

4 EIA CONSULTATION AND SCOPE

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Consultation and engagement with stakeholders is an important part of the EIA process, with advice and input from key consultees being sought at the early design stages of a project, to inform decisions about the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.2 This chapter describes the pre-application consultation undertaken to date and EIA scoping process that was undertaken to determine the scope of the EIA Report and inform design evolution. This chapter also provides a brief description of the potentially significant effects associated with the Proposed Development which are to be addressed in detail in this EIA Report, as well as the issues which have been scoped-out.
- 4.1.3 Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing since the early stages of the project in 2021 and continued throughout the EIA development process during 2022. Consultation events held in June 2021 were conducted in line with COVID-19 restrictions, using virtual exhibitions and online interactive chat functions. Consultation events held in May 2022 were face to face. These events were supported by a Consultation Brochure mailed out to the relevant postcodes around the Proposed Development location. Project documentation is also available on the project website¹ to download and contact details are provided to allow stakeholders to request paper copies of documents or contact the project team directly with their views and questions.
- 4.1.4 This chapter is supported by the following Technical Appendices:
- **Technical Appendix 4.1: EIA Scoping Report;**
 - **Technical Appendix 4.2: Scoping Opinion;** and
 - **Technical Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register.**

4.2 Stakeholder Consultation

- 4.2.1 Best practice in EIA encourages consultation and engagement with stakeholders early in the process, with advice and input from key consultees being sought at the early design stages of a project, to inform decisions about the Proposed Development. The following stakeholder consultation has been undertaken to date:
- A public consultation event on the six alternative Route Options were held from June-July 2021;
 - A public consultation event on the Preferred Alignment was held in May 2022; and
 - A scoping request for the New Proposed Route Option between the proposed Creag Dhubh substation and a connection point on the recently constructed Inveraray - Crossaig overhead line was submitted in March 2022.
- 4.2.2 A 30-day consultation period was held after each of the consultation events to allow community feedback. Key issues emerging from statutory and non-statutory consultee responses include:
- potential impacts on Inveraray Castle inventory GDL;
 - potential impacts on Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA;
 - potential impacts on ornithology and ecology, including aquatic ecology;
 - potential impacts on landscape and visual amenity;

¹ <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/creag-dhubh-inveraray-275kv-overhead-line/>

- potential impacts on the surrounding road network;
- potential impacts on the Blarghour Wind Farm habitat management area;
- potential impacts on the water environment including Scottish Water Drinking Water Protection Areas;
- potential impacts on forestry; and
- potential impacts on peat.

4.2.3 Further information on consultation undertaken for each environmental topic assessment, including how issues raised in the Scoping Opinion have been addressed are available in each topic's respective **Chapter (6 to 13)** of this EIA Report, with full details of all EIA consultation feedback provided within the **Technical Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register, EIAR Volume 4**.

4.2.4 Details on the most recent consultation (May 2022) can be found in the Pre-application Consultation Report (PAC Report) which accompanies this application and **Appendix 3.2: Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV Overhead Line, Alignment Report on Consultation, EIAR Volume 4**.

4.3 EIA Scoping

4.3.1 A request for a Scoping Opinion was made to the Scottish Ministers under Regulation 12² of the EIA Regulations in March 2022. A Scoping Report was submitted to support the request (**Technical Appendix 4.1: EIA Scoping Report, EIAR Volume 4**) which sought input from both the Energy Consents Unit (ECU), and statutory and non-statutory consultees regarding the information to be included within this EIA Report.

4.3.2 A Scoping Opinion was provided by the ECU on 15 June 2022 and is included in **Technical Appendix 4.2: EIA Scoping Opinion (EIAR Volume 4)**. The responses, contained within the Scoping Opinion have been considered in detail during the EIA process, with responses to issues raised provided in **Technical Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register, EIAR Volume 4** and within each environmental topic assessment, **Chapter 6 to 13**.

