

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION Annual Engagement Plan

2021/22



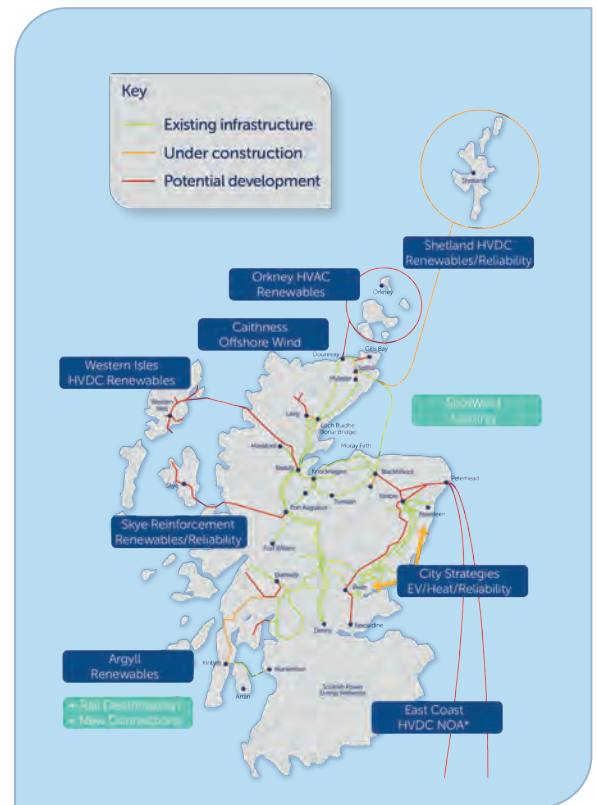
About us

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

Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles or steel towers, and electricity substations. It extends over a quarter of the UK's land mass, crossing some of its most challenging terrain and powering our communities by providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity. We do this by taking the electricity from generators and transporting it at high voltages over long distances through our transmission network for onwards distribution to homes and businesses in villages, towns and cities.

Scotland's transmission network has a strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the UK's Net Zero target. We're already a mass exporter of renewable energy, with around two thirds of power generated in our networks area exported south. By 2050, the north of Scotland will need 33-35GW of renewable energy capacity to support net zero delivery. For context, we currently have just over 6GW of renewable generation connected in the north of Scotland.

Find out more: www.ssen-transmission.co.uk



Five years Five clear goals

In April this year, we entered our new five year price control period known as RIIO-T2, having actively consulted with our stakeholders on the development of our Business Plan for the RIIO-T2 period.

This Business Plan, titled 'A Network for Net Zero', covers the period from April 2021 to March 2026 and follows substantial consultation with national and local stakeholders as well as SSEN Transmission's independent expert RIIO-T2 User Group.

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:



Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes

Our RIIO-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 RIIO-T2 Certain View includes £100 million of cost savings through productivity and increased innovation, and we aim to go further to save more

Delivered for around £7 a year

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Introduction to our Draft Annual Engagement Plan Consultation

There is an increasing recognition of the role that business can and should be playing in addressing customer, societal and environmental issues that deliver long-term value creation for businesses and their stakeholders. We continue to intensify our efforts to engage with our stakeholders, operate and advocate on their behalf and deliver our co-created Network for Net Zero business plan.

In early 2021, we reviewed the feedback we gathered from stakeholders during 2020, both through direct engagements and from our annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey. From this feedback we identified the common themes that stakeholders encourage us to engage on and areas where they want us to implement improvements or play a more active role in industry change.

While most of the themes we seek to engage on remain the same, given the long-term nature of these subjects, there has been significant progress made during the past year. We have grouped these topics into 5 overarching themes, and would like your input on whether we have understood these priorities correctly:

1. **Net Zero**
2. **Supporting Customers and Consumers**
3. **Sharing Best Practice for Positive Change**
4. **Co-Creating our World Class Asset Management**
5. **Large Onshore Transmission Investment (LOTI)**

Consultation Questions

We would like to invite views from all our stakeholders on the activities proposed in this document. To gather input in a consistent way, we are seeking responses to the questions provided below:

1. **What comments or suggestions do you have, related to the initiatives described?**
2. **Please prioritise your interest in the initiatives described (there is a table in online form which facilitates this)**
3. **Are there any further engagement topics which you would like to see added to our Annual Engagement Plan? If so, what are they?**
4. **How can we best share our information on stakeholder engagement with you?**
5. **How can we make our engagement materials and information more accessible to our stakeholders?**
6. **Please tell us any suggestions you have for collaboration and partnership working that we have not mentioned in our draft Annual Engagement Plan**
7. **What engagement methods do you wish us to use, as we move out of the pandemic? Please state your preference for online virtual engagement, emails, bilateral calls, or face to face meetings; or whether mixture of all these methods suits you best.**
8. **We'd love you to participate in our on- line, workshop on 15 July to discuss your views further, would you like to join us? More details will be confirmed in the coming weeks.**

How to respond, including an invitation to our virtual workshop

We welcome feedback from all stakeholders on this Draft Annual Engagement Plan, and encourage you to respond by **25 July 2021** using the online form on our **website**, which includes the questions within this consultation document and space for further comments and feedback. While our consultation has been structured into eight questions, we also welcome feedback on any aspect of our plan.

