

Agenda Item	6.3
Report No	PLS-91-22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee

Date: 13 December 2022

Report Title: 22/04835/PAN: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc
Land 425M NE of Aigas Power Station
Beauly

Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Replacement of existing Aigas Substation

Ward: 12 – Aird And Loch Ness

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the submission of the PAN and highlight any material issues they wish to be brought to the attention of the applicant before the submission of an application for planning permission.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report informs the Planning Applications Committee of the submission of the attached Proposal of Application Notice (PAN).
- 1.2 The submission of the PAN accords with the provisions of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and was made valid on 19 October 2022. The PAN is a statutory requirement for planning applications for major or national developments and must be lodged at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of a planning application. Members are asked to note this may form the basis of a subsequent planning application.
- 1.3 The submitted information attached includes:
- Proposal of Application Notice (Application Form)
 - Location / Site Layout Plan.
- 1.4 There will be two in-person consultation events, the first took place on Monday 31st October 2022 between 3pm and 7pm at Kilmorack Hall, and the second on Tuesday 1st November 2022 between 3.30pm and 6.45pm at Cannich Village Hall. Further to these events, the applicant is committing to have additional follow up events in the new year scheduled for Monday 6th of February 2023 between 3pm and 7pm at Kilmorack Hall, and on Tuesday 7th of November 2023 between 3.30pm and 6.45pm at Cannich Village Hall, dates and times to be confirmed. The first two events were advertised on 19th October 2022 in the Press & Journal, 12 days prior to the public consultation dates and within the required statutory period. The advert for the next events will be placed in Press & Journal in January 2023, for which the date is to be confirmed.
- 1.5 Details of all notified parties are contained / appended to the PAN form and include Strathglass, Beaulay, Kilmorack, Kiltarlity, and Glen Urquhart Community Councils, as well as local Members. The applicant undertook a letter drop to advise the public of the consultation events to properties over a large geographical area as shown on the Letter Drop Locations Plan submitted as Supporting Information with the proposal of application notification. The applicant has also put posters up in the local areas, updated social media accounts, as well as the dedicated project website: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/west-of-beaulay---asset-replacement-projects/>.
- 1.6 Any forthcoming application will be accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report explaining the consultation undertaken, feedback received, and any resultant amendments made to the planning application.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The proposal is for the replacement of existing Aigas substation. The proposed permanent access track is from the northwest side of the site from the A831 Trunk road. The site would also comprise of a fenced platform area of size not exceeding 50x95m which would have control building, transformers, plant and infrastructure, associated ancillary facilities, temporary construction compound and lay down areas alongside drainage and landscaping requirements. part of the West of Beaulay – Asset

Replacement Projects. The replacement substations are to be built on new sites as close to the respective serving power station as possible, with the applicant including a selection of sites for each substation in the request with additional detail for the preferred site. The stations form a part of the networked Affric / Beaully Hydro-electric Scheme, which is formed around Glen Strathfarrar, Glens Cannich and Affric, and Strathglass, and exploit water from Lochs Monar, Beannacharan, Mullardoch, and Beinn a' Mheadhoinas well as the Rivers Farrar, Beaully, Cannich, Affric, and Glass. The scheme has been operating since the 1960s and includes six power stations at Mullardoch, Fasnakyle, Deanie, Culligran, Aigas, and Kilmorack, along with seven dams at Mullardoch, Benevean, Monar, Loichel, Beannacharan, Aigas, and Kilmorack.

- 2.2 The developer sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority through the Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments in 2022 for the erection of a 132kv Substation (HC ref. 22/03249/PREMAJ).

