

Agenda Item	<b>5.3</b>
Report No	<b>PLS-04-23</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** South Planning Applications Committee

**Date:** 08 February 2023

**Report Title:** 22/05451/PAN: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc  
Knocknagael Substation, Essich Road, Inverness.

**Report By:** Area Planning Manager – South

### **Purpose/Executive Summary**

**Description:** Erection and operation of extension to the Knocknagael Substation comprising new platform area, associated plant and infrastructure, ancillary facilities, laydown area(s), access roads and landscape works

**Ward:** 15 – Inverness Ness-Side

### **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 01 December 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 Wednesday 07 December 2022 between 1400h and 1900h at Green Drive Community Hall, with the time, date, and venue of the second event to be confirmed, although the applicant has confirmed this will be after two weeks of the first and prior to the submission of the application. The first event was advertised on 30 November 2022 in the Press & Journal, which is seven 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 due course. The applicant has also advised that a preliminary public consultation event took place in April 2022 prior to the submission of the current PAN.
- 1.5 Details of all notified parties are contained / appended to the PAN form and include Stratherrick and Foyers, Strathnairn, Dores and Essich Community Councils, as well as local Members, an MSP, and MP. The applicant undertook a letter drop to advise the public of the consultation events to all domestic and commercial properties within 3km of the proposal site (1,116 properties in total) on 29 November 2022. The events are promoted through social media accounts, as well as the dedicated project website: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/red-john-pump-storage-scheme-275kv-connection/>.
- 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 erection and operation of an extension to the existing Knocknagael substation at Essich, comprising a new platform area, associated plant equipment and additional infrastructure, ancillary facilities, laydown areas, access roads and landscaping works.
- 2.2 The developer has sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority through the Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments for the erection of and operation of the substation extension along with an associated grid connection for the Red John Pumped Hydro Scheme, which will be provided in February 2023.

### **3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The PAN boundary covers approximately of 25.35 hectares taking in the existing substation at Essich and includes a satellite platform hosting a large 275kV OHL tower and transformers, additional pylon towers, as well as surrounding agricultural ground and woodland. The site is accessed from the west side of the single track Biorraid adopted road approximately 390m from its junction with the Essich Road (C1064), and is located approximately 6.3km SSE of the centre of Inverness on elevated ground. The nearest residential property is located at the junction of the two roads 485m NW of the proposal site, while there are few properties dispersed over the wider area.
- 3.2 There are no 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) with the nearest SSSIs being the geological designation of Torvean Landforms (2.5km NW), and Loch Ashie (3km SSE), which is designated for its breeding Slavonian Grebes. There are pockets of Ancient and Long Established policy Woodland in the surrounding countryside. The site occupies a raised position on undulating ground within the Rolling Farmland and Woodland Landscape Character Type (LCT) as defined by NatureScot's Landscape Character Assessment although with an overall slope that dips northwards towards the Moray Firth, while the substation itself is built over a raised level platform. The LCT changes to Flat Moorland Plateau with Woodland just south of the proposal site. There are several Core Paths to the west of the substation including the Kindrummond to Cullaird (IN 12.02) and Drumashie to Cullaird (In 12.06) within the Drumashie Plantation 1km from the site boundary. Additionally, the 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 Scheduled Monuments within the site but there are features included within the Historic Environment Record within and in the vicinity of the site while the wider area is known for archaeological interests. The proposal site is not at risk of flooding from fluvial sources but there are known areas at risk of flooding from pluvial sources, 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
- 66 - Surface Water Drainage
- 67 - Renewable Energy Developments
- 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
- 72 - Pollution
- 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, Nature Protection, Preservation, and Enhancement.

#### 4.3 **Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

- Developer Contributions (November 2018)
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (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
- National Planning Framework 3 (June 2014)
- Revised Draft National Planning Framework 4 (Nov 2022)
- Draft Scottish Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (Jan 2023)
- 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 – South  
Author(s): Mark Fitzpatrick  
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  
Plan 3 – Advertisement

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.**

Applicant: <b>Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc</b>	Agent: <b>N/A</b>
Address: <b>Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ</b>	Address
Phone: <b>07918 302034</b>	Phone
E-mail: <b>keith.smith@sse.com</b>	E-mail

### 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

**Knocknagael Substation, Essich Road, Inverness.**

### 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.

**Erection and operation of extension to the Knocknagael Substation comprising new platform area, associated plant and infrastructure, ancillary facilities, laydown area(s), access roads and landscape works.**

### 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

**Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council;  
Strathnairn Community Council;  
Dores and Essich Community Council.**

