Tealing to Westfield Overhead Line 400 kV Upgrade

EIA Report Volume 1:

Non-technical Summary

November 2024









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Who we are

We are Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, operating under licence as Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc for the transmission of electricity in the north of Scotland.

Who are SSEN Transmission?

SSEN Transmission operates, maintains, and improves the high voltage electricity transmission network in the north of Scotland. Our network extends over a quarter of the UK's land mass and some of its most challenging terrain. This area has a lot of renewable energy potential such as wind, solar, hydro and marine power.

Delivering a Network for Net Zero

SSEN Transmission are investing over £20bn to upgrade the network infrastructure across the north of Scotland between now and 2030 as the region plays a leading role in the clean energy transition.

As a mass transporter of renewable energy, the north of Scotland electricity transmission network has a major role to play in supporting delivery of Scotland and the UK's 2030 net zero targets, connecting new onshore and offshore renewables generation and transporting the power generated to demand centres in the rest of Scotland and beyond.

This investment is critical to powering change and meeting Scotland and the UK's renewable energy targets, accelerating our delivery to meet the 2030 offshore wind connection dates, known as the 'Pathway to 2030'. This investment will also play a vital role in helping ensure our future energy security by using affordable, home-grown, low carbon electricity while providing significant economic and employment opportunities supporting 20,000 jobs across the UK, 9,000 of which will be in Scotland.



Our Responsibilities

SSEN Transmission have a licence for the transmission of electricity in the north of Scotland and we are closely regulated by the energy regulator Ofgem.

Our licence stipulates that we must develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission.



Project Overview

The upgrade of the exiting 275 kilovolt (kV) overhead line (OHL) between Tealing and Westfield to 400 kV is part of a larger upgrade of the National Grid to enable the growth of renewable energy across Great Britain.

Introduction

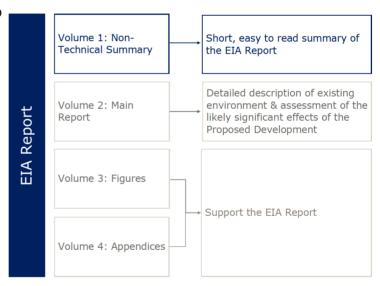
This Non-Technical Summary forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report ('EIA Report') which has been prepared to accompany an application for consent to upgrade approximately 37 kilometres (km) of OHL between Tower 182 (west of Tealing substation) and the licence boundary with Scottish Power Energy Networks (Westfield / Glenrothes) (mid span Towers 66 and 65), to enable operation at 400 kV ('the Proposed Development').

The EIA Report presents the findings of a detailed environmental assessment and advises on whether there would be any significant environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development. It also

includes measures which would be taken to prevent, reduce and, where possible, offset predicted likely significant adverse effects.

Whilst Volumes 2 to 4 present detailed technical assessments, the first volume - this Non-Technical Summary – provides a simpler, clearer summary of the key findings of the EIA Report.

AECOM have prepared the EIA Report on behalf of SSEN and in accordance with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process

Carpow Hill looking northwards

EIA is a process that considers how a proposed development is predicted to change existing environmental conditions and what the consequences of such changes will be. It considers how sensitive a receptor is (such as a community or certain wildlife); what the magnitude of the impact (or change) will be; and then determines how significant the effect will be (using a scale:

moderate or major effects are considered significant and can be negative (adverse) or positive (beneficial)).

EIA is an important design tool as it provides an opportunity to avoid or minimise significant adverse effects as the design of a development progresses. If effects cannot be reduced through design, other measures to improve effects can sometimes be identified, such as through planning the movements of construction traffic. This is called mitigation.



Project Description

Consent for the Proposed Development is being sought under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, as amended, for the increase in voltage of the existing OHL from 275 kV to 400 kV. Deemed planning permission is also being sought under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, for supporting and associated works.

