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Figures (Volume 3 of this EIA Report)

There are no figures associated with this chapter.

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Appendix 6.1: Scoping Report

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6. SCOPE AND CONSULTATION

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The EIA Regulations¹ require that an EIA should describe the likely significant effects of a proposed development on the environment. Specifically, Schedule 4 sets out the information to be included in an EIA Report. Scoping is a process which seeks to identify and agree the scope and level of detail to be provided in an EIA Report, defining the issues considered most likely to represent significant environmental effects and the matters of greatest relevance to determining the consent application, ensuring a proportionate approach to EIA. Consultation and engagement with stakeholders informs and validates the scoping process.
- 6.1.2 This Chapter summarises the consultation that has informed the scoping process, and the subsequent EIA scope that has been agreed.

6.2 Consultation

- 6.2.1 SSEN Transmission has consulted with statutory and non-statutory consultees, landowners, elected members, local organisations and the local community throughout the different stages of the project. This has included consultation during the initial site selection stages, as well as formal consultation in accordance with the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process as required by the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) Regulations².
- 6.2.2 A full description of the scope and outcomes of formal consultation are set out in a Pre-Application Consultation Report, which is submitted to accompany the planning application. The main consultation activities are summarised below.

Initial Consultation

- 6.2.3 Initial consultation was conducted between May and July 2023 where options regarding the substation site selection were presented for a new proposed 400 kV substation at Fiddes. as described in the Consultation Document³, A series of in-person consultation events for Associated SSEN Transmission Developments were held between 2 May 2023 and 13 July 2023 at various locations, including Kirkton of Skene (2 May), Ardoe (3 May), Laurencekirk (4 May), and attended by 67, 40, and 169 individuals, respectively. The events focused on enabling local communities to view the route site options under construction. A virtual event was also held on 17 May 2023 for those who could not attend the in-person events; 75 people attended. For all consultations, a total of 13 responses were received specifically in connection with the proposed Fiddes 400 kV Substation. Various meetings were held in the weeks before, during and after the consultation events with other key stakeholders such as landowners, statutory and non-statutory consultees, councillors and community councils to discuss the proposals. The feedback received focused primarily on the following issues:
- project need;
 - technology choice – e.g. potential for underground cabling;
 - impacts to local biodiversity;
 - socio-economic impacts; and
 - lack of communication/tight timescale for consultation process.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Available [online]: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents>

² The Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021. Available [online]: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/99/made>

³ SSEN Transmission (May 2023) Consultation Document – Substation Site Selection. Available [online]: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/east-coast-phase-2-may-2023-docs/tealing-consultation-documents/consultation-document-substation-site-selection---stage-1---tealing-final-090523.pdf>

⁴ Similar consultation was undertaken for Associated SSEN Transmission Developments as defined in Chapter 1, Section 1.4 of this EIA Report.

- 6.2.4 Following the May 2023 consultation, the feedback received was analysed by SSEN Transmission and a Report on Consultation (RoC)⁵ was published in November 2023, summarizing the consultation undertaken and comments received from the public and statutory and non-statutory consultees, the Applicants response and rationale for selecting a site near Hurlie as the preferred option for the new substation.

First Pre-Application Consultation

- 6.2.5 A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to Aberdeenshire Council on 31 January 2024, setting out the Applicant's proposals for consultation. The Council acknowledged the Notice and noted the recommendations from the Council's planning officer on the material issues of relevance to any future planning determination.
- 6.2.6 The first pre-application consultation (PAC1) events were held on 11 March 2024 at Stonehaven Bowling Club; 19 March at Drumlithie Village Hall; and on 21 March 2024 at Auchenblae Village Hall. A PAC booklet⁶ was prepared to support the consultation event setting out information on the site selection process, the outcomes of the consultation undertaken through 2023, and the rationale for selecting the site proposed for development in Fetteresso Forest near Hurlie. The Booklet summarised the key environmental and technical considerations relevant to the Proposed Development and presented key elements of the project design at that stage. Four hundred people attended the event, of which 118 at Drumlithie Village Hall; 175 at Stonehaven Bowling Club; and 107 at Auchenblae Village Hall. 1,958 responses were received in total, 280 of which explicitly referred to the proposed substation. The principal issues, in decreasing order of frequency were visual impact, socio-economic impacts, cost and benefits, and the consultation process.

