



Denny to Wishaw Network Upgrade

Planning Statement

May 2026

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Definition
AIL	Abnormal Indivisible Load
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
ASNW	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
AQMA	Air Quality Management Areas
AWI	Ancient Woodland Inventory
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
DWNO	Denny Wishaw Network Upgrade
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EDQ	Environment and Design Qualities
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FLLDP2	Falkirk Local Development Plan 2
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HV	High Voltage
kV	Kilovolt
km	kilometre
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LEPO	Long Established Plantation Origin
LDP	Local Development Plan
LLA	Local Landscape Areas
NLC	North Lanarkshire Council
NLLDP	North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NPS	National Policy Statement
PAC	Pre-application Consultation
PMP	Peat Management Plan
SM	Scheduled Monument
SMC	Scheduled Monument Consent
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPEN	SP Energy Networks
SPD	SP Distribution plc
SPP	Species Protection Plan
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage System
TCPA	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
WHS	World Heritage Site
WMP	Waste Management Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of SP Transmission ('the Applicant'). It accompanies three applications ('the Section 37 Applications') for consent to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989¹ ('the Electricity Act'), together with deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 ('TCPA')² and a separate application to North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) for planning permission under the TCPA ('the Planning Application').

1.1.2 In summary, the Project comprises the following components:

- The construction of approximately 19 kilometre (km) of a new 275/400 kilovolt (kV) double circuit overhead line (to be known as WB route), including temporary access tracks, tower compounds, site compounds, pulling positions and associated works. This is hereafter referred to as the 'New Build Overhead Line';
- Upgrading the eastern circuit of three existing overhead line routes from 275kV to 400kV, hereafter referred to as the 'Upgraded Overhead Lines', including temporary access tracks, tower compounds, site compounds, pulling positions, tower foundation upgrades, and associated works:
 - ZG Route – upgrading of approximately 4km of the eastern circuit of existing overhead line between Denny North and Bonnybridge Substations;
 - XX Route – upgrading of 15km of existing overhead line between Easterhouse and Newarthill Substations. Part of XX Route is located to the north of Glenmavis where the 'New Build Overhead Line' shall tee into XX Route, involving the dismantling of existing towers XX020 and XX021, and the construction of towers XX019A, XX019B, XX020A and XX021A. In addition, one new tower (XX048A) is proposed to the north-east of Newarthill Substation;
 - XR Route – upgrading of approximately 16km of existing overhead line between Newarthill and Wishaw Substations, including one new tower (XR001A) and span of overhead line between towers XR001A and XX048A. In addition, one temporary tower (XR001T) and two temporary spans of overhead line between XR001 – XR001T and XR001T - XR002;
- Works to the existing ZD Route including the installation of two new towers, two new spans of overhead line between new towers and one new span of overhead line between existing towers, as part of reconfiguration of connections to Denny North Substation;
- Works at the existing Denny North, Cumbernauld and Wishaw Substations to facilitate the above overhead line works. These are hereafter collectively referred to as the 'Substation Works';

¹ UK Government (1989). The Electricity Act 1989, Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/contents>

² UK Government (1997). The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents>

- There are also ancillary works which form part of the Project, these are hereafter referred to as the ‘Ancillary Works’, and comprise the following:
 - The entire removal of existing CB Route 132kV overhead line, measuring approximately 11km between Bonnybridge and Cumbernauld, referred to as the ‘CB Route Removal’;
 - The undergrounding of two short sections of existing 132kV overhead line known as the ‘AA Route’ referred to as the ‘AA Route Undergrounding’; and
 - Diversions to other SP Distribution plc (SPD) infrastructure are required as part of the Project, referred to as the ‘Distribution Line Diversion Works’.
- 1.1.3 A full description of the Denny Wishaw Network Upgrade (DWNO, also referred to as the ‘Project’) is outlined in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report Chapter 4 Project Description.
- 1.1.4 Consent will be sought under Section 37 of the Electricity Act for the New Build Overhead Line and the Uprated Overhead Lines. The Applicant will also seek deemed planning permission under section 57 (2) of the TCPA for the Substation Works (except the Cumbernauld Substation works) and the Ancillary Works (except the Distribution Line Diversion Works) and associated works (such as temporary infrastructure and access tracks) (‘deemed planning permission’). A separate application under the TCPA will be submitted for Cumbernauld Substation.
- 1.1.5 The Section 37 Applications are supported by the following documents:
 - Planning Statement (this document);
 - EIA Report related to the whole Project;
 - Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report; and
 - Phase 1 Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Reports.
- 1.1.6 The Planning Application for the Cumbernauld Substation works is supported by the following documents:
 - Planning Statement (this document);
 - Design and Access Statement;
 - EIA Report related to the whole Project;
 - Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report;
 - Phase 1 Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Reports;
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Report (BNG); and
 - Badger Protection Plan (Confidential).

1.2 Consenting Approach

- 1.2.1 As described above, the Applicant seeks the consents required for the Project via the Section 37 Applications and the Planning Application. The Project is however assessed as a whole for the purposes of the relevant EIA Regulations and a single EIA Report addressing all the likely significant environmental effects of the Project accompanies

each Application. This Planning Statement considers all of the elements of the Project as outlined in Chapter 2 of this statement.

1.3 The Applicant - SP Transmission plc

- 1.3.1 SP Energy Networks (SPEN) is the trading name for Scottish Power Energy Networks Holdings Limited. SPEN owns and operates the electricity transmission and distribution networks in central and southern Scotland through its wholly owned subsidiaries SP Transmission plc and SP Distribution plc. These businesses are ‘asset-owner companies’ holding the regulated assets and Electricity Transmission and Distribution Licenses. SP Transmission plc is the Transmission Licence holder under the Electricity Act.
- 1.3.2 The network which SP Transmission is responsible for in Scotland comprises over 4,000km of overhead Line and 360km of underground cable and serves approximately two million customers.
- 1.3.3 As the holder of a transmission licence under the Electricity Act, the Applicant 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 statutory duty is reflected in the conditions of SP Transmission’s transmission licence which includes an obligation to make its transmission system available for generators wishing to connect to it and ensure that the system is fit for purpose through appropriate reinforcements to accommodate the contracted capacity.
- 1.3.4 The Section 37 Applications and the Planning Application have been prepared and made by the Applicant considering the statutory duties and licence obligations under the Electricity Act as outlined above.

1.4 The Planning Statement

- 1.4.1 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to identify the need for the Project and assess it against policies contained within the Development Plan, comprising local and national planning policy. It also considers environmental effects and suitability of mitigation against policy.
- 1.4.2 The Section 37 Applications are for Strategic Transmission Infrastructure. The Section 37 Applications are therefore considered priority applications under the Priority Applications for Transmission Infrastructure Guidance³. Under that guidance, a complete application must include a planning statement describing how the Project accords with local and national planning and other policies.
- 1.4.3 With regard to the Planning Application, Section 25 of the TCPA states that:

“Where, in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

³ Scottish Government (2025). Priority Applications for Transmission Infrastructure Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2025/02/priority-applications-transmission-infrastructure-guidance-section-37-electricity-act-1989/documents/priority-applications-transmission-infrastructure-guidance-section-37-electricity-act-1989/priority-applications-transmission-infrastructure-guidance-section-37-electricity-act-1989/govscot%3Adocument/priority-applications-transmission-infrastructure-guidance-section-37-electricity-act-1989.pdf>

- 1.4.4 Section 24 of the TCPA sets out that the Development Plan comprises of the National Planning Framework and the Local Development Plan (LDP) for the area. The Development Plan for relevant to the determination of the TCPA Application comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) 2023 and the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (2022).
- 1.4.5 This Planning Statement therefore considers how the Section 37 Applications and the Planning Application respond to and comply with the policies contained in the Development Plan.
- 1.4.6 The Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 1** introduces the proposal and the scope of the applications;
 - **Section 2** details the Project and application proposals;
 - **Section 3** sets out the consultation undertaken to support the Project and the applications;
 - **Section 4** sets out the statutory framework for consenting;
 - **Section 5** outlines the need for the Project and outlines the energy and climate change policy context;
 - **Section 6** outlines the planning policy context;
 - **Section 7** assesses the Project against relevant planning policies; and
 - **Section 8** sets out the overall conclusions of this Planning Statement.
- 1.4.7 This Planning Statement is intended to be read alongside information contained within the EIA Report, which includes an environmental assessment of the Project. This provides relevant information on the likely significant environmental effects of the Project and how these will be avoided and mitigated as far as possible. This Planning Statement draws from that EIA Report to provide evidence to demonstrate the level of compliance with policies as applicable.

2. The Project

2.1 Project Overview

- 2.1.1 The table below provides an overview of all the elements of the Project and associated Ancillary Works:

Table 2.1 Project Overview

Project Element	Ancillary Elements
New Build Overhead Line	CB Route Removal AA Route Undergrounding
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	-
Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Denny North Substation Works
Upated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route)	Newarthill Substation Works Wishaw Substation Extension

- 2.1.2 Further details of each constituent Project Element are outlined below, and a detailed Project description is available in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 4 Project Description.

2.2 Description of the New Build Overhead Line

- 2.2.1 The New Build Overhead Line will involve the construction of approximately 19km of a new 400kV overhead line (WB Route) between Bonnybridge Substation and an existing overhead line (XX Route) north of Glenmavis.
- 2.2.2 The New Build Overhead Line will also require the Ancillary Works, relating to both the CB Route Removal and AA Route Undergrounding as detailed below.

