



Callisterhall Wind Farm Connection Project

Pre-application Consultation Strategy

October 2025

01.

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Report

This document outlines Scottish Power Energy Networks' (SPEN) approach to pre-application consultation and engagement for the Callisterhall Wind Farm connection project. It sets out the strategy for engaging with local communities, statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and other interested parties. The aim is to ensure that everyone is informed about the project and given a fair opportunity to share their views and contribute to its development. Early, inclusive and meaningful engagement is critical in:

- Informing the design and route selection
- Identifying and addressing issues and opportunities
- Building trust and transparency with stakeholders and communities
- Supporting a robust and defensible planning application

In addition to this, the document defines the objectives of engagement and presents the process for identifying and mapping stakeholders. It also details the planned consultation activities and sets out how feedback will be gathered, reported and used to guide the next steps of the project.

Furthermore, it clarifies roles and responsibilities within the engagement process, outlines the event materials and communication methods to be used, and describes the approach to risk management to ensure effective and inclusive consultation throughout the project life cycle.

1.2. Overview of Callisterhall Wind Farm Connection Project

SPEN has a legal duty under the Electricity Act 1989 to provide grid connections to new electricity-generating developments and has been contracted to provide a connection from the proposed Callisterhall Wind Farm to the existing Gretna Substation. The distance of the new transmission connection (referred to as the Proposed Development) is approximately 16km.

Need for the Connection

As part of their commitments to tackling climate change the Scottish and UK Governments have set legally binding targets to reach net zero in their greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 in Scotland. In delivering net zero, the electricity system - how electricity is generated, transmitted, distributed and used - is undergoing transformational change.

The grid connection is needed to connect Callisterhall Wind Farm to the Transmission network. As Transmission Licence Holder SP Transmission (represented by SPEN) is legally obliged under the Electricity Act 1989 to provide a grid connection.

SP Transmission's Duties and Licence Obligations

SP Transmission plc (SPT), the Transmission Owner (TO) and Licence Holder under the Electricity Act 1989 ('the Act'), is responsible for the electricity transmission network in central

and southern Scotland including throughout Dumfries & Galloway where Callisterhall Wind Farm and the grid connection are located. As the holder of a transmission licence under the Act, SPT is subject to a number of statutory duties and licence obligations.

These include a requirement “*to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission*” and “*to facilitate competition in the supply and generation of electricity*”. This requires SPT to provide for new electricity generators wishing to connect to the transmission system in its licence area; to make its transmission system available for these purposes and to ensure that the system is fit for purpose through appropriate reinforcements to accommodate the contracted capacity.

In addition, in formulating proposals for network reinforcements or grid connections such as that proposed for the Callisterhall Wind Farm Grid Connection, SPT is subject to duties under Schedule 9 of the Act: “(a) *to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and, (b) to do what it reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.*”

SPEN acting on behalf of SPT, is undertaking further work in order to connect the Callisterhall Wind Farm to the transmission network. This work is undertaken in accordance with SPT’s statutory duties and licence obligations with the objective of ensuring that the grid connection is technically feasible, economically viable and on balance, causes the least disturbance to both the environment and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.

The new transmission connection would include a 132kV wood pole Overhead Line (OHL). This shall be subject to an application under the Section 37 (s37) of the Electricity Act 1989 and deemed planning consent under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

The Development and Consenting of the Grid Connection

The development of the grid connection will comprise the following key phases:

Phase 1. Routeing and Consultation.

Phase 1 comprises a routeing study in which a number of route options for the grid connection are identified and assessed taking into account a range of environmental, technical and economic considerations. It concludes with the identification of a preferred route option for the OHL which is then subject to consultation. SPEN is committed to ongoing consultation with interested parties, including statutory and non-statutory consultees and local communities. Whilst there is no statutory requirement to consult during the early routeing stages, SPEN nonetheless considers it good practice to introduce consultation at this stage. Responses to the consultation will be evaluated and inform confirmation of a proposed route to be taken forward to Phase 2.

