



Stakeholder Engagement Draft Forward Plan 2020/21 Consultation Findings

November 2020

About us

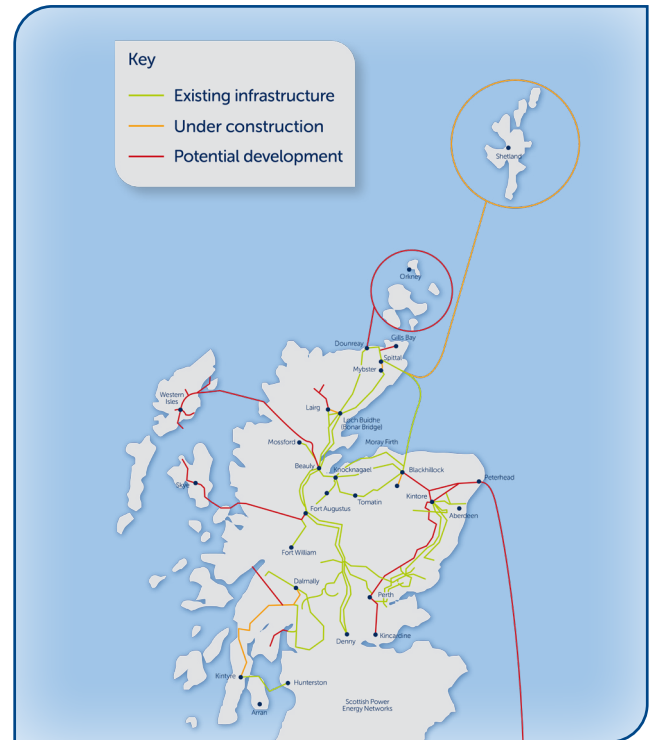
We are Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission (SHE Transmission), part of the SSE Group, responsible for the electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland.

We operate under the name of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, together with our sister companies, Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD) and Southern Electric Power Distribution (SEPD), who operate the lower voltage distribution networks in the north of Scotland and central southern England.

As the Transmission Owner (TO) we maintain and invest in the high voltage 132kV, 220kV, 275kV and 400kV electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland.

Our network consists of underground and subsea cables, overhead lines on wooden poles and steel towers, and electricity substations, extending over a quarter of the UK's land mass crossing some of its most challenging terrain.

We power 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.



Introduction

In early 2020, we reviewed the feedback gathered from stakeholders during 2019 both through the annual Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey and through direct engagements. Stakeholders highlighted areas for us to engage on, implement improvements, or where they wanted us to play a more active role in industry change. We used these insights to form our forward plan for engagement in 2020/21.

With the arrival of COVID-19 and the impacts it has had, we understood that stakeholder priorities may have changed. We wanted to hear their views on whether any of the proposed engagement initiatives should be changed in light of the social and economic uncertainty that the pandemic has created.

To gather this feedback, we published a Draft Forward Plan which included a summary of our proposed stakeholder engagement initiatives for 2020/21. It also included examples of how we are adapting our engagement to allow the initiatives to continue within the restrictions that the pandemic has created. We welcomed views and suggestions on this aspect of the plan. It was published as part of a four-week consultation ending 4th September 2020, followed by a virtual stakeholder engagement workshop.

Engagement Process

In mid-August, we published our Draft Forward Plan for consultation on the SSEN Transmission website. This was initially a four-week consultation. We emailed around 800 stakeholders from our database directly to invite them to give their views.

The consultation was run at the same time as our consultation on Ofgem's RIIO-T2 Draft Determination for Transmission. As a result, engagement fatigue was considered a factor in only receiving two responses to the consultation. To ensure we gave stakeholders every opportunity to offer their comments, we arranged a virtual stakeholder engagement workshop which was held on 30th September 2020. We sent invitations to our stakeholder list, targeting stakeholders representing the following groups who are likely to have a particular interest in our suggested priorities:

-  Consumer groups
-  Local authorities
-  Transmission Operators
-  Environmental and Wildlife agencies
-  Wildfire groups
-  Building and construction industry groups

23 stakeholders registered for the virtual stakeholder engagement workshop, and 10 attended. As part of the registration process, we asked stakeholders which of the topics within the Draft Forward Plan they were most interested in discussing and offered them the opportunity to suggest their own. This feedback informed our agenda, and seven topic-specific breakout groups.

We followed up the virtual workshop with a survey, sent to those who registered for the virtual workshop but did not attend. We received a low response rate but will continue to seek further opportunities to gather feedback from our stakeholders.



Your Feedback

Feedback on our Draft Forward Plan was positive. This section summarises the response from stakeholders with some quotes included. Feedback on the specific topics from the workshops is included in the following sections of this report.