New Build Overhead Line

- 2.2.3 The New Build Overhead Line will be a new double circuit overhead line consisting of approximately 19km of new overhead line running from Glenmavis to Bonnybridge Substation, with a connection to Cumbernauld Substation. This new overhead line will have an operational capacity of 400kV, with the option for the circuits to operate at 400kV and 275kV. There will be 62 new towers from Glenmavis to Cumbernauld Substation and Bonnybridge Substation required as part of the New Build Overhead Line.
- 2.2.4 Towers will be steel lattice with height varying according to the operating voltage of the conductors and relevant electrical safety clearances to the ground. Tower heights will range up to 63m above ground level, however this may increase subject to the route design. The distance between adjacent towers is approximately 300m. Three types of towers will be required at various points along the New Build Overhead Line route:
- Suspension or line tower;
 - Tension or angle tower; and

- Terminal tower.
- 2.2.5 Temporary access tracks to facilitate the New Build Overhead Line will be stone, 4m wide increasing to 6m at bends.
- 2.2.6 Where the New Build Overhead Line passes through forestry an 80m wide clearance corridor will be considered the minimum requirement.
- 2.2.7 The New Build Overhead Line starts on the western side of Bonnybridge Substation within Falkirk Council administrative area. It is routed to the south of the substation crossing two existing 132kV overhead lines routes, referred to as the CB Route and the AA Route, (as illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.2 Project Works Plan) then heads southeast towards the Forth and Clyde Canal. This section of the New Build Overhead Line is located within the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) Buffer Zone.
- 2.2.8 From here the New Build Overhead Line crosses the Canal, Antonine Wall and Glasgow – Edinburgh via Falkirk Railway Line in a southern direction to Howie Rig. It then heads southwest largely following the existing CB Route to the north/northwest of the Slamannan Plateau Special Protection Area (SPA). The New Build Overhead Line crosses into North Lanarkshire to the north of Fannyside Muir continuing towards Palacerigg Country Park.
- 2.2.9 The New Build Overhead Line includes an approximate 750m spur which connects it to the existing Cumbernauld Substation and allows the existing CB Route between Bonnybridge and Cumbernauld to be removed in its entirety. From Cumbernauld Substation the New Build Overhead Line is routed through part of Palacerigg Country Park heading south towards Greengairs. It is routed southwest from here crossing the A73 to the north of Riggend.
- 2.2.10 From here the route heads south to the east of Glenmavis/west of Stand where it meets the reconfigured XX Route. A new Tee-shape arrangement would be formed to the northwest of Glenmavis with the XX Route diverted to form a dogleg which would continue south over the B803 before connecting to the existing XX Route to the west of the Albert Bartlett Factory.

Ancillary Works – CB Route Removal

- 2.2.11 The removal of the existing CB Route 132kV overhead line between Bonnybridge and Cumbernauld Substations would be undertaken in advance of construction of the New Build Overhead Line, parts of which would be constructed on the same or a similar alignment to the existing route.
- 2.2.12 The removal of CB Route would follow the same approach to decommissioning as described below. Steel towers will be removed with components re-used where possible. Foundations would be removed to a minimum depth of approximately 1.5m below ground level with the area around the base of the tower cleared and the ground reinstated.

Ancillary Works – AA Route Undergrounding

- 2.2.13 The AA Route will be undergrounded in two sections where it intersects with the New Build Overhead Line. These undergrounding works will be undertaken between

Bonnybridge Substation and existing Towers AA001, and between existing Towers AA006 and AA009.

- 2.2.14 The location of the AA Route Undergrounding is illustrated in the EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.1 Project Components Location Plan. The specific works associated with the undergrounding are shown in EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.2 Projects Works Plan.
- 2.2.15 The undergrounding works will require the construction of three new towers (AA001CSE, AA006CSE and AA009CSE). All towers associated with the AA Route Undergrounding are listed in EIA Report Volume 3, Appendix 4.1 Project Tower Schedule.

2.3 Description of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension

2.3.1 The Cumbernauld Substation Extension will involve the construction of a new Cumbernauld 275/33kV Substation, as shown in EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.3 Cumbernauld Site Layout. This will involve the demolition of the existing 132/33kV Cumbernauld Substation outdoor equipment and control building. The area of temporary and permanent works associated with the Cumbernauld Substation Extension would be approximately 5.8ha, and new infrastructure would be a maximum height of 15.5m above the finished platform level.

2.3.2 Permanent works will include:

- New substation equipment including;
 - 275kV Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS);
 - Two Super Grid (275/33kV) Transformers with AIS circuit breakers;
 - Two connection bays with marshalling kiosks;
 - 275kV bus section breaker;
 - 2no. new gantries;
- New access road (5.5m width), from Forest Road main road;
- One single storey new control building (including toilet, mess room, storage, office, battery room, and other electrical equipment);
- New platform to accommodate new electrical equipment (no more than 1.8ha);
- Diesel generator;
- Distribution Network Operator Substation;
- Car parking for up to six vehicles;
- 3m high palisade perimeter fencing;
- Internal footpath (2m wide);
- Internal vehicular access road (3.5m wide);
- Realignment of existing 33kV cables and overhead line;
- Dedicated Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS);
- Storage of up to 90,000 litres of insulating oil;
- Operational lighting (only during maintenance in hours of darkness); and

- Associated landscape planting.

2.3.3 The temporary works associated with construction would include:

- Earthworks;
- Decommissioning and removal of two existing 132kV grid transformers;
- Construction phase lighting (only during hours of darkness);
- Dismantling and removal of one existing CB tower to make space for new substation infrastructure;
- Two temporary compounds to provide office accommodation and welfare facilities during construction;
- Upgrade to telecommunications;
- Dismantling and removal of existing control building;
- Removal of existing septic tank and associated drainage; and
- Diversion of water mains associated with Forest Road.

2.4 Description of the Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)

2.4.1 The Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route) will involve the upgrading of the existing towers upgraded from 275kV to 400kV. The existing towers carry twelve conductors and an earth wire. Each conductor is joined to the tower cross arm via an insulator string. The conductors, earth wire and insulators will be replaced as part of the works. In addition, the existing towers along each route are to be reviewed and tower steel strengthening and foundation upgrades are to be completed as required, to facilitate conductor upgrades. There will be two new L6 terminal towers at Denny North Substation required as part of the Project.

2.4.2 The Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route) is approximately 4km long extending from Denny North Substation to Bonnybridge Substation. It exits the substation in a southern direction through a wayleave within Tor Wood which is identified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI). It continues in a southeastern crossing the M876 before heading south crossing the River Carron and A883 terminating at Bonnybridge Substation.

Ancillary Works – Denny North Substation Works

2.4.3 The ancillary works will involve works to the existing Denny North Substation to support the Project. Denny North Substation is located approximately 1.7km north of Denny.

2.4.4 Works at Denny North Substation are required due to the upgrading of the existing ZG Route. These comprise works at the northern side of the existing substation including the installation of a new bay containing air insulated switchgear and an overhead line gantry tower. As part of the works the existing security fence would be extended. Towers ZD096A and ZD096B will also be constructed as part of the Denny North Substation Works. These two towers are listed in EIA Report Volume 2, Appendix 4.1 Project Tower Schedule.

2.5 Description of the Uprated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route)

- 2.5.1 The Uprated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route) will involve the uprating of approximately 15km of an existing overhead line between Easterhouse Substation and Newarthill Substation from 275kV to 400kV.
- 2.5.2 The Uprated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route) will also require Ancillary Works. These include:
- Newarthill Substation Works – Required works to the existing Newarthill Substation; and
 - Wishaw Substation Extension – Required works to the existing Wishaw Substation.

Uprated Overhead Lines (XX Route)

- 2.5.3 The XX Route is approximately 15km extending from Easterhouse Substation to Newarthill Substation. It is routed in an eastern direction from Easterhouse towards Glenmavis. It is currently routed east/southeast around Glenmavis but as part of the Project will be diverted to tie into the New Build Overhead Line. It continues south to the west of the Albert Bartlett Factory and then is routed to the northeast and east Airdrie on the margins of the settlement. It is routed through Chapelhall crossing the M8 to the west of Newhouse before terminating at Newarthill Substation.

Uprated Overhead Lines (XR Route)

- 2.5.4 The XR Route is approximately 16km long extending from Newarthill Substation to Wishaw Substation and comprises 50 double circuit towers. It is routed in a broadly eastern direction from Newarthill Substation towards Shotts then heads south between Newmains and Allanton. From here it is routed in a western/southwestern direction to the south of Wishaw before terminating at Wishaw Substation.

Ancillary Works – Newarthill Substation Works

- 2.5.5 The ancillary works will involve upgrades to the existing Newarthill Substation to support the uprating of the existing XX and XR Route.
- 2.5.6 The substation is located approximately 750m north of Newarthill. Works at Newarthill are required due to the uprating of the existing XX Route and XR Route. These comprise works to replace the 275kV equipment including air insulated switchgear.

Ancillary Works – Wishaw Substation Extension

- 2.5.7 The ancillary works will involve upgrades to the existing Wishaw Substation to support the uprating of the existing XR Route.
- 2.5.8 The substation is located south of Wishaw between the B574 and a railway line. Works at Wishaw Substation are required due to the uprating of the existing XR route. These include an extension of the existing substation platform and associated security fencing as well as installation of three new bays containing gas insulated switchgear and circuit breaker.

2.6 Construction

2.6.1 The following construction activities are required as part of the Project:

New Build Overhead Line

2.6.2 The construction process for the New Build Overhead Line will comprise the following key stages:

- Establishment of temporary construction compounds;
- Access track construction including bellmouths and other road improvements;
- Installation of tower foundations;
- Construction of towers;
- Conductor stringing including construction of any temporary scaffolding;
- Overhead line commissioning;
- Removal of existing redundant equipment, conductors, and towers; and
- Removal and reinstatement of temporary construction work areas.

2.6.3 The New Build Overhead Line construction phase would last approximately 37 months.

Ancillary Works – CB Route Removal

2.6.4 To provide a clear corridor for the new WB Route, the existing 132kV overhead line CB Route will be decommissioned, dismantled, and removed from site. This involves removing all hardware including conductors and fittings, dismantling of towers and removal of foundations to a depth of 1.5m below ground level.

2.6.5 Existing SP Transmission wayleaves and access routes shared with the New Build Overhead Line will primarily be used to provide access to each tower location along the CB Route. Where these tracks become unsuitable for heavy construction plant, low ground bearing plant including a tracked excavator, tracked dumper and associated cutting equipment will be offloaded and taken to the tower location individually.

2.6.6 Where possible, these wayleaves will also support access for dismantling works at CB Towers. Existing access tracks already in place for the New Build Overhead Line present a viable solution, and further investigation will determine the most appropriate track type for reaching the CB Towers. In areas where tracks serve only CB Towers, proprietary trackway systems are likely to be sufficient.

2.6.7 The removal of the CB Route will last approximately four months.

Ancillary Works – AA Route Undergrounding

2.6.8 The construction process for the partial undergrounding of the existing 132 kV AA Route Undergrounding comprises the following key stages:

- Temporary construction requirements, such as access and compounds will be shared with WB works;
- Installation of temporary masts allowing one circuit to remain live during works;

- Removal of redundant overhead line equipment associated with the existing AA Route Undergrounding;
- Installation of cable sealing end tower arrangements at each end of the underground cable route;
- Excavation of trenches, installation of cable ducts and reinstatement of ground;
- Cable installation, including erection of temporary scaffolding at each end;
- Jointing/termination works; and
- Underground cable commissioning.

2.6.9 Access will be provided to each tower position where redundant overhead line equipment is dismantled and removed, including conductors, fittings, and foundations to 1.5m below ground level. Access will also be required to the new Cable Sealing End towers (AA006CSE and AA009CSE), where the terminal arrangements will be installed at either end of the underground cable route.