Phase 2. Detailed Route Design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Following confirmation of the Proposed Route, SPEN will submit a request for an EIA Screening Opinion to the Scottish Ministers in accordance with Regulation 8(1) of the EIA Regulations to determine whether the project is considered EIA development. Following screening, if EIA is required a Scoping report and subsequent EIA report will be prepared to

accompany the application for consent. If EIA is not required, an Environmental Appraisal will be undertaken, and an Environmental Appraisal Report will instead accompany the application for consent. During this phase SPEN will also undertake a second round of public consultation (referred to as Phase 2 Consultation) on the detailed design of the grid connection.

Phase 3. Applications for Consent.

SPEN will be applying to the Scottish Ministers for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, as amended, to install, and keep installed, the grid connection. The EIA Report will accompany the application for Section 37 consent. At the same time, SPEN will also apply to Scottish Ministers for deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, for the grid connection including ancillary development. While the Scottish Ministers will be responsible for the decision to approve the grid connection or not, in reaching their decision they will consult with statutory stakeholders and members of the public.

Approach to routing

The Proposed Development has been designed in line with best practice, following the Holford Rules for overhead line (OHL) routeing and SP Energy Networks' Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment (2020). Under the Electricity Act, SPEN is required to balance environmental, technical and economic considerations when selecting a route.

After establishing the study area and identifying routeing constraints, SPEN assessed and refined route options, leading to the identification of a Preferred Route. The Preferred Route is then taken forward for consultation. Following consultation and consideration of stakeholder feedback, the Preferred Route is further refined to a Proposed Route for application.

1.3. Project timeline

Table 1 includes the project timeline in line with Scottish Government Pre-Application Consultation and Engagement Guidance. A more detailed consultation timeline is included in Section 3.4.

Table 1: Project timeline

Step	Description	Date
New transmission connection requirement identified	Identification of new transmission connection required between proposed Callisterhall Wind Farm and Gretna Substation by SPEN.	March 2022
Definition of routing strategy	Establishing routeing objective, study area and identifying routeing constraints and considerations.	March 2025

Application of routeing strategy	Identify, assess and refine route options. Identify a Preferred Route Option and prepare Consultation Routeing Report.	July 2025
Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Strategy PAC Notice	Set out stages of consultation in strategy.	October 2025
Stage 1 Planning and Design: Definition of Proposed Route	Preparation and submission of PAC Notice.	November 2025
Stage 2 Planning and Design: Definition of the Alignment	Pre-application Consultation Event 1 (PAC Event 1) to gather feedback on Preferred Route option.	December 2025
PAC Report	PAC Event 2 to present and gather feedback on Proposed alignment.	2026
Application submission	Sets out what consultation and engagement has been undertaken.	2027
	SPEN will submit an application under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.	2027

02.

Stakeholders

2. Stakeholders

This section outlines the approach to identifying stakeholders, determining the frequency of engagement and maintaining a record of engagement activities.

2.1. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement, including public involvement, is an important component of the Scottish planning and consenting system. Legislation and government guidance aim to ensure that the public, local communities, statutory and other consultees and interested parties have an opportunity to have their views taken into account throughout the planning process.

SPEN recognises the importance of consulting effectively on proposals and is keen to engage with key stakeholders including local communities and others who may have an interest in the grid connection. This engagement process continues through to the construction of SPEN projects.

SPEN's approach to stakeholder engagement for major electrical infrastructure projects is outlined in Chapter 2 of the SPEN document 'Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment'. SPEN aims to ensure effective, inclusive and meaningful engagement with the public, local communities, statutory and other consultees and interested parties through four key engagement steps:

