

Planning Applications under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

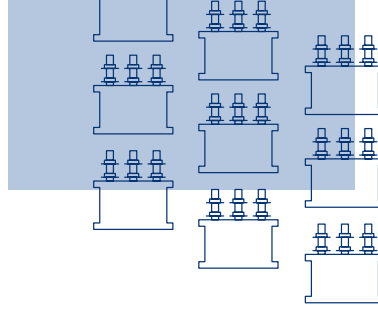
The main legislation that governs the consenting of our substation and converter station projects is the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

The pre-application consultation process

Formal Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) is required for all development proposals that fall within Major or National development categories, as described by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The PAC process is described by Regulations 6 and 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 (as amended) ('Development Management Regulations').

The submission of a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) is the first formal stage in the PAC process, and the beginning of a consultation period that must allow for at least 12 weeks between the start of the pre-application consultation and submission of a planning application. It must be submitted to the planning authority, and sent to interested parties, with details of the consultation a developer intends to carry out, and a plan identifying the land for development.





Pre-application Consultation for our Pathway to 2030 substations and converter stations

We began this process for our Pathway to 2030 substations and converter stations with the submission of our PANs at the beginning of 2024 to the relevant planning authority. With each PAN, we submitted a plan identifying the largest extent of land which could be used for development within a PAN Boundary (shown in red). This was drawn to account for not only the platforms to house the electricity infrastructure, but also necessary temporary and permanent development like access, drainage infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements, construction compounds, and more. It is important to note that the PAN Boundary shown on these may be reduced or rationalised as the development proposals become finalised. To the planning authority, we also provided details of interested parties the PAN was sent to, and highlighted plans for publicity for the events and project website.

We are required by the Development Management Regulations to hold at least two public PAC events for our proposals. The first public events for our Pathway to 2030 substations and converter stations were held across February and March 2024. These current events (May and June) are our second PAC events, during which feedback will be given on the views you provided at the first event. There will also be an opportunity for comment after this second event for the duration of the consultation period.

We would like to confirm that comments made through the PAC process are not formal representations to the planning authority. When the planning applications are submitted there will be an opportunity to make formal representations to the relevant planning authority in writing or through their online planning portal.



Environmental assessments

Formal Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for Town and Country Planning Act applications are governed by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 ('2017 EIA Regulations').

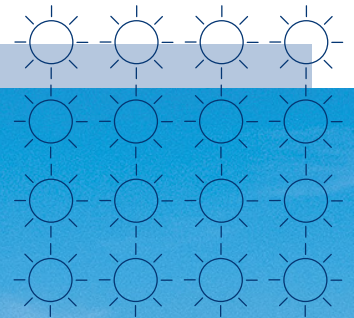
Our Pathway to 2030 substations and converter stations would not automatically trigger the need for an EIA to be submitted as they do not fall definitively within the relevant definitions set out within the Schedules of the 2017 EIA Regulations. However, we are progressing these projects as EIA developments due to their connection to our proposed 400kV overhead lines which, due to their scale and capacity, are subject to mandatory EIA under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Once submitted, these EIA Reports will become available to the public for inspection.

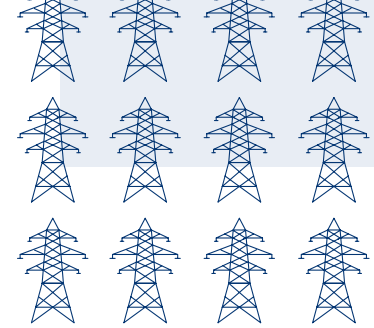
Any of our applications that are not classed as EIA developments will still be accompanied by a comprehensive environmental assessment (known as an Environmental Appraisal to distinguish it from a formal EIA), which is not mandated by any regulations, but contains the same kind of information and assessment as an EIA.

Prior to submission of the applications, we acknowledge that members of the public are keen to view further details regarding our consideration of potential impacts such as landscape and visual, noise, local wildlife, water soils and drainage (including protection of Private Water Supplies), land use, traffic, and recreation.

For projects that require an EIA, we are required to confirm the scope of the assessments by seeking a Scoping Opinion from the relevant planning authority. In consultation with Statutory Consultees (such as SEPA, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland), the planning authority will issue a Scoping Opinion. The topics to be included in the EIA may vary from project to project.

In our requests for Scoping Opinions, we will also outline the methods for obtaining information that will ultimately inform the conclusions of the environmental assessments. The Scoping Opinion provides the planning authority and Statutory Consultees an opportunity to agree these or suggest alternatives.





Planning application submission and determination

Planning applications for the development proposals are due to be submitted to the relevant planning authorities in Autumn 2024. They will be accompanied by an application form, technical layout drawings, a planning statement (detailing how the development complies with relevant planning policies) and an EIA Report or Environmental Appraisal.

We will also submit a Pre-application Consultation (PAC) Report, providing a summary of the consultation undertaken and feedback received throughout the process. Where comments are received that cannot be addressed in the final proposal, an explanation will also be given why this is the case.

Following submissions, the local authorities will confirm they have all the information they require to progress the application, or request additional information, through a process called validation. Once an application is validated, the planning authority will open and publicise its own consultation period for the application. After the consultation period, the planning authority can start to determine the application according to its decision-making procedures (often contained in a Scheme of Delegation). Normally, Major and National development applications will be decided by a committee made of elected members, or full council.

If the application is approved, planning permission will normally be granted subject to conditions, which we as the developer will need to satisfy in order to implement the planning permission.