2.6.10 Reconductoring of the AA Route Undergrounding will take place from existing towers AA001CSE to AA006CSE, which includes towers AA001, AA002, AA003, AA004 and AA005. Towers AA009 and AA010 will also be reconducted as shown in EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.2 Project Works Plan.

2.6.11 For the cable installation, trenches of approximately 1.5m in width will be excavated to a typical depth of 1.3m. With AA Route Undergrounding being an existing double circuit overhead line, two trenches will be required, running parallel at a typical spacing of 5m, centre to centre. Lengths of cable duct for cable to be pulled through would then be installed and an insulating material (usually concrete, sand, or cement bound sand) is placed to cover the ducts. Sections at a time are then backfilled with the excavated material, and the ground reinstated with minimal scarring.

2.6.12 Prior to installing the cable, scaffolding would be erected at each end of the cable route to provide access to the terminating structure. An access road would be required to each end of the installation to allow for winch pulling position at one end, and cable drums at the other. Using a winch and hoist mechanism, the cable would be pulled carefully off the drum, through the ducts and up to the terminating structure at each end. From there, the cables would be terminated to the desired basket or cable sealing end arrangement. Following successful HV testing, the underground cable installation would be commissioned.

2.6.13 The AA Route Undergrounding will last approximately 18 months.

Cumbernauld Substation Extension

2.6.14 Construction works would include decommissioning and removal of the existing 132/33kV 90MVA Grid Transformer 1 and Grid Transformer 2, and disposal of the associated bays and equipment. This would be followed by installation of the new Cumbernauld 275/33kV Super Grid Transformers as part of the new substation, within and adjacent to the existing Cumbernauld 132/33kV Substation compound.

2.6.15 The construction phase would last approximately 28 months, and would comprise the following key stages:

- Site Mobilisation;

- Construction Stage 1 including:
 - Groundworks and platform construction;
 - Civil works;
 - Control building construction;
 - Super Grid Transformer No 1 installation;
 - Telecommunications works;
 - Pre-commissioning of equipment; and
 - Decommissioning of existing equipment (including removal of one CB route tower).
- Construction Stage 2 including:
 - Demolition works;
 - Decommissioning of existing equipment;
 - Protection and control works;
 - Super Grid Transformer No 2 installation;
 - Civil works;
 - Commissioning of Super Grid transformer No 2; and
 - Final demobilisation.

2.6.16 Earthworks fill material would be sourced from off-site, however material won on-site would be utilised if it is determined to be acceptable and suitable for re-use.

2.6.17 New ducts would be laid for new cabling. The use of precast concrete cable trenches would be kept to a minimum and wherever practicable a system of multicore ducts and duct boxes would be used to route cables into proposed new control building. Cable trenches would be used where appropriate. Cable trenches would be self-draining pre-cast concrete systems. All cable ducts would be Polyvinyl Chloride.

Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)

2.6.18 The construction process for the Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route) will comprise the following key stages:

- Replacement of existing conductors, fittings, tension and suspension insulators and tension and suspension conductor end fittings;
- Existing towers to be reviewed and tower strengthening and foundation upgrade design to be completed if required, to facilitate conductor upgrades;
- Overhead line reconfiguration works at Bonnybridge Substation, including the removal and installation of phase conductors and installation of slack span; and
- ZD Route overhead line reconfiguration works at Denny North Substation, including the installation of two new L6 terminal towers, stringing of converters and potential existing tower strengthening.

Ancillary Works – Denny North Substation Works

2.6.19 The construction process for the Ancillary Works will comprise the following key stages:

- Establishment of temporary construction compound;
 - Site clearance and de-vegetation;
 - Bulk earthworks and drainage works;
 - Installation of primary utility services;
 - Construction of equipment foundations;
 - Erection of equipment structures and line landing gantry;
 - Modifications to existing Denny North substation and adjacent sealing compounds;
 - Construction of towers ZD096A and ZD096B, new terminal tower and overhead line gantry construction (ZD Tower);
 - Dismantle and removal of redundant equipment;
 - Installation of HV plant, cable, and associated equipment;
 - Testing and commissioning of newly installed equipment;
 - Dismantle and removal of redundant equipment; and
 - Site clearance and demobilisation.
- 2.6.20 The addition of the proposed two new towers (known as ZD Tower Construction) at Denny North Substation has been included into the EIA Report, post-EIA scoping report and opinion. The two new ZD towers are required to facilitate the reconfiguration of existing circuits as they connect into the substation. The ZD towers are captured within the works at Denny North Substation and are included in this Section 37 application.
- 2.6.21 The construction of towers ZD096A and ZD096B will follow the same process as the New Build Overhead Line. A tower working area will be established at each tower. This is typically 50m x 50m in area and comprises a laydown area, turning head and segregated bunding area. The compounds will be used to provide welfare facilities for operatives, storage, and final reinstatement of excavated materials. Following construction and reinstatement of foundations, the crane pad shall be established in preparation of tower erection.
- 2.6.22 The foundations are subject to Ground Investigation works, with three potential options as described above:
- Pad and Column;
 - Micro-pile; and
 - Rock Anchor.
- 2.6.23 Prior to the erection of each tower, a stone crane pad and laydown area shall be created within the tower working area to provide a stable working platform for lifting operations. Tower steelwork is transported to site by a flatbed wagon and placed within the laydown area ready for assembly. Sections are then assembled on the ground before being lifted into position with a telehandler or an all-terrain mobile crane.
- 2.6.24 The towers will be accessed via the existing tracks through Denny North Substation.

Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Routes)

2.6.25 The construction process for the Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Routes) will comprise the following key stages:

- Replacement of existing conductors, fittings, tensions and suspension insulators and tension and suspension conductor end fittings;
- Installation of five new L8c towers including foundations between existing towers XX019 and XX022;
- Dismantling of existing towers XX020 and XX021;
- Overhead line reconfiguration works at Newarthill Substation, including the installation of new L8c terminal towers (XX048A and XX001A), installation of a temporary diversion of the Newarthill – Wishaw circuit and potential tower strengthening;
- Overhead line reconfiguration works at Easterhouse Substation, including the installation of new downloads from existing tower XX001A and potential tower strengthening; and
- Overhead line reconfiguration works at Wishaw Substation, including the installation of new downloads from existing tower XR050 and potential tower strengthening.

Ancillary Works – Newarthill Substation Works

2.6.26 The construction process for the Ancillary Works at Newarthill Substation will comprise the following key stages:

- Establishment of temporary construction compound;
- Site clearance and de-vegetation;
- Construction of equipment foundations;
- Erection of equipment structures and line landing gantry;
- Modifications to existing Newarthill substation;
- Installation of HV plant and associated equipment;
- Testing and commissioning of newly installed equipment;
- Dismantle, removal and disposal of redundant equipment; and
- Site clearance and demobilisation.

Ancillary Works – Wishaw Substation Extension

2.6.27 The construction process for the Ancillary Works at Wishaw Substation will comprise the following key stages:

- Establishment of temporary construction compound;
- Site clearance and de-vegetation;
- Bulk earthworks and drainage works;
- Modification to existing substation building and cladding;
- Extension of existing gas insulated switchboard in substation building;

- Extension of existing gas insulated busduct in switchyard;
- Installation of primary utility services including relocation of existing diesel generator;
- Construction of equipment foundations;
- Erection of equipment structures and line landing gantry;
- Installation of HV plant and associated equipment;
- Testing and commissioning of newly installed equipment; and
- Site clearance and demobilisation.

Construction Working Hours

- 2.6.28 Construction working hours for the Project would take place during daytime hours from Mon-Fri 08:00-19:00 and Sat-Sun 08:00-13:00. No work outside of this time would take place unless agreed in writing. Weekend working would be restricted to locations with the least impact on the local community.

Construction Compounds

New Build Overhead Line

- 2.6.29 A main works construction compound for the New Build Overhead Line is proposed on land adjacent to Bonnybridge Substation. This compound will be used to provide office accommodation and welfare facilities for construction staff. This construction compound will provide a safe area for parking away from the public highways and the temporary storage of materials, plant, and equipment. Other smaller satellite construction compounds will be used along the route and will be used for temporary storage and parking.
- 2.6.30 In addition, at each proposed tower location for the New Build Overhead Line a tower working area compound is proposed. Each of these compounds will be approximately 50m x 50m in area and will comprise a construction laydown area, turning head and segregated bunding area. These proposed construction compounds will provide welfare facilities for construction staff, storage of plant, storage of materials and equipment to carry out the works safely, and bunding areas for storage and final reinstatement of excavated materials. Following construction and reinstatement of the foundations, a crane pad shall be established in preparation of tower erection.
- 2.6.31 The locations of the proposed construction compounds for the New Build Overhead Line are illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.2 Projects Works Plan.

CB Route Removal

- 2.6.32 As per the New Build Overhead Line, at each proposed tower location for the CB Route Removal a tower working area compound is proposed. Each of these compounds will be approximately 50m x 50m in area and will comprise a construction laydown area, turning head and segregated bunding area. These will be used for the same purposes as described for the New Build Overhead Line Development.
- 2.6.33 The locations of the proposed construction compounds for the CB Route Removal are illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.2 Projects Works Plan.

Ancillary Works – AA Route Undergrounding

- 2.6.34 As per the New Build Overhead Line, at each proposed tower location for the AA Route Undergrounding a tower working area compound is proposed. Each of these compounds will be approximately 50m x 50m in area and will comprise a construction laydown area, turning head and segregated bunding area. These will be used for the same purposes as described for the New Build Overhead Line.
- 2.6.35 The locations of the proposed construction compounds for the AA Route Undergrounding are illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 4.2 Projects Works Plan.

Cumbernauld Substation Extension

- 2.6.36 Two temporary construction site compounds will be used to provide office accommodation and welfare facilities for staff and provide a safe area of parking and temporary storage of materials, plant, and equipment during construction.
- 2.6.37 This compound will be located within SP Transmission owned land around the substation, and the location of the compound will be subject to further landowner discussions. Access to the compound will be from the existing access to Cumbernauld Substation via Forest Road.

Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)

- 2.6.38 At each proposed tower location, a tower working area is proposed. Each of these compounds will be approximately 50m x 50m in area and will comprise a construction laydown area, turning head and segregated bunding area. These will be used for the same purposes as described for the Project.

Ancillary Works – Denny North Substation Works

- 2.6.39 All temporary construction compound and laydown area will be located within the existing Denny North Substation site and land owned by SP Transmission. These areas will be used to provide office accommodation, welfare facilities for staff and provide a safe area for parking and temporary storage of materials, plant, and equipment.

Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)

- 2.6.40 At each proposed tower location, a tower working area compound is proposed. Each of these compounds will be approximately 50m x 50m in area and will comprise a construction laydown area, turning head and segregated bunding area. These will be used for the same purposes as described for the Project.

Ancillary Works – Newarthill and Wishaw Substation Works/Extension

- 2.6.41 A temporary construction site compound and laydown area will be used to provide office accommodation and welfare facilities for staff and provide a safe area for parking and temporary storage of materials, plant, and equipment.
- 2.6.42 This compound will be located within SP Transmission owned land around the substation and the location of the compound will be subject to further landowner discussions.
- 2.6.43 Access to the compound and laydown area for Newarthill Substation will be via existing access from Legbrannock/Edinburgh Road. The indicative location of the construction

site compound area is currently in a field approximately 220m north of the Newarthill Substation, while the laydown area is proposed adjacent to the north.

- 2.6.44 Access to the compound for Wishaw Substation will be via an existing track from Allershaw Road and Birkshaw Brae. The indicative location of this construction site compound area is currently southeast of the Wishaw Substation.

Access

New Build Overhead Line

- 2.6.45 Access tracks are proposed to provide access to the New Build Overhead Line route during construction. All existing and new temporary access tracks will be stone tracks. These will be 4m wide (including construction areas) and will extend to 6m wide at bends.
- 2.6.46 Where possible, it is proposed that existing non-public roads and tracks are utilised. Upgrade works to these existing tracks will be undertaken to ensure they are suitable. Where there are no existing access tracks, new tracks will be constructed in accordance with good practice working methods. For example, water crossings will be designed and installed to comply with all relevant legislation and Scottish Environment Protection Agency River Crossings guidance. Any modifications to existing access tracks and new access tracks are temporary and will be reinstated to previous condition following the completion of construction works.
- 2.6.47 Stone tracks are preferred as they are designed to accommodate heavy plant loads required for the construction works and are suitable in a variety of ground conditions. On completion of the construction works the stone is removed and the original ground material reinstated.
- 2.6.48 No abnormal indivisible loads (AILs) with regards to length and width will be required and the largest construction vehicles required will be road legal, standard articulated lorries. Abnormal loads with regards to vehicle weight (over 44 tonnes) are required. These will be road legal standard articulated lorries or low loaders importing construction equipment such as plant and cranes.

Ancillary Works – CB Route Removal and AA Route Undergrounding

- 2.6.49 Access tracks are proposed to provide access to the CB Route Removal and AA Route Undergrounding during construction. All existing and new temporary access tracks for the CB Route Removal will be stone and approximately 4m wide (including construction areas).
- 2.6.50 No AILs with regards to length and width will be required and the largest construction vehicles required will be road legal, standard articulated lorries. Abnormal loads with regards to vehicle weight (over 44 tonnes) are required. These will be road legal standard articulated lorries or low loaders importing construction equipment such as plant and cranes.

Cumbernauld Substation Extension

- 2.6.51 The existing substation access road would be re-aligned to accommodate the arrangement of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension. This existing access road would

be maintained as the primary vehicular access point to the existing and extended substation areas, during operation of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension.

- 2.6.52 A separate entirely new 5.5m wide secondary access road would be constructed to facilitate delivery of the two new transformers, as well as facilitate their future maintenance or replacement. This secondary access road would be retained during operation and would enter the Cumbernauld Substation Extension from Forest Road via a new bellmouth (road access), entering the extension area from the west. Internal access roads would be designed to accommodate delivery of the new transformer.

Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)

- 2.6.53 Access tracks are proposed to provide access to the Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route) during construction. All existing and new temporary access tracks will be trackway. These will utilise a plastic trackway laid on the existing ground with no soil stripping required. These access tracks will be approximately 4m wide (including construction areas).

Ancillary Works – Denny North Substation Works

- 2.6.54 The proposed access route for the Denny North Substation Works will be via existing tracks from an unnamed road to the east of the A872. The existing access point to the northwest of Denny North Substation will continue to be used.
- 2.6.55 Construction works require road legal, standard articulated lorries only. There will be no abnormal loads in terms of size (i.e. length or width) of load, however, there would be abnormal loads in terms of weight. Abnormal loads with regards to vehicle weight (over 44 tonnes) are required. These will be road legal standard articulated lorries or low loaders importing construction equipment such as plant and cranes.

Upated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route)

- 2.6.56 Access tracks are proposed to provide access to the Upated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route) during construction. All existing and new temporary access tracks will be trackway. These will utilise a plastic trackway laid on the existing ground with no soil stripping required. These access tracks will be approximately 4m wide (including construction areas).

Ancillary Works – Newarthill Substation Works

- 2.6.57 The proposed access route for the Newarthill Substation Works will be via existing tracks from Legbrannock Road. The existing access point to the west of Newarthill Substation will continue to be used.
- 2.6.58 No AILs will be required for the works. The largest construction vehicles required will be road legal, standard articulated lorries. The construction vehicle movements and personnel.

Ancillary Works – Wishaw Substation Extension

- 2.6.59 The proposed access route for the Wishaw Substation Extension will be via existing tracks from Castlehill Road. The existing access point to the northwest of Wishaw Substation will continue to be used, with an existing access point to the construction compound being used from Birkshaw Brae.

- 2.6.60 No AILs will be required for the works. The largest construction vehicles required will be road legal, standard articulated lorries. The construction vehicle movements and personnel.

Further Details

- 2.6.61 Further information pertaining to the New Build Overhead Line in relation to construction works including crossings, foundations, tower design, tower construction, temporary scaffolding and pulling positions and pertaining to the Cumbernauld Substation Extension in relation to insulation technology, drainage, landscaping and design compliance with UK Code of Practice on Electromagnetic Fields is available within EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 4 Project Description.

2.7 Operation

New Build Overhead Line

- 2.7.1 The New Build Overhead Line will require maintenance. The condition of tower steelwork and foundations will be monitored regularly. Towers which have deteriorated significantly may be dismantled carefully and replaced. Any vegetation within proximity to the New Build Overhead Line will also be monitored to ensure it does not impact on safety clearances.

Cumbernauld Substation Extension

- 2.7.2 While the Cumbernauld Substation Extension would form an integral part of the electricity network and operate all year round it would be operated remotely. Access would be required for inspections, servicing or repairs should they be required. However, once operational the Cumbernauld Substation Extension would not generate significant on-site activity or travel to/from the Site.

Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)

- 2.7.3 Operational and maintenance requirements for the Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route) are the same as those required for the New Build Overhead Line:

“The New Build Overhead Line will require minimal maintenance. The condition of tower steelwork and foundations will be monitored regularly. Towers which have deteriorated significantly may be dismantled carefully and replaced. Any vegetation within proximity to the New Build Overhead Line will also be monitored to ensure it does not impact on safety clearances.”

Ancillary Works - Denny North Substation Works

- 2.7.4 While Denny North Substation would continue to be an integral part of the electricity network and operate all year round it would be operated remotely. Access would be required for inspections, servicing or repairs should they be required. However, once operational the substation would not generate significant on-site activity.
- 2.7.5 Full operational lighting for maintenance/emergencies will be temporary and sporadic. Lighting will be lower-level and be contained to security/perimeter lighting which is assumed to operate throughout the hours of darkness. Lights will be directional, downward-facing and shielded to minimise upward sky and horizontal glare.

Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route)

- 2.7.6 Operational and maintenance requirements for the Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route) are the same as those required for the New Build Overhead Line:

“The New Build Overhead Line will require minimal maintenance. The condition of tower steelwork and foundations will be monitored regularly. Towers which have deteriorated significantly may be dismantled carefully and replaced. Any vegetation within proximity to the New Build Overhead Line will also be monitored to ensure it does not impact on safety clearances.”

Ancillary Works – Newarthill Substation Works and Wishaw Substation Extension

- 2.7.7 While Newarthill and Wishaw Substations would continue to be an integral part of the electricity network and operate all year round it would be operated remotely. Access would be required for inspections, servicing or repairs should they be required. However, once operational the substation would not generate significant on-site activity.
- 2.7.8 Full operational lighting for maintenance/emergencies will be temporary and sporadic. Lighting will be lower-level and be contained to security/perimeter lighting which is assumed to operate throughout the hours of darkness. Lights will be directional, downward-facing and shielded to minimise upward skill and horizontal glare.

2.8 Decommissioning

- 2.8.1 It is not envisaged that the Project would be decommissioned, as it is proposed as permanent development. The lifespan of the equipment within the proposed substation is approximately 40 years, however, it is expected that this would be extended through replacement or refurbishment.
- 2.8.2 In the event that the New Build Overhead Line, the AA Route Undergrounding and the Cumbernauld Substation Extension were no longer required, a Decommissioning Plan would be prepared. The substation equipment and materials, towers, equipment, and materials would be removed and taken for recycling where possible. It is expected that the platform, access roads, and foundations would be removed (the latter to approximately 1m deep) and land reinstated.
- 2.8.3 The process of decommissioning would be similar to construction meaning the likely significant environmental effects would be comparable. As a result, decommissioning has not been assessed in the EIA Report.

2.9 Mitigation and Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

- 2.9.1 A hierarchical approach has been followed in the development of mitigation and compensation measures, aiming to ‘design out’ adverse effects as much as possible. This approach emphasises avoiding adverse impacts followed by measures preventing, reducing, or offsetting adverse impacts through compensation.
- 2.9.2 Some mitigation measures have been embedded into the design of the Project, while others, described in the EIA Report as additional mitigation, have been identified through the EIA process following the identification of potential adverse effects.

- 2.9.3 The Applicant is committed to ensuring no net loss of biodiversity across all of its projects and to achieving a minimum 10% BNG as part of the Project.
- 2.9.4 Full details of the mitigation and enhancement measures are outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity which accompanies this application.

3. Consultation

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section provides an overview of the consultation undertaken to date and notes the key advice received and actions taken. Further details are outlined in PAC Report submitted as part of the applications.

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.2.1 A proactive approach was taken to ensure constructive engagement and consultation with meaningful feedback provided by stakeholders.
- 3.2.2 The consultation undertaken to date is as follows:
- EIA Scoping Opinion contained within EIA Report Volume 3, Appendix 2.3 Scoping Opinion; and
 - Additional consultation was undertaken with statutory and non-statutory consultees throughout the various stages of the EIA and design process.
- 3.2.3 Details of the consultation are detailed within the PAC Reports and each topic chapter of the EIA Report.