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The PAN boundary covers approximately of 2 hectares taking in the existing substation at the Aigas Dam and running northwards between the public road and the River Beaully before opening up to include a wider section of the river terrace where it is proposed to construct the substation compound. From the main site area, the proposal site would connect to a large pylon on the opposite side of the A831, to the west and adjacent to the Teanassie Primary School and a residential property. There are a further four crofting cottages to the south west of the site also on the west side of the A831, from which the site is accessed.
- 3.2 This small informal settlement, including the site area, is surrounded by woodland, much of which is policy designated Ancient Woodland (which also crosses the northern tip of the site), and Long established Woodland, and includes the named woodlands of Ruttle and An Druim. There are no other natural heritage designations within the site boundary nor is the site within connectivity distance of any Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) other than the Beaully Firth SSSI and Inner Moray Firth RAMSAR and SPA downstream. The topography on river side of the public road is relatively flat with these areas lying below the ground level of the road before, whereas levels rise sharply on the road's western verges. The site falls wholly within the Farmed Strath – Inverness Landscape Character Type as defined by NatureScot's Landscape Character Assessment. There are no Core Paths however the track and wider area is subject to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 where members of the public may reasonably exercise their rights to public access. There are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments in the vicinity of the site however the wider area is known for archaeological interests.
- 3.5 The proximity of the site to the River Beaully means the whole of the development area for the main substation compound is within the river flood plain and consequently at 1:200 year plus climate risk of flooding, according to SEPA's Flood Risk Mapping.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the proposal:

4.1 **Highland Wide Local Development Plan (2012) (HwLDP)**

- 28 - Sustainable Design
- 29 - Design Quality and Placemaking
- 30 - Physical Constraints
- 31 - Developer Contributions
- 36 - Development in the Wider Countryside
- 51 - Trees and Development
- 52 - Principle of Development in Woodland
- 56 - Travel
- 57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- 58 - Protected Species
- 59 - Other Important Species
- 60 - Other Important Habitats
- 61 - Landscape
- 63 - Water Environment
- 64 - Flood Risk
- 66 - Surface Water Drainage
- 67 - Renewable Energy Developments
- 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
- 72 - Pollution
- 74 - Green Networks
- 77 - Public Access

4.2 **Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP)**

No site specific policies or allocations, application will be assessed against the general policies of the HwLDP.

4.3 **Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2**

The plan is at the proposed stage with consultation recently closed and comments currently under review. The plan's focus is again on identifying specific site allocations however it will include several overarching 'general policies' that will apply to all developments including for Low Carbon Development, and, Nature Protection, Preservation, and Enhancement.

4.3 **Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

- Developer Contributions (November 2018)
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- Green Networks (Jan 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)
- Highland Renewable Energy Strategy & Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (Aug 2010)
- Managing Waste in New Developments (Mar 2013)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Standards for Archaeological Work (Mar 2012)
- Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)

- Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

4.4 **Scottish Government Policy and Other Guidance**

- Scottish Planning Policy and Guidance
- Scottish Planning Policy
- National Planning Framework 3 (June 2014)
- Revised Draft National Planning Framework 4 (Nov 2022)
- Scottish Energy Strategy (Dec 2017)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS, 2019)
- PAN 56 - Planning and Noise
- PAN 58 - Environmental Impact Assessment
- PAN 60 - Planning for Natural Heritage
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy
- Scottish Government Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map (May 2018)

5.0 **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- a) Development Plan and other planning policy;
- b) Community amenity including operational noise impacts;
- c) Construction impacts;
- d) Roads and transport;
- e) Flood risk and drainage impacts;
- f) Impact on trees and woodland;
- g) Design, landscape, and visual impact (including cumulative impacts);
- h) Natural heritage including protected species and habitats;
- i) Built and cultural heritage;
- j) Economic impact and tourism;
- k) Construction impacts;
- l) Pollution;
- m) Decommissioning and restoration;
- n) Outdoor access; and,
- o) Any Other Material Considerations Raised within Representations.

6.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The report presents the information submitted to date as part of the PAN. The policy considerations against which any future planning application will be considered have been summarised as well as the potential material planning considerations and key issues based on the information available to date. The list is not exhaustive and further matters may arise as and when a planning application is received and in the light of public representations and consultation responses.

7.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 It is recommended the Committee notes the submission of the PAN and advises of any material issues it wishes to be brought to the applicant's attention.

Designation: Area Planning Manager – North
Author(s): Mark Fitzpatrick / Swayamsidha Patra
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – Proposal of Application Notice (Application Form)
Plan 2 – Location Plan

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

The Council will respond within 21 days of receiving the Notice. It will advise whether the proposed Pre-application Consultation is satisfactory or if additional notification and consultation above the statutory minimum is required. Please note that a planning application for this proposed development cannot be submitted less than 12 weeks from the date the Proposal of Application Notice is received by the Council and without the statutory consultation requirements having been undertaken. The planning application must be accompanied by a Pre-application consultation report.