When asked, both email and workshop attendee responses confirmed that we were focusing on the correct priorities and themes.



"They all seem well planned and appropriate for 21st century."

A poll during the virtual workshop showed the majority, eight participants out of the eleven, still considered Net Zero to be their top priority for the coming year, with their priorities remaining unaffected by the current pandemic.

Much of the feedback given requested further development and increasing the reach of our engagement, for example to include more Tier 2 contractors, operational workers and less-engaged communities. There was a specific request from workshop participants to hold public roadshows on wider topics, such as net zero, instead of solely project-specific events.



"More community roadshows and events, similar to what you do now but... less project specific. One on a subject such as Net Zero would be beneficial."



"Ensure a focus on sustainability and opening up/attracting the operational design teams to environmental forums."

Our documents, publications and information were considered good and are well received.



"SSEN Transmission already produces really good information and publications."

The virtual workshop was popular with participants, but it was clear from nearly everyone that more time to discuss topics would be beneficial. Multi stakeholder virtual workshops were the most popular method of engagement chosen, taking COVID-19 restrictions into account, but with direct engagement, email and phone calls still considered important.



"I liked today's session and technology. First time I have been on this type of session with the breakouts (just more time for discussion)."



"I thought this method was valuable, and would be interested in doing this again. It would be good to go into more depth on specific matters."



"Email and phone with limited events like this"

Our Stakeholder Engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we were determined that our engagement with stakeholders would continue and vital projects would not be delayed.

For our development and construction activities, we developed an online consultation tool which enables local communities to experience full exhibitions from home on a computer, tablet or mobile device. The online exhibition has been designed to look and feel like a real consultation in a community hall, with exhibition boards, maps, interactive videos and the opportunity to share views on the proposals.

Alongside this tool, we have been holding scheduled interactive sessions with project teams to allow members of the public to ask questions directly.

The online consultation events have been designed to be as interactive as face-to-face events, allowing for presentation of key project information and plans, as well as providing an opportunity to ask questions about the project. Visitors can engage directly with the project teams, via a live chat function, where they can ask any questions they might have about the project and share their feedback on the current proposals. We have also hosted webinars for more technical audiences.

One of our priorities with this Draft Forward Plan consultation was to find out from our stakeholders if they had any suggestions for how we could engage with them better, or issues we needed to be aware of.



"..Important to be aware of the lack of digital integration and/or knowledge within some communities and.. groups."



"..You need to be clear on the distinction between community engagement and stakeholder engagement."

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 our plans, including sending out hard copies of booklets about projects, ensuring our names, phone numbers and email addresses are readily available, and publishing technical reports on our website.

Following recent feedback from stakeholders, we are also offering site visits where available, and one to one discussion sessions, either digitally or over the phone, with subject matter experts.

During the draft forward plan consultation workshop we asked stakeholders what engagement methods they would prefer within the current restrictions. Responses to our poll, shown in Appendix 2, strongly support the use of virtual consultation methods, but allowing more time to discuss the subjects and offering opportunities to engage on specific issues outside of more formal events.

In further discussions during the workshop, stakeholders were clear that they support a mix of engagement methods in future, both virtual and face to face. Both are seen to offer value, but stakeholders did not want one to replace the other post-COVID-19 and both options should be offered.

We will continue to evolve our communication and consultation channels based on feedback from all our stakeholders.

Developing the Action Plan

After reviewing and analysing our stakeholders' input, we developed an action plan. The stakeholder input and agreed action is documented below:

	Stakeholder Ask/Comment	Our Action
Local Area Energy Plans	<p>Engage early with Local Authorities. There is not a one-size-fits-all communications approach for each Local Authority (LA).</p> <p>Speak to the right people.</p> <p>Work with LA's to tailor the community messaging.</p>	<p>Ensure tailored engagement with individual Local Authorities regarding LAEP's – using this to shape community engagement and messaging.</p>
Customer connections charges and services	<p>Standardise the process as much as possible so that there's clarity of queue position and how quickly they can get connected. Queuing would help fairness for generators.</p> <p>Involve DNOs in engagement on these activities.</p>	<p>Progress with the queue management proposals through industry working groups, which include DNOs.</p>
	<p>Some generators are benefitting by sitting on an empty contract rather than paying a cancelling charge for termination – "zombie contracts".</p> <p>Charges shouldn't only be on Transmissions lost costs but also on the potential benefits which may have been lost.</p> <p>Need to develop a way for SSEN Transmission to add a condition to contracts which say if a generator is unsuccessful then they'll be released from their capacity allotment. Cancellation charges apply to costs incurred on work delivered to date.</p>	<p>Engage with industry parties to consider feasibility of conditions in connections contracts around project progress and termination requirements and costs.</p>
	<p>Conflict of interest – if a big enough project then used as justification for carrying out large works – would prefer to keep separate.</p>	<p>Ensure transparency of needs case for all large projects and dependency on customer connections activities.</p>
	<p>For gathering information on what services connected customers would like to have, the water industry does this well.</p>	<p>Continue discussions with Citizens Advice Scotland to gather learning from their project to improve community engagement with Scottish Water.</p>