3.3 Public Consultation

- 3.3.1 Pre-application consultation procedures for a planning permission application are set out in the TCPA. Whilst there are no statutory pre-application consultation procedures for a Section 37 application under the Electricity Act⁴, the ECU expects meaningful engagement at each stage in the design of a Priority Application transmission project⁵.
- 3.3.2 As the design of the Project has progressed, consultation has been undertaken with a range of interested parties including statutory and non-statutory consultees, stakeholders, and the local community. The PAC Reports provide an account of the pre-application consultation that has been undertaken by the Applicant and how feedback has been addressed in advance of submitting the applications to the ECU.
- 3.3.3 SPEN initially consulted in 2021 on a previous design of the Project. This consultation ran from May until June 2021. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, requirements for in-person public events were temporarily suspended, however a virtual consultation room and webinars with key members of the project team were held. As a result of feedback received and environmental and technical studies, the current Project was developed.

⁴ Scottish Government (2025). Electricity Act 1989 pre-application consultation and engagement guidance for electricity transmission line projects which require Environmental Impact Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/electricity-act-1989-pre-application-consultation-engagement-guidance-electricity-transmission-line-projects-require-environmental-impact-assessment/documents/>

⁵ Scottish Government (2025). Priority Applications for Transmission Infrastructure Guidance Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/priority-applications-transmission-infrastructure-guidance-section-37-electricity-act-1989/pages/13/>

- 3.3.4 The Applicant held three rounds of consultation events for the public, stakeholders, and consultees. The first round ran from 29 January 2025 to 17 April 2025, which included six drop-in events. The second round ran from 28 October 2025 until 7 November 2025 including 7 drop-in events. The third round to present the final project proposals comprised two information events on 24 February 2026 and 25 February 2026.
- 3.3.5 In addition to the public exhibitions held, SPEN have been in ongoing discussion with the owners and residents of the properties located in proximity to the Project. The events were timed at a specific point in the project whereby the design of the Project was sufficiently developed to give a robust impression of the potential effects, but opportunities for design amendments were still open, ensuring that real value could be placed on the feedback received.
- 3.3.6 The three rounds of pre-application consultation were undertaken to inform the community about the Project and to allow the community to provide views on the Project, as summarised in Table 3.1. The feedback has informed the design and assessments of the Project and the recommended mitigation measures.

Table 3-1 Consultation Event Details

Consultation	Location	Event details
Round 1	Newarthill Community Facility	Wednesday 29 January, from 2pm to pm
	Muirfield Community Centre	Thursday 30 January, from 4pm to 8pm
	Pather Community Centre	Friday 31 January, from 2pm to 7pm
	Gartcosh Social Club	Tuesday 4 February, from 2pm to 7pm
	Bonnybridge Community Education Centre	Wednesday 5 February, from 3:15pm to 7pm
	Glenmavis Community Facility	Thursday 6 February, from 2pm to 7pm
Round 2	Netherton Community Centre	Tuesday 28 October, from 2pm to 7pm
	Bonnybridge Community Education Centre	Wednesday 29 October, 2pm to 7pm
	Glenmavis Social Club	Thursday 30 October, 2pm to 7pm
	Newarthill Community Facility	Monday 3 November, 2pm to 7pm
	Cumbernauld New Town Hall	Tuesday 4 November, 2pm to 7pm
	Gartcosh Social Club	Wednesday 5 November, 2pm to 7pm
	Dunipace Parish Church Hall	Friday 7 November, 2pm to 7pm

Consultation	Location	Event details
Round 3	Cumbernauld New Town Hall	Tuesday 24 February, 2pm to 7pm
	Bonnybridge Community Education Centre	Wednesday 25 February, 2pm to 7pm

- 3.3.7 Further details on the consultation events and the consultation feedback are contained in the PAC Report for the Project, submitted with the respective applications.

4. The Statutory Framework for Consenting

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section provides an overview of the statutory framework that is relevant for the Project.

4.1.2 An overview of the Project elements and relevant consenting routes is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 DWNO Consenting Route Overview

Project Element	Ancillary Elements	Consenting Route
New Build Overhead Line	CB Route Removal AA Route Undergrounding	Section 37
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	-	TCPA
Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Denny North Substation Works	Section 37
Upated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route)	Newarthill Substation Works Wishaw Substation Extension	Section 37

4.2 The Electricity Act 1989

Section 37 Applications

4.2.1 As an overhead line scheme with a voltage of 400kV, the New Build Overhead Line, the Upated ZG Route Development and the Upated XX and XR Route Development are classified as energy transmission infrastructure which requires consent from the Scottish Ministers under Section 37 of the Electricity Act.

4.2.2 The Applicant owns and operates the electricity transmission and distribution networks in central and southern Scotland and is the transmission owner and license holder under the Electricity Act.

4.2.3 Schedule 9 'Preservation of Amenity and Fisheries' of the Electricity Act requires that:

a licence holder shall, in formulating any relevant proposals, a) *"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) *"shall do what he 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..."* In addition, in exercising any relevant functions, the Applicant is under a duty to *"avoid, so far as possible, causing injury to fisheries or to the stock of fish in any waters".*

4.2.4 In developing the route and design of the New Build Overhead Line (including Ancillary Works), the Upated ZG Route, the Upated XX and XR Route through the preparation of

the EIA Report and the identification of mitigation measures as described in the EIA Report the Applicant has had due regard to the statutory duties set out in Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act.

4.3 Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

4.3.1 Section 57(2) of the Planning Act states that the Scottish Ministers can, on granting consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act, give direction for planning permission to be deemed to be granted (subject to any conditions specified in the direction). The applications to Scottish Ministers for the New Build Overhead Line, the Uprated ZG Route and the Uprated XX and XR Route therefore request that deemed planning permission be granted as part of the Section 37 consent.

4.3.2 Section 57(2) of the Planning Act provides that:

“On granting or varying a consent under section 36 or 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, the Scottish Ministers may give a direction for planning permission to be deemed to be granted subject to such conditions (if any) as may be specified in the direction”.

4.3.3 The Scottish Ministers will determine the applications having regard to the statutory duties in Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act, and to material considerations. The Applicant has provided sufficient information to enable the Scottish Ministers to address these duties.

4.3.4 The statutory Development Plan (which in this case comprises NPF4 and the LDPs for Falkirk and North Lanarkshire Councils is a relevant consideration for Scottish Ministers. The Falkirk LDP applies to New Build Overhead Line and Uprated Overhead Lines (ZG Route). The North Lanarkshire LDP applies to New Build Overhead Line, the Uprated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route), and Cumbernauld Substation. An overview of the Development Plan is set out in section 6 and an assessment against Development Plan is contained in section 7.

4.3.5 It is important to note, however, that Section 25 of TCPA is not engaged as there is no ‘primacy’ of the Development Plan in determining an application made under Section 37 of the Electricity Act and the direction that planning permission shall be deemed to be granted under Section 57(2).

The Planning Application

4.3.6 The Cumbernauld Substation Extension requires planning permission, and an application for planning permission is being submitted to North Lanarkshire Council with this Planning Statement. Under Sections 25 and 37(2) of TCPA, any planning application determination needs to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. An overview of the Development Plan is set out in section 6 and an assessment against Development Plan is contained in section 7.

4.4 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

4.4.1 The relevant EIA regulations for applications under Section 37 of the Electricity Act are the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (‘the Electricity Works EIA Regulations’). The relevant EIA regulations for applications

under the TCPA are the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 ('the TCPA EIA Regulations').

- 4.4.2 The New Build Overhead Line is 'Schedule 1 Development' under Schedule 1(3) of the Electricity Works EIA Regulations as it comprises construction of overhead electrical power lines with a voltage of 220kV or more and a length of more than 15km. EIA is a mandatory requirement for Schedule 1 Development. The Upgraded ZG Route, the Upgraded XX and XR Route and the Cumbernauld Substation Extension are all considered to form part of the same project for EIA purposes and as such are also considered in the EIA Report.
- 4.4.3 The EIA for the Project complies with both the Electricity Works EIA Regulations and the TCPA EIA Regulations, as is further detailed in the EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 2 Approach to EIA.

5. Need for the Project

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section sets out the need for the Project and demonstrates how it supports energy and climate change policy objectives.
- 5.1.2 A detailed overview of the need for the Project is outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 1 Introduction.

5.2 Network Requirement

- 5.2.1 The Project is necessary to ensure the Applicant achieves its statutory duties under the terms of its transmission licence and under Section 9 (1) of the Electricity Act, which states that it is one of the duties of electricity distributor to *‘develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission’*.
- 5.2.2 The Applicant is the transmission licence holder responsible for the electricity transmission network in central and southern Scotland and therefore has a crucial role to play. It’s transmission network enables the bulk transfer of renewable energy generated within its licence area as well as that generated within SSEN Transmission’s licence area to the north. This allows electricity to be transmitted and distributed within central and southern Scotland and for it to be transported southwards to National Grid Electricity Transmission’s licence area and large centres of demand.
- 5.2.3 National Energy System Operator is responsible for the planning and operation of high voltage (HV) electricity transmission system across Great Britain. They undertake a number of activities on an annual basis to ensure the economic and efficient operation of the electricity transmission system. This includes the Network Options Assessment (NOA), an economic assessment of projects proposed by transmission operators including SP Transmission to provide network capacity and meet the future needs of the electricity transmission network. The analysis in NOA allows recommendations to be made as to which projects will be economic and efficient to develop and the optimal timing of those projects.
- 5.2.4 The Project was given a ‘proceed’ signal meaning that it was considered appropriate to be taken forward, in successive NOA publications in 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 as well as the NOA Refresh published in 2022 in parallel with the publication of the Holistic Network Design⁶. The latter which set out a blueprint for the electricity network upgrades required to enable connection of offshore wind needed to meet the Government’s 2030 targets (also referred to as the ‘Pathway to 2030’)⁷, also recommended the development of DWNO.
- 5.2.5 The recommendations in NOA highlight the need for DWNO to be developed in order to ensure an economic and efficient electricity transmission system.
- 5.2.6 Accordingly, and consistent with the statutory duties described in paragraph 5.2.1, DWNO is necessary to ensure an efficient, co-ordinated, and economical electricity

⁶ National Grid ESO (2022). The Holistic Network Design (HND) (July 2022), Available at: <https://www.neso.energy/publications/beyond-2030/holistic-network-design-offshore-wind>

⁷ SSEN Transmission / National Grid ESO (2022). The Pathway to 2030 (2022). Available at: <https://www.sse.com/news-and-views/2022/07/pathway-to-2030-underpins-7bnplus-investment-in-north-of-scotland-transmission-network/>

transmission system in line with the Applicant's obligations, as a transmission license holder, under Section 9 of the Electricity Act.

