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 (March 2016) of the project and continued throughout the EIA development process during 2021, culminating in a pre-application virtual consultation event in Summer 2021. Consultation events held between September 2020 and August 2021 were conducted in line with COVID-19 restrictions, using virtual exhibitions and online interactive chat functions. 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 website[1] 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**
- **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:

- Two consultation events were held in March 2016 (Project Introduction) and October 2016 (Route option consultation).
- A scoping request for the Preferred Alignment between the proposed Creag Dhubh and Dalmally substation was submitted in December 2017. This was a separate exercise , which has now been superseded by the current scoping request (2020) on the Preferred Alignment being taken forward for consent.
- The Applicants project team attended Glenorchy and Innishill Community Council meeting in January 2018 (cabling update), with a further public consultation even in March 2018 (Preferred Alignment consultation between Creag Dhubh and Dalmally substation).
- A new Scoping request was submitted in December 2020 for the Preferred Alignment / Route[2] between the proposed Creag Dhubh substation to a new switching station in Glen Lochy (Succoth Glen) adjacent to the existing Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) 275 kV overhead line from Dalmally to Inverarnan.

1 https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/creag-dhubh-dalmally-275kv-connection/

[2] The Proposed Development was at two stages of development at this time. Consisting of a Preferred Alignment between the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation and T33 and a Preferred Route between T330 and the proposed Glen Lochy (Succoth Glen) Switching Station.

- Two virtual consultation events (dedicated virtual public consultation platform with a 3D Model) were held in September 2020 (available here: https://3dwtech.co.uk/dashboard/ssen/dalmally/exhibition/) and Summer 2021 (available here: https://3dwtech.co.uk/dashboard/ssen/argyll-kintyre-strategy/exhibition/).
- The Applicant held a public meeting on the 4th October 2021 with the MSP and local community. Following this meeting, an additional[3] Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) was published in October 2021 to provide further information on the questions and themes raised by the community. This document can be accessed on the project website at the following link: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/media/5936/dalmally-community-qa-21-oct-2021.pdf.

4.2.2 Following requests from local residents to see printed stills from the Applicant's online visualisation portal and for further discussion with the Applicants team. The Applicant will publish information about future public events on the project website Creag Dhubh - Dalmally 275kV Connection (ssen-transmission.co.uk), in local press and by directly contacting stakeholders.

4.2.3 A 30-day consultation period was held after each of the consultation events to allow community feedback. The majority of the community responses received were from those who were concerned and objected to the project for a variety of reasons. In particular, the perceived negative impact that this project may have on the landscape, the potential impact on the wildlife and the possibility it would contribute to a decline in tourism.

4.2.4 A summary of all the consultation undertaken throughout the project design process is shown in **Plate 4.1** below. Further information on consultation undertaken for each environmental topic assessment is available in each topic's respective **Chapter (6 to 13**) of this EIA Report, with full details of consultation feedback provided within the **Technical Appendix (TA) 4.3: Consultation Register (EIAR Volume 4).**

4.2.5 Details of the most recent virtual consultation (July and August 2021) can be found in the Pre-application Report on Consultation[4] which accompanies this Application.

3 In addition to Appendix 3 of the Report on Consultation Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275kV Connection, published in November 2020. This document can be accessed on the project website at the following link: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/media/4939/report-on-consultation-creag dhubh-to-dalmally-275kv-connection-november-2020-web-version.pdf.

4 SSEN (2021) Report on Consultation – Creag Dhubh to Dalmally 275kV Connection. Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/creag-dhubh-dalmally-275kv-connection/ and https://3dwtech.co.uk/dashboard/ssen/argyll-kintyre-strategy/exhibition/.

Plate 4.1: Summary of Consultation and Design Evolution

4.3 EIA Scoping

4.3.1 A request for a Scoping Opinion was made to the Scottish Ministers under Regulation 12[5] of the EIA Regulations in December 2020. A Scoping Report was submitted (December 2020) to support the request, 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 An EIA Scoping Report was issued to ECU on 16th December 2020 (see **TA 4.1: EIA Scoping Report (EIAR Volume 4)**. A Scoping Opinion was provided by ECU on 8th March 2022, and is included in **TA 4.2: EIA Scoping Opinion (EIAR Volume 4)**. The responses, contained within the Scoping Opinion and re-consultation, have been considered in detail during the EIA process.

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;
- Biodiversity;
- Ornithology;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils;
- Noise and Vibration; and
- Forestry.

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

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 4.2** 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
Biodiversity	• Statutory designated sites within 10 km of the Site where there is no connectivity; • Operational effects on bat species; and • Water vole.
Ornithology	• Barrier effects; • Electrocution; • Habitat loss (during both construction and operational phases); and • Potential disturbance during the operational phase.
Cultural Heritage	• Conservation Areas; • Battlefields; and • World Heritage Sites.
Traffic and Transport	• Operational impacts; • Decommissioning impacts; and • Where the thresholds for significant effects during the construction phase are not met in a specific location (in accordance with IEMA Guidelines) further assessment has not been undertaken.
Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology, and Soils	Contaminated Land
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 EIAR.
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.
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 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.

