

Stakeholder Annual Engagement Plan 2023/24

July 2023



**Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks**

TRANSMISSION

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Introducing our Annual Engagement Plan

As a Stakeholder-led business, we recognise the critical role of effective stakeholder engagement in ensuring that our activities address customer, societal and environmental issues that deliver long-term value creation for our businesses and our stakeholders as we deliver a Network for Net Zero.

This Annual Engagement Plan provides a summary of our planned strategic engagement activity in 2023/24.

The plan was initially drafted in early 2023 based on feedback we gathered from stakeholders during 2022, both through direct engagements and responses to our surveys of connections customers, stakeholders impacted by our infrastructure projects and our strategic stakeholders. The Draft Annual Engagement Plan 2023/24, illustrated the key themes that we concluded we should be engaging with our stakeholders on based on that feedback. We then consulted on this draft document with our stakeholders to ensure that we are engaging on the correct initiatives. Following consultation, we have considered and incorporated stakeholder feedback into this – our Annual Engagement Plan 2023/24.

There are nine engagement themes and we have included detail on each of these later in this plan.

Working with local communities

SSEN Transmission recognise local communities are 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. For further information on our projects, please visit our website at www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects


How to provide feedback on our Annual Engagement Plan

If you have any queries or comments on our Annual Engagement Plan, please contact us at:
transmission.stakeholder.engagement@sse.com

Accessibility

Please let us know if you require information in an adapted format such as a paper copy, large print or braille and we will work with you to accommodate your preferences. We are happy to accommodate all reasonable requests for adapted communications and if you are unable to reach us online or by email, you can also write to us at SSEN Transmission, Grampian House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ.

We offer the Recite Me assistive toolbar to help provide an accessible website to our stakeholders, customers and colleagues. This enables them to customise their digital experience to suit their own specific needs.

Features include customisable styling features, multiple reading aids, and a translation tool with over 100 languages including 65 text-to-speech. Our website users can launch the Recite Me assistive toolbar by clicking the yellow treble-A icon  on our website: www.ssen-transmission.co.uk

The Five Clear Goals of our Business Plan

Five Years – Five Clear Goals

We continue to intensify our efforts to engage with our stakeholders, operate and advocate on their behalf and deliver our co-created five-year business plan.

Our Business Plan, titled 'A Network for Net Zero', covers the period from April 2021 to March 2026.

It aims to support both the UK and Scottish Governments' net zero emissions targets and meet the needs and expectations expressed by stakeholders through five clear, ambitious goals.

The following pages summarise the common themes which stakeholders are encouraging us to engage on and areas where they want us to implement improvements or play a more active role in industry change.

While many of the themes we seek to engage on remain the same as previous years, given the long-term nature of our projects and the significant progress made over the past year, it is important we continue to engage on them to ensure they continue to meet their objectives.

For each theme this Annual Engagement Plan outlines why we are undertaking this engagement and how it is linked to at least one of our Five Clear Goals. They also contain a summary of our planned engagement for 2023/24.

**Five years
Five clear goals**

- **Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes**
Our RII0-T2 Certain View will deliver an electricity network with the capacity and flexibility to accommodate 10 GW renewable generation in the north of Scotland by 2026
- **Aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses**
By investing in new technology and ways of working, when cost effective for customers to do so, we will strive for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses by 2026
- **Every connection delivered on time**
By 2026 we will provide every network connection, tailored to meet our customers' needs, on time, on budget and to our customers' satisfaction
- **One third reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions**
Reduce the controllable greenhouse gas emissions from our own operations by 33% by 2026, consistent with a net zero emissions pathway
- **£100 million in efficiency savings from innovation**
Our RII0-T2 Certain View includes £100 million of cost savings through productivity and increased innovation, and we aim to go further to save more

Pathway to 2030

Background

The UK Government's British Energy Security Strategy set out plans to reduce the UK's dependence on, and price exposure to, volatile global gas markets through the deployment of homegrown renewable electricity generation and the enabling grid infrastructure. This included an increased ambition for 50GW of offshore wind by 2030.