4.3.3 The EIA Scoping Report was also issued to the following statutory and non-statutory consultees:

- Argyll and Bute Council (ABC);
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES);
- NatureScot;
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA);
- Scottish Forestry (SF);
- Scottish Water;
- Transport Scotland;
- Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board (ADSFB)/Argyll Fishery Trust (AFT);
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB);
- Sustrans; and
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS).

4.3.4 The EIA Scoping Report outlined that the Proposed Development has the potential to result in likely significant effects on the environment associated with the following topic areas:

- Landscape Character and Visual Impact;

² Regulation 12 – Request for Scoping Opinions. Available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/101/regulation/12/made>

- Cultural Heritage;
- Ecology;
- Ornithology;
- Geology and Soils;
- Water Environment;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Noise and Vibration; and
- Forestry.

4.4 Topics Scoped out of the EIA

4.4.1 Several topics or elements of topics have been scoped out of the EIA and are therefore not reported in the EIA Report. **Table 4-1** summarises this aspect of the process and justification for scoping out these topics and elements.

Table 4-1: Topic and Topic Elements Scoped out of the EIA Report

Environmental Factor	Scoped Out
Landscape Character & Visual Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (LCT37) Upland Glens - Argyll; and • The Ardkinglas and Strone GDL.
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battlefields; and • World Heritage Sites.
Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory designated sites within 10 km of the Site where there is no connectivity.
Ornithology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier effects; • Electrocutation; • Habitat loss (during both construction and operational phases); and • Potential disturbance during the operational phase.
Geology & Soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contaminated Land; and • Operational impacts.
Water Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Traffic & Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational impacts; and • Where the thresholds for significant effects during the construction phase are not met in a specific location (in accordance with IEMA Guidelines) it is proposed that further assessment is not required.
Noise & Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction noise and vibration.
Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Socioeconomic, Recreation and Tourism	<p>The potential effects on visual amenity for tourism and recreational routes and receptors will be assessed in the EIA Report as part of the LVIA. The potential for effects on core paths and national cycle routes would be included as part of the Traffic and Transport assessment and would be managed according to an outline Traffic Management Plan (TMP). Therefore, no separate recreation and tourism assessment has been completed for the EIA Report.</p>

Environmental Factor	Scoped Out
Population and Human Health	Topic scoped out of EIA. Any potential effects on human health in terms water quality, air quality, noise, visual impacts, traffic, and transport have been considered within the appropriate Technical Chapters of this EIA Report.
Climate Change	The Proposed Development would not result in significant adverse effects on climate change during the construction or operational phases. The Proposed Development would contribute to connecting renewable electricity generation capacity to the transmission network, in turn displacing emissions associated with fossil fuel based electricity generation elsewhere. As such, this issue is scoped out of the EIA and no assessment of climate change will be undertaken as part of the EIA Report.
Air Quality	The Proposed Development would not result in significant adverse effects on air quality or climate change during the construction or operational phases. The Proposed Development would contribute to connecting renewable electricity generation capacity to the transmission network, in turn displacing emissions associated with fossil fuel based electricity generation elsewhere. As such, this issue is scoped out of the EIA and no assessment of air quality has been undertaken for the EIA Report.
Major Accidents and Disasters	The potential for impact resulting from major accidents or disasters is limited to impacts from towers being destabilised. A review was undertaken within Chapter 4 (Population and Human Health) of the Scoping Report regarding the expected effects deriving from the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to risks of major accidents and disasters. This review did not identify potentially significant effects from major accidents or disasters that would require assessment under the EIA Regulations and therefore this topic has been scoped out from further assessment.

4.5 Technical Consultation

4.5.1 As part of the EIA process, technical consultation with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees has been ongoing. Details of the technical consultation undertaken for each topic area is provided in the respective technical **Chapters 6 to 13**.

4.6 Key Environmental Issues Raised During Consultation (May 2022)

4.6.1 A number of key environmental considerations were raised during the latest consultation process. These are summarised in **Table 4-2**.