<p>Applicant: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc</p> <p>Address: Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ</p> <p>Phone:07385430158 E-mail:callum.cp.petrie@sse.com</p>	<p>Agent: N/A</p> <p>Address</p> <p>Phone</p> <p>E-mail</p>
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Address or Location of Proposed Development
Please state the postal address of the prospective development site. If there is no postal address, please describe its location. Please outline the site in red on a base plan to a recognised metric scale and attach it to this completed Notice

Land East of Aigas Substation, A831, IV4 7AE.

Description of Development
Please include detail where appropriate – eg the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m of any buildings not for residential use; the capacity of any electricity generation or waste management facility; and the length of any infrastructure project. Please attach any additional supporting information.

Replacement of existing Aigas Substation comprising: permanent access track, fenced platform area (not exceeding 50x95m) incorporating control building, transformers, associated plant and infrastructure, ancillary facilities, temporary construction compound and laydown area(s), alongside drainage and landscaping requirements.

Pre-application Screening Notice

Has a Screening Opinion been issued on the need for a Proposal of Application notice by

the Highland Council in respect of the proposed development?

If yes, please provide a copy of this Opinion.

No.

Community Consultation [See checklist of Statutory minimum consultation attached]

State which other parties have received a copy of this Proposal of Application Notice.

Community Council/s	Date Notice Served	13 October 2022
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Strathglass CC,
Beaully CC,
Kilmorack CC,
Kiltarlity CC,

Glen Urquhart CC (construction traffic)

Names/details of any other parties

Date Notice Served	13 October 2022
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Ward 12 (Aird & Loch Ness) Councillors:

Cllr Chris Ballance, Cllr Helen Crawford,
Cllr David Fraser, Cllr Emma Knox;
Ward Manager Charles Stephen

MP - Iain Blackford
MSP - Kate Forbes

Notifications sent via email. The follow up public PAN event will include notice to the same aforementioned parties as a minimum.

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event

Venue

Date and time

In-Person Public Consultation;

Kilmorack Hall, Kilmorack IV4 7AG	Mon 31.10.23 15.00-19.00
Cannich Village Hall, Cannich IV47LY	Tue 01.11.23 15.30-18.45
	TBC-
Kilmorack Hall, Kilmorack IV4 7AG	Mon 6.02.23 15.00-19.00
Cannich Village Hall, Cannich IV47LY	Tue 7.02.23 15.30 - 18.45

Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper


Advert date(when known)

Press & Journal – An advert will be placed in this newspaper on Wednesday 19 October 22 (in excess of 7 days prior to the first public consultation events). A second advert will thereafter be placed in this newspaper in January 2023, advising on the date, time and venue of follow up (2nd) event.

Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)