Table 4.1: Topic and topic elements scoped out of the EIA report	
Socioeconomics, Recreation and Tourism	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.
Land Use and Agriculture	Overall, the Proposed Development would not impinge on land owner choice over the type or intensity level of land operations and would not require any significant management changes. As such, no further assessment of land use or agriculture is needed, therefore it is scoped out of the EIA.
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.

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 (Summer 2021)

4.6.1 A number of key environmental considerations were raised during the latest virtual consultation event (July and August 2021). These are summarised in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.2: Summary of Key Environmental Issues			
Stakeholder	**Consultation Feedback**	**Applicants Response**	**EIAR Chapter Reference**
NatureScot	NatureScot requested that the transmission line not to be on the skyline along the southeast side of Loch Awe at its northern end and for the inevitable skyline of the line crossing southeast to Creag Dhubh substation to be minimalised.	The Applicant has given consideration to potential landscape and visual impacts throughout the design process, The realignment of the OHL to extend into Glen Lochy, rather than pass through the Strath of Orchy, has reduced its impact on the setting of the northern part of the loch by moving it away from the loch and following the contours of the hillside.	Further details on the potential Landscape and visual impacts, as well as any mitigation requirements is located in **Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact (EIAR Volume 2**)
NatureScot	Potential impacts on Glen Etive and Glen Fyne Special Protection Area (SPA). The SPA is	The Applicant ensured that a Habitat Regulations Appraisal was undertaken (in consultation with	Potential disturbance of golden eagle territories within the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA is

Table 4.2: Summary of Key Environmental Issues

	classified for breeding golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos.*	NatureScot), to inform an Appropriate Assessment if deemed necessary.	assessed in more detail in **Technical Appendix 7.3: Habitat Regulations' Appraisal (EIAR Volume 4**).
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	The Proposed Alignment (T28-T47) has potential to have an impact on the designated Auchtermally Or Uachdar Mhaluidh, Deserted Township (SM 4019).	The Applicant undertook further consultation with Historic Environment Scotland (HES). A letter was issued (23rd Nov 2021) responding to points raised in HES's consultation response and providing details of additional visualisation viewpoints requested by HES and the format of visualisations.	Further details of the potential for direct and indirect (setting) effects on heritage assets, which will include the Auchtermally Or Uachdar Mhaluidh, Deserted Township asset can be found in **Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (EIAR Volume 2**).
Scottish Forestry	Scottish Forestry advised that both the UK Forestry Standard - 4th Edition – 2017 (UKFS) and Scottish Governments Control of Woodland Policy 2009 (CoWRP) are relevant to the OHL project. As with previous projects, forest design and wider felling need to be taken into account, with similar landscape work being completed as per Inveraray Crossaig. In addition, the hydrology of development felling in context with the normal forest activity needs to be considered in relation to any sensitive waters, including Loch Awe. Scottish Forestry are content with the description of GL5 diversion decision, which, despite a slightly increased impact on coniferous woodland, does minimise the effect on the Ancient Woodland.	Guidance provided in the UK Forestry Standard - 4th Edition – 2017 (UKFS) and Scottish Governments Control of Woodland Policy 2009 (CoWRP) has been and will be adhered to in the development of the proposed design. It is also confirmed that the hydrology of development felling will be considered in the environmental assessments in relation to any sensitive areas. Where practicable, alignment decisions have been made to seek to minimise direct effects on all woodland, and semi-natural and Ancient Woodland in particular, where possible.	Further details on felling proposals can be found in **Chapter 11: Forestry (EIAR Volume 2**). Further details on Hydrology are located in Chapter 10: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils (EIAR Volume 2).

Table 4.2: Summary of Key Environmental Issues			
Local community	Concerns from local residents regarding visual amenity.	Residential Visual Amenity was a primary consideration throughout the alignment selection process. Visualisations were prepared to provide the project team with understanding of the visual impacts at the Blarchaorain and Brackley properties, and towers were microsited where possible (within the restrictions of other environmental constraints) to seek to reduce visual impacts on the amenity of these properties. The Applicant also plans to hold a public information event in January 2022 to discuss landscape and visual amenity in more detail.	Further details on the potential Landscape and visual impacts, as well as any mitigation requirements is located in **Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual Impact (EIAR Volume 2**).

4.6.8 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: Considerations of Alternatives (EIAR Volume 2)**. A detailed summary of all the consultation responses (2017-2021) can be found in **TA 4.3: Consultation Register(EIAR Volume 4).**