Table 4-2: Summary of Key Environmental Issues

Stakeholder	Consultation Feedback	Applicants Response	EIA Report Chapter Reference
SEPA	No specific concerns regarding the preferred corridor but without information on habitats and peat and the likely location of all the supporting infrastructure required to build the scheme we are not able to give a complete view on the acceptability of the alignment from our	The location of the towers is constrained by the topography in achieving the necessary clearances between spans and towers are sited on areas of flatter ground to minimise the excavation or “benching” requirements. Moving tower locations to increase distance from watercourses will likely introduce other constraints. Additional structures may be	Further details on habitat impacts are covered in Chapter 8: Ecology ; peat is covered in Chapter 10: Geology and Soils ; and the water environment in Chapter 11: Water Environment (EIAR Volume 2) .

Stakeholder	Consultation Feedback	Applicants Response	EIA Report Chapter Reference
	<p>perspective. However, in relation to the water environment then it would seem that the turbines avoid direct impacts, although it may be necessary to slightly relocate those in the vicinity of the River Aray in the north of the site to ensure a suitable buffer.</p>	<p>required to achieve clearances which would result in an overall increase in excavation and construction activities.</p> <p>Detailed information on habitats and the results of the peat surveys will be presented in the EIA Report, along with full details and a plan of the Proposed Development. Potential impacts in relation to the water environment will also be assessed in the EIA Report.</p>	
NatureScot	<p>The proposed route corridor crosses the Blarghour Wind Farm habitat management area as shown in the Blarghour Land Management Plan (LMP). The LMP is subject to a condition attached to the deemed planning permission of Blarghour Wind Farm (ECU reference: EC00005267). Condition 9(1) states – “No development shall commence until a Land Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with NatureScot”. The specific area in question currently contains 95 ha of mature non-native conifer plantation of low biodiversity value and limited foraging opportunity for bird species. It is proposed to fell the conifers and replant with low density native broadleaves with a mosaic of open ground to provide a wider variety of foraging habitat for golden eagle and black grouse. It would appear that the OHL crosses the habitat management area. In order to avoid compromising the habitat management objectives the OHL should avoid this area by rerouting or consider undergrounding if practicable. Consideration should also be given to the</p>	<p>It is not practical to reroute the Preferred Alignment for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid the HMP would require realignment more closely to the Baseline Alignment which was ruled out due to the disproportionate impact on farming operations at Stronmagachan. It would also require an additional angle tower and additional permanent access to be retained to the angle tower. This would lead to further forestry/ habitat loss which would need to be agreed with the affected landowner. • It would require the alignment to approach and possibly encroach on the in-bye lambing fields which Deviation 1 seeks to avoid. • It would move the alignment closer to local residences. • The terrain between the Preferred Alignment and Baseline Alignment is challenging. This could result in additional towers with shorter spans to achieve the required clearances which would increase the presence of infrastructure in the area. • Ongoing consultation with NatureScot is being undertaken in respect to their comments and further ecology and ornithology assessment 	<p>Impacts on habitats and habitat management is provided in Chapter 8: Ecology (EIAR Volume 2).</p>