Separately, the ScotWind leasing round awarded seabed lease options for up to 28GW of offshore wind, a significant proportion of which will connect to SSEN Transmission's network region, which will play a key role in delivering UK and Scottish Governments' net zero targets and future energy security ambitions. The GB Electricity System Operator, National Grid ESO, working in collaboration with the three GB Transmission Owners, developed the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design which sets out the onshore and offshore network requirements to deliver the British Energy Security Strategy and 2030 offshore wind targets.

Our Five Clear Goals

Our Pathway to 2030 projects will support delivery of our goal to transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes, enabling connection of the first phase of ScotWind, connecting around 11GW of ScotWind, which is key to delivering the UK target of 50GW offshore wind by 2030.

Objectives of Engagement

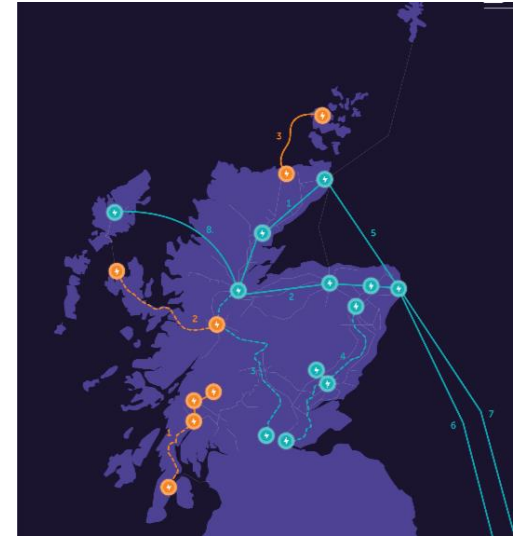
- To be accessible and provide early opportunities to engage to ensure responsible development, taking account of stakeholder views and being transparent on decision making and trade-offs for these major infrastructure developments.
- To accelerate project development, consenting and delivery to ensure timely delivery of these major infrastructure developments and secure the supply chain, in what is currently a highly competitive and constrained global supply chain market.

What it will deliver

- Increased certainty of network investment, including who is delivering it, between now and 2030. This is critical to unlocking renewable energy and achieving decarbonisation targets at the scale and pace required to deliver net zero by 2030.
- Securing the supply chain, including exploring opportunities to support inward investment and skills development.
- Benefits for local communities hosting the infrastructure

How it will happen

We will undertake significant and meaningful engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to support the development and delivery of these projects, ensuring stakeholders can contribute to and inform the development of detailed network designs, shaping the way we deliver a Pathway to 2030.



Developing our Delivery Plan for 2026 - 2031

Background

As the Transmission Owner for the north of Scotland, we have a crucial role to play in supporting the delivery of the UK and Scotland's Net Zero targets. Planning is already underway to deliver the work required in the second half of the decade as part of our T3 Delivery Plan, which will begin in 2026. Future investment will play a vital role in helping ensure the UK's future energy security by using affordable, home-grown, low carbon electricity, while also providing significant economic and employment opportunities across the north of Scotland.

Our Five Clear Goals

Our 5 clear goals are being reviewed as we develop our next business plan. Currently, there are three draft themes which are: Net Zero, Energy Security, Environmental and Social.

Objectives of Engagement

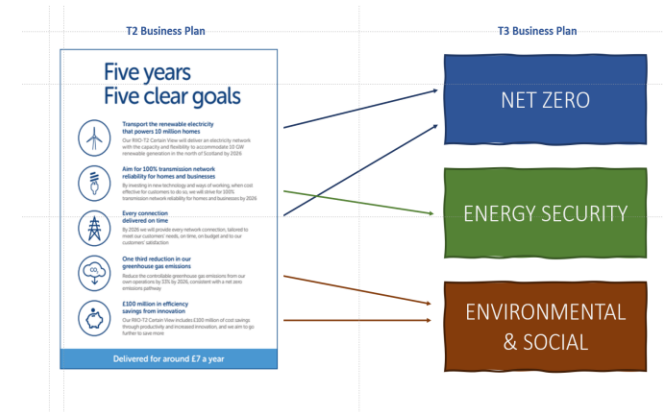
Having identified the three draft themes – Net Zero, Energy Security and Environmental and Social, we will engage with stakeholders to ensure our business plan delivers on stakeholder expectations at the right level of ambition whilst ensuring deliverability and efficiency.

