VOLUME 2 – CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

Figure 1.1: Location Plan

Appendices (Volume 4 of this EIA Report)

There are no appendices associated with this Chapter.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Applicant

1.1.1 Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc ('the Applicant') is a wholly owned subsidiary of the SSE plc group of companies. Operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission ('SSEN Transmission'), it owns and maintains the electricity transmission network across the north of Scotland and remote islands.

1.1.2 SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under section 9 of *the Electricity Act 1989*[1] to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical electrical transmission system in its licence area. Where there is a requirement to extend, upgrade or reinforce its transmission network, SSEN Transmission's aim is to provide an environmentally aware, technically feasible and economically viable solution which would cause the least disturbance to the environment and to people who use it.

1.1.3 The terms "Applicant" and "SSEN Transmission" are used interchangeably throughout this EIA Report.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 In July 2022, National Grid, the Electricity System Operator (ESO)[2], published the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND)[3], setting out the blueprint for the onshore and offshore electricity transmission network infrastructure required to enable the forecasted growth in renewable electricity across Great Britain, including the UK and Scottish Government's 2030 offshore wind targets of 50 GW and 11 GW respectively.

1.2.2 The extensive studies completed to inform the ESO's Pathway to 2030 HND confirmed the requirement to increase the power transfer capacity of the onshore corridor from Kintore to Tealing. This requires a new 400 kV connection between these locations to enable the significant power transfer capability needed to take power from onshore and large scale offshore renewable generation which is proposed to connect at onshore locations on the East Coast of Scotland and transport it to areas of demand.

1.2.3 To achieve this, SSEN Transmission is proposing a new 400 kV overhead transmission line (OHL) between Kintore and Tealing. This new connection also requires two new 400 kV substations to be constructed near Tealing in Angus and in Fetteresso Forest in Aberdeenshire to enable future connections and export routes to areas of demand.

1.2.4 Extensive studies, reported in Chapter 4 of this EIA Report, have led to the selection of a site at Hurlie near the existing Fetteresso 275 kV Substation, southwest of Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire, for the new 400 kV substation.

1.3 The Planning Application

1.3.1 The Applicant is applying to Aberdeenshire Council for planning permission under the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997*[4] to install and operate a new 400 kV substation at Hurlie in Fetteresso Forest in Aberdeenshire, with associated earthworks, the formation of platforms, landscaping, means of access, means of enclosure, site drainage, and temporary construction compounds. (see Planning Application with accompanying drawings).

1.3.2 The aforementioned is referred to interchangeably in this EIA Report as the "Proposed Development" and "Hurlie substation".

1.3.3 The Proposed Development is located on land at Fetteresso Forest, approximately 8 km west of Stonehaven, approximately 292 ha in area and herein referred to as the "Site".

[1] Electricity Act 1989. Available [online]: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents
[2] The ESO was replaced by the National Energy System Operator in 2024.
[3] National Grid ESO (2022) Pathway to 2030: Holistic Network Design. Available [online]: https://www.neso.energy/document/262681/download
[4] Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Available [online]: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents

1.3.4 In accordance with the requirements of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017*[5], this Environmental Impact Assessment Report has been prepared by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of the Applicant, to accompany the Planning Application.

1.4 Associated SSEN Transmission Projects

1.4.1 In addition to the Proposed Development, the Applicant is bringing forward a separate consent application for the associated infrastructure referred to in paragraph 1.2.2 above and detailed as follows:

- Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL – application for consent to be submitted to the Scottish Ministers under Section 37 of *the Electricity Act 1989*[6], for a new 400kV OHL from the existing Kintore substation in Aberdeenshire to Emmock substation, via the proposed Hurlie substation, along with a request for a direction that planning permission be deemed to be granted under Section 57 (2) of *the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997* (as amended); and

1.4.2 The cumulative environmental effects of the Proposed Development with the Associated SSEN Transmission Projects and other proposed projects identified for cumulative impact assessment are described in each of the technical assessment **Chapters 7-14** and summarised in **Chapter 15**.

1.5 Legal and Policy Context

1.5.1 As referenced above, the legislative framework under which the Applicant is seeking planning permission includes the Electricity Act 1989 Section 9, the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the "EIA Regulations").