Proposed Development

The main components of the Proposed Development are:

- replacement of conductors, insulators and fittings on the existing steel lattice towers;
- where required, tower condition works including steelwork and tower leg foundation work to strengthen the existing steel lattice towers;
- replacement of existing earthwire with Optical Ground Wire;
- subject to further engineering and design checks, some modifications to the existing towers may be required, such as the inverting of cross arms to improve clearances, and changes to the insulator set configurations; and
- subject to further engineering and design checks, the following tower works may be required:
 - Towers 155 and 156 may need to be extended in height by using a 2 m long body extension however, inverting tower cross arms and/or the use of suspended tension sets may suffice; and
 - o either Tower 129 or 132 (not both) may need to be replaced. To facilitate these works, a temporary diversion tower (installed for less than 1 year) would also be required. The maximum height of these towers would be:
 - Tower 129: new tower 45.5m; temporary diversion tower - 45.5m; or
 - Tower 132: new tower: 51.15m; temporary diversion tower 51.3m.

Associated Works

The other works required to support the main components of the Proposed Development (i.e. the associated works) include:

- vegetation clearance,
- access track construction and track upgrades,
- temporary site compounds (at working areas, to include mobile welfare unit and refuelling / spill kits, etc.),
- laydown areas,
- crane pads,
- Equipotential Zones (which is an area to protect workers from electric shock when working on the lines),
- temporary measures to protect road, rail and water crossings, and
- the increase in operating voltage of the OHL requires a wider wayleave corridor, therefore some tree felling will be required where there are infringements to this corridor.

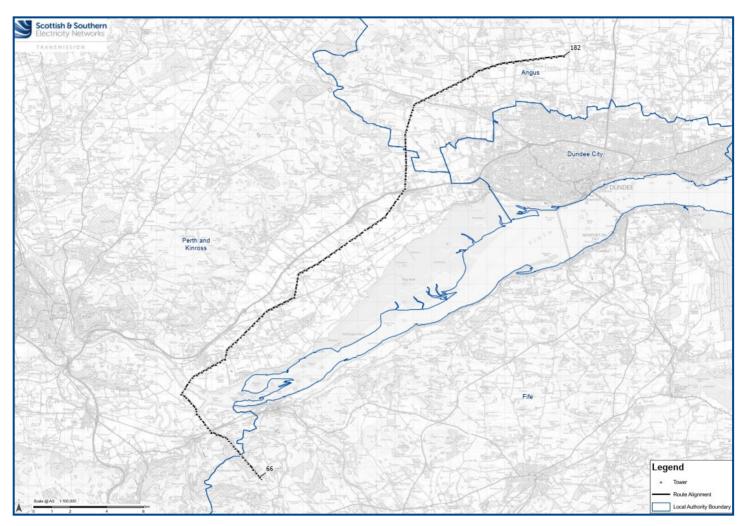
Construction Allowances

The Proposed Development includes a number of elements which, for construction, will need some flexibility in final siting to reflect localised land, engineering and environmental constraints. No element would be placed more than 100m from the designs submitted with this EIA. Maximum distances are established and assessed within the EIA.



Site Location

The route of the Proposed Development is shown on the figure below. It passes through the following Local Authority areas: Fife; Perth and Kinross; and Angus.





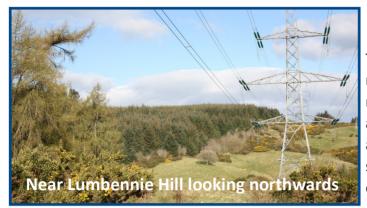
Conductor Replacement

Conductors are important elements of OHLs which allow the transmission of electricity. The existing conductors on the OHL are twin conductors. These would be replaced by triple bundle conductors for the Proposed Development. The photograph on the left shows the difference between the conductors types: on the left of the tower is the twin, and on the right is the triple conductor.



Need for Project and Alternatives Considered

The EIA Report provides details on the reasonable alternatives studied, and the reasons for the selection of the final option.



Need for the Proposed Development

To enable the forecasted growth in renewable electricity across Great Britain, including the UK and Scottish Government's 2030 offshore wind targets of 50 gigawatts (GW) and 11 GW respectively, in 2022 the National Grid set out a blueprint of the electricity transmission network infrastructure required.

As part of wider proposals, collectively known as East Coast 400 kV Phase 2, this project has been determined as critical to enable the delivery of the UK and Scottish Government's renewable energy targets.