What it will deliver

- Delivery of Net Zero: unlock low carbon energy potential by delivering the infrastructure which will keep SSEN Transmission on track to deliver net zero pathways and help to meet Scottish and UK Government targets for 2030.
- Network reliability: it will ensure a reliable network for consumers and other users of the network.
- Economic, social and environmental legacy: investments set out in the plan will deliver additional benefits for local communities, wider society and the environment.

How it will happen

- Engage with stakeholders as we develop our next business plan to confirm key themes, gathering and utilising feedback to develop commitments within these and to develop detailed delivery plans.
- Undertake engagement with GB energy consumers and consumer representative organisations to ensure the plans align with societal goals



Offshore Engagement

Background

As a mass transporter of renewable energy, the north of Scotland electricity transmission network has a major role to play in supporting the delivery of Scotland's 2045 and the UK's 2050 net zero targets. To support this, further investment in Scotland's network infrastructure is needed to connect the growing onshore and offshore renewable generation and transport it to areas of demand. We are investing over £10 billion to upgrade the network, which includes several subsea cables. The large volume of work needed in the North Sea requires careful coordination due to the accelerated programme within a busy and complex environment, with a range of stakeholders operating in the same area.



Our Five Clear Goals

The successful accelerated delivery of the required infrastructure in the North Sea by 2030 will enable us to transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes, whilst delivering every connection on time.

Objectives of Engagement

Recognising the accelerated timeframe, manage stakeholder relationships and collaboration and proactively seek local advocacy to help raise awareness, increase understanding of offshore developments, how these fit into our wider Scottish and UK Government net zero targets and remove barriers to delivery.

What it will deliver

- Support our offshore projects, co-ordinating engagement and identifying opportunities for a joined-up approach.
- Undertake meaningful engagement with a broad range of offshore stakeholders to support the development and delivery of the projects.
- Carry out targeted engagement to raise awareness of our project activity and the scale of work to be carried out in the offshore area to increase understanding, secure the supply chain, and highlight opportunities for skills development.

How it will happen

Stakeholder engagement will take place throughout the year, with methods ranging from bilateral meetings, marine public consultation events, roundtables, sector events and virtual engagements.

Energy Policy Transformation

Background

The policy and regulatory landscape under which we operate continues to evolve, with major institutional reforms planned by Government and Ofgem. These reforms are intended to ensure the energy system today and, in the future, continues to deliver for consumers, customers, and stakeholders, whilst also ensuring an attractive and stable investment climate to encourage the significant investment required to deliver net zero and energy security.

In the short term, in addition to connections reform (covered next in this plan), these reforms range from proposals to establish a Future System Operator, reforms to Industry Code Governance, and the introduction of Competition in Onshore Electricity Networks, which are currently being considered as part of the British Energy Security Bill. Over the medium to long term, fundamental reforms are being considered by Government as part of its Review of Electricity Market Arrangements, which include potential changes to network charging and grid access reform. Separately, Ofgem is considering reforms to the current regulatory framework in advance of network price controls beyond RIIO-T2, which could come into effect by 1 April 2026. The role of electricity transmission in the north of Scotland is critical in achieving government targets and energy security. Our priorities in engagement on policy reforms will focus on our role in working with the Future System Operator and our stakeholders' priorities as outlined in this document, to meet net zero targets.

Our Five Clear Goals

Renewable power from the north of Scotland is critical to the national decarbonisation effort to achieve net zero and requires us to connect this low carbon power and maintain the network to enable power to flow to areas of demand. Any reforms to the energy market must be considered within this context, recognising the importance of certainty in ensuring we meet our goals of transporting the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes, delivering every connection on time and aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses.

Objectives of Engagement

- To ensure that any reforms to the policy and regulatory landscape, particularly those with far reaching and fundamental changes to current market and regulatory arrangements, are clearly evidence based, supported by stakeholders, enhance the role of transmission, and do not distract from the overarching task at hand, delivering net zero and energy security ambitions.
- To encourage review and reform of Planning Policy to help accelerate the investments required to deliver net zero and energy security.

