



## **ABERLEMNO & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Reply to: [aberlemnocc@yahoo.com](mailto:aberlemnocc@yahoo.com)

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023

Louise Anderson, Community Liaison Manager

SSEN Transmission

Grampian House

200 Dunkeld Road

Perth, PH1 3AD

Dear Louise

This letter is sent on behalf of the residents, land owners, farmers and businesses in Aberlemno and District Community Council area, who oppose the new 400kV pylons and OHL's .

Aberlemno and District Community Council covers an area which is bounded to the north by the South Esk river and extends as far as Farnell. It is a vast area with Pictish Heritage and Standing Stones, further investigations and 'digs' are planned for the near future and plenty of visitors. The settlements affected, Balbinny, Netherton and Damside (which was not on the original OS map used for the "consultation" exercise) and residents are concerned that using out of date maps for the 'proposed' route, has resulted in assessments being made that don't reflect the actual local area. A number of residents have reported that distress and anxiety is being caused to a lot who live and work in the 'proposed' route.

A Special Meeting of the Community Council was requested by residents, held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and the following points and concerns were raised. These have been separated into categories with lists that are not exhaustive and some issues are common to all.

## Residents

- “Consultation” – some residents are still unaware of the project that is being proposed close to their homes. Some farmers and landowners have not been approached yet about usage of their land. Meetings were held outside the impacted hamlets with a distance that was untenable. The residents would like to know why alternatives to pylons were not fully addressed. There was not any indications of a “consultation” being carried out on the alternative routes or the siting of pylons.
- Communities – resilience and support is given by our community as is security and safety which will be seriously challenged with the increase in movement of strangers and vehicles.
- Health – not enough comprehensive research has been carried out to assess the dangers of an electromagnetic field on the health of residents. The data on 400kV pylons and OHL’s is unavailable which may create issues in the future for families along with their current and future mental health. Diseases such as Asthma and COPD are triggered by stress, road construction, dust and pollution which may be in abundance.
- Homes – residents are concerned with the potential drop in resale prices and that house purchaser’s wont be forthcoming. Pylons bring issues for everyone including some Financial Institutions which will measure the distance from pylons to homes before mortgages and loans can be secured. There is no compensation to address this issue. Residents already have 132kV pylons on one side of their homes and feel they will be surrounded by metal structures.
- Views – some residents have chosen to move to the area to enjoy the beauty of the Angus Hills and the Hill of Angus. Tourism will be destroyed as pylons and OHL’s are not acceptable to most potential visitors.

- Noise, Pollution, Dust and additional Traffic – retirees and families living here can enjoy a slower pace of life with clean air, less pollution and fantastic views but these will be spoilt by 57 metre (average) high pylons and four years of construction. Residents need assurances that access to homes and farms is maintained 24/7 and feel it should not be compromised at all. Narrow single track roads cannot sustain large STGO vehicles and additional concrete mixers. The roads already have potholes and further degradation to them and the verges will create problems for residents and visitors. The community needs assurance that the necessary repairs will be carried out in a timely manner should the project proceed. The residents also need assurance that SSEN will put plans in place to minimise noise pollution eg hours that HGV's are allowed to use the roads and the same with construction work.
- Natural Environment – The South Esk river (special area of conservation) and the nature reserve is enjoyed by residents with a number of protected species in their natural habitat. Building work will destroy the habitat of ground nesting birds as will removing dykes, trees and hedges which may/may not be restored to their original state after the completion of works. The flight path of geese towards Montrose Basin comes overhead too which may be affected by the works, pylons and OHL's.

### Farmers

- Land – prime agricultural land (8-9% left in Scotland) will be destroyed and out of use for approximately 4 years. Farmers are concerned that their livelihoods and food production will be eroded with land being taken for pylons. Tractors will no longer be able to be used near or under pylons with GPS signals blocked. New hardcore roads for access to pylons will take years to recover when removed and access will always be required for maintenance. This will limit the amount of farming and crop growing that can be carried out and will seriously affect food security.
- Diseases – Eelworms and Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) can devastate potatoes that are grown in our area. These diseases are spread by people and vehicle movements.

- Flooding and High Water Table - farmers are aware of the difficulties and challenges with flooding and the high water table in fields along the 'proposed' route of pylons. Flooding happens on a regular basis and any construction will have a further impact on what is already a flood plain.
- Other considerations – there is an underground gas pipe which needs to be inspected regularly from the air which will be more difficult under pylons and OHL's. Telephone and Internet signals are already poor in the rural area and any disruption could endanger lives and create issues for homeworkers and businesses. A few properties use a private water source which may be disrupted and polluted during construction work. There is also a transformer and communication mast on one farmer's land which must be taken into consideration, with further research carried out before the route is agreed.

### Businesses

- Holiday Leisure Resort – the owner of the resort has built up his business again after it was impacted by COVID 19 and the Angus views are essential for potential and returning customers. During a 4 year construction period the business and number of customers could be decimated creating the loss of the business through no fault of the owner.
- Employment – a number of local people are employed at the leisure resort which will affect their jobs and with the cost of living increasing, losing jobs is a real problem. The owner of the resort purchases locally sourced items and advertises local businesses to tourists and customers.

Residents believe that SSEN have grossly underestimated the impact of this project on them, their families, farmers, landowners and business owners in the area. The impact will not only be now and during the construction but for many years to come when SSEN have left.

The residents would like consideration to be given to underground cables through the area or on the seabed and be kept up to date with progress. This will include the confirmed route in a timely fashion, prior to commencement of any works. Consultation has sadly been lacking with no meaningful dialogue so sending information and progress via Aberlemno and District community council would be welcome, then all residents can be made aware of it.

The impression that has been given to residents at this stage is, priority given to reducing costs over communities, heritage, people, wildlife and jobs and the degradation of views, tourism, rural roads and prime agricultural land.

The residents and Aberlemno and District Community Council look forward to your response to the above points in the near future.

Yours sincerely

on behalf of residents in Aberlemno and District Community Council area.