Second Pre-Application Consultation (PAC2) Event

- 6.2.7 The PAC2 events were held on 10 June 2024 at Auchenblae Village Hall, 11 June 2024 at Drumlithie Village Hall, and 13 June 2024 at Stonehaven Town Hall. A second PAC booklet⁷ was published to support the consultation which summarised the feedback from the previous PAC events, and explained how the design and development proposals had been amended to address that feedback.
- 6.2.8 The consultation process and outcomes are presented in the Pre-Application Consultation Report referred to above.

6.3 Further Consultee Engagement

- 6.3.1 Stakeholder consultation has been ongoing since the early stages of the project and has continued throughout the design development process. A number of pre-application and formal scoping consultation meetings were held on site selection, proposed scope, topics to be assessed in the EIA, and issues of related to assessment of topics by the local authority, in this case Aberdeenshire Council, and other statutory and non-statutory consultees. These issues are addressed in the relevant technical chapters.

6.4 Scoping

- 6.4.1 An EIA Scoping Report was issued to Aberdeenshire Council on 8 July 2024 (see **Volume 4, Appendix 6.1: Scoping Report**). A draft Scoping Opinion was provided by Aberdeenshire Council in September 2024 and is included in **Volume 4, Appendix 6.2: Scoping Opinion**.
- 6.4.2 The responses, contained within the Scoping Opinion, were considered in detail during the EIA process. **Volume 4, Appendix 6.4: Scoping Matrix** of this EIA Report includes a matrix detailing the key issues that were raised in the Scoping Opinion and how and where they are addressed in the EIA Report.

⁵ SSEN Transmission (November 2023) Fiddes 400 kV Substation. Report on Consultation. Available [online]: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/rocs/fiddes/report-on-consultation---fiddes-400kv-substation.pdf>

⁶ SSEN Transmission (2024) Emmock 400 kV Substation. Pre-application Consultation. Available [online]: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/hurlie-400kv-substation-downloads/march-2024-consultation-docs/ssen---fiddes-hurlie---booklet---28119---artwork-digital-pages-2.pdf>

⁷ SSEN Transmission (2024) Hurlie 400 kV Substation. Pre-application Consultation Feedback Event. Available [online]: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/hurlie-400kv-substation-downloads/june-2024-event-docs/ssen---hurlie-pac-2---booklet---28491---artwork-june-24-digital-spreads.pdf>

6.5 Key Issues Identified by Aberdeenshire Council and EIA Consultees

6.5.1 Aberdeenshire Council is in agreement with the proposed scope and assessment approach and methodology of the EIA, as outlined in the Scoping Report. The Scoping Opinion makes reference to site specific issues of interest to Aberdeenshire Council, to be considered and addressed in addition to those laid out in responses from consultees. These are presented in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Scoping Opinion Topics

Topic	Aberdeenshire Council Comments	Applicant Response
Cumulative Impact	<p>Table 13.2 Developments Foreseeable to the Applicant, should also include Quithel Battery Energy Storage System located to the southwest of the site.</p>	<p>The Scoping Report lists the developments we proposed to consider in the Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA). Whilst we agree the request to include Quithel Battery Energy Storage System as part of the CEA, we do not propose to include additional consultation on further cumulative developments other than those included the Scoping Report.</p>
Cultural Heritage	<p>Environment and Infrastructure Services – Archaeology states that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “the Cultural Heritage Assessment for potential historic environment impact should include an assessment of the transportation route to site and for any identified compensatory planting zones.” “In terms of the desk-based assessment in paragraph 7.8.1 there have been updates to the Aberdeenshire HER data for the primary development area. There are also further sites recorded throughout Fetteresso Forest which are in the process of being uploaded into the HER. The DBA should also take account of readily available LiDAR data.” “Any areas where felling has already taken place or where replanting has relatively recently occurred should be subject to a walkover survey. Post felling, a walkover survey is expected.” “In relation to paragraph 7.9 ‘Issues Scoped Out’ it states “There will be no construction works associated with the Proposed Development beyond the Site.” - does this take account of transportation route and compensatory planting zones.” <p>Environment and Infrastructure Services – Built Heritage states that: “historic assets within 5km should be assessed for potential impact. These would include Kirkton of Fetteresso Conservation Area and the approximately 30 listed buildings within 5 km of the application site, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> category ‘A’ listed Fetteresso Castle Doocot category ‘A’ listed Castle of Fiddes, located approximately 5.5 km to the south of the application site. Glenbervie House Gardens and Designed Landscape, located approximately 5.3km to the south west of the application site.” <p>“Can the Applicant extend the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) study area to 5 km to show the historic assets within this area and update the ZTV accordingly. Photomontage visualisations would also be expected for any assets identified within the assessment which</p>	<p>“The Scoping Opinion requests assessment of cultural heritage assets on land identified for compensatory planting. It is not anticipated that, at the time of planning submission, these areas will have been identified to a sufficient level of detail to facilitate this assessment, indeed, considerable time is required to identify possible tree planting projects, assess their capacity, undertake due diligence and secure heads of terms.”</p> <p>Updated HER records will be included in our assessment and updated LiDAR data has been used to support the desk-based assessment. Walkover surveys will be completed as part of the CEMP.</p> <p>Volume 2: Chapter 7: Forestry, Paragraph 7.9 takes into account access tracks and compensatory planting inside the PAN boundary.</p> <p>The Scoping Report sets out the rationale for using a study area of 3 km. The LVIA study area will not be expanded but will include assessment of key receptors that have intervisibility in conjunction with the Proposed Development, as noted in the report. Consideration of specific receptors, namely Fetteresso Castle Doocot, Castle of Fiddes and Glenbervie House Gardens and Designed Landscape will be included in the EIAR.</p> <p>A series of photomontage visualisations have been prepared to support the LVIA, included with the EIA Report in Volume 3: Figures 8.4 – 8.8.</p>