For the north of Scotland, there is a need for a significant and strategic increase in the capacity of the onshore electricity transmission infrastructure to deliver 2030 targets and a pathway to net zero. East Coast 400 kV Phase 2 requires accelerated development and delivery to meet 2030 connection dates.

The need for these reinforcements has been further underlined within the recent British Energy Security Strategy. This sets out the UK Government's plans to accelerate homegrown power to support increased UK energy independence.

Consideration of Alternatives

The EIA Regulations require SSEN to report on the reasonable alternatives that were studied and the main reasons for the choice of the development, taking into account the environmental effects. In this case, the alternative options considered were a "do nothing" scenario, and the refurbishment and upgrade of the existing 275 kV OHL to 400 kV.

"Do-nothing"

The "do-nothing" scenario assumes that no other options are considered as reinforcement and the section of the transmission network forming part of this application would remain operational at a voltage of 275 kV.

The upgrade to the transmission network in the north of Scotland is necessary due to the growth in renewable electricity generation requiring an increase in transmission capacity. Therefore, a "do nothing" scenario would result in a significant network capacity deficit.

The "do nothing" scenario is not considered a sustainable development option, resulting in insufficient capacity in the network and a failure to meet the generation and supply demands. It would be inconsistent with SSEN's licence obligations to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economic electricity system.

Refurbish and Upgrade Existing OHL to 400 kV

The option of refurbishing and upgrading the existing OHL was based upon re-using the existing tower assets, as this could be achieved and would avoid additional cost, time and potential impacts of installing new assets. For this reason, and to be in line with the SSEN's licence obligations, the decision was taken to refurbish and upgrade the existing OHL.



Landscape and Visual

The landscape surrounding the Proposed Development is largely rural in nature, characterised by an undulating topography and agricultural land use in the north, transitioning to flatter land close to the Firth of Tay, before rising on the irregular slopes of the Ochil Hills towards the south. Occasional trees and woodland often associated with historic estates, and forestry on higher ground, provides a local sense of enclosure within an otherwise open agricultural landscape.

Visual Receptors

Potential sensitive landscape and visual receptors include residents, tourists, walkers and cyclists.

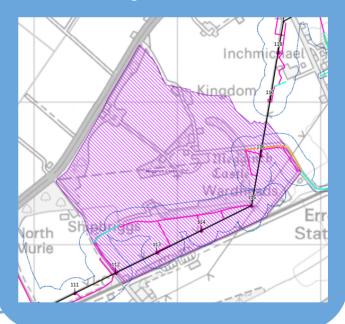
In the northern study area, potential visual receptors largely consist of residents and visitors to Piperdam and a small number of scattered farms and rural properties, and recreational users of the golf course and local core paths.

In the southern study area potential visual receptors consist primarily of residents on the edge of Inchture and scattered rural properties along the minor road south of West Mains of Inchture and around Balgay Farm.

Legend Limit of Deviation — Route Alignment — Existing road / track Upgrade to existing road or track Trackway panels — Bespoke Track Garden or Designed Landscape

Megginch Castle

Megginch Castle Garden and Designed Landscape is located approximately 1 km north of Errol, bordered by the A90 to the north and railway line to the south. The Garden and Designed Landscape consists largely of parkland, tree lined avenues and woodland, with more formal gardens around the castle.



Significant Effects

The majority of the potential landscape and visual changes would be related to construction activities, which are temporary and short-term, with no potential for significant effects. As a result, a targeted landscape and visual assessment was conducted to focus on areas where changes or replacements to existing tower structures may be needed, and where there is potential for direct impacts on trees within the Megginch Castle Garden and Designed Landscape.

This targeted assessment concluded that the effects on receptors during construction would be minor or negligible adverse on identified landscape and visual receptors. For the operational phase, the assessment identified limited changes, resulting in negligible adverse effects on the same receptors. Due to the limited, localised nature of the changes and the absence of significant effects, additional mitigation measures are deemed unnecessary.