Our stakeholder engagement team are preparing a virtual workshop event to encourage debate and to better understand stakeholder interests and needs. All stakeholders are welcome to attend. This is expected to take place on **Thursday 15 July** and will be advertised on **www.ssen-transmission.co.uk**

Alternatively, please respond by email to:

Transmission.Stakeholder.Engagement@sse.com, or request a call to give verbal feedback.

Engaging Effectively While Working Remotely

The outbreak of COVID-19 continues to impact on our activities. Our dedicated teams have supported colleagues to source and optimise new digital platforms to engage effectively with our stakeholders. Our investment in new digital platforms has provided our stakeholders additional ways to engage and has enabled us to become more inclusive and accessible. To continue meeting the needs of our stakeholders, we have since committed to using a mix of in-person and digital engagement methods, keeping costs and limited stakeholder resources in mind.



AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard

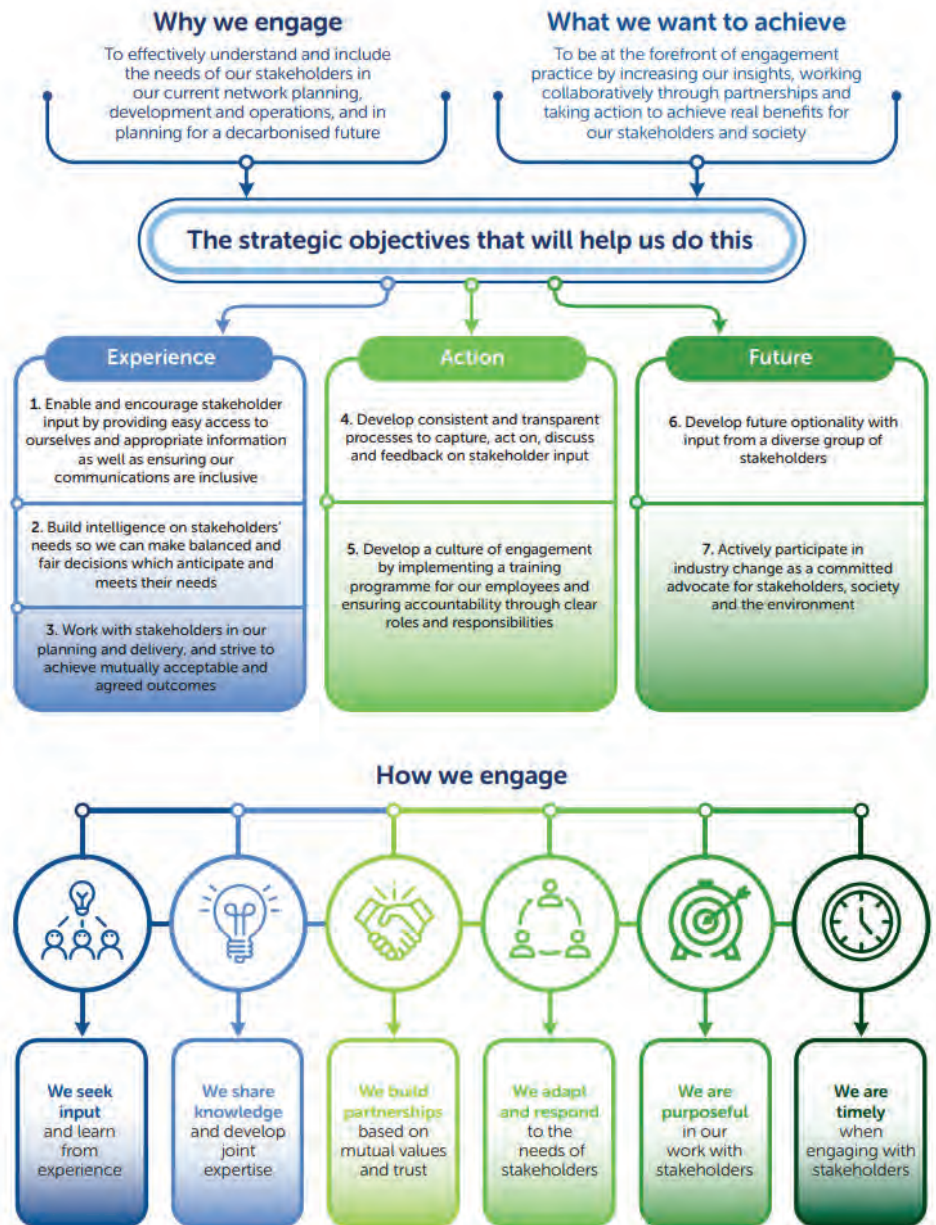
This year we undertook the AA1000 Health Check for the second time, in association with the international consulting and standards firm, AccountAbility. We are pleased to report a total score of 73% for their 20/21 assessment and hope that this will give our stakeholders confidence in the quality of our stakeholder engagement. This score means we continue to sit within the Accomplished stage of the AccountAbility Stakeholder Engagement Maturity Ladder, increasing our score by 11% from 2019/2020. Separately, we also maintained our 'Exceed' score in the audit of our compliance with RIIO-T1 stakeholder engagement commitments.