Topic	Aberdeenshire Council Comments	Applicant Response
	could be impacted as a result of the proposed works."	
Ecology & Biodiversity	<p>Environment and Infrastructure Services - Natural Environment acknowledges that, "Compensatory planting is outwith the scope of the EIA but will need to be addressed, including an assessment of the ground on which this is to be provided to ensure no loss of existing biodiversity or other features of value."</p> <p>"Consideration of the impacts should include any impacts resulting from the need to improve access to the site. . . Access has been scoped out of the EIA but as stated an Access Management Plan will be required for both development and operational phases of the development."</p> <p>"The requirements for biodiversity net gain are to be considered as part of the EIA and any habitats created and species used should be relevant to the local area and the soil conditions on site."</p>	<p>The Scoping Opinion identifies the need for a field-based assessment of any locations identified for compensatory planting to ensure impacts on biodiversity are addressed. As noted above, it is anticipated that at the time of planning submission the location of the compensatory planting locations will not be fully resolved.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report is included with the EIAR in Volume 4: Appendix 10.4.</p>
Private Water Supplies (PWS), Flood Risk	<p>Planning Service "has received feedback from residents in the area that whilst certain properties have been shown as having a PWS, the location of the source has been omitted from the map despite the information being provided. It is imperative that accurate information is considered within the EIA Report.</p> <p>Environment and Infrastructure Services – Flood Risk and Coast Protection comments that "a Drainage Impact Assessment and would be required and that a Flood Risk Assessment maybe required."</p>	<p>The Scoping Opinion highlights that where there are properties using private water supplies (PWS) the source of the water supply is not necessarily contiguous with property itself. The Applicant can confirm the source of the PWS will be accurately addressed in the EIAR.</p> <p>A Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy is included in Volume 4: Appendix 12.1. The drainage strategy, in conjunction with the wider EIAR, will provide sufficient detail on current and future drainage proposals within the Site, plus ancillary topics.</p>
Landscape, Forestry	<p>Carol Anderson Landscape Associates (CALA) requests that, "the applicant commits to planting hedgerows, field trees and woodlands Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland off-site with the aim of not just providing 'Additional Mitigation' in screening views, for example, but also providing more general landscape and biodiversity enhancement as required by NPF4",</p> <p>CALA welcomes "the opportunity to contribute to the consultation to be undertaken to determine other developments to be considered in the cumulative LVIA. The provisional representative assessment viewpoints listed in Table 6.2 of the Scoping Report are acceptable but consideration should also be given to defining additional representative viewpoint(s) from recreational routes within Fetteresso Forest (if open views occur) where potential receptors are identified."</p>	<p>The Scoping Opinion requests that the Applicant commits to planting hedgerows and other vegetative screening outwith the Site boundary. Given the requirement for the Applicant to secure agreements with multiple third-party landowners, it is not considered feasible to provide a commitment to screening in this manner. However, we intend to explore the potential to secure voluntary agreements with landowners to provide supplementary planting at the detailed design stage.</p> <p>The LVIA and Forestry chapters within the EIAR will identify where forest is to be retained and describe how forestry will play a role in screening the Proposed Development. This will be visually represented in the Landscape Design Plan (Volume 2: Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development, Figure 3.2).</p> <p>Use of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has indicated the likelihood of clear views from existing forest tracks to be limited. Whilst it is not proposed that additional viewpoints will be commissioned at this time, the LVIA will provide some consideration and provide commentary on views from Fetteresso Forest.</p>
Traffic and Transport	<p>Environment and Infrastructure Services – Roads Development states that, "Condition Surveys, traffic surveys and route appraisals will be required for all routes associated with the delivery of the project from the boundaries of the</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Council's request for Condition Surveys, traffic surveys and route appraisals. It proposes that it would be appropriate to secure Condition Surveys through a suitably worded planning condition, given the likely time between submission of the planning</p>

