



Committee report

Development proposed:

Proposal of application notice – construction of new 400kV substation and underground cable connection comprising new buildings, platform, plant and machinery, access, laydown/ work compound area(s), drainage, landscaping, track upgrades and installations, underground cabling and other ancillary works (National Development) on land to the south of the A86, Strathmashie, Laggan, Newtonmore, PH20 1AJ

Reference: PRE/2026/0025

Applicant: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc

Date called-in: N/A

Recommendation: For information

Case officer: Heather Boswell, Senior Planning Officer



Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a) inform the Planning Committee of a Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN); and
 - b) allow members to raise any views on the issues to be addressed in any subsequent planning application.

Background

2. The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires that any developer proposing to submit a major planning application must undertake statutory pre-application consultation with the community. Before commencing this consultation, the developer is required to serve a 'Proposal of Application Notice' (PoAN) on the Planning Authority.
3. This report relates to a PoAN for a new 400kV substation and underground cable connection on land to the south of the A86, Strathmashie. The PoAN was submitted to the Highland Council on 26 August 2026, who subsequently notified the Park Authority on 11 September 2026. Members are asked to note that this PoAN is intended to form the basis of a subsequent planning application. The submitted information comprises the Location Plan (**Appendix 1a**) and the PoAN form (**Appendix 1b**).
4. In December 2015, Planning Committee agreed a procedure to allow Member involvement in pre-application advice for major planning applications, since these applications are normally called in for determination by the Park Authority. The procedure involves officers presenting the information provided by the applicant as part of any PoAN submission, along with a short covering report to highlight the relevant policy framework, likely material considerations and key issues associated with the proposed development.
5. In line with the agreed procedure, it is important to note that Committee Members are not being asked to discuss the merits of the proposal. Rather, they are asked to note the relevant issues that a future application would be



expected to address and advise of any additional material issues they wish to be drawn to the applicant's attention.

The proposal

6. The proposal is for the construction of a new 400kV substation and underground cable connection comprising new buildings, platform, plant and machinery, access, laydown/ work compound area(s), drainage, landscaping, track upgrades and installations, underground cabling and other ancillary works on land south of the A86, Strathmashie. The proposal is necessary to connect the consented Earba pumped storage hydro scheme into the grid. A separate Section 37 application will be submitted to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit in summer 2027 for the associated overhead line and tower works required to upgrade the Beauly to Denny transmission line and bring the development online.
7. The proposal comprises land within the Highland Council local authority area, with a large proportion of the red line boundary falling within the Cairngorms National Park Authority boundary. The substation is proposed in proximity to the existing Beauly to Denny overhead line, approximately 2km south-east of Feargour cottage, Kinlochlaggan. The underground cable corridor would extend south-west from this location towards the consented Earba pumped storage hydro scheme site at Lochan na h-Earba.
8. The PoAN submission explains that the applicants propose to carry out two pre-application public consultation events as required by legislation. The events will be held at Laggan Community Hall between 3pm and 7pm on 7 October 2026 and 24 March 2027. Both events will be advertised in the local press.

Site description

9. The site falls within the Ardverikie Estate and comprises areas of woodland and open moorland. The River Mashie, River Pattack and its tributaries flow through the site. Various tracks are present across the site and accessible to



active travel users and estate vehicles. The Beauly to Denny overhead line transects the northern portion of the site. Across the site small areas of localised surface water and river flooding are identified on SEPA's flood maps. Given the extent of land within the site boundary which is not at risk of flooding, it would be reasonable to assume that the development will be sited to avoid flood risk areas.

10. A small number of scattered properties are located across the Ardverikie Estate used as both permanent residences and short-term lets.

Development plan context

11. Any proposed development will be considered against the relevant policies and guidance as contained within the Development Plan. For the parts of the development within the National Park boundary, this comprises the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2021 (LDP) and the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Where there is conflict between policies, NPF4 policies will be used.