	Stakeholder Ask/Comment	Our Action
TNUoS and renewables charging	Aware of Ofgem review of TCR outcomes. Seems stacked against renewables in Scotland. Will the review have an impact on Eco7 tariff charging?	Arrange follow up discussion with consumer representative groups to better understand their concerns regarding impact of network charging changes on electric heating consumers.
	Transmission costs to consumers are contained within their wider electricity bill and they may not understand these charges. Understanding of these charges is key.	Work with consumer-representative groups to understand the best approach to ensuring consumer impacts and views from consumers are included in these reviews.
Development Engagement	SSEN Transmission needs to make information more available as much as planning authorities and developers need to make you aware of existing plans/infrastructure.	Investigate what infrastructure location information we can publish while maintaining security standards.
	Work with developers to ensure mutual solutions. Should SSEN Transmission not be a statutory consultee?	We are engaging with local planning authorities to look at options for how we are informed of submissions at application stage. We are also formalising internal processes to ensure we work collaboratively with developers on mutual solutions.
Best Practice for Positive Change	Early engagement with contractors (reduces risk for both parties)	Ensure earlier engagement in procurement and contracting, including open communications channels to build trust.
	Data Sharing	Learn from our own best practice. Investigate what data on our best practice projects could be shared to benefit other parties and increase adoption and undertake that data sharing where it is viable.
	Building trust and types of leadership. Visibility of all positive behavior within a company including corporate social responsibility as well as technical best practice	Promote positive action on corporate social responsibility topics. Continue our membership of the National Skills Group for Power, which brings together employers, skills organisations and stakeholders to promote best practice and build collaboration to address skills needs. We are also members of POWERful Women, a professional initiative to advance gender diversity within the energy sector. We will expand these initiatives and consider other opportunities for sharing best practice across and beyond our industry.

	Stakeholder Ask/Comment	Our Action
Network for Net Zero	Questions on the ground around the definition of net zero and what it actually means in practice.	<p>Include net zero in Meet the Buyer events to reach Tier 2 suppliers.</p> <p>Look for other ways to reach working level of supply chain, including operational design teams.</p>
	<p>We need more forums for discussion, much like this one, with a focus on net zero. SSE needs to open forums wider and attract not just those who are already involved, not just the environmental experts, but attract others within organisations to ensure people know that they can be involved in getting us all to Net Zero.</p> <p>More community roadshows and events, similar to what (we) do now but less project specific One on a subject such as net zero would be beneficial.</p>	<p>Further engagement on Net Zero and sustainability, including forums and events, which aim wider than the usual attendees. Expanding on what we already do well.</p> <p>Run an open digital event for Net Zero network in north of Scotland.</p>
	Ensure a focus on sustainability and opening up/ attracting the operational design teams to our environmental forums.	Ensuring participation of operational design teams in our environmental forums.
	In "2.1 net zero" you mention that you "wish to lead" through partnerships. I also suggest international partnerships. We offer collaboration as we develop technology - and implement first projects - to reduce the cost and accelerate progress of energy system transformation towards "net zero" - we are as concerned as you that just a "linear progress" will not suffice.	Investigate potential for international partnerships on net zero.
	Local educational institutions. We need a systematic approach to community education for the public at large.	Continue development of our education strategy, which includes aims to engage directly with schools and educational institutions.
Engaging During the COVID-19 Pandemic	To find more people to engage with, use the elected representatives – councillors and community councillors. Use these to form regional community liaison groups.	Regional portfolio engagement. We recently held our first region-focused engagement session in the North East. This received excellent feedback and we are now looking to do a similar event for Argyll and the West Coast. As part of these sessions, we will ask our stakeholders if they would see benefit from us setting up regular regional liaison forums and if so, what format these might take.

Next Steps

Following business updates and stakeholder feedback, we will update our Forward Plan and publish this on the SSEN Transmission website. We will notify all stakeholders who contributed to our consultation when the final Forward Plan is published.