Topic	Aberdeenshire Council Comments	Applicant Response
	<p>trunk road network (or neighbouring Council network) as appropriate.”</p> <p>“It should be noted that the redline boundary of the site identified still includes the U115K public road network section and its’ linkage to the C1K. Roads Development noted concerns about this road corridor (C1K-U115K) in previous correspondence, this should be considered and amended accordingly as part of any future formal applications.”</p> <p>As part of the EIA, a review of the following would likely be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing road widths passing provisions construction makeup drainage visibility junction radii road markings statutory undertaker's plant <p>which may result in requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> road widening passing provision junction radii increases edge strengthening drainage solutions street furniture relocation statutory undertaker's plant rerouting or lowering remedial works for reinstatement <p>“A Transport Assessment is required for the development, a reduced scope as noted in 11.3.3 is in principle acceptable, and dialogue should be made with Roads Development in conjunction with this.”</p>	<p>application and the transport of materials to site and that any premature survey could provide an unrepresentative description of the highway. Traffic surveys and a high-level route appraisal (including justification for the routes chosen) is provided in Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of this EIAR, which includes mitigation measures by design, industry standard/best practice through the CEMP and GEMPS, and Site-specific mitigation to address required works and manage impacts.</p> <p>The Applicant would prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for approval by Aberdeenshire Council, secured through a suitably worded planning condition to any planning permission. The CTMP would identify the design and location of access roads including any upgrades, surface finishing, drainage proposals, and approaches to environmental management which Aberdeenshire Council deems to be required.</p> <p>Drainage is assessed in Chapter 12: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology & Soils.</p>

6.6 Issues Scoped Out of Assessment

6.6.1 It is considered that the following topics, summarized in **Table 6.2: Issued Scoped Out of EIA** below, do not require to be the subject of detailed EIA work as it is considered that they are not likely to give rise to significant effects. The topics were scoped out from further consideration within the EIA Report, as discussed in the Scoping Report provided in **Volume 4: Appendix 6.2**. There was general agreement amongst consultees, as detailed within the Scoping Opinion provided in **Volume 4: Appendix 6.3**), as to the proposed scope of the EIA Report.

Table 6.2: Issues Scoped Out of EIA

Issues Scoped Out	Assessment	Conclusion
Recreation	<p>Access Management Plan would ensure no significant effects on users of recreational routes during construction.</p> <p>Minor adverse effects would be temporary in nature.</p> <p>No significant impact to the use or general amenity of the key routes such as core paths and cycle routes during operation.</p>	<p>Proposed Development (PD) would not have likely significant effects on recreation.</p>
Population and Human Health	<p>EMF</p> <p>Electromagnetic fields (EMFs) are emitted from the operation of substations but is typically contained within the boundary of the substation development.</p>	<p>EMF from PD would not have a likely significant effect on population and human health.</p>