5.3 Energy and Climate Change Policy Justification

Introduction

- 5.3.1 The Project will reinforce and expand the existing network by increasing route capacity from 275kV to 400kV. This will strengthen the transmission network in Central Scotland and facilitate the transfer of renewable electricity across the national grid.
- 5.3.2 The New Build Overhead Line will allow for the connection between Bonnybridge Substation and the existing overhead line (XX Route) north of Glenmavis, the Up-rated ZG Route, will uprate the connection between Bonnybridge and Denny North, the Up-rated XX and XR Route will uprate the connection between Easterhouse, Newarthill and Wishaw, and the Cumbernauld Substation Extension will allow for the connection between Cumbernauld Substation and Bonnybridge Substation.
- 5.3.3 As such, it directly supports renewable energy integration and security of supply and supports national energy and climate change policy, which underpin the Scottish Government's ambition to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Significant weight should therefore be attached to climate and energy policy.

UK Government Policy and Strategy

- 5.3.4 The UK Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan⁸ sets out the pathway to deliver a low-carbon electricity system by 2030 and outlines that grid infrastructure needs to be strengthened, and failure to do so risks holding back energy security, economic growth, and other important infrastructure. It further outlines that Great Britain's electricity network must undergo unprecedented expansion, as the economy electrifies, to deliver decarbonisation, energy affordability, and energy security, and support economic growth. The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1)⁹ has been updated to reflect Clean Power 2030, strengthening the need case for strategic transmission reinforcements such as the Project. While NPS EN-1 is primarily in place for the determination of applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in England and Wales, NPS EN-1 notes that *"energy policy is generally a matter reserved to UK Ministers and this NPS may therefore be a relevant consideration in planning decisions in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland"*.
- 5.3.5 NPS EN-1 confirms that cleaning up the power system is central to decarbonisation, including through the electrification of heat, transport, and industry, and identifies an urgent need for significant new energy infrastructure, including new electricity network infrastructure, to meet the Government's Clean Power 2030 security and net zero objectives. NPS EN-1 should be read alongside NPS EN-5¹⁰, the National Policy Statement for electricity networks, which is directly relevant to transmission and distribution infrastructure and confirms that EN-1 and EN-5 together provide the primary

⁸ UK Government. (2024). Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity. Available at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/677bc80399c93b7286a396d6/clean-power-2030-action-plan-main-report.pdf>

⁹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. (2025). Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025-accessible-webpage>

¹⁰ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. (2025). Overarching National Policy Statement for electricity networks infrastructure (EN-5). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statement-for-electricity-networks-infrastructure-en-5-2025>

policy basis for decisions on electricity network infrastructure. EN-5 further recognises that electricity network infrastructure must be brought forward at pace in support of urgent decarbonisation targets, including network reinforcement, upgrades and associated infrastructure such as substations, and that very significant amounts of new network infrastructure are required to connect renewable generation, meet rising electricity demand, improve resilience and support the Clean Power 2030 mission. This is consistent with the British Energy Security Strategy¹¹, which states that accelerating domestic clean and affordable electricity supply requires accelerated connecting network infrastructure, with the aim of halving delivery times and planning ahead to minimise cost and disruption. It is also consistent with the Climate Change Committee's latest statutory 2025 Progress Report to Parliament¹², which identifies the rapid expansion of the low-carbon electricity system as essential to meeting carbon budgets and notes that this must be accompanied by rapid transmission grid expansion, distribution network upgrades, and faster grid connections. On this basis, the DWNO scheme would make a direct and necessary contribution to the transmission of renewable energy, supporting national energy security, decarbonisation, and the transition to a clean power system.

Scottish Government Policy and Strategy

- 5.3.6 The Scottish Government's Energy Strategy¹³ sets a 2030 target to source 50% of Scotland's heat, transport, and electricity needs from renewable sources and highlights the critical role of electricity transmission infrastructure in managing rising demand and unlocking the potential of Scotland's abundant renewable energy resources.
- 5.3.7 Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026–2040¹⁴ reaffirms this position by being based on the more ambitious reduction target of net zero by 2045¹⁵, and recognises the need for a secure, flexible, and resilient electricity grid. Whilst the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024 removed all interim targets, it did not alter the 2045 net zero target and replaced interim targets with a carbon budget target (set out every five years).
- 5.3.8 The need for new infrastructure is further emphasised in the Vision for Scotland's Electricity and Gas Networks 2019 to 2030¹⁶, which anticipates substantial new capacity requirements, including strategic transmission links such as subsea cables and network reinforcements.
- 5.3.9 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement¹⁷ sets an ambition for at least 20GW of onshore wind by 2030 and acknowledges that realising ambitions for increased wind capacity will necessitate significant and timely investment in transmission infrastructure.

¹¹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2022). British Energy Security Strategy. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-energy-security-strategy/british-energy-security-strategy>

¹² Climate Change Committee (2025). Progress in reducing emissions – 2025 report to Parliament. Available at:

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-2025-report-to-parliament/>

¹³ Scottish Government (2017) The Scottish Energy Strategy. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-energy-strategy-future-energy-scotland-9781788515276>

¹⁴ Scottish Government. (2026). Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026–2040. Available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-change-plan-2026-2040-annexes/>

¹⁵ This target was set in law by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (as amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019)

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2019) A vision for Scotland's electricity and gas networks. Available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/vision-scotlands-electricity-gas-networks-2030/>

¹⁷ Scottish Government (2022) Onshore wind: policy statement 2022. Available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-2022/>

- 5.3.10 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan¹⁸ identifies infrastructure constraints as a barrier to renewable deployment and commits to overcoming these through strategic upgrades to the transmission network. It also reflects the Scottish Government's commitment to delivering this transition in a way that supports workers and communities, ensuring equitable benefits from energy system changes.
- 5.3.11 The draft Strategy specifically addresses energy networks and states "Significant infrastructure investment in Scotland's transmission system is needed to ameliorate constraints and enable more renewable power to flow to centres of demand" (page 136).
- 5.3.12 Delivery urgency is reinforced by recent consenting-process reforms. In October 2024–March 2025, the UK and Scottish Governments consulted on changes to electricity infrastructure consenting in Scotland to streamline pre-application, examination and decision-making, and the Scottish Government's Transmission Networks Short Life Working Group (2024) recommended measures to accelerate Section 37 consenting timeframes to meet net-zero and 2030 power-system goals. These reforms and recommendations demonstrate clear policy support for expedited delivery of strategic transmission reinforcements such as the Project.
- 5.3.13 Finally, the Green Industrial Strategy¹⁹ further strengthens the case for the Project by identifying electricity transmission as a key enabler of Scotland's green economic ambitions.

5.4 Summary

- 5.4.1 Taken together, these policies establish a strong needs case and provide support for the Project, which aligns with national priorities for decarbonisation, energy security, and economic transformation.
- 5.4.2 UK and Scottish policy documents, including NPS EN-1 and EN-5, Clean Power 2030, British Energy Security Strategy, Scottish Draft Energy Strategy, Climate Change Plan, and Green Industrial Strategy, highlight the critical role of transmission infrastructure in decarbonisation, energy security and economic transformation, and enabling renewable energy.
- 5.4.3 The Project will increase the capacity for electricity generated from renewable energy sources to be transmitted to areas of demand across the UK, and as such supports the expansion of the renewable energy sector which will contribute to Scotland and UK targets to reduce carbon emissions.
- 5.4.4 The Project is therefore strongly supported by the energy and climate policies of the UK and Scottish governments in delivering their energy transition and net zero commitments. The assessment above demonstrates how the Project contributes to wider government energy policy objectives.
- 5.4.5 The energy and climate change policies outlined above constitute a material consideration and demonstrate significant weight should be given to the benefits of the Project in the overall planning balance.

¹⁸ Scottish Government. (2023). Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/draft-energy-strategy-transition-plan/>

¹⁹ Scottish Government. (2024). Green industrial strategy. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/green-industrial-strategy/>

6. Planning Policy Context

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section provides an overview of the relevant planning policies in the Development Plan relevant to the Project.
- 6.1.2 The Project is assessed against the relevant Development Plan policies as outlined in Section 7.

6.2 The Development Plan

- 6.2.1 The TCPA stipulates that the statutory Development Plan comprises of the National Planning Framework and the LDP for the area.
- 6.2.2 The New Build Overhead Line extends across both the North Lanarkshire Council and Falkirk Council areas, therefore the relevant Development Plan for the New Build Overhead Line consists of:
- NPF4 (2023);
 - North Lanarkshire LDP (NLLDP) (2022); and
 - Falkirk LDP2 (FLDP2) (2020).
- 6.2.3 The Cumbernauld Substation Extension and Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route) are situated wholly within the North Lanarkshire Council area, therefore the relevant Development Plan which these must be determined in accordance with consists of:
- NPF4 (2023); and
 - NLLDP (2022).
- 6.2.4 The Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route) is situated wholly within the Falkirk Council area, therefore the relevant Development Plan which these must be determined in accordance with consists of:
- NPF4 (2023); and
 - FLDP2 (2020).
- 6.2.5 Although primacy is not given to the statutory Development Plan in determining Section 37 applications, it is a relevant consideration for Scottish Ministers in their decision-making (as set out in Section 4.3). The New Build Overhead Line, the Up-rated ZG Route and the Up-rated XX and XR Route have therefore been assessed against the policies of the Development Plan, informed by the assessments within the EIA Report. Section 24 of the TCPA provides that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of the NPF4 and a provision of an LDP, whichever of them is the later in date is to prevail.
- 6.2.6 Both NLLDP and FLDP2 predate NPF4 which was adopted by Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023. If there is any incompatibility between a provision in the LDP and NPF4, the NPF4 prevails as it is the most up to date policy framework for assessing the development.

- 6.2.7 Scottish Ministers and North Lanarkshire Council may also attribute weight to relevant national and local policy documents, as outlined in this Planning Statement.

Table 6.1 Relevant Development Plan Overview

Project Element	Ancillary Elements	Consenting Route	Relevant Development Plan
New Build Overhead Line	CB Route Removal AA Route Undergrounding	Section 37	NPF4 (2023) NLLDP ²⁰ (2022) FLDP2 ²¹ (2020)
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	-	TCPA	NPF4 (2023) NLLDP (2022)
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Denny North Substation Works	Section 37	NPF4 (2023) FLDP2 (2020)
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route)	Newarthill Substation Works Wishaw Substation Extension	Section 37	NPF4 (2023) NLLDP (2022)

6.3 National Planning Framework 4 (2023)

- 6.3.1 NPF4 was adopted by the Scottish Ministers in February 2023 and sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland to 2045.
- 6.3.2 NPF4 is centred around two primary themes: addressing the climate emergency and tackling the nature crises. As emphasised in the Ministerial Foreword, prioritising the global climate and nature crises will ensure that the decisions made today align with the long-term interests of Scotland.
- 6.3.3 Part 1 of NPF4 sets out the ‘National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045’ which identifies six spatial principles to achieve the delivery of ‘Sustainable Places’, ‘Liveable Places’ and ‘Productive Places’:
- Just transition;
 - Conserving and recycling assets;
 - Local living;
 - Compact urban growth;
 - Rebalanced development; and
 - Rural revitalisation.