Ecology

A desk study was carried out to identify nature conservation designations and records of important habitats and species potentially relevant to the Proposed Development. Ecological field surveys were undertaken in 2023 and 2024 to identify sensitive ecological habitats and to confirm the presence or absence of protected ecological species. Targeted surveys were undertaken for habitats, bats, otter, beaver, water vole, badger, pine marten, great crested newts.

Baseline

There are 8 identified designated sites within the vicinity of the Proposed Development, including 4 Special Areas of Conservation and 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. There are also 5 Local Nature Conservation Sites. A variety of habitats were found within the large study area, including areas of Ancient Woodland. Some plant invasive non-native species were also recorded incidentally.

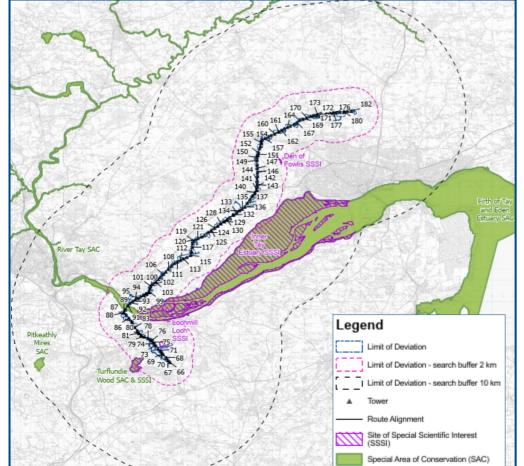
A minimum of four bat species were confirmed to be present within the survey area. There was also evidence of otter, badger, beaver, red squirrel, brown hare, great crested newt and pine marten.

Significant Effects

No significant effects on any important ecological features from the Proposed Development were identified during the assessment.

A variety of mitigation measures were identified to further reduce effects. The need for compensatory planting for long-established plantation woodland, wet woodland and upland mixed ashwood was identified.

Some otter refuges found in study area:









November 2024



Ornithology

An ornithological desk study was carried out to identify nature conservation designations and records of important bird species potentially relevant to the Proposed Development. Ornithological non-breeding bird surveys were also completed in suitable habitat within 500m of the Proposed Development, with site visits in February and March 2024.

Potential Receptors

There are 4 sites with a statutory designation for ornithological interest which are potentially connected (i.e. lie within distances typically travelled for an individual bird species from its roost) to the Proposed Development, as follows:

- Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary (SPA and Ramsar site)
- Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay (Complex SPA)
- Loch Leven (SPA and Ramsar site)
- South Tayside Goose Roost (SPA and Ramsar site)

Bird species present include: whooper swan, pink-footed goose, greylag goose, shoveler, wigeon and a large number of seabirds and waterbirds.

The desk study also identified records of protected species

including; grey partridge, linnet, tree sparrow, merlin, marsh

Significant Effects

It has been concluded that there will be no likely significant effects caused by the Proposed Development ecological on features relating to ornithology.

As the alignment of the existing Overhead Line will remain unchanged, there will be no change to the current baseline risk of birds colliding with the line.

harrier and barn owl. It has been concluded there is no suitable habitat for the raptor species identified within the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Forestry

The forestry assessment focused on commercial and non-commercial woodland and its ability to withstand a shock event and then return to its former purpose and quality. In this context, management of vegetation in proximity to the energy network considers growth and the potential failure of trees. As part of the assessment, a resilience survey was undertaken.

Significant Effects

Woodland sites at Dronley Wood, Murie Wood / Broadlie Burn and Pitmedden Wood will require tree removals for the wider wayleave corridor, but in each case there would be no significant effect. This includes consideration of the extended felling (totalling 0.45 ha) at Dronley Wood that would be required for tree stability.





Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage in this context refers to the above and below-ground archaeological resource, built heritage, the historic landscape, and any other elements which may contribute to the historical and cultural heritage of the area. A combination of desk-based research and walkover surveys in 2023 and 2024 were undertaken for the assessment.

Megginch Castle Garden and Designed Landscape

It was identified early in the assessment process that the main potential for impacts on designated assets were limited to this asset. The overhead line crosses the eastern avenue associated with the Garden and Designed Landscape and passes through arable fields within it to the south and east.