What it will deliver

Energy market reform and energy system roles and responsibilities that enable the acceleration of net zero.

How it will happen

We will undertake significant and meaningful engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to help inform our policy and regulatory positions and associated advocacy priorities.



Connections Reform

Background

With greater awareness of the climate imperative and need to transition to Net Zero over the last four years, there has been significant focus from the UK Government, Ofgem and the Electricity System Operator (ESO) to encourage greater connection of low carbon generation and flexibility services to the electricity network. Approximately 50GW of renewable generation will be required to be connected in the north of Scotland by 2050. As a result, we have seen an unprecedented increase in the number of applications to connect to our network. The high volume and increasing complexity of connection applications has resulted in the over subscription of network capacity, highlighting the inadequacy of the current industry processes.

Our network has just over 8GW of renewable generation connected, including embedded generation. At a GB level, there is currently at least 320GW of connections waiting in the queue. Industry-wide connection reform is urgently needed to ensure timely and efficient delivery of network connections and wider network reinforcements associated with greater capacity requirements.



Our Five Clear Goals

We need to accelerate future connections to enable the transition to net zero and to achieve our goal of transporting the renewable energy to power 10 million homes and deliver every connection on time.

Objectives of Engagement

To gain customer and wider stakeholder feedback on proposed reforms to help guide and shape the process for connections to the grid in the future, whilst avoiding unnecessary cost for consumers.

What it will deliver

Reform of the connections process, supporting faster, better coordinated and more efficient delivery of connections and associated wider system reinforcement.

How it will happen

- Engage with a broad range of customers and stakeholders and collaborate with the ESO, Ofgem and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, to support the development and delivery of timely and appropriate reforms.
- Ensure customers and stakeholders can contribute to and inform our thinking.
- Work with the Energy Network Association (ENA) and the Strategic Connections Group to deliver an industry-wide coordinated approach to stakeholder engagement on connections reform.

Data and Digitalisation – Improving our Customer Experience

Background

With an increasing number of customers applying to connect to our network, with a wider, more complex range of technologies, there are clear benefits to be achieved through improved digital systems and tools.

Following extensive customer research, we published our Customer Experience Strategy in January 2023, outlining a range of improvement initiatives, including the development of our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and secure online customer portal. These will provide capability for improved data recording, increased automation, self-service opportunities and will better inform our connections customers, supporting them in progressing and managing their projects. Our new systems will complement human interactions, to provide the best possible experience for our customers.

Our Five Clear Goals

Continued improvements in the customer experience we provide will support conversion of connection offers into successfully delivered connections projects, supporting our goals of transporting the renewable electricity to power 10 million homes and delivery of every connection on time.

Objectives of Engagement

- To inform system development by gaining a deeper understanding of the needs of our customers, particularly in relation to different technology types.
- To understand areas where there is scope and value in collaborating with ESO to integrate digital systems, allowing the smooth transition of appropriate information between SEN Transmission and ESO in serving customers and creating efficiencies.
- To maintain a clear focus and understanding of connections reform, ensuring that we develop our digital systems taking account of this changing landscape.
- To help inform features, system capabilities, data and design of our CRM and online portal which will enable customers to easily and confidently self-serve and access important information.

What it will deliver

A CRM system and online portal which removes the pain points currently highlighted by customers and meets their differing needs, creating efficiencies and improving customer experience.

How it will happen

- Undertake targeted engagement to gain a deeper understanding of customer needs.
- Gather insight from customers to inform development of our CRM and online portal features and capabilities.
- Continue to collate and analyse insight gathered from customers through our Quality of Connections surveys and day to day interactions.
- Collaborate with the ESO in relation to system integration opportunities.
- Continue to review impacts of connections reform on system development, adapting to changing requirements.



Whole System

Background

Currently, the GB energy system operates largely as standalone elements, arranged by either energy vector (gas or electricity), industry type (networks or generation), or voltage / pressure levels (distribution or transmission). This isolated approach is enshrined in our longstanding industry structures, regulations, and ways of working. Our interest is in identifying and working with those other elements that impact on the economic development of the north of Scotland electricity transmission system.

