submitted to the Scottish Government. Additional information may be requested and will be supplied as required.

- **DETERMINATION OF APPLICATION**
  The application will be determined by the Scottish Government.
Environmental considerations

Environmental Statement (ES)

The ES which will be presented as part of the planning application, is a report detailing the need for the proposed development, the consultations and assessments undertaken during the development process and the objectives of the development.

A key output of the ES is to report on the environmental aspects of the project examining in detail the impacts (both positive and negative) associated with the proposed transmission reinforcement, along with the methodologies applied to identify those impacts.

We will also produce a Non Technical Summary which will describe the ES in non technical language. This is produced as a separate document and available to interested parties.

Ornithology

The ES includes an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed replacement overhead line on birds of conservation concern and their habitats.

The assessment includes the consideration of potential impacts associated with construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed line and the cumulative effects of other plans and projects.

We have undertaken extensive studies which have included walk over surveys, desktop research and assessment using ecological consultants and specialist ornithological surveyors.

Ecology

We have also undertaken extensive surveys examining how the proposals might affect the ecology and natural habitats adjacent to the proposed line.

Temporary and longer term impacts have been considered. For example, consideration has been given to the effects of upgrading existing access tracks or the construction of new permanent tracks where they are required.

We have carried out surveys for various species including Freshwater Pearl Mussels, Red Squirrel and Badger.

Consultations were undertaken with statutory bodies such as SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) and other non statutory conservation and environmental organisations.

Other environmental considerations

The ES contains information about other environmental considerations including assessments of the potential effects on landscape and visual (please see separate board), hydrology and ground conditions.

The potential effects of traffic and transport, agriculture, cultural heritage and access and recreation is also assessed and considered in the ES.
Landscape and visual assessment

The ES considers the effects of the proposal on the landscape and visual character of the area taking into account the proposed overhead line and ancillary works such as the upgraded and new permanent access tracks.

Effects on the landscape and visual character may be permanent and direct (from the presence of the replacement overhead transmission line, or from any new tree clearance required as part of the proposed development), or temporary (from the presence of temporary access tracks, or temporary connections between the two existing single circuit overhead lines).

Examples of existing and typical replacement towers
Beauly Mossford 132kV Transmission Replacement

Next steps

What happens next?
We anticipate that the Section 37 application and supporting documents will be complete and ready for submission in December 2011 or very early in 2012.

The Section 37 application, to construct and maintain the line, will be submitted to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit.

We will regularly update the project website – www.sse.com/beaulymossford – once the application has been submitted.

Can I comment on the proposal?
Once the application has been submitted, there will be a statutory period where members of the public, statutory and non-statutory consultees and other interested parties are able to make representations regarding the proposal.

Representations should be made directly to the Scottish Government. Once the application has been submitted, we will provide information on how to make representations on the project website.

Please do not send representations to SSE.

Contact details
If you would like more information or have questions or concerns regarding the Beauly Mossford project, please do not hesitate to contact the project Liaison Manager as follows:

By email: noel.cummins@sse.com
By post: Noel Cummins
SSE
Inveralmond House
200 Dunkeld Road
Perth
PH1 3AQ
By phone: 01738 516901

Example of existing tower
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Working with the community

Our approach

Throughout the life of our projects we aim to work positively with the local community, keeping people informed about what we are doing.

During the construction phase of a project we will seek to work closely with the local community to ensure that they are aware of what is happening and to ensure that our work has as little impact as possible on the lives of those living and working in the area.

Communication

Communication is a key part of ensuring that our work impacts as little as possible on local communities.

We will communicate by:

• Email. We will invite residents to join an email distribution list so that you can receive our communications directly to your inbox.

• Local notice boards. We will look to use local notice boards to place notices advising of upcoming events.

• Project websites. We will regularly update the project website which is at www.sse.com/beaulymossford.

Construction Period

If the proposal is successful in being granted permission, prior to construction beginning we will begin to publish indicative timescales on the project website so that you will be able to see what will be happening and when we expect it to happen.

Throughout the construction phase and from time to time afterwards, teams will be brought in for major operational and maintenance tasks. They are likely to rely on local services for accommodation, fuel, food and supplies.
A new substation is required to facilitate connection to the grid of the consented Loch Luichart and Corriemoillie wind farms.

A site for the new substation was identified within Wester Corriemoillie Forest, near Mossford and was the subject of a separate planning application to The Highland Council, under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, submitted in January 2011.

Consent for the substation site was granted on 18 May 2011 and preparatory works (including site investigation work and forestry clearing) for the construction phase have now commenced.

Main construction work is expected to begin in spring 2012.

Map shows location of consented Corriemoillie substation