Our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

During the year we have continued to embed our engagement strategy, ensuring that it is applied consistently across our business to meet stakeholder needs and deliver real benefits for our stakeholders and society. The strategy, shown here, sets out our clear aim and ambition, the objectives for achieving these, and our principles which guide how we engage.

In December 2020, we updated our strategy to make clearer its alignment with AccountAbility's AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard.

In their May 2021 review, AccountAbility also suggested we identify how our RIIO-T2 Business Plan's Five Clear Strategic Goals are related to the engagement themes in our Annual Engagement Plan; and we have done this throughout this report.



Enablers
Colleagues, regulators, governments, National Grid ESO, supply chain, investors, innovators, landowners

Specialist influencers
Industry partners, network owners, local authorities, NGO's, campaign groups, media, academia

Members of the public
Business and domestic end users, future end consumers, GB public



Communities
Local and regional groups in affected areas

Infrastructure and emergency response
Resilience and emergency response, utility companies, transport

Customers
Electricity generators, large demand customers, distribution network owners, some distribution network customers

Stakeholder Themes We Will Engage On

1. Net Zero

By 2050, the north of Scotland will need 33-35GW of clean, green renewable capacity to support net zero delivery. For context, we currently have just over 6GW of renewable generation connected in the north of Scotland. Here we outline the topics we are currently seeking to engage on as part of our role in delivering net zero and are supportive of doing so while adhering to a just transition.

Net Zero Advocacy | One third reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions

As we look to provide the solutions and infrastructure to deliver a pathway to net zero, including reducing our own carbon emissions through the establishment of our Science Based Target, we see a major part of our role as being an advocate for net zero ambition.

We are one of the Principal Partners of the UK Government for COP26, and as such are already working with government and other stakeholders to support the delivery of a successful and impactful COP26 later this year.

We continue to work with our stakeholders, who have clearly told us that net zero is a top priority. We will lead through partnerships and engagement with our supply chain, continue promoting net zero best practice across our sector, and ensure our net zero messaging extends beyond our industry to the general public, consumers and future consumers.

Offshore Wind – Supporting a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivering ScotWind Targets



Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes



Every connection delivered on time

During 2020 it became clear that delivery of the UK and Scottish Government's 2030 offshore wind targets of 40GW and 11GW respectively would require significant grid infrastructure to be delivered at pace. Concurrently, we received applications for nearly 25GW of offshore wind connections which are simultaneously competing to secure seabed leasing rights under the ScotWind leasing round. With the development and construction timeline on projects of the scale required to transport this capacity being up to ten years, we knew that action was needed now to identify requirements and propose an efficient approach to planning, development and delivery.

Multiple stakeholders were aware of these challenges and initiating projects to identify co-ordinated solutions for offshore wind connections. This includes the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) led Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) and the ESO's Offshore Co-ordination. Concerned that silos could develop across the industry, counter to the co-ordination that was required, and having identified that OTNR was very England and Wales focused, we set up an internal cross-business project that ensures a co-ordinated, stakeholder-led response across all activities, known internally as Project OTtER (Offshore Transmission that Enables Renewables).

We propose to continue working with our industry partners through Project OTtER to identify co-ordinated solutions for offshore wind connection. This includes full participation in the OTNR and associated working groups and advocacy with government, regulators and other specialist influencers. Engagement is also planned with developers on their potential offshore grid connections and local communities where ScotWind related infrastructure is likely to be required.

Industry Structure Reform



Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes



Every connection delivered on time



Aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses

The energy market continues to evolve, including focus on market reform and the role and structure of the Electricity System Operator (ESO). We continue to engage on this and other key functions of the electricity transmission network, including Transmission Use of System (TNUoS) charges, industry codes and licenses that may require amendments to ensure these functions and roles of key stakeholders are effectively taking a whole system approach and accelerating the journey to net zero. These key stakeholders include the electricity regulator Ofgem, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the ESO, and other electricity network Transmission and Distribution Operators.

Another important part of our role as the Electricity Transmission Network Operator is to provide timely and cost-effective connections for renewable generators; and renewable power from the north of Scotland is critical to the national decarbonisation effort to achieve net zero. The theoretical debate that competition delivers benefit under any circumstance, must be considered in the new context of Net Zero targets. It is important to consider these benefits alongside the potential shortcomings and trade-offs of early competition. Principled policy making requires underlying robust analysis, to develop thorough and complete policy options, to assess the best regime that optimises benefits for consumers.