Our Five Clear Goals

Local energy planning will be a key enabler for the transition to net zero and our aim to transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes. The initiative adopts a whole-system approach to ensure that local developments are enabled without risking reliability of the transmission network, ensuring 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses.



Objectives of Engagement

Taking a whole system approach in our network design, future planning and project delivery means that we take a wide look at all of these wider elements and systems of the energy industry to understand how they are related, and how they influence one another. This enables us to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to find innovative and efficient network solutions as we deliver a network for net zero.

What it will deliver

Improve the network design for the area as well as improving our whole system ways of working across all the work we do. Establish the connection requirements of local stakeholders including local authorities, transport and generation developers with network development needs.

How it will happen

We will hold direct engagement with relevant stakeholders on specific projects across our network area including the islands, Dundee and Aberdeen.

Education, Skills and Pipelines

Background

Our investment programme out to 2030 will create 20,000 jobs, 9,000 of those in Scotland, and in the next year alone we will be recruiting an additional 500 employees in SSEN Transmission on top of the 400 new employees recruited last year. The programme of engagement we have set out for expanding our workforce will ensure we are able to attract people into the business, securing jobs for people within our local communities, by having a coordinated approach to raising awareness of the opportunities arising within SSEN Transmission, our development programme's, and providing insight into what life is like and the benefits of working at SSEN Transmission. This includes education partnerships to encourage young people or career transitioners to learn the skills necessary for the low carbon transition.

Our Five Clear Goals

Engaging appropriately to encourage workforce growth and recruitment supports us in delivering projects on programme and on budget. Having the right people with the right skills working in each area of our business will allow us to transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes as well as deliver every connection on time.

Objectives of Engagement

To ensure that we have the correct people in place to successfully deliver against the objectives in our business plan, and that our colleagues are in the position to excel in their role through appropriate training opportunities. Workforce growth also provides the opportunity to draw skilled people from other industries to challenge our thinking and create efficiencies.

What it will deliver

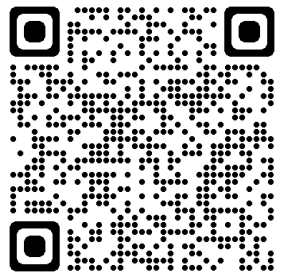
- Enhanced awareness of SSEN Transmission's career opportunities, and in turn allow us to meet recruitment targets, ensuring we can deliver the projects and programmes that benefit stakeholders.
- An increased uptake in our initiatives that we believe have significant benefit for our stakeholders, including upskilled staff through learning and development opportunities as we aim for reaccreditation with the 5% club which recognises our commitment to having 5% of our colleagues in 'earn as you learn' roles.
- Societal and environmental awareness of the significance of our projects through educational sessions delivered to schools in local communities.
- A platform for the industry to collaborate on developing the skills and experience needed to provide a pool of industry-ready resources and career pathways to deliver infrastructure for net zero.
- New opportunities for existing employees to advance in their chosen career path within a growing business.

How it will happen

- Partner with universities & others to create talent pipelines for the future. Attend careers fairs across Scotland, including the North of Scotland Careers Fair and the Scottish Graduate Careers Fair.
- Participate and engage with education authorities in a variety of activities with different age demographics at both Primary and secondary schools to help prepare the future workforce for entering the job market.
- Advertise all our early years & talent opportunities both internally & externally.
- Engage with the supply chain and the wider industry to work together to create critical mass in terms of encouraging young people into the industry.



Visit the SSE
Careers page to
find out more:



International Engagement

Background

As we develop and grow as a Transmission business, we are operating at a different scale and on a global platform beyond the UK, working in an international supply chain marketplace and with a customer base which includes international organisations, and with our own international investment partners. The role that Scotland is playing in the delivery of net zero is gaining increasing attention and as a front runner in this delivery, we have best practice to share and will continue to learn from the best practice and innovations of others.

Our Five Clear Goals

Increasing our engagement at an international level will facilitate the transportation of the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes by securing supply chain for delivery of new infrastructure and connections of low carbon electricity generation; enhance network reliability by sharing and learning from best practice on network resilience planning; and help us achieve our goal of a one third reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through sharing and adopting world leading innovations for emissions reduction.