- **Pre-project notification and engagement:** Discussions are undertaken with consenting bodies, planning authorities, and statutory consultees such as NatureScot and SEPA. Early and proactive engagement enables the views of these consultees to inform project design, assessment methodologies and further engagement. It also provides consultees with an early understanding of the likely programme to submission of the application for consent.
- **Information gathering:** To inform the routeing stage, information on relevant environmental and planning considerations and proposed data gathering techniques (e.g. for seasonal ecological surveys) is requested from statutory consultees and other relevant organisations.
- **Obtaining feedback on emerging route options:** This RCD has been prepared to gather feedback on the emerging project details. It will be issued to statutory consultees, and made available on SPEN's website, at Council offices and in public libraries, with its availability advertised in the press. Local exhibitions and/or public meetings may also be arranged. SPEN will look to virtual methods of informing consultation and gathering feedback from stakeholders such as project specific websites to host virtual consultations to share relevant information and broaden its accessibility.
- **The EIA stage:** The results of stakeholder engagement are taken into consideration and used to confirm the 'proposed route' for progression to EIA/EA. Further consultation is carried out during the EIA stage, including additional information gathering, and the preparation of a publicly available Screening/Scoping Report which accompany either a 'Request for a Screening or Scoping Opinion' to the consenting authority.

2.2. Stakeholder list

Table 2 lists key stakeholders, groups that will be considered (but are not limited to):

- Statutory consultees
- Community Councils
- Local community and residents
- Local Businesses
- Landowners

Table 2: Stakeholder list

Stakeholder Type	Name
Statutory	Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit
	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
	Dumfries and Galloway Council
	Historic Environment Scotland
	NatureScot
Non-Statutory	Local MP
	Local MSPs
	Local Councillors
	Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk Community Council
	Middlebie and Waterbeck Community Council
	Kirtle and Eaglesfield Community Council
	Kirkpatrick Fleming District Community Council
	Canonbie and District Community Council
	Springfield and Gretna Green Community Council
	North Milk Community Council.
Other	Transport Scotland
	Scottish Forestry – South Scotland Conservatory
	Crown Estate Scotland
	British Horse Society Scotland
	BT
	Civil Aviation Authority - Airspace
	Defence Infrastructure Organisation
	Fisheries Management Scotland
	Joint Radio Company

John Muir Trust

Mountaineering Scotland

NATS Safeguarding

RSPB Scotland

Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)

Scottish Water

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Visit Scotland

Glasgow Airport

Glasgow Prestwick Airport

National Grid

The Coal Authority

Network Rail

West of Scotland Archaeology Service

Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.

03. Consultation and Engagement Strategy

3. Consultation and engagement strategy

This section outlines the planned approach to consultation and engagement, including consultation objectives, activities and timeline.

3.1. Approach to consultation

The approach to engagement focuses on openness, trust and genuine collaboration with stakeholders affected by or interested in the Callisterhall Wind Farm Connection Project. Relevant technical experts from SPEN shall be in attendance at all events.

Proposed Pre-application Strategy

In line with the approach to Routeing and Stakeholder Engagement, and new ECU guidance on pre-application consultation, SPEN's approach to PAC for Callisterhall Wind Farm is proposed as follows:

Stage 1 Planning & Design: Definition of the Proposed Route

- Consultation Period running between 1st December 2025 and 16th January 2026, exceeding the minimum 28 days to accommodate the Christmas break.
- Consultation Event: 2nd December 2025, Chapelknowe Village Hall, Canonbie, DG14 0YF 2.00PM – 7.00PM. At this event, all relevant technical experts from the SPEN project team will be in attendance, and relevant project information will be available including:
 - A Routeing and Consultation Document (RCD), detailing the need for the project, its location, a description of the proposals, and the environmental constraints and the process used to identify and appraise route options;
 - Project Banners summarising the background to the project, the key issues and displaying plans;
 - A0 maps of the preferred route;
 - Plans of the preferred route that the public can take away;
 - Details on how feedback can be provided.
- Online Engagement Opportunities: A dedicated project website (www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/callisterhall_wind_farm_connection.aspx) will be live for the duration of the project, where all of the relevant project information documents will be available and a project specific FAQ page. The website will also include opportunities to leave written feedback, via an online form, e-mail (callisterhallconnectionproject@spenergynetworks.co.uk) or post (to Callisterhall Wind Farm Connection, Land and Planning Team, SP Energy Networks, 55, Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA).
- Publication of the consultation will be as follows:

- PAC Notice sent to Energy Consents Unit, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Local MP and MSPs, Local Councillors and Community Councils within the study area.
- RCD sent to list of statutory and non-statutory consultees (including those above) inviting comments and notifying them of the public consultation period and events.
- Adverts in the local media (Annandale Observer) 21 days prior to the events.
- Project leaflet with information on the project and public events sent to businesses and households within 5km of the preferred route 21 days prior to the events.
- Landowners impacted by the preferred route will be contacted directly by the SPEN Transmission Land Team in advance of the publication of the above.
- Updates on the proposal, consultation and project banners and the consultation process will be held on the dedicated project website.