The works proposed within the Garden and Designed Landscape consist of minor changes to the woodland associated with clearances required for the safe operation of the Proposed Development, and works associated with the access tracks.



In order to preserve the trees lining the eastern

avenue, the track here would not be widened to accommodate construction traffic. If construction traffic were considered to pose risk to the roots of the trees here, then alternative temporary trackway through the adjacent arable fields would be used instead, with resulting minor loss of up to 2 young trees. Effects are therefore considered minor and not significant.

An Archaeological Strategy will be agreed pre-construction with Historic Environment Scotland and the relevant Local Planning Authority Archaeological Advisor via a Written Scheme of Investigation. It is expected that day-to day works on site will be under the supervision of an Archaeological Clerk of Works.

Significant Effects

The results of the baseline assessment identified that the study area contains evidence of archaeological remains dating from the later prehistoric periods to the modern period, however below ground archaeology is expected to experience relatively limited impacts a result of the Proposed Development.

Most previously recorded assets will also be avoided by the works, such as the installation of temporary trackways or the upgrade of existing tracks. As such, mitigation in most areas is limited to archaeological monitoring where trackways are being stripped to record elements of previously recorded features or assets that might extend into the work areas.

As the Proposed Development results in no changes to the majority of towers, all effects are limited to the construction phase, with no impacts on the setting of assets during the operational phase.



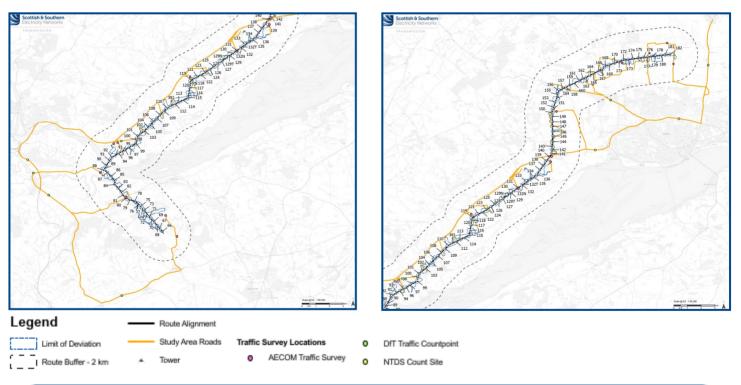
Traffic and Transport

This assessment considered the direct effects during construction of the Proposed Development on increased traffic flows on the surrounding road networks and on population groups that may be sensitive to changes in road traffic. Traffic surveys and Traffic Scotland National Traffic Data System traffic counts were used for data on 38 roads in the study area.

Receptor Sensitivity

Study area roads are subject to an assessment of sensitivity based on interests including people at work and home, sensitive and/or vulnerable groups and locations of concentrations of vulnerable users (such as hospitals and schools), areas of retail, recreation and tourism, as well as routes with road safety concerns and junctions or link roads at or over capacity.

Roads are also identified which require to be subject to environmental assessment, which considers community severance which can be caused by roads; fear and intimidation on or by road users (vulnerability relating to traffic flows and speed); road user and pedestrian safety; non-motorised amenity (broadly the pleasantness of pedestrian and cyclist journeys); and delay (both non-motorised and driver/passenger).



Significant Effects

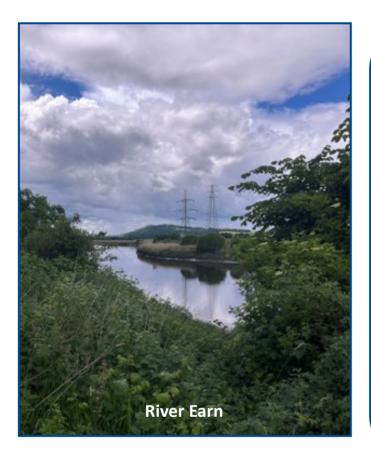
Of the roads in the study area, no significant effects were identified except on the U093 Lochmill Loch. Prior to mitigation, temporary, short-term moderate, significant effects were identified in the categories of: community severance, non-motorised user amenity and non-motorised user delay. These results are all primarily due to the very low current traffic numbers increasing as a result of construction traffic.