Names/details of any other parties

Date Notice Served

**Cllr Chris Ballance - Chris.Ballance.cllr@highland.gov.uk  
Cllr Helen Crawford - Helen.Crawford.cllr@highland.gov.uk  
Cllr David Fraser - David.fraser.cllr@highland.gov.uk  
Cllr Emma Knox - emma.knox.cllr@highland.gov.uk**

**MSP: Kate Forbes - Kate.Forbes.msp@parliament.scot  
MP: Drew Hendry - drew.hendry.mp@parliament.uk**

**Notice served to parties listed above: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022 by email.**

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event

Venue

Date and time

**1<sup>st</sup> public event: In-Person Public Consultation; Green Drive Community Hall, 36 Green Dr, Inverness IV2 4EU from 2pm – 7pm, 7th December 2022.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> public event: In-Person. In excess of 2 weeks from first public event and prior to submission of planning application (programmed for July 2023). The date is provisionally 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and is subject to change. The venue is still to be confirmed.**

Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper

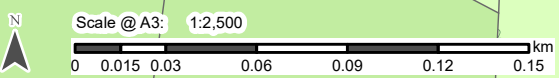
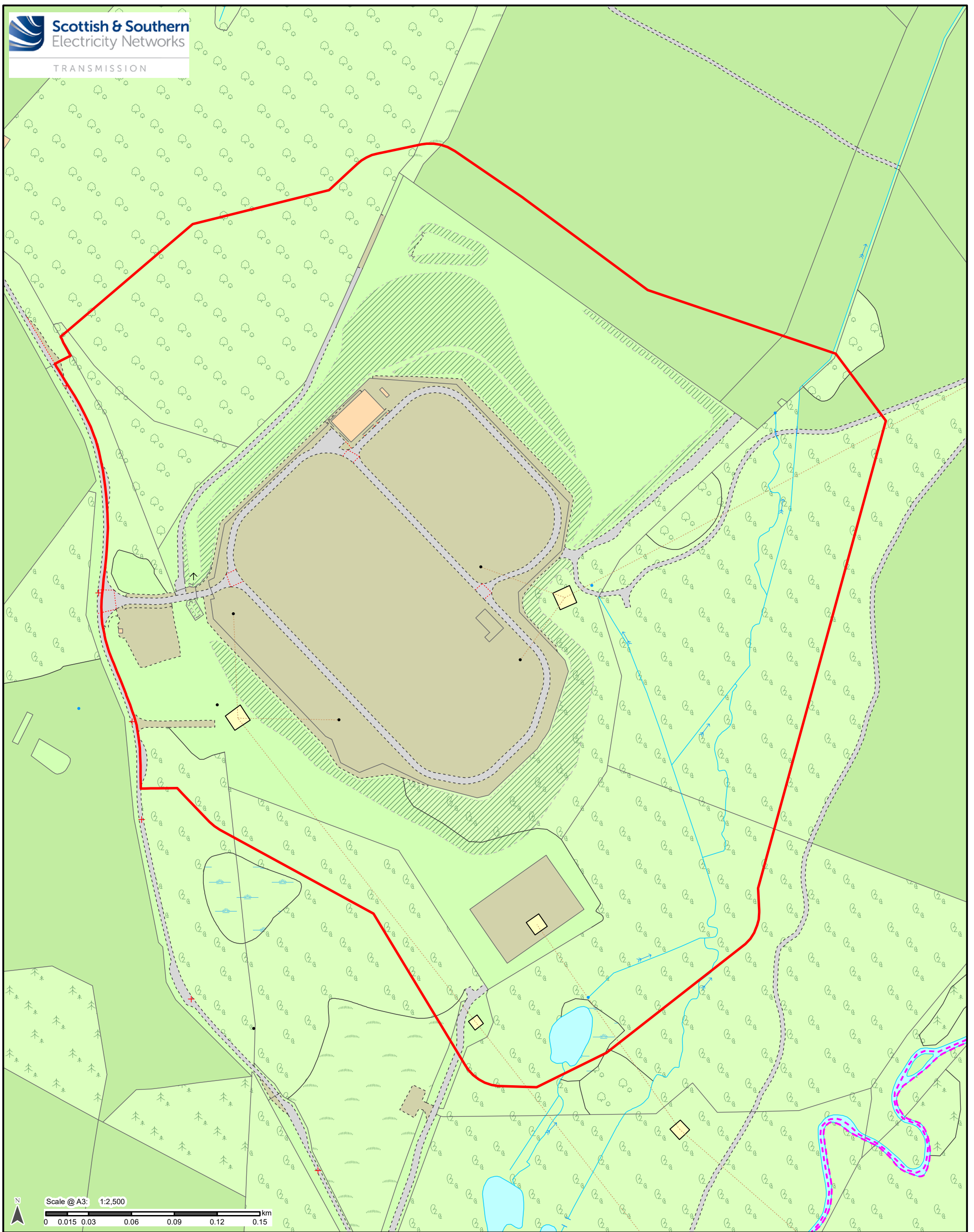
Advert date(where known)