We seek to engage with stakeholders to further explore the potential benefits and consequences of early competition on the transmission network. This includes impacts to our connection customers to enable renewable generation to connect to the GB transmission network and to the homes of GB consumers in a timely and cost-effective way as we race to net zero.

North of Scotland Future Energy Scenarios



Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes



Every connection delivered on time

To be able to meet customers' future needs over the next decade and beyond, we must understand which technologies are likely to impact generation and demand profiles. In February 2021, we published an updated North of Scotland Future Energy Scenarios paper outlining potential electricity generation and demand necessary to meet UK and Scottish net zero emissions targets. Hydrogen and electrification of rail are two areas where further analysis will be required to identify the potential impact on the electricity network in the north of Scotland.

The use of hydrogen and the electrification of heat have been identified as means to enable further decarbonisation across the country. In 2020, the UK Government announced an aim to develop 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. The Scottish Government in their update to the Climate Change Plan, outlined that £180 million would be made available for an Emerging Energy Technologies Fund which would support the development of hydrogen. Additionally, the Scottish Government detailed that they would be publishing a Hydrogen Action Plan in 2021.

For the electrification of the rail network, Transport Scotland outlined that Scotland's rail services would be decarbonised by 2035. A large extent of the rail network in the central belt of Scotland has been electrified. The remaining parts that require to be electrified are in the Borders and in our area in the north of Scotland.

We will be carrying out research during 2021 to give us the required inputs to model the impact of hydrogen production and the electrification of the rail on our network. We continue to seek to engagement with stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to provide information and input into the development of our annual North of Scotland Future Energy Scenarios.

Sustainability Strategy Review | One third reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions

As we build our network for Net Zero to support the UK and Scottish Government's world leading climate targets, we are also led by our own responsibility to be environmentally conscious, creating benefit for the communities and the environment that we work and live within.

In March 2021, Ofgem published their Environmental Discretionary Reward (EDR) decision, an annual incentive for transmission owners to demonstrate a strategic environmental focus in helping support the transition to a low carbon economy. For the third year running we are delighted to be awarded a 'Leadership' rating; achieving our highest scoring to date and making us the first transmission operator to achieve EDR leadership status for three consecutive years.

Building on our leadership in sustainability rating, we are working with 3Keel - the renowned sustainability advisors - on ways to continue our best practice sustainability strategy. With our sister company SSEN Distribution, we are also participating in the Sustainability First 'Sustainability Principles Project' which aims to develop, test and embed a robust set of practical sustainability principles which economic decision-makers in essential services can readily adopt and apply.

Over the next year, we propose to continue engage with our stakeholders on our Sustainability Strategy, aiming to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose for our Net Zero ambitions.

<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/media/3737/sustainability-strategy.pdf>



2. Supporting Customers, Communities and Consumers

We are committed to engaging with our connection customers, the communities we operate in, our supply chain partners and the GB end consumers we work on behalf of, so that society continues to benefit from our strategic investments.

Connection Customer Engagement | Every connection delivered on time

Our main focus on supporting our customer stakeholders is currently on the advocacy work we are engaging on relating to TNUoS, ScotWind and Competition in Transmission; with further details of this work outlined in this document.

As the licence holder for the transmission network in the north of Scotland, each year we also set out our charges (i.e. our allowed revenue) for investing in and maintaining transmission infrastructure. We will be seeking input from our stakeholders regarding developing a guidance document to support our customers understand these charges better.

In the past year we have delivered an application fee review and we continue to develop early engagement on a new "Renew" service for customers whose connection needs are changing. We continue to engage with our connection customers to better understand the new products and services they are looking for, including increased customer advocacy.

Transmission Network Use of System (TNUoS) & Charging | Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes

Our generation customers and wider stakeholders have told us that charges for transmission access in the north of Scotland, known as Transmission Network Use of Systems charges (TNUoS) are acting as a barrier to the development of renewable energy. The charges for a single generator can swing dramatically from year to year – and this is near impossible to predict. This, in turn, is making it difficult for us to determine system investment needs.

This results in Scottish generators paying a higher cost for use of the transmission network compared to other areas in GB. With Scotland boasting the greatest wind resource to meet the UK's net zero targets, this creates a huge barrier for further low carbon investment. After extensive engagement with stakeholders, we published a **TNUoS charges discussion paper** earlier in 2021 and then published a follow up **summary report** in May which outlined the key feedback received from stakeholders on the paper's findings.

We are proposing to continue pushing for TNUoS reform. We are seeking feedback from all interested stakeholders (for or against) to further explore this issue and seek viable solutions to support net zero ambitions. Our final recommendations based upon this stakeholder feedback will be published in towards the end of 2021.