Policies

National policy	National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Scotland 2045 (Policies expected to be relevant to the assessment of any future planning application for this development proposal are marked with a cross (x))	
Policy 1	Tackling the climate and nature crises	X
Policy 2	Climate mitigation and adaptation	X
Policy 3	Biodiversity	X
Policy 4	Natural places	X
Policy 5	Soils	X
Policy 6	Forestry, woodland and trees	X
Policy 7	Historic assets and places	X
Policy 8	Green belts	
Policy 9	Brownfield, vacant and derelict land, and empty buildings	



Policy 10	Coastal development	
Policy 11	Energy	X
Policy 12	Zero waste	X
Policy 13	Sustainable transport	
Policy 14	Design, quality and place	X
Policy 15	Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods	
Policy 16	Quality homes	
Policy 17	Rural homes	
Policy 18	Infrastructure first	X
Policy 19	Heat and cooling	
Policy 20	Blue and green infrastructure	
Policy 21	Play, recreation and sport	
Policy 22	Flood risk and water management	X
Policy 23	Health and safety	X
Policy 24	Digital infrastructure	
Policy 25	Community wealth building	X
Policy 26	Business and industry	
Policy 27	City, town, local and commercial centres	
Policy 28	Retail	
Policy 29	Rural development	
Policy 30	Tourism	
Policy 31	Culture and creativity	
Policy 32	Aquaculture	
Policy 33	Minerals	

Strategic policy	Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2022 – 2027	
Local plan policy	Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan (2021) (Policies expected to be relevant to the assessment of any future planning application for this development proposal are marked with a cross (x))	
Policy 1	New housing development	
Policy 2	Supporting economic growth	X
Policy 3	Design and placemaking	X
Policy 4	Natural heritage	X
Policy 5	Landscape	X



Policy 6	The siting and design of digital communications equipment	
Policy 7	Renewable energy	X
Policy 8	Open space, sport and recreation	
Policy 9	Cultural heritage	X
Policy 10	Resources	X
Policy 11	Developer obligations	

Planning guidance

12. Supplementary guidance also forms part of the Local Development Plan and provides more details about how to comply with the policies. Guidance that is expected to be relevant to this proposed planning application is marked with a cross.

Policy 1	New Housing Development Supplementary Guidance	
Policy 2	Supporting Economic Growth Non-Statutory Guidance	X
Policy 3	Design and Placemaking Non-Statutory Guidance	X
Policy 4	Natural Heritage Non-Statutory Guidance	X
Policy 5	Landscape Non-Statutory Guidance	X
Policy 7	Renewable Energy Supplementary Guidance	X
Policy 8	Sport and Recreation Non-Statutory Guidance	
Policy 9	Cultural Heritage Non-Statutory Guidance	X
Policy 10	Resources Non-Statutory Guidance	X
Policy 11	Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance	

Potential material planning considerations and issues to address

13. Key material planning considerations for any subsequent application are as follows:
- a) The principle of development
 - b) Landscape and visual impacts
 - c) Design and layout
 - d) Flooding and surface water management



- e) Environmental impacts (including impacts on any designated sites)
- f) Ecology
- g) Forestry and woodland
- h) Archaeology and cultural heritage
- i) Amenity (including noise, vibration and air quality)
- j) Access (including traffic, transport, and public access impacts)

Conclusion and next steps

14. The report presents the information submitted to date as part of the PoAN. Officers have summarised the policy considerations against which any future planning application will be considered as well as potential material planning considerations and key issues. The summary 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 on any formal planning application.
15. It is recommended that the Committee notes the submission of the PoAN and advises of any additional material issues it wishes be brought to the applicant's attention.

Recommendation

That members of the committee:

- a) note the Proposal of Application Notification;
- b) note the Officer's advice to the prospective applicant as to issues to address; and
- c) advise of any additional relevant issues to be addressed in any future planning application.