**Press and Journal - An advert will be placed in this newspaper on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022.**

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

**We will also be circulating postcard invitations to all domestic and commercial properties within a 3km radius (1116 properties) estimated to land on 29th November. We will also be promoting the event on social media.**

Signed .....Keith Smith..... Date.....11/11/2022.....



 Redline Boundary



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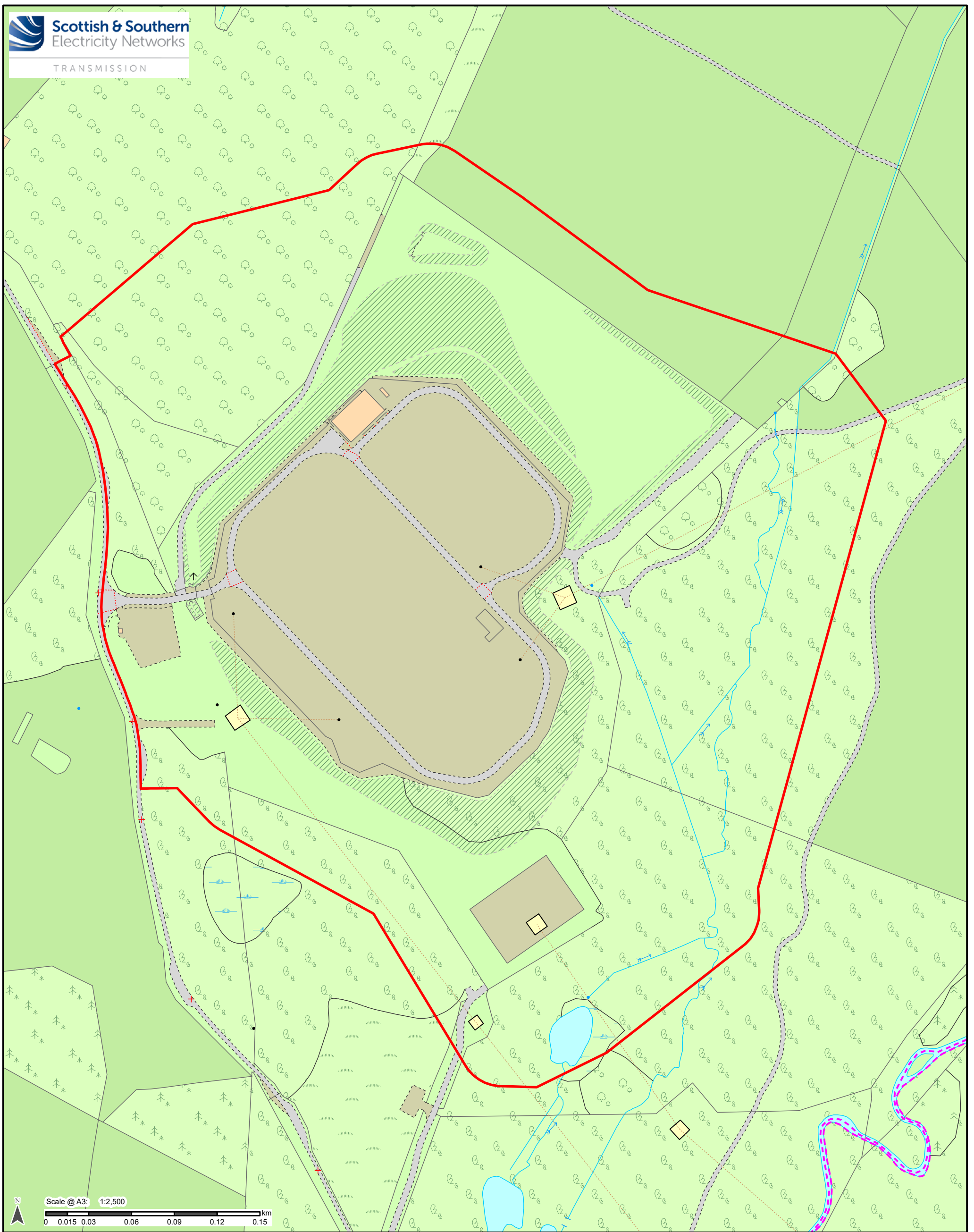
Project No: LT000325  
 Project: Red John Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH)


Title:  
 Location Plan A -  
 Redline Boundary

Drawn by: IF Date: 09/11/2022

Drawing: LT000325\_WAY\_002





 Redline Boundary



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Project No: LT000325  
 Project: Red John Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH)

Title:  
 Location Plan A -  
 Redline Boundary

Drawn by: IF Date: 09/11/2022

Drawing: LT000325\_WAY\_002



BLOW: Jim and Rosslyn Sutherland outside the Brig and Barrel.