Communities Engagement – Construction & Development Projects



Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes



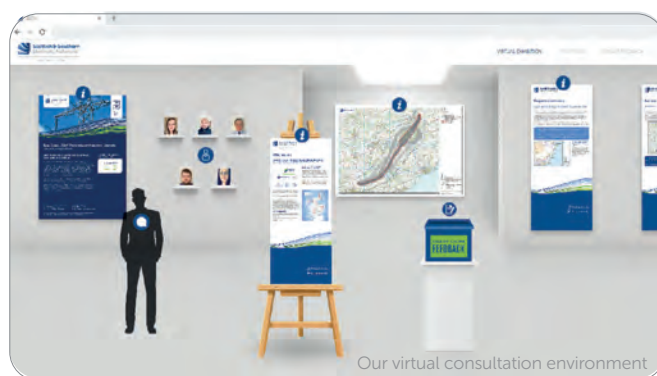
Every connection delivered on time

Our Communities and Stakeholder Engagement Teams work alongside each other, under the same SSEN Transmission Directorate, providing a holistic approach to stakeholder engagement in the local communities where developments are planned.

There are over 70 SSEN Transmission projects in construction and development, which we continue to engage on over the coming year. This engagement is primarily led by our Communities, Environmental and Land Teams with a focus on engagement with our local communities, statutory consultees, landowners and local authorities.

For projects at the development stage, a milestone in this engagement is often the Public Consultation events; and it is anticipated that in the next year at least 15 projects will host multiple virtual or face to face public consultation events, with that number likely to increase.

For projects in construction, our Communities Team facilitate and support the work of Community Liaison Groups, delivering our commitment to local stakeholders and providing a platform for meaningful engagement between ourselves and nominated local community members. These groups give an opportunity to provide local input and updates, raise concerns and answer questions over a project's lifespan. Our Communities Team currently engage with 9 Community Liaison Groups and again, we expect this to rise over the course of the year as more projects enter the construction stage



Last year, stakeholders in North East Scotland and Argyll & Bute areas of our network asked us to engage on the total development planned for the region over the next decade, not just one project at a time. This is to help them better understand the reasons for the scale of work across the region, how this helps deliver the UK and Scotland's net zero targets and how they can help shape our plans. We will continue to use this approach, with similar events planned for each region over the next year including updates in the North East and Argyll and initial holistic engagement planned for the Highlands and Islands area.

Procurement Engagement



Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes

The Local Supply Chain is key to the delivery of our RIIO-T2 Sustainability Action Plan. To deliver each of our sustainability ambitions we are collaborating and working in partnership with our supply chain and wider stakeholders. By integrating sustainability in procurement policies and practices, organisations can manage risks and opportunities for sustainable environmental, social and economic development across their value chains.

A key proposal to deliver these objectives and drive value is to revitalise our commitment to our 'Meet the Buyer' initiative, which allows us to promote opportunities and engage with the local economy.

We will be working with stakeholders to create and implement new processes and guidelines around SSEN Transmission Meet the Buyer events and to agree a detailed plan for our approach to local supply chain engagement. This will include the development of guidelines and documentation for events hosted by staff and suppliers, which will ensure consistency and improve our relationships with suppliers and local contractors. The aim is to increase our use of local suppliers, increase local spend on projects using agreed measurement tools, and increase the number of contractors taking part in our Meet the Buyer events.



Direct engagement with GB end consumer

We will continue with our work to roll out vulnerability training to ensure our staff are fully aware of the issues faced by vulnerable consumers, and the importance of initiatives such as the Priority Service Register. We will also take steps to revitalise our partnership with Home Energy Scotland and are adding guidelines for engaging with end consumers in our Stakeholder Engagement Plans. As part of our commitment to a Just Transition, our definition of vulnerable consumers will expand to include vulnerable consumers in the Just Transition to net zero and also vulnerable consumers in a crisis (including during the pandemic).

We continue to understand the benefits of collaborating with consumer representative bodies and their greater reach and understanding of consumer advocacy. We continue our discussions with relevant organisations and the possibility of joint initiatives.

3. Sharing Best Practice for Positive Change

As an industry leader, we recognise that we have the ability to influence others within and outside our sector to provide even more benefit to customers and society. We will continue to share our sector leading and progressive work, to promote the adoption of best practice within our sector and others.

Interrupting and Insulating Gas (SF6)



One third reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions

With our specialist supplier partners, we have co-created a new strategy and specifications for avoiding the use of sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) gas on our network, which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We have adopted a policy of SF6 avoidance, while also investigating ways to reduce SF6 leakage in plant we have already installed.

In one recent example, in 2020/21 we appointed GE Grid Solutions (GE) to develop and install the world's first 420 kV SF6-free Gas Insulated Switchgear at Kintore using their Green Gas for Grid (g3).

In doing so, we provided demonstration of market need, as well as a viable trial site, which were critical to the success of GE's application to the European Commission's LIFE climate action program. Our g3 420 kV, 63 kA gas-insulated substation circuit-breaker will demonstrate that g³ technology can be applied to all other high-voltage levels of Europe's electrical networks.