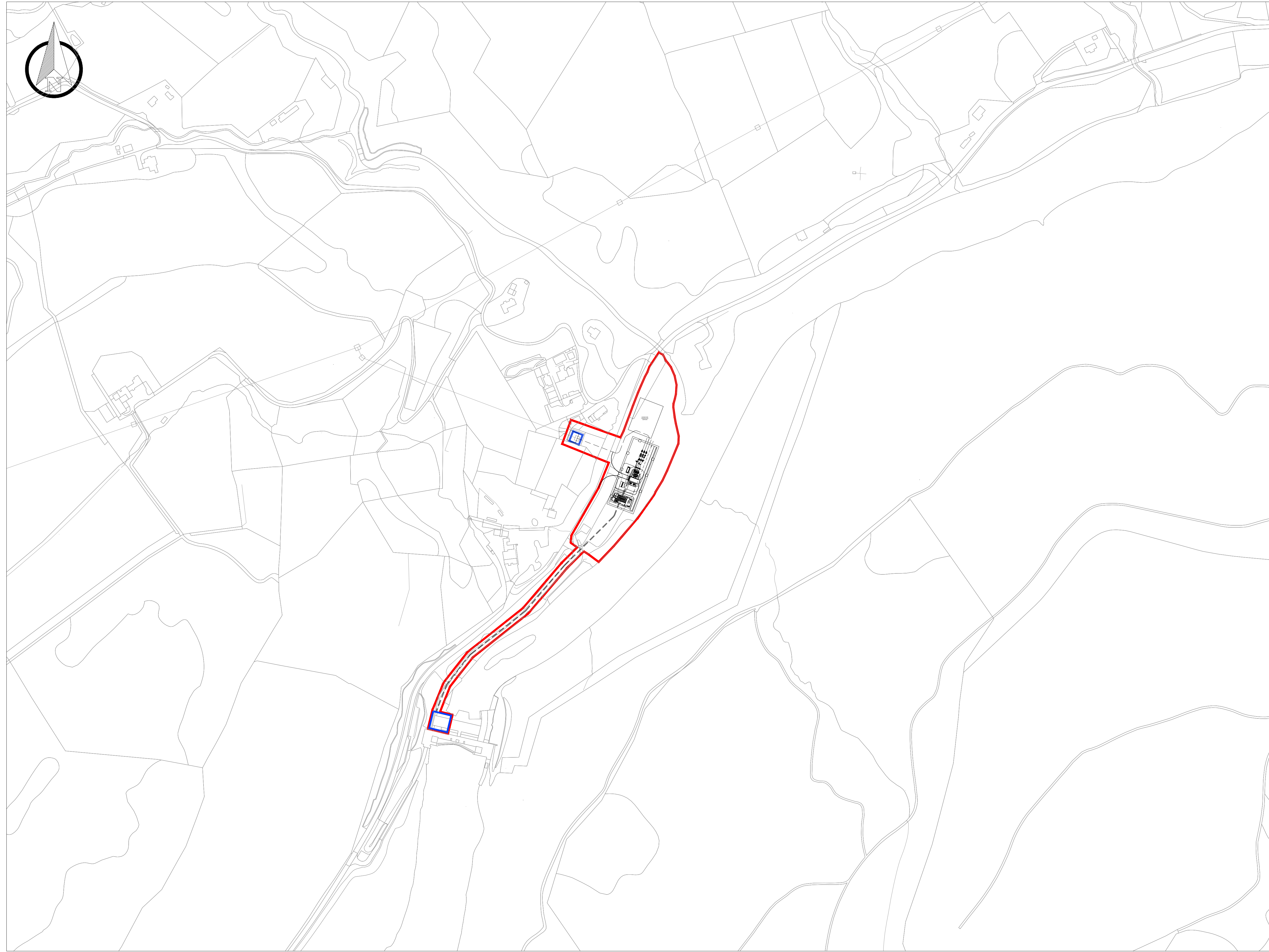
Information leaflet drop to properties (circa 2000) within the vicinity of the proposed development sites (please see coverage map enclosed). In addition, information will be provided on the dedicated project website <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/west-of-beaully---asset-replacement-projects/>, SSE social media outlets, direct updates to Beaully CLG and Strathglass Development Trust. All of the aforementioned will

take place either; ongoing throughout the Consultation process and until a planning application is concluded, or at least 7 days prior to the public events (leaflet drop).

Signed .  Date..... 18 October 2022.....

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LEGEND:-

- PAN BOUNDARY
- EXISTING ASSETS

OS MAP
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DRAFT

Rev: OD	Drawn: PMR	Approved:	Description: PRELIMINARY
Checked:	Date: 12.10.22	Revised by: SSEN TO INCLUDE OS MAP DATA.RLB AMENDED.	

M M
MOTT MACDONALD

On Behalf of Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks



Project:
 AIGAS 132/11kV GT REPLACEMENT

Project Number: LT251 **Location:** AIGAS

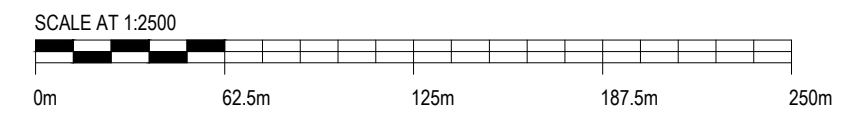
Title:
 AIGAS PROPOSED OPTION F LOCATION PLAN

Drawing Status: For Information **Drawn:** EW

Scale: 1:2500 **Checked:**

Date: 20/08/22 **Approved:**

Drawing Number: LT251_AIGA_1104_0014 **Sheet No:** 01 **Revision No:** 0D



Date Plotted: 12.10.2022
 File Name: LT251_AIGA_1104_0014_00_00.dwg

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