In addition, adoption of efficient best practices will help us to achieve £100 million savings through efficiencies and support us in delivering every connection on time, for example with new technologies for connection of offshore projects.

Objectives of Engagement

- Increase our profile internationally as a leading Transmission company, particularly our world leading innovations. e.g. SF6 gas alternatives and HVDC innovations.
- Increase our network with international companies and supply chains.
- Provide enhanced opportunities for learning and sharing of best practice.

What it will deliver

A network of international contacts and opportunities which will support delivery of the Pathway to 2030 and contribute to net zero, including securing required supply chain commitments.

How it will happen

- Attending and speak at international conferences and events to showcase our best practice and innovations.
- Maximise membership of relevant international trade bodies and working groups.
- Undertake learning exchange visits with international Transmission companies and supply chain organisations, including Benchmarking through the International Transmission Operations and Maintenance Survey and International Transmission Asset Management Survey.



Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Working with external specialists, we created our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy which has been built on our stakeholders' input, alongside extensive research into best practice.

The strategy sets out our clear aim and ambitions, the objectives for achieving these, and our principles which guide how we engage.

Clear Stakeholder Governance

There is increasing recognition of the role that business can and should be playing in addressing customer, societal, environmental, and economic issues.

We have clear governance and rigorous processes which are thoroughly embedded in our business, across all teams.

You can read our full Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, which was refreshed in April 2022, and find out more about our stakeholder engagement governance on our website.

Achieving the AccountAbility AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard

SSEN Transmission engages with stakeholders in line with AccountAbility's AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard. We achieved the advanced rating, considered the 'gold standard', in stakeholder engagement accreditation in 2022 and increased our overall score to 85% in 2023.

You can find out more about the AccountAbility AA1000 Standard, and our scores, on our website.



Prioritising our Engagement Activities

Prioritising our stakeholder initiatives and deciding which to start, stop or scale up is based on the following factors:

- Stakeholder feedback – including relative prioritisation against other initiatives and risk of engagement fatigue
- Strategic alignment – initiatives which align with our SSE Group strategic vision, goals and objectives will be prioritised
- Scale of potential benefits – we apply the most appropriate quantitative or qualitative measures for assessment of initiatives based on the nature of the initiative and its intended outcomes
- Scale of investment – we generally target a positive return on investment
- Availability of resource – to ensure effective project management and delivery of the initiative
- Initiative risk or level of confidence in achieving target benefits

Decisions to scale up generally require evidence of proven success, positive return on initial investment and potential to increase benefits further in future, and strategic importance to SSEN Transmission, the wider sector or society.

It is clear from our materiality assessment (including our engagement with stakeholders) that delivering on net zero and energy security remains a key priority from our stakeholders. While we will continue to engage on all the initiatives outlined as we deliver our 'Network for Net Zero' business plan, our top three priorities are:

- Energy Policy Transformation
- Pathway to 2030
- Connections Reform



How we use your feedback

Everyone in SSEN Transmission works hard to encourage and demonstrate transparency around our projects, proposals and plans. All information and content in this Plan, provided by us, can be shared with others.

Any feedback received on our Annual Engagement Plan will not be associated with you specifically unless requested by you. As one of our contributing stakeholders, we may publish your feedback in any reports or submissions we subsequently produce, **but we will anonymise this.**

Instead of quoting specific stakeholders, we will describe the origin of feedback using broad categories, such as “Local Resident” or “Landowner” as examples. We will also take care to avoid ‘jigsaw identification’.

Thank you for providing your feedback on our Annual Engagement plan.



Contact us

Keeping in Touch



General enquiries -
transmission.stakeholder.engagement@sse.com



Generation customer connection enquiries -
transmission.commercial@sse.com



Supply chain enquiries –
transmission.procurement@sse.com



Communities and Landowner enquiries –
<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk>



If you have any queries or comments regarding our Annual Engagement Plan, you can contact the Stakeholder Engagement Team at:
transmission.stakeholder.engagement@sse.com.

Alternatively, please respond directly to your SSEN Transmission contact.



Visit our website
www.ssen-transmission.co.uk



Recite me



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