We will continue to promote SF6 alternatives, nationally and internationally, through collaboration with other transmission and distribution network owners, via the Energy Networks Association (ENA), switchgear suppliers, the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers Association (BEAMA) and CIGRE, the global community committed to the collaborative development and sharing of power system expertise. With these partners, we are engaging with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to extend the exemption for SF6 filled apparatus currently contained with the Pressure System Safety Regulations 2000 (PSSR) to all apparatus, i.e. to include alternatives to SF6. This exemption, which we believe is firmly valid on technical grounds, will remove a significant operation and maintenance barrier to introduction of alternative to SF6 across the UK.

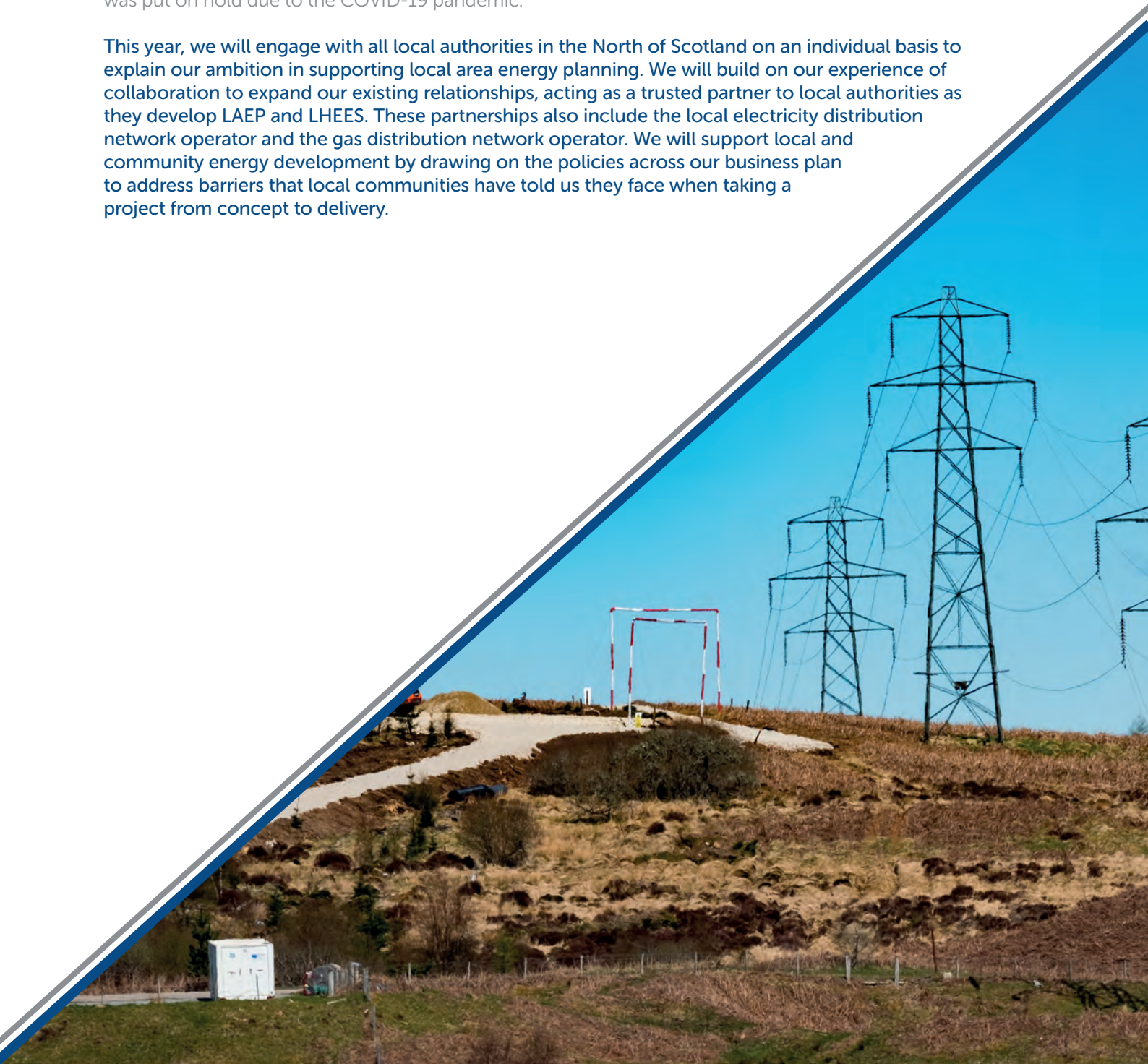
Local Area Energy Planning | Aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses

Local energy planning will be a key enabler for the transition to Net Zero and our aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses. Both the Scottish and UK governments recognise the role of local energy and the need to bring stakeholders together using Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP) and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES).

Our stakeholders have told us that as a result of subsidies being withdrawn, customers are more focussed on a whole system approach to address local energy needs. Stakeholders have also highlighted that they want us to tailor our engagement with individual Local Authorities and ensure localised community messaging.