National Planning Framework (NPF4)[7]

- Policies 1 & 2 ensure future developments minimise emissions and are built to reflect the future risks of climate change;
- Policies 3, 4, 5 and 6 ensure that natural assets are protected and enhanced by managing the effects of development on biodiversity and on natural places;
- Policy 11 supports opportunities for renewable energy development and the transition to net zero;
- Policy 13 ensures that the area's needs and characteristics are considered in assessing the transport impacts of development; and
- Policy 23 ensures air and noise pollution are considered to protect health and wellbeing.

Scottish Government Planning Advice Notes (PANs)[8]

- PAN1/2011: Planning and Noise;
- PAN1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment;
- PAN2/2011: Planning and Archaeology;
- PAN51/2006 (revised): Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation;
- PAN60/2000: Planning for Natural Heritage; and
- PAN79/2006: Water and Drainage.

[5] Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Available [online]: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents
[6] The Electricity Act 1989, section 37. Available [online]: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/section/37
[7] Scottish Government (February 2023) National Planning Framework 4. Available [online]: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/
[8] Scottish Government (2024) Planning Advice Notes (PANs). Available [online]: https://www.gov.scot/collections/planning-advice-notes-pans/

Aberdeenshire Council Local Development Plan[9]

- Section 10: Natural Heritage and Landscape;
  - Policy E1: Natural Heritage;
  - Policy E2: Landscape; and
  - Policy E3: Forestry and Woodland.
- Section 11: The Historic Environment;
  - Policy HE1 Protecting Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Sites (including other historic buildings); and
  - Policy HE2 Protecting Historic, Cultural and Conservation Areas.
- Section 12: Protecting Resources;
  - Policy PR1: Protecting Important Resources; and
  - Policy PR2: Reserving and Protecting Important Development Sites.
- Section 13: Climate Change;
  - Policy C2: Renewable Energy; and
  - Policy C4: Flooding.

1.5.2 An assessment of the Proposed Development against national and local policy is provided in a Planning Statement which accompanies the Planning Application.

1.6 The EIA Regulations

1.6.1 The Proposed Development is not defined as Schedule 1 Development or Schedule 2 Development in the EIA Regulations'). However, as set out in Part 2, Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, if an Applicant submits an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) within its planning application to the Local Planning Authority, then the Proposed Development is considered an EIA development.

1.6.2 As part of the EIA process a Scoping Report was prepared to seek input from statutory and non-statutory consultees to determine and describe the factors specified in Schedule 4 of The Regulations which are likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development. A Scoping Opinion was sought from Aberdeenshire Council under Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations on 8 August 2024. A Scoping Opinion from the Council was received on 11 September 2024 confirming the scope of the EIA Report.

1.7 EIA Report Structure

1.7.1 The EIA Report is structured as follows:

- **Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary;**
- **Volume 2: Main Report;**
- **Volume 3: Figures and Visualizations;** and
- **Volume 4: Appendices.**

1.7.2 **Volume 1** of the EIA is a non-technical summary that provides an overview and description of the Proposed Development, sets out the project need, describes the site selection, consultation process and design considerations for development of the project, and outlines the EIA assessment process and report structure according to the Regulations.

1.7.3 **Volume 2: Chapters 1-6** provides the main text of the EIA Report. **Chapter 1** introduces the project and explains the project need, strategic planning considerations for delivering the Proposed Development, and structure of the EIA Report. **Chapter 2** lists the team preparing the EIA Report and their respective disciplines and qualifications. **Chapter**

[9] Aberdeenshire Council Local Development Plan (2023) Available [online]: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/plans-and-policies/ldp-2023/

3 describes the Proposed Development. **Chapter 4** describes the site selection process, the assessment of alternatives, and how the final Site was chosen. **Chapter 5** describes the EIA process and methodology used for the EIA Report. **Chapter 6** discusses the consultations that have been undertaken to define the scope of the EIA. **Volume 2** also includes a series of technical topic-based reports (**Chapters 7-14**) that assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on receptors of relevance to the topic, as well as cumulative in-combination effects of the Proposed Development with other developments; and cumulative interactive effects on key receptors for different impact types for the Proposed Development, and a description of the proposed mitigation measures relevant to the above assessments. The Volume concludes with a Cumulative Effects Assessment (**Chapter 15**), and Schedule of Environmental Mitigation (**Chapter 16**) to address the predicted residual effects of the Proposed Development.

