

Inveraray – Port Ann transmission link: Project update, April 2020

What works are taking place between Inveraray and Lochgilphead?

The works are part of SSEN Transmission's Inveraray to Port Ann transmission project, which will see the construction of a new 275kV overhead electricity transmission line to replace the existing line. The construction of the project is being led by Balfour Beatty, the Principal Contractor.

The existing line was installed back in the 1950s and as this critical national infrastructure is now reaching the end of its operational life, the replacement line is vital to maintain a safe and secure electricity network for the Argyll and Kintyre communities.

Why are these works continuing now?

In line with the guidance of both the UK and Scottish Governments, as well as our regulator Ofgem, our work is considered critical, particularly where it is required to maintain security of supply, such as the Inveraray to Port Ann project.

It is essential that the timely replacement of this ageing and failing asset continues in order to maintain security of supply for the Argyll and Kintyre communities. These essential works will help avoid the very real near-term risk of future power cuts in the area, such as those experienced in March 2013 following the catastrophic failure of a number of transmission towers in Kintyre.

What measures have been put in place in response to Coronavirus?

The safety of our people, contractors and the communities in which we operate is paramount in everything we do, particularly in these challenging times. Following the initial announcement of Government lockdown measures, construction work was paused whilst we and Balfour Beatty undertook a full assessment of the latest Government guidelines.

As critical workers, designated by Government, we and our contractors follow strict Government and industry guidance. In line with this guidance, we have introduced new operating procedures which include social distancing. Staff who can operate from home are now doing so, which is actively reducing the number of workers present in the area.

Whilst the majority of construction activity will take place away from the local community, additional measures are being introduced to limit our interface with the local community, such as on site temporary accommodation and catering facilities. Alternative arrangements are being made for fuelling project vehicles to reduce visits to local fuel outlets and additional vehicles are being hired to reduce close contact within our workforce.

Where there is a requirement to use local services, such as shops, our teams of critical workers are committed to ensure this is sensitive to the needs of local residents and in full compliance with the conditions set out by Government for coronavirus lockdown, as enforced by Police Scotland.

Next steps?

With an imminent and controlled phased return to full construction activity planned in the coming weeks, we will continue to review all operating procedures, adapting our activities in line with any changes to Government and industry guidance in what continues to be an evolving situation.

We thank the community for their cooperation during the works to date and if you have any questions about the project, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Kelly.Scott@sse.com