Based on local development plans and our network development plans, we had been engaging with Dundee City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to understand how we might work in partnership with them. This work, and our engagement on Local Area Energy Plans with other local authorities, was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, we will engage with all local authorities in the North of Scotland on an individual basis to explain our ambition in supporting local area energy planning. We will build on our experience of collaboration to expand our existing relationships, acting as a trusted partner to local authorities as they develop LAEP and LHEES. These partnerships also include the local electricity distribution network operator and the gas distribution network operator. We will support local and community energy development by drawing on the policies across our business plan to address barriers that local communities have told us they face when taking a project from concept to delivery.



4. Co-Creating Our World-Class Asset Management

Our approach to Asset Management is underpinned by our commitment to maintain the highest industry standards through our certification to the BS ISO 55001 standard. Our commitment to invest in new technologies and ways of working, along with our collaborative approach with planning authorities and preventative measures with regards to risks such as wildfires, deliver a level of asset performance that will significantly contribute towards our goal to aim for 100% network reliability for homes & businesses by 2026.

World Class Asset Management



Aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses



£100 million in efficiency savings from innovation

We have set ourselves a target to become world class in asset management by 2026, and will demonstrate our progress towards this by achieving top quartile performance through benchmarking our performance against that of others in the assessment of international Transmission Operators.

Over the last year we have been preparing external policy and guidance documentation for landowners and developers, on what to do when a development is planned near to one of our assets. This work will continue this year, while we are also formalising internal processes to ensure we work collaboratively with developers to find mutually acceptable solutions.

In addition, we have developed a proposal for sharing data on infrastructure locations (while ensuring security of supply) which we are passing to Local Authorities for discussion, so that we can automatically see their Local Plan data. Early sight of local development plans; visibility of planning applications near our assets; data sharing and our inclusion in planning discussions will reduce the risk of infringement on our infrastructure.

Our focus for the 2021/22 period will be very much on internal engagement across the Transmission business as we seek to build upon the excellent work undertaken to develop the RII0-T2 business plan and start to embed all of the learning gained from this work into new and improved Asset Management processes. These processes will define our 'Business as Usual' activities and be applied to give us a clear picture of what forecasting we need to deliver in future regulatory periods across our existing asset base.

Data & Digitalisation



Aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses



£100 million in efficiency savings from innovation

Digital is a key enabler for our stakeholder-led strategy, and the drive to a Network for Net Zero. Our focus remains on efficiency, and therefore value for consumers and stakeholders, and on the reliability, resilience and sustainability of our network. We are mobilising to deliver a more fully digitalised and data-driven business, on the path to becoming a world class digital utility.

All functional areas in Transmission will be enhanced through digitalisation. Over the last year, we have concentrated on upgrading our core asset register, which is foundational for our plans to improve efficiency and reliability. The next 5 years will see us integrate the asset register with other technical and commercial platforms, generating efficiency and value.

Through the Energy Networks Association and building on the recommendations of the UK Government's Energy Data Taskforce, we have joined with partners to launch a ground-breaking proof-of-concept project to build an in-depth digital system map of the UK's energy system. Network data from all Britain's electricity and gas network operators will be pulled into an integrated map covering the entirety of Great Britain. The map will provide customers with information about energy network assets, where those assets are located as well as who owns them. Making this information available will significantly improve investment decisions, support new markets, and help bring new renewable connections to the energy networks. A fully integrated, scalable and secure data sharing platform is also the first step towards developing a National Energy System Map.

Throughout 2021, we will work with stakeholders to identify the parties who could make the most use of our data, learn their current and prospective data needs and confirm their product and service requirements. We will also look to determine that the products and services to be delivered within our Digital Strategy and Action Plan are the right ones and deliver the right targeted benefits for our stakeholders.

We will also work with stakeholders to investigate what would be useful to be included as part of the National Energy System Map, using the power of data to support a more efficient pathway to net zero.

Wildfires | Aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses

As we aim for 100% transmission network reliability for homes and businesses, the increasing risk of wildfires in our area due to the changing climate is a rising threat to this goal.

We asked the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) for a coordinated approach in responding to wildfires near our assets. We requested and received data from our partners at the SFRS, which detailed all the wildfires they had been called to in the last 10 years. Our Geographic Information System (GIS) and land teams analysed this data to create maps which show the highest wildfire risk areas. We are using these maps as an important tool for assisting operational staff during wildfire incidents, and also when we review proposed substation locations. We have since shared these maps with the SFRS so they can use them for their own risk assessments.

Employee safety is a high priority for our business. Since rolling out use of the wildfire risk maps and utilising the Scottish Wildfire Notification Service, discussions with wildfire experts and internal stakeholders representing operational staff have highlighted a requirement for internal training on wildfire process.

This year we will utilise the expertise of our partners to examine and tailor training and support for our operational and control centre staff, including risk assessment and protocol. Alongside this, we will work with stakeholders to strengthen the wildfires partnership, collaborating to improve processes and communications in wildfire situations, helping to realise benefits for safety, security of supply, ecology and the environment.