1.7.4 **Volume 3** contains supporting figures referred to in **Volume 2** of the EIA Report and photomontage visualisations of the Proposed Development from a series of viewpoints that have been prepared in accordance with the relevant guidance from Aberdeenshire Council.

1.7.5 **Volume 4** comprises supporting appendices to **Volume 2** of the EIA Report (Listed below). Appendices include further detailed reporting or information to support the EIA Report and technical assessments contained therein.

1.8 Other Plans and Reports Accompanying the Planning Application

1.8.1 The following supplemental drawings and reports will be submitted with the Planning Application.

1.8.2 These drawings and reports do not form part of the EIA Report. Cross references to drawings and reports are made in the Chapters of the EIA Report where relevant. All drawings intended to form part of the EIA Report are provided in **Volume 3**.

Table 1.1: Drawings

Planning Drawing	Document Number	Title
General Arrangements (Proposed Site Plan)	162507-BMD-TW-HR-GIS-TP-0002	LT486 Hurlie Temporary Works Areas
	162507-BMD-PL-HR-DPL-TP-0001	Electrical Layout
	162507-BMD-PL-HR-DPL-TP-0003	Electrical Layout (Sheet 1 of 2)
	162507-BMD-PL-HR-DPL-TP-0004	Electrical Layout (Sheet 2 of 2)
	162507-BMD-PL-HR-DEL-TP-0001	Electrical Elevations
	162507-BMD-PL-HR-DEL-TP-0002	Electrical Elevations
	162507-BMD-PL-HR-DPL-TP-0002	External Lighting Layout
Proposed Elevations	162507-BMD-BL-HR-DEL-TP-0001	Control Building Elevations
	162507-BMD-BL-HR-DEL-TP-0002	Switchgear Building Elevations
Existing/Proposed Site Levels	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DSE-TP-0001	Platform Earthworks Layout
	162507-BMD-XX-HR-GIS-TP-0001	LT486 Hurlie – Local Topography
Existing/Proposed Site Selection	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DEL-TP-0001	Platform Elevations (Sheet 1 of 2)
	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DEL-TP-0002	Platform Elevations (Sheet 2 of 2)
Proposed Fencing Details	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DDE-TP-0004	Security Fencing And Gate Layout
	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DDE-TP-0005	Security Fencing And Gate Details
3D/CAD data to inform environmental consultant visuals/photomontages	N/A	X-REF_1625007_Civil 3D Earthworks
Access Track Design Plans and Construction Details	162507-BMD-ZZ-HR-DSP-TP-0001	Red Line Boundary & Site Access Plan
	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DDE-TP-0002	Site Access Road Sections And Details

Planning Drawing	Document Number	Title
	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DDE-TP-0003	Substation Road Sections And Details
	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DPL-TP-0002	Site Access Roads Layout
SUDs	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DPL-TP-0001	Platform Drainage Layout
	162507-BMD-CE-HR-DDE-TP-0001	Detention Basin Layout & Typical Drainage Details
Site Clearance Plan	162507-BMD-TW-HR-GIS-TP-0001	LT486 Site Clearance Plan

Table 1.2: Reports

Reports	Source
PAC Report	The Applicant
Planning Statement	David Bell Associates
Design and Access Statement	David Bell Associates
Socio-economic Assessment	Biggar Economics
Biodiversity Net Gain Report	Land Use Consultants

1.9 Notifications

1.9.1 In accordance with *the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017* (the "EIA Regulations"), the submission of this EIA Report will be publicised in a newspaper circulating in the locality of the Proposed Development, and in the Edinburgh Gazette.

1.9.2 This EIA Report and associated documents and figures, will be available for viewing at the following public location during normal opening hours:

- Stonehaven Library, Evan St, Stonehaven AB39 2ET.

1.9.3 An electronic version is available online at Hurlie 400kV substation – SSEN Transmission.