



Aberlemno and District Community Council Special Meeting

Thursday 15th June 2023, 7.00pm

Aberlemno Village Hall

	<p>In attendance: Community council members: Russell Bruce (RB), Isabelle Davies (ID), Lynn Bruce (LB), Jacqui Thornton (JT) Local councillors: Gavin Nicol (GN)</p>	
1	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Russell Bruce thanked everyone for attending and read out the following introduction:</p> <p>“I will start by trying as best I can to explain that there is a lot of incorrect information within media surrounding this subject. Common opinion is that it was possibly initiated by SSEN to allow them to slip this new Over Head Line (OHL) through with less opposition.</p> <p>There is an upgrade of a current line, not going through our area, that was already given permission. This work has already started.</p> <p>We are here today at the request of our residents to hear the concerns that they have, regarding the proposed 400kV OHL that SSEN say is required and the route that they have chosen as ‘preferred’, so that we can compile an official response to SSEN from your community council.</p> <p>Rules for this evening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I would ask that you raise your hand if you wish to speak.• We will ask where in the area you live.• We will ask for reactions and issues / questions in the following order:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ residents○ farmers○ businesses• We will then ask for comments from those outside our area, who are in attendance.• I ask that there is no interruption from others, while someone is talking.• At this moment in time, there are no further meetings planned by Aberlemno and District community council on this subject.• Please be civil or I will be forced to end the meeting.”	
2	<p>Overview of SSEN proposals</p> <p>Isabelle Davies provided a summary of the SSEN proposals which can be located on the SSEN website:</p> <p>https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/kintore-fiddes-tealing-400kv-ohl-connection/</p> <p>At this stage we are providing comments to SSEN and noting our objection to the proposals as part of the required consultation. When SSEN submit the Section 37 application to the Consents Unit at the Scottish Government, they must include issues raised as part of the consultation along with their responses.</p>	

Concerns and questions

- Why have SSEN used out-of-date maps for the proposed routes resulting in assessments being made that do not reflect the actual local area.
- Why has a computer programme with no human input or site visits been used to generate the proposed corridors?
- How many pylons will be erected in our district?
- The proposed routes have a lot of deviation rather than just straight lines – this was thought to be a result of no local visits.
- What does SSEN have in place to ensure there will be no disruption of ground sourced water and other services?
- How soon will we know where in the 1km corridor the pylons will actually be placed?
- What are the marks being painted on the roads in the area, especially as planning permission has not been granted?
- The road infrastructure in our district will not be able to cope with the construction traffic the work will bring to the area.
- Impact on wildlife – if woods, hedgerows, fields etc are replaced with roads, it will decimate the wildlife population (including the red squirrel population in the area) and even if trees, hedgerows etc are replaced after construction, it will take years for it to re-establish. It has also been confirmed that there are water voles and ospreys locally - both protected species – how has this been taken into account?
- A new temporary road infrastructure will wipe away heritage that's been here for generations including the many stone dykes which may or may not be replaced.
- A question was asked as to whether any of the trees in the area have protection orders.
- Why pylons and not an underground route? The current pylons have been in place since the 1950s and so why has SSEN not moved on from this to a less impactful solution. SSEN have said that this is an issue of access and complexity.
- There has been a lack of clear and meaningful information during the consultation process including information being drip fed after decisions have been made eg decisions to use pylons rather underground with no consultation, and contradictory information – the lines will not cross the A90 and river Esk in some areas of the SSEN website but they clearly do.
- How is the historic interest in the area taken into account when SSEN are choosing the route eg Pictish Heritage now being uncovered
- What influenced SSEN to use underground rather than pylons in other areas where there has been protest eg Dorset, Skye and Beaulieu?
- Will the current pylons be removed if the new ones go ahead?
- Loss of productive fields – not just where pylons are situated but the width of the pylon line will be fenced off for four years during construction.
- In Scotland there is 8% prime agricultural land and the SSEN proposed routes run right through all of this which will impact on food production. Was agricultural land quality part of the initial assessment? The proposed routes run through the prime agricultural land in our area.
- Concerns raised about forcing access through farmland for access tracks and pylons using CPO power.
- When construction commences there are concerns about how this will affect the current water table issues.
- What consideration has SSEN given to the potential impact on the water supply, field drains, watercourses making flooding worse?

- What consideration did SSEN give to a route north of the ESK which has higher ground and less flooding?
- The construction and then the pylons themselves will impact on tourism in the area in turn affecting local businesses. It's not just the pylons impacting on the views but whether visitors would choose to come to the area for the four years on construction.
- Noise pollution concerns during the four years of construction – what plans does SSEN have to minimise this eg hours the heavy goods vehicles are allowed to use the roads?
- What studies have SSEN undertaken on the health impacts of living in such close proximity to 400Kv pylons?
- There is evidence from storm Arwen of the amount of time it takes to repair pylons after weather damage and the current pylons are only 40 meters. The new proposed pylons will be 57 meters high and so what will be the time impact for repairing these at a height where they will also be impacted by the high winds in the areas alongside ice and freezing conditions? Will these conditions then require more repairs and maintenance?
- Do taller pylons mean more power outages?
- What options other than pylons have SSEN considered and why have they been discounted?
- Why has the request to extend the consultation period beyond 23rd June been declined by SSEN, especially given the lack of clear information available?
- How did SSEN choose the people in the area to inform about the consultation? Some people received leaflets while many others did not. Why were some people notified and not others within the preferred route?
- How will this affect house prices? A response from the audience was that where there is a pylon erected within 200 meters of a residential property, this will reduce that value of the property by 38%. Why is there no compensation consideration from SSEN for this?
- Will this effect the ability to get a mortgage on a property? Some financial institutions do not give mortgages to people buying houses with a power pylon close to the property. The projection of low return on investment when carrying out risk assessment makes them shy away from financing mortgages in such areas. This will affect the housing market in the area.
- Does SSEN have the power of compulsory purchase – yes.
- Will there be compensation for those affected – SSEN have confirmed No.
- How far away from my property must a pylon be?
- Can the lines go directly over my property?
- How will this affect mobile and internet signals – both during construction and after completion?
- Will this affect farmer's GPS?
- Who determines the length and content of the consultation and 2030 date for completion?
- What is the potential impact on farm incomes as grants are increasingly based on environmental factors which are likely to be destroyed?
- Suggested useful site from the audience: <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/>

10

Next Steps

Aberlemno and District community council will provide feedback as part of the consultation based on the discussions at this meeting, but it is imperative for everyone as individuals to also provide their own comments and objection.

	<p>We will make available (on Aberlemno.org) sample letters and e mail addresses to help with this.</p> <p>It is important not to just copy the sample letters but to make them your own. Your letters (or e mails) must also say 'I object'.</p> <p>If a local authority objects to a planning application, it must go to a public enquiry. We must all therefore take responsibility to ask the people that represent us to object.</p> <p>The SSEN consultation period closes on 23rd June 2023.</p>	
12	<p>Meeting close</p> <p>Russell Bruce thanked everyone for their attendance participation and closed the meeting at 8.35pm.</p>	

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