5. Large Onshore Transmission Investment (LOTI)

Needs Case Engagement

-  Transport the renewable electricity that powers 10 million homes
-  Every connection delivered on time
-  £100 million in efficiency savings from innovation

On behalf of our stakeholders, SSEN Transmission are developing a number of projects which are essential to achieving net zero but have yet to be approved by Ofgem. Under the RII0-T2 Price Control period, these projects must apply for funding under the Uncertainty Mechanism as Large Onshore Transmission Investment (LOTI) projects, and each project requires a Needs Case.

- **East Coast HVDC Subsea Link**

The East Coast HVDC electricity transmission project is a proposal to construct two High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) subsea links, each with capacity of 2GW down the east coast from Scotland to the north-east of England. One project is from Sandford Bay at Peterhead to Drax in England; the other is between Torness in East Lothian and Hawthorn Pit in County Durham. These projects are being developed between the three Electricity Network Operators, SSEN Transmission for northern Scotland, Scottish Power Transmission (SPT) for the central belt and south of Scotland, and National Grid Electricity Transmission (National Grid) for England and Wales. The Initial Needs Case (INC) was submitted to Ofgem in October 2020, who are currently hosting a six-week consultation period until 23 June 2021. We will continue our collaborative engagement with stakeholders on the project, including a planned Communities event for the Peterhead area later this Summer and hope to submit the Final Needs Case late 2021.

- **Skye Reinforcement**

The Skye Reinforcement project aims to maintain security of supply and facilitate renewable generation by replacing the existing overhead line between Fort Augustus and Ardmore on Skye. Our Initial Needs Case for the Skye Reinforcement project is due to be submitted to Ofgem this Summer (2021). We continue to engage with key stakeholders to discuss the submission, anticipated timelines and next steps and recently hosted a [developer webinar](#) to better understand their project needs. Stakeholder consultation continues throughout 2021, where statutory stakeholder workshops are currently being undertaken and wider virtual consultation sessions will be held later this year following publication of the Overhead Route Alignment Consultation Document. At this stage we will seek stakeholder views in relation to the overhead line route alignment process and action taken in response to feedback thus far. This work follows on from the [Overhead Route Options Consultation Document](#) published in March 2020 and virtual consultation sessions carried out in June 2020.

- **Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Strategy Upgrade**

The Argyll and Kintyre 275kV Strategy aims to reinforce the transmission network in the region by changing the existing 132kV network to 275kV operating voltage to increase MW capacity to facilitate an increase in renewable generation.

Earlier this year we held our first [Argyll and Bute Region Information Sharing Webinar](#), sharing updates with local stakeholders on both current construction projects alongside our development plans for the future. We also held a [developer webinar](#) to better understand their project needs. Following continued targeted meetings and stakeholder consultation throughout 2021, our Initial Needs Case is due to be submitted to Ofgem in Autumn 2021.

Similarly to Skye, we will ensure stakeholders are kept updated as to the progress of the submission and are informed as to how their feedback has helped to shape the submitted proposals. Project refinement will continue throughout 2022, allowing for meaningful stakeholder influence on decision making with robust and transparent processes for decisions on trade-offs and provision of stakeholder feedback. Where there are competing interests, we will clearly explain how we have considered the views of stakeholders and the potential hierarchy of how the various factors influencing decisions have been considered.

- **Western Isles & Orkney Subsea Links**

We will continue to engage to ensure that they can be taken forward in a timely manner once developer commitment is confirmed.

Throughout 2021/2022, we will continue working closely with stakeholders to ensure our LOTI projects take account of stakeholder views during the development process and we will continue seeking to understand stakeholder positions to ensure as far as reasonably practical that all stakeholders views are represented in the design of the project solution, achieving consensual decision making.

Stakeholder Engagement Panels

We sincerely value the stakeholder feedback we receive as part of our quarterly engagement with both our **Network for Net Zero Stakeholder Group** and from the **Stakeholder Advisory Panel**, the latter we share with SSEN Distribution. Both groups were recently given an update on the key themes being included in this draft plan, are being invited to participate in the consultation feedback and will be updated on the overall stakeholder feedback outcomes.



Stakeholder Advisory Panel meeting pre-pandemic

How to get in touch

We welcome feedback from all stakeholders on this Annual Engagement Plan, and encourage you to respond by 25 July 2021 using the online form on our website, which includes the questions within this consultation document and space for further comments and feedback. Alternatively, please respond by email to: Transmission.Stakeholder.Engagement@sse.com, or request a call to give verbal feedback.

We intend to publish all stakeholder responses on our [website](#) alongside the finalised Annual Engagement Plan. We therefore request our stakeholders clearly state if any part of their response is to remain confidential. If you require any further information, or wish to receive this Draft Annual Engagement Plan in a different format, again please contact: Transmission.Stakeholder.Engagement@sse.com

Accessibility

We are mindful that stakeholders may have a range of backgrounds, knowledge, and digital accessibility. We are offering a range of ways for different audiences to speak to us about both our Annual Engagement Plan and the wider engagement work that we do; including sending out hard copies of publications when requested, ensuring our contact details are readily available, and that publications are included on our [website](#).



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