# Trust shaken as bar hit by sneak thieves

STUART FINDLAY

**T**hieves targeted a newly-renovated Buckie bar just weeks before it is due to open following a six-figure facelift.

The Brig and Barrel will open its doors to the public next month after a major renovation under its new owners Jim and Rosslyn Sutherland.

Work is continuing at the building on West Church Street, the site of the former Highlander Hotel.

But thieves got into the bar between Friday night and Saturday morning.

Among the items stolen were power tools, a music system and bottles of alcohol.

A door had been left unlocked and no damage was done to the building, so the owners decided not to involve the police.

Discovering the break-in on Saturday morning was a blow for Buckie couple Jim and Rosslyn.

But they remain as determined as ever to bring their project to life.

He said: "It's really unfortunate, but at least



The Brig and Barrel has been renovated.

the building wasn't damaged. We will, of course, recover from this setback. But our trust in people has taken a knock for now."

A temporary CCTV system and a new alarm have been installed to protect the bar against another break-in.

News of the Sutherlands' plans to renovate the old Highlander Hotel has been warmly welcomed by people in Buckie.

It reached more than 54,000 people on The Press and Journal's Facebook page.

The old bar and hotel had been a mainstay of the town for decades.

But the building fell into a state of disrepair after closing in 2019.

It then hit the headlines for the wrong reasons when cannabis worth almost £1m was recovered there in September 2020.

The shell the Sutherlands bought in October was in need of a lot of work.

Jim is delighted to have finally got his hands on the building, after previously expressing an interest in taking it over a few years ago.

The retired offshore worker has sunk a huge portion of his savings into the new venture and hopes the new venue will give Buckie a lift.

## RAF Lossiemouth generators will cut emissions by more than 90%

RAF Lossiemouth is going green with new electric generators that should cut harmful emissions by more than 90%.

This comes as part of a £4 million rollout of 40 new ground power units (GPUs) across the Moray base and RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire by the Ministry of Defence's Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S).

The new generators are powered by the same battery packs used in Nissan Leaf electric cars and will hopefully lower emissions and running costs.

It is estimated costs could be cut by around 80%, saving the force £13m across the Typhoon fleet in the decade after they are put to use in March 2023.

As well as reducing emissions, the new GPUs will also improve working conditions at RAF Lossiemouth as they make around as much noise as a



One of the new generators at RAF Lossiemouth.

dishwasher or electric shower.

Flight Lieutenant Adam Hayler said: "The current in-service diesel GPUs have a high fuel consumption, are noisy and have high carbon dioxide emissions. In fact, around 42% of the CO2 footprint from seeing off the aircraft comes from these GPUs."

"In contrast, this new GPU is emission free, quieter and, with its

battery powered unit, can be used inside hangars with no need for input cables or ventilation.

"In addition to its green credentials, its maintenance costs are much reduced, meaning that overall operating costs are also lower."

Air Vice Marshal Simon Ellard added: "These new generators are a step forward, both in operational capability and in their green credentials."



## Red John Pump Storage Scheme 275kV Connection Public Consultation Event

SSEN Transmission invites you to share your views with us

### What is happening?

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) Transmission are holding a consultation exhibition event for Red John Pump Storage Scheme 275kV Connection. This consultation is focused on SSEN Transmission's alignment for the underground cables connecting Red John Pump Storage Scheme in to Knocknagael Substation and the extension of the substation.

We would like to extend an invitation to local members of the community and all interested parties to attend an exhibition to discuss our plans with the project team and let us know your thoughts on our proposals.

The face to face consultation will be held at the following location:

Scan me

Wednesday 7th December 2022 2-7pm  
Green Drive Community Hall  
36 Green Drive, Inverness, IV2 4EU



This is an open door drop in session, open to all members of the public and interested parties.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Community Liaison Manager:



**Ryan Davidson**  
Scottish Hydro Electric  
Transmission, 1 Waterloo St,  
Glasgow, G2 6AY

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