Mitigation is identified to reduce the significant effects identified on the U093 Lochmill Loch. This includes a Construction Traffic Management Plan to control and minimise the effects of vehicle movements to and from the Proposed Development, and control measures at access points onto public roads. This mitigation would reduce predicted effects to not significant.



Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Geology

An assessment of the potential impacts and effects of the Proposed Development on the water environment and geology during its construction, operation and maintenance. Baseline data was gathered from a range of sources and a site walkover was also conducted.



Baseline Conditions

The site walkover in March 2024 aimed to identify and characterise surface and groundwater receptors, consider flow pathways from source to receptors, and make general observations about the character of the landscape and other relevant features that may influence the sensitivity and importance of water features.

5 catchment areas were identified to be crossed by the Proposed Development. There are also 71 private water supplies within 250 m and 31 Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 licences within 200 m of the Proposed Development. These licences include the activities of discharge, diffuse pollution, abstractions, engineering works in inland waters and groundwater activities.

Significant Effects

No significant effects were identified on groundwater receptors, culverts, peat or geologically designated sites. Prior to mitigation, significant effects were identified on three private water supplies from the potential for foundation improvements to cause groundwater contamination. Significant effects were also identified through sediment runoff to water features to the River Earn, the River Tay, the Pow of Errol, Grange Pow, Huntly Bar and Piperdam Burn.

Following the implementation of mitigation, including a Construction Environmental Management Plan, which would include standard good construction practices, and a water quality and flow management plan for water bodies directly affected by works and any identified private water supplies, no significant residual environmental effects on the water environment have been predicted.

It is expected that there will be minimal impacts from the operation of the Proposed Development due to its nature as operational residue and emissions are very limited and additional works are only expected if there is unexpected damage to the Proposed Development.





Noise and Vibration

An assessment of the potential noise effects that could arise due to the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development to the closest noise sensitive receptors has been undertaken.

Baseline Conditions

There are 391 noise sensitive receptors identified within 280 m of the centreline of the existing overhead line. To determine the background noise at each location, free-field attended spot measurements were conducted at nearby noise sensitive receptors between 23:00 and 03:00 on the nights of 23 April, 24 April, 01 May, 02 May, 12 June and 17 June 2024.

It is not expected that there will be a significant change to future baseline noise levels than those measured in this study.

Significant Effects

Prior to mitigation, significant effects were identified on nearby residents for certain types of construction works taking place in the evenings and at weekends, as noise is predicted to be above the 55 decibel limit. However, the implementation of a robust construction noise management plan will ensure residual construction noise has a minor impact on all receptors, which is not considered significant.

The operational noise of the Proposed Development is predicted to have no significant effects on any noise sensitive receptor, this includes internal noise at nighttime.

For vibration from foundation works, any sensitive receptors within 57m may need to be given prior warning to the works by the Principal Contractor. The need for this will be reassessed by the Principal Contractor prior to works starting.





Cumulative Effects

The EIA Regulations require that the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development are assessed. This assessment considers a number of different interactions, including the combined environmental effects from the Proposed Development (such as the effects that may occur on a community from traffic and visual impacts); as well as the combined environmental effects from multiple projects in development (such as the effects that may occur on a community from traffic if many projects were being constructed at once).

Approach to Assessment

The assessment of cumulative effects for the Proposed Development was split into 3:

1. Interactive cumulative assessment for the Proposed Development

The effects caused by a combination of effects from the Proposed Development on a receptor, such as the community or the natural environment. Collectively, all of the impacts considered in each of the assessment chapters of the EIA may combine to cause a more significant effect than they do alone.

Significant Effects

After the implementation of mitigation, no significant effects have been identified in any of the specialist assessments conducted for the EIA (including ecology, ornithology, traffic and transport, noise, etc.). No significant combined effects have therefore been identified.

2. Interactive cumulative assessment for associated SSEN developments

The consideration of the effects from all projects from the SSEN Pathway to 2030 projects, referenced on Page 1 'Who we are', that are in geographical proximity to the Proposed Development.