²⁰ North Lanarkshire Council (2022) North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan. Available at:

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building/development-plans/current-north-lanarkshire-local-development-plan>

²¹ Falkirk Council (2020) Falkirk Local Development Plan 2. Available at:

<https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/development-planning/falkirk-local-development-plan-2>

- 6.3.4 With regard to the delivery of ‘sustainable places’, page 4 of NPF4 states “Scotland’s Climate Change Plan, backed by legislation, has set our approach to achieving net zero emissions by 2045, and we must make significant progress towards this by 2030...”.
- 6.3.5 Eighteen national developments are identified within NPF4 which are considered significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver the spatial strategy set out above. Six of these national developments have been identified in support of the delivery of ‘sustainable places’, of relevance to the Project is National Development 3: ‘*Strategic Renewable Generation and Transmission Infrastructure*’ which:
- “...supports electricity generation and associated grid infrastructure throughout Scotland, providing employment and opportunities for community benefit, helping to reduce emissions and improve security of supply.”*
- 6.3.6 NPF4 states in relation to National Development 3 that:
- “The electricity transmission grid will need substantial reinforcement including the addition of new infrastructure to connect and transmit the output from new on and offshore capacity to consumers in Scotland, the rest of the UK and beyond. Delivery of this national development will be informed by market, policy and regulatory developments and decisions”.*
- 6.3.7 National Development 3 includes:
- b) *“New and/or replacement upgraded on and offshore high voltage electricity transmission lines, cables, and interconnectors of 132kV or more; and*
 - c) *New and/or upgraded Infrastructure directly supporting on and offshore high voltage electricity lines, cables and interconnectors including converter stations, switching stations and substations”.*
- 6.3.8 The Project as a whole, and each of the New Build Overhead Line, the Upgraded ZG Route, the Upgraded XX and XR Route and the Cumbernauld Substation Extension, are therefore classed as National Development. NPF4 states that National Developments are “*significant developments of national importance that will help to deliver the spatial strategy*” (page 97), which requires a “*large and rapid increase*” (page 103) in electricity generation and the delivery of an enhanced transmission network to enable this. The benefits that the Project would give rise to are therefore nationally important. The need for the Project is therefore firmly established.
- 6.3.1 Furthermore, the Project provides critical infrastructure to support the required grid upgrade of the transmission network and supporting the continued decarbonisation of Scotland’s energy system.
- 6.3.2 Part 2 of NPF4 sets out the national planning policy to guide development and achieve ‘Sustainable Places’, ‘Liveable Places’ and ‘Productive Places’. The following NPF4 policies within Part 2 have guided the need and design of the Project:
- Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises;
 - Policy 2: Climate mitigation and adaptation;
 - Policy 3: Biodiversity;
 - Policy 4: Natural Places;

- Policy 5: Soils;
- Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland and Trees;
- Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places;
- Policy 8: Green Belts;
- Policy 11: Energy;
- Policy 18: Infrastructure First;
- Policy 22: Flood Risk and Water Management; and
- Policy 23: Health and Safety.

6.4 North Lanarkshire LDP (2022)

6.4.1 Adopted in 2022, NLLDP presents a 5-to-10-year strategy for development within the North Lanarkshire authority area. The LDP's vision introduces a focus on places, placemaking and sustainability, and successful and safeguarded places. As such, the LDP is intended to guide the regeneration of North Lanarkshire's economy and physical fabric with the creation of better places.

6.4.2 The relevant NLLDP policies include:

- Policy PROM LOC4: Special Landscape Areas and Green Network Improvements;
- Policy PROM ID2: Utilities Improvements;
- Policy PROT A: Natural Environment and Green Networks Assets;
- Policy PROT B: Historic Environment Assets;
- Policy PROT C: Mineral Resources;
- Policy PP 4: Green Belt;
- Policy EDQ 1: Site Appraisal;
- Policy EDQ 2: Specific Features for Consideration; and
- Policy EDQ 3: Quality of Development.

6.4.3 NLC are currently preparing a new LDP which will be known as North Lanarkshire LDP2. Once adopted, North Lanarkshire LDP2 will replace the currently adopted NLLDP. Preparation of LDP2 will take place between 2025 and 2027, with the Evidence Report expected to be submitted in Summer 2026.

6.4.4 As the North Lanarkshire LDP2 is at an early stage of preparation, it is not considered further.

6.5 Falkirk LDP2 (2020)

6.5.1 FLDP2 was adopted in 2020. The FLDP2 presents a vision of Falkirk as: "a dynamic and distinctive area at the heart of Central Scotland characterised by a network of thriving communities set within high quality greenspaces, and a growing economy which is of strategic importance in the national context, providing an attractive, inclusive and sustainable place in which to live, work, visit and invest".

- 6.5.2 The FLDP2 contains the planning policies which provide the basis for assessing and determining planning applications which guide and shape future land use.
- 6.5.3 The relevant FLDP2 policies include:
- PE05: Antonine Wall;
 - PE06: Archaeological Sites;
 - PE07: Listed Buildings;
 - PE08: Conservation Areas;
 - PE14: Countryside;
 - PE18: Landscape;
 - PE19: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
 - PE20: Trees Woodland and Hedgerows;
 - PE22: The Water Environment;
 - PE24: Flood Management;
 - PE25: Soils and Agricultural Land;
 - PE26: Air Quality; and
 - IR12: Energy Generation Development.
- 6.5.4 Falkirk Council are preparing a new LDP. This will be known as Falkirk LDP3 (FLDP3). Once adopted, FLDP3 will replace the currently adopted LDP (FLDP2). Preparation of FLDP3 will take place between 2025 to 2027.
- 6.5.5 As the FLDP3 is at an early stage, it is not considered further.

7. Policy Assessment

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This section provides a detailed assessment of the New Build Overhead Line, the Cumbernauld Substation Extension, the Uprated Overhead Lines (ZG Route), and the Uprating Works (XX and XR Route) against the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

7.2 Principle of Development

- 7.2.1 The Project falls under the ‘Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure’ category, one of the eighteen National Developments identified in NPF4, as discussed in Section 6 of this Planning Statement.

- 7.2.2 Annex A of the NPF4 explains how NPF4 should be used and clearly states that national development status means that *“the principle of development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes”*. This means that the principle of the New Build Overhead Line, the Uprated ZG Route, the Uprated XX and XR Route and the Cumbernauld Substation Extension are established which, in turn, means that the assessment should be focused on detailed matters.

- 7.2.3 NPF4 provides strong support for the delivery of transmission infrastructure across Scotland, reinforcing support for the Project. It states that:

“The electricity transmission grid will need substantial reinforcement including the addition of new infrastructure to connect and transmit the output from new on and offshore capacity to consumers in Scotland, the rest of the UK and beyond”.

- 7.2.4 Aligned with this, the Project will reinforce and increase the capacity of the electricity transmission network in central Scotland and meet the future needs of the electricity transmission system.

7.3 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

- 7.3.1 For the development components requiring a Section 37 application (New Build Overhead Line, Uprated Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route), and Uprated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)), key considerations include the strategic need and alignment with NPF4 net-zero objectives, through evidence-led routeing alongside embedded and secured mitigation.

- 7.3.2 For the TCPA element (Cumbernauld Substation Extension), the overarching policy test is to confirm it accords with NPF4 (2023) and the North Lanarkshire LDP (2022) as the relevant development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the event of policy conflict between NPF4 and the North Lanarkshire LDP, NPF4 takes precedence as the most recently adopted plan. In the following assessment each policy of NPF4 is considered in relation to the whole Project in the first instance, and where there are any specific policy considerations for individual project elements this is subsequently set out.

Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises

- 7.3.3 NPF4 Policy 1 serves as an overarching policy for all developments, highlighting that *“when considering all development proposals, significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises”*. The policy’s intent is to *“encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis”*.
- 7.3.4 The New Build Overhead Line, the Upgraded ZG Route the Upgraded XX and XR Route, with its 275/400kV transmission capacity, and the Cumbernauld Substation Extension, with its upgraded 275/33kV transmission capacity will play a key role in supporting renewable energy transmission across the UK by increasing capacity on the transmission network, which NPF4 states is *‘fundamental to achieving a net zero economy’* (page 103). This aligns with the policy outcome of zero carbon places and the intent of Policy 1 in tackling climate change through energy transition.
- 7.3.5 Furthermore, the Applicant is committed to achieving no net loss of biodiversity across all of its projects and achieving a 10% biodiversity net gain as part of the New Build Overhead Line, the Upgraded ZG Route and the Upgraded XX and XR Route. This approach is consistent with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 1, which seeks to address the nature crisis and the policy outcome of nature positive places.
- 7.3.6 In February 2023, the Scottish Chief Planner’s Letter²² stated the following in regard to Policy 1: *“This policy prioritises the climate and nature crises in all decisions. It should be applied together with the other policies in NPF4. It will be for the decision maker to determine whether the significant weight to be applied tips the balance in favour for, or against a proposal on the basis of its positive or negative contribution to the climate and nature crises”*.
- 7.3.7 Given the role that the Project will have in transmitting renewable energy and by extension helping to minimise carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) which support Scotland and the UK’s net zero targets, as well as the proposed biodiversity enhancement measures, the Project strongly aligns with and secures support from NPF4 Policy 1. Significant weight should be afforded to these benefits in the determination of the Applications. Policy 1 is considered further below.

Table 7-1 Policy 1 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 1, no specific planning policy considerations for project elements have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project above.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	

- 7.3.8 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 1.