Issues Scoped Out	Assessment	Conclusion
	<p>Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) arise from electric charges. To prevent known effects of EMFs on health, the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) developed health protection guidelines in 1998 for both public and occupational exposure. In the UK, the National Institute for Health Protection's (NIHP) Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (CRCE) has set out guidelines for exposure to EMFs.</p> <p>In March 2004, the UK adopted the ICNIRP 1998 guidelines on the advice of the National Radiological Protection Board (now part of NIHP CRCE). These guidelines set conservative exposure levels for the public to electric and magnetic fields, and they are endorsed by the World Health Organisation and the UK Government.</p> <p>The NIHP CRCE keeps under review emerging scientific research and/or studies that may link EMF exposure with health problems and provides advice to the Department of Health and Social Care on the possible need for introducing further precautionary measures.</p> <p>All new transmission and related infrastructure is required to comply with the government policy of adopting the guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) on exposure to EMF. The Applicant ensures at all times that it complies with relevant legislation, which in turn is based on the advice of the UK Government's independent scientific advisers, to ensure the appropriate level of protection for the public from these fields.</p> <p>In determining the level of impact, SSEN Transmission closely observe these independent guidelines which in conjunction with a Code of Practice, published in 2012 by industry and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (now part of the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero), sets out all the practical details needed to apply the exposure limits for substations.</p> <p>EMF resulting from the Proposed Development are compliant with National Policy and Industry Standards as specified with the Energy Network Association Code of Practice and Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002. Consequently, in setting out the scope of an EIA, SSEN Transmission can demonstrate that levels of exposure are within the limits set within these standards, within the exposure guidelines as specified in the Code of Practice on compliance, and with the policy on phasing as specified in the Code of Practice on optimal phasing, no significant effects are likely to result from radiation and EMFs.</p> <p>Therefore, an assessment on EMF has been scoped out of this EIA Report.</p> <p>Noise, dust and visual effects</p> <p>Changes in noise predicted from construction traffic for people living close to the PD, and elevated levels of dust from some construction works during dry periods would be mitigated and managed in a CEMP and construction noise management plan.</p> <p>During operation the substation would not be illuminated at night for normal operation. Floodlights would be installed and only used in the event of a fault during the hours of darkness, the over-run of planned works, or when sensors are activated as security lighting for night-time access.</p>	<p>PD is not predicted to have significant effects related to noise, emissions to air or visual impact on the health of people resident in the area.</p> <p>The Residential Visual Amenity assessment concludes that the Proposed Development would not affect the 'living conditions' or residential amenity experienced by the residents, either in isolation or cumulatively."</p> <p>Noise impact related to operation of substation equipment, as well as cumulative noise impacts for inter and intra-related projects, is discussed further in Chapter 14.</p>
Air Quality	<p>PD is not located within or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).</p> <p>Emissions would be limited and temporary during construction. Potential effects would be managed and mitigated by the CEMP, GEMPs, and an Access Management Plan.</p>	<p>No likely significant effects on air quality are anticipated.</p>

Issues Scoped Out	Assessment	Conclusion
	There are no operational or maintenance activities that will give rise to emissions to air.	
Climate Change	According to NPF4, a GHG assessment of National Development concludes that grid transmission projects are part of renewables infrastructure that collectively delivers (net) emissions reductions. At the strategic level the negative effects are predicted to be minor.	Effects of the PD on climate change are predicted to be minor in significance.
Life Cycle/ Embodied Carbon & Land Use Change Carbon	The PD has been designed to avoid carbon rich soils (CRS) or peat within the Site area. The project includes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to offset changes to land use both on and offsite, which would have a positive effect on retaining/increasing embodied carbon. The Applicant's environmental management plans would minimize life cycle emissions.	PD would have an insignificant or potentially beneficial impact on carbon sequestration/retention. A Peat Survey Report is included in Appendix 12.3 .
Socio-Economic Considerations & Assessments	PD conforms to national planning policy, NPF4 framework for National Developments, National Grid's Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND) policy, and British Energy Security Strategy to provide homegrown power in the UK, reinforce the electricity grid, facilitate renewable energy transmission in Scotland, and provide wider social and economic benefits in Scotland and the UK.	A stand-alone Economic Impact Assessment addresses the broad benefits of the Proposed Development in terms of employment generation. Socio-economic considerations are also noted in the Planning Statement. Both are submitted to accompany the planning application and are separate from this EIA Report.
Major Accidents & Disasters	Limited vulnerability to major accidents due to rural location. Site would be secured by perimeter fencing. PD to be designed in-line with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (2015) (CDM Regulations). Flood risk avoided in design. SuDS to minimize flood risk.	PD would not likely contribute to, nor is it particularly vulnerable to major accidents and disasters. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy is included in Appendix 12.1 .
Material Assets & Waste	PD was selected to avoid utilities infrastructure (such as gas pipelines). Construction waste will be managed in accordance with good practice guidance and implementation of a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP). Substation operation does not produce any waste. Waste from maintenance would be managed on site and recycled.	PD would not have a significant impact on material assets or waste.