We have allocated the actions identified in this report to managers within SSEN Transmission for implementation. We will monitor progress on an ongoing basis and publish an update for stakeholders on the SSEN Transmission website in Spring 2021.

Feedback on our engagement priorities and practices is welcome from all of our stakeholders. Any stakeholders who wish to get in touch with us or wish to input into any of the initiatives within our Forward Plan can email us at transmission.stakeholder.engagement@sse.com



Appendix 1 – Feedback from organisations

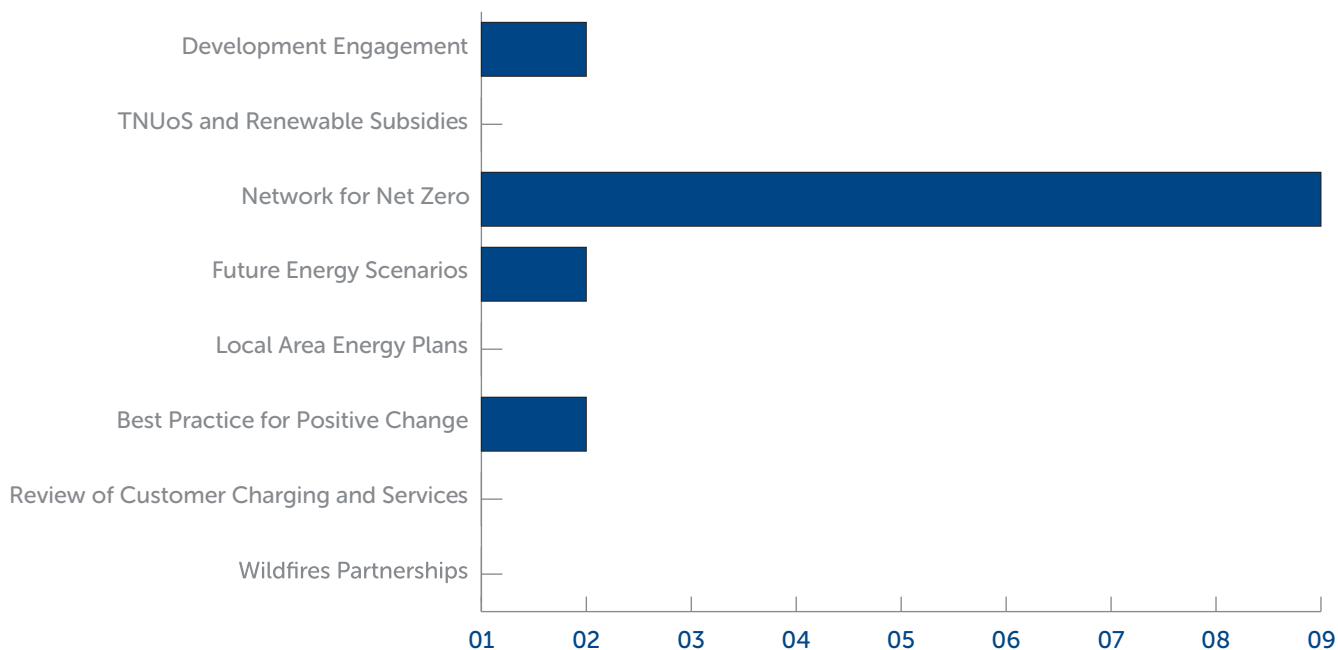
A total of 10 stakeholders attended the workshop and we received two additional responses by e-mail. The organisations represented are shown below:

-  Avich and Kilchrenan Community Council
-  Balfour Beatty Power T&D
-  Citizens Advice
-  Citizens Advice Scotland
-  Easy Smart Grid GmbH
-  GE Digital Grid
-  General Electric
-  Peel Energy
-  RJ McLeod
-  Siemens Energy Ltd
-  Wood T&D

Appendix 2 – Polls

We recognise that priorities may have changed as a result of the pandemic and the impact of lockdown.

Please choose your top priority for stakeholder engagement in 2020-21.



Within the options available to us, what is your preferred method of engagement?

Workshops like this work well. Any pre-read you want us to consider would be helpful.

I thought this method was valuable, and would be interested in doing this again. It would be good to go into more depth on specific matters.

Sessions like this.

Email and phone with limited events like this.

I liked today's session and technology. First time I have been on this type of session with the breakouts (just more time for discussion). Thanks.

Sessions like this are helpful but the opportunity to engage on specific issues outside of these more formal events is something we find very helpful.

Just to say that I think Finlay's idea of a net zero community roadshow when COVID restrictions allow is a really good one.

Like this but more open ended...ie no time guillotine.

Direct engagement – phone etc



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

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 SSEN Community

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