²² Scottish Government (2023) Chief Planner Letter: Transitional Arrangements for National Planning Framework 4. Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/chief-planner-letter-transitional-arrangements-for-national-planning-framework-4/>

Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

- 7.3.9 NPF4 Policy 2 seeks to “*encourage, promote and facilitate development that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change*”. The policy’s intended outcomes include “*Emissions from development are minimised*” and “*Our places are more resilient to climate change*”.
- 7.3.10 Policy 2(a) requires that “*Development proposals will be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible*” and Policy 2(b) states that “*Development proposals will be sited and designed to adapt to current and future risks from climate change*”.
- 7.3.11 The Project will play a key role in supporting renewable energy transmission by increasing capacity on the transmission network. This will promote a reduction of GHG emissions and support the deployment of renewable energy generation which displaces emissions associated with fossil fuel-based electricity generation elsewhere.
- 7.3.12 The route and siting of the Project have been sensitively developed to avoid and minimise impacts on environmental designations and features as far as reasonably practicable, as detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 3 Evolution of Design and Alternatives.
- 7.3.13 As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 15 Other Environmental Matters no significant effects on climate change are likely as a result of the Project, as such effects on climate change were scoped out of the EIA. Importantly, greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction of the Project, which are considered to be not significant, should be considered in the context of the wider climate benefits, particularly the role of the Project in enabling the transmission of electricity from renewable sources and supporting decarbonisation of the electricity transmission system. Policy 2 is considered further below.

Table 7-2 Policy 2 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 2, no specific planning policy considerations for project elements have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project above.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension.	

- 7.3.14 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 2.

Policy 3: Biodiversity

- 7.3.15 The intent of NPF4 Policy 3 is “*to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks*”. The policy’s intended outcomes aim to enhance and better connect biodiversity.

- 7.3.1 Policy 3(a) states that “*Development will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including, where relevant, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks and their connections. Proposals should also integrate nature-based solutions where possible*”.
- 7.3.2 As detailed at Paragraph Error! Reference source not found., the Applicant is committed to ensuring no net loss of biodiversity across all of its projects and to achieving a minimum 10% BNG as part of the Project. Details of the mitigation and enhancement measures are outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, and the Applicant’s Environmental Action Plan²³.
- 7.3.3 Policy 3(b) states that national development “*will only be supported where it will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention*”.
- 7.3.4 Table 7.3.3 sets out in detail how the Project enhances biodiversity and addresses the criteria set out in Policy 3(b).

Table 7-3 NPF4 Policy 3 (b) Criteria

Policy 3 (b) Assessment Criteria	Commentary
(b)(i) The proposal is based on an understanding of the existing characteristics of the Site and its local, regional, and national ecological context prior to development, including the presence of any irreplaceable habitats.	The Project is based on a thorough understanding of its ecological context, gathered through desk-based assessments, fieldwork, and consultations. This understanding has informed the design, location, and route of the Project as detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 3 Evolution of Design and Alternatives, and the ecological assessments detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity.
(b)(ii) Wherever feasible, nature-based solutions have been integrated and made best use of.	Wherever feasible, nature-based solutions have been integrated into the Project. This includes landscape mitigation which will include opportunities for the restoration and enhancement of habitats such as woodland, scrub, grassland, wetland, and the creation of features like log piles from retained brash, installation of bat and bird boxes, and the establishment of new ponds and water vole habitat. The Applicant aims to deliver biodiversity enhancements over and above those required by Policy 3 and is committed to achieving a minimum 10% BNG. These enhancements will strengthen and improve habitat connectivity within and beyond the site.

²³ SP Energy Networks (2024). RIIO-T3 Environmental Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Environmental%20Action%20Plan%20-%20RIIO-T3%20Business%20Plan%20-%20SP%20Energy%20Networks%20-%20Redacted.pdf>

Policy 3 (b) Assessment Criteria	Commentary
(b)(iii) An assessment of potential negative effects which should be fully mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy prior to identifying enhancements.	The route and siting of the Project have followed the mitigation hierarchy (as defined in NPF4, page 153) to avoid features of biodiversity importance wherever possible. An assessment of ecological and ornithological effects resulting from the construction and operation of the Project are detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity. Mitigation measures are also detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity.
(b)(iv) Significant biodiversity enhancements are provided, in addition to any proposed mitigation. This should include nature networks, linking to and strengthening habitat connectivity within and beyond the development, secured within a reasonable timescale and with reasonable certainty. Management arrangements for their long-term retention and monitoring should be included, wherever appropriate.	The proposed biodiversity enhancements to be provided as part of the Project, and the mitigation measures to be implemented are identified in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity. This outlines that biodiversity enhancement measures to target creation and restoration of higher value habitats to offset the woodland and habitat lost from tree removal as discussed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 14 Forestry. EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity recommends 10% biodiversity net gain (to be provided off-site) is proposed to be delivered to align with the Applicant's commitment to biodiversity enhancement and in turn provide opportunities to strengthen green networks and promote higher value habitat creation. The enhancements will be managed and monitored for their long-term retention and will be secured through a planning condition.
(b)(v) Local community benefits of the biodiversity and/or nature networks have been considered.	The Applicant is committed to deliver measurable biodiversity improvements in line with its commitment to providing at least 10% BNG on projects as set out in its Environmental Action Plan. Additional measures set out in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, which will benefit biodiversity and nature within the Site and wider area will also be implemented, including provision of bat, bird, pine marten, and barn owl boxes, alongside retention of brash to create log piles.

7.3.5 Policy 3 (d) requires “*any potential adverse impacts on biodiversity, nature networks and the natural environment to be minimised through careful planning and design*”.

7.3.6 In response to Policy 3 (a), 3 (b) and 3 (d) it is noted that EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity identified that there are mostly no likely significant effects on any important ecological features during the construction phase and operational phase identified during the impact assessment.

- 7.3.7 The exception to this is the loss of AWI Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and AWI Long Established Plantation Origin (LEPO), which were identified as being significant in EIA terms within EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity. As it is not possible to mitigate for the loss of ancient woodland there remains a significant effect due to the loss of ASNW and LEPO as listed on the AWI.
- 7.3.8 Habitat surveys confirmed that while the survey area included large expanses of agricultural land and improved grassland with low ecological value, it also contains notable habitats such as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Wet Woodland, and degraded Blanket and Raised Bogs. The majority of permanent habitat loss is restricted to the small footprints of new towers and the New Build Overhead Line wayleave corridor while other impacts, such as vegetation clearance for access tracks and temporary compounds, are temporary and reversible. In some areas, such as Cullochrigg Site for Nature Conservation, the removal of birch trees from degraded bog could have a long-term positive effect by reducing the drying out of peatland.
- 7.3.9 Desk and field surveys identified a range of protected species using the Site, including:
- **Bats:** The assessment identified a significant potential impact regarding the loss of and disturbance to bat roosts within trees slated for felling. However, with additional mitigation, including further surveys and the provision of bat boxes, this effect is reduced and would not be significant;
 - **Other Mammals:** Evidence of otter activity was found on major watercourses, and badger setts were recorded throughout the area. Works are designed to maintain distance from these features, and any required disturbance will be managed under specific licenses from NatureScot; and
 - **Great crested newt:** A meta-population of great crested newts was identified in the wider Drum Wildlife Site area. Impacts are largely limited to temporary habitat fragmentation, which is expected to resolve once construction is complete and habitats are restored.
- 7.3.10 The assessment concluded that with the proposed mitigation, significant effects at a site/local level may occur on protected species. However, these effects are not deemed significant in EIA terms. Mitigation measures include employment of an Ecological Clerk of Works to monitor construction, pre-construction surveys, adherence to a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), standard nesting bird mitigation including restricting vegetation clearance during the breeding season and installation of species-specific boxes (bat, bird, red squirrel, and pine marten) to compensate for woodland loss.

Table 7-4 Policy 3 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2a ASNW (1860) and AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (both significant at County Level in EIA terms) were identified as likely significant adverse effects from the New Build Overhead Line. The loss of AWI ASNW would result solely from the New Build Overhead Line. In addition, 80% of the loss of AWI LEPO is attributable to the New Build Overhead Line. Moreover, subject to mitigation measures, the residual effects would

Project Element	Policy Assessment
	remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the New Build Overhead Line comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.
Upgrading Works (XX and XR Route)	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (significant at County Level in EIA terms) was identified as a likely significant adverse effect from all components of the Project. However, it should be noted that these combined components of the project only account for 20% of net AWI LEPO lost.
Upgrading Works (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	
	Moreover, subject to mitigation measures, the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the Project comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.

7.3.11 Given the BNG measures proposed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, and embedded and additional mitigation measures proposed in relation to significant adverse impacts on biodiversity, the Project is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 3 in this respect. However, it is recognised that there is tension with NPF4 Policy 3 in relation to loss of ancient woodland.

7.3.12 While loss of Ancient Woodland cannot be mitigated and the effect remains significant, given efforts made to avoid loss and minimise impacts on other woodland, alongside the proposed compensation measures, and public benefits, the Project is considered to align with the intent of NPF4 Policy 3.

Policy 4: Natural Places

7.3.13 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 4 is “*to protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions*”. The Policy Outcomes include “*Natural places are protected and restored*” and “*Natural assets are managed in a sustainable way that maintains and grows their essential benefits and services*”.

7.3.14 NPF4 Policy 4 (a) states that “*development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, will not be supported*”.

7.3.15 Significant effects were identified relating to landscape and visual (EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual) in terms of landscape character and visual amenity, biodiversity and nature conservation (EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity) due to loss of AWI, and water environment (EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment) due to water quality impacts from contamination. These are addressed in

the EIA Report with proposed additional mitigation measures in place. No anticipated significant effects were identified in the EIA Report relating to geology or soils (EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions).

- 7.3.16 Landscape mitigation is embedded into the project design, and mitigation of views of the permanent infrastructure has been a key part of the design development process as well as consideration of local landscape character context. This has been primarily associated with the sensitive routeing and siting of the Project elements, particularly the alignment of the New Build Overhead Line. Embedded landscape mitigation measures have been incorporated in relation to the Cumbernauld Substation Extension. This includes new planting, to provide softening and screening of views and to create a softer and more naturalistic appearance around the proposed infrastructure. Significant residual effects remain at three viewpoints after mitigation, however the embedded mitigation of the Project has reduced the likely effects on landscape and visual effects as far as possible.
- 7.3.17 In relation to Ancient Woodland loss, it is not possible to mitigate for the loss of ancient woodland. While compensatory planting is proposed, there remains a significant effect due to the loss of ASNW and LEPO as listed on the AWI.
- 7.3.18 Mitigation measures in relation to water contamination (significant surface water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillage on water features BW-10 and BW-14) includes micro-siting for steel towers WB040 and WB023, and a water quality monitoring plan (as detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment).
- 7.3.19 Overall, despite expected significant residual effects, the Project avoids and mitigates unacceptable impacts on the natural environment as far as possible.
- 7.3.20 NPF4 Policy 4 (b) states that *“development proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on an existing or proposed European site (Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Areas) and are not directly connected with or necessary to their conservation management are required