Significant Effects

Four other projects are considered as part of this assessment: the Alyth to Tealing 400 kV upgrade, Emmock (Tealing) substation, Kintore to Tealing 400 kV connection, and the Alyth—Tealing and Tealing—Westfield OHL substation tie ins and associated tower dismantling.

If all developments were constructed at once, a moderate adverse significant effect on traffic was identified, however mitigation through coordinated construction traffic management plans would manage these cumulative effects. No other cumulative effects were identified.

3. In combination cumulative assessment for other SSEN and 3rd party developments

The combined effects from the Proposed Development, associated SSEN developments and other reasonably foreseeable developments in the surrounding area.

Significant Effects

Eleven other projects are considered as part of this assessment, including energy storage facilities, energy generation projects and another proposed OHL uprating to the south of the Proposed Development.

As above, a significant effect with combined traffic was identified if all developments were constructed at once, however mitigation would manage this. No other cumulative effects were identified.



Summary of Effects

Where significant effects from the Proposed Development have been identified, either alone or in combination with other topics and/or developments, mitigation measures have been proposed with the aim of reducing the extent of the effects. As a result, no significant residual effects have been identified following the application of these measures.

Summary of Effects

A full schedule of mitigation measures is provided in Chapter 17 of the EIA Report (Volume 2). This will need to be implemented as part of any future consent and the contractor who builds the development will be required to comply with it. The list below provides a selection of some of the key measures in the schedule:

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan, which will detail how the contractor will
 manage the project in accordance with all commitments and mitigation detailed in this EIA
 Report, as well as statutory consents and authorisations, and industry best practice and
 guidance.
- New or widened tracks should avoid any Site of Special Scientific Interest and if they do not, NatureScot authorisation is required.
- Biodiversity Net Gain measures, as prescribed in the associated report to enhance habitat and woodland, are to be implemented.
- Construction work should be designed to avoid disruption to great crested newt, beavers, badgers, pine martens and red squirrels as identified through the ecological survey. Where this is not possible, a Species Protection Plan will be needed and a licence will be required from NatureScot.
- All works in or near watercourses would adhere to pollution control measures and the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011.
- Targeted bat surveys by licensed surveyors are required on relevant identified trees to minimise impacts on roosting bats.
- Archaeological monitoring to be undertaken during construction and ground works in areas identified in cultural heritage assessment.
- Detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan to be approved by relevant roads authorities .
- Control movement of construction traffic to /from public roads in safe and efficient manner
- A robust Construction Noise Management Plan to ensure construction noise has a minor impact on all noise sensitive receptors.



What happens next and have your say

An application for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 has been submitted to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit to upgrade the Tealing to Westfield OHL to 400 kV. Deemed planning consent has also been applied for under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, for supporting and associated works.

Feedback

Any representations in respect of the application may be submitted via:



Energy Consents Unit mailbox at representations@gov.scot or



post to The Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 ✓→ Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds of representation.

Representations should be dated, clearly stating the name of the project (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to will receive representations@gov.scot acknowledgement.

All representations should be received no later than the date falling 30 days from the date of the last published notice, although Ministers may consider representations received after this date. Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the Applicant will be subject to further be accepted as per this notice.

Further Information

The application, including the EIA Report, has been advertised in the following newspapers: Edinburgh Gazette, Perthshire Advertiser, the Dundee Courier, the Courier (Fife).

Notice of the Section 37 application, including this EIA Report and associated documents and figures, will be available for viewing at the following public locations during normal opening hours:

- Perth & Kinross Council, Pullar House, 35 Kinnoull Street, Perth, PH1 5GD (normal opening: hours Monday to Friday 8.45am to 5.00pm);
- Angus House, Orchardbank Business Park, Orchardbank, Forfar, DD8 1AN (opening hours: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 5.00pm)
- Newburgh Library and Heritage Centre, Tayside Institute, 90-92 High Street, Newburgh, KY14 6DA (opening hours: Monday 10.00am to 1.00pm, Thursday 2.00pm to 6.00pm, and Saturday 09.30am to 12.30pm).

An electronic version is available online at: https:// www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/tealing ---westfield-overhead-line-upgrade, Energy Consents Unit website at www.energyconsents.scot/

The EIA Report is available in other formats if required. For details, including costs, contact:

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