Stage 2 Planning & Design: Definition of the Alignment

The same format of public engagement activities undertaken in Stage 1, as detailed above, will take place in Stage 2.

In Stage 2, a detailed alignment within the proposed corridor will be presented, and feedback will be sought on the indicative location of structures and construction arrangements.

It is anticipated that the Stage 2 consultation will take place in Q4 2026. Precise details to be confirmed with the ECU in advance.

At this stage, due to the nature and scale of the proposed development (132kV and less than 15km in length), it is not considered that PAC Consultation Event 3 will be required, and that the broad scope of the final proposals can be presented during Stage 2. The public will be advised at this time how to make formal representations post-application to Scottish Ministers.

However, SPEN will consider the level of engagement received during the first two consultation events and will adjust the PAC Strategy accordingly if required.

3.2. Consultation materials

In line with Scottish Government guidance, information provided throughout the consultation must be accurate, easy to understand, accessible and relevant. All information should be provided in good time and appropriate formats. As a minimum the following information on the project must be made available on the SPEN website:

- PAC Notice and PAC Strategy
- The reasons/need for the project
- Benefits of project
- How the project has been identified and by who
- Project location and description of proposals
- Potential environmental effects and constraints
- Information on process used to identify and appraise route options

- Contact information
- Feedback methods
- Summary of feedback and SPEN's response
- Frequently asked questions
- All materials provided at consultation events.

The consultation materials will be developed to ensure this information is included. Table 4 provides an overview of the materials that will be produced for the consultation.

Table 4: Consultation materials

Material	Description
Routeing and Consultation Document	A document to report on Phase 1 of the grid connection; the routeing study which has been undertaken and the preferred Route Option which has been identified for the grid connection.
Consultation Leaflet	An easy-to-read overview of the Proposed Development for the public, designed to help the public understand the scheme to provide informed feedback.
Maps	Visual representations of the proposed route and design for the overhead line to help explain the project.
Information Banners	Pull-up banners to be displayed at public events.
Feedback summary	After each event a summary of feedback will be produced along with SPEN's response.
Feedback Form	Adapt SPEN standard questionnaire, made available online and at in-person events.

3.3. Communication and promotion methods

To ensure strong awareness and participation in the public consultation, we will use a range of targeted communication methods:

- **Leaflet distribution:** clear, concise leaflets will be created to inform local residents and businesses about the consultation. These will be delivered to properties within a set area from the project.
- **Newspaper advertisements:** in line with statutory requirements, public notices will be prepared and published 21 days before PAC Event 1 and PAC Event 2.
- **Stakeholder emails:** using the Stakeholder Map, targeted email communications will be sent to key stakeholders.
- **Project website:** A dedicated project website will be live for the duration of the project, where all of the relevant project information documents will be available

04. Feedback and Next Steps

4. Feedback and Next Steps

4.1. Feedback methods

Feedback can be provided at the in-person events using a hard copy of the feedback form or by speaking to a member of the team. Following each event, feedback can be submitted to SPEN within the 28-day post-event comments period using the following methods:

- Online copy of the feedback form provided on the website
- by email to callisterhallconnectionproject@spenergynetworks.co.uk
- by post to Callisterhall Wind Farm Connection, Land and Planning Team, SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA.

4.2. Next steps

The PAC Strategy will be a live document during the pre-application stages allowing for updates and amendments in approach reflecting the need of the project as it develops.

Following consultation, a PAC Report will be prepared to accompany the Section 37 application. The report will outline the consultation and engagement activities undertaken, summarise the feedback received and explain how this feedback has been considered in the development of the submitted proposal - including reasons why any matters raised did not influence the final proposal.