Stakeholder	Consultation Feedback	Applicants Response	EIA Report Chapter Reference
	location of access tracks, borrow pits, construction compounds and other infrastructure etc. and the need to be placed out with the habitat management area.	will be undertaken as part of the EIA process.	
Argyll Fisheries Trust/ DSFB	The preferred alignment will bring the OHL in close proximity to the upper reaches of the River Aray, which is a spawning habitat for Atlantic salmon and sea trout. We therefore ask that the sensitivities of the site should be considered in mitigation for any disturbance of riparian habitats and drainage of work sites which enter the river.	Riparian habitats and fish populations will be considered in the EIA Report.	Impacts on terrestrial and aquatic habitats are provided in Chapter 8: Ecology (EIAR Volume 2) . Potential impacts to water quality are discussed in Chapter 11: Water Environment (EIAR Volume 2) .
RSPB	<p>Golden Eagle</p> <p>It is good to see that the route now does not cross the A819 into the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA designated for its golden eagle population. Potential for it to impact upon the SPA still requires a Habitat Regulations Assessment.</p> <p>Operational mitigation</p> <p>The preferred alignment takes the line closer to a number of golden eagle eyries. Although on lower ground it runs close to eyries and eagles have been found to collide with deer fences i.e. structures very low to ground in periods of reduced visibility i.e., fog. To reduce potential impacts on eagles we advise that mitigation is required.</p> <p>Our scoping response advised that the line route follows the most eastern edge of the corridor but this does not seem to be an option which is disappointing. We advise that line visibility is increased where it transits close to eagle eyrie sites (the</p>	Further ornithology assessment will be undertaken as part of the EIA process, with a view to avoiding (where possible) and reducing the effects on the SPA, and consideration of any mitigation required.	<p>A HRA is provided in Technical Appendix 9.3 (EIAR Volume 4).</p> <p>Ornithology is covered in Chapter 9 (EIAR Volume 2) and it's associated appendices.</p>

Stakeholder	Consultation Feedback	Applicants Response	EIA Report Chapter Reference
	<p>northern section of deviation 1 outside of the forestry), measures should be for the life-time of the line so ideally some form of coloured line sheathing or failing this hanging type bird deflectors which are replaced as per line maintenance schedule. Ideally it would be good to see mitigation include positive upland management for eagles in this area.</p> <p>Construction (& potentially operational) mitigation</p> <p>The alignment is approximately 1 km of some eyrie sites and therefore potential for disturbance exists within the breeding season so we advise that works especially the use of helicopters should occur outwith the breeding season (Feb-August) or only within this period if breeding is proved to be unsuccessful within that season.</p>		
Scottish Water	<p>The alignment lies within the River Aray drought management source catchment. A temporary abstraction from the River Aray for drought mitigation is our preferred option for Inveraray WTW, as this watercourse is more resilient to the effects of drought than the Douglas Water. It is therefore more likely to facilitate an abstraction which would meet full demand in a severe drought situation. Nevertheless, the usual environmental protection measures will suffice in this area during the proposed works. SW to be informed of any needs to abstract water from the River Aray during the summer months going forward.</p>	<p>The appointed Contractor would be responsible for liaising with Scottish Water pre and post construction. Potential impacts to DWPA's, Scottish Water assets and the River Aray catchment will be assessed in the EIA Report.</p>	<p>Impacts on the water environment are covered in Chapter 11: Water Environment (EIA Volume 2).</p>

Stakeholder	Consultation Feedback	Applicants Response	EIA Report Chapter Reference
	<p>Scottish Water have produced a list of precautions for a range of activities. This details protection measures to be taken within a DWPA, the wider drinking water catchment and if there are assets in the area. Please note that site specific risks and mitigation measures will require to be assessed and implemented.</p>		
Scottish Forestry	<p>Deviation 1 seems to be a slight improvement reducing impact on ancient woodland and LEPO and so we would not raise any concerns.</p> <p>Deviation 2 which has not been taken forward, does raise an interesting point regarding forestry work in and around powerlines, especially where they converge. The owner may still have a wish for commercial woodland, although a change in woodland type in this area may reduce the need for forest management intervention. Is it the case that the OHPL as it continues to the north west – would be connected to the Creag Dhubh station?</p>	The OHL would connect into the Creag Dhubh substation.	Forestry is covered in Chapter 14 (EIAR Volume 2) and its associated appendices.

4.6.2 Further detail on the key issues identified through the scoping and consultation process, and how they have influenced the route, alignment selection and consideration of alternative options are described in **Chapter 3: Consideration of Alternatives (EIAR Volume 2)**. A detailed summary of all the consultation responses can be found in **Technical Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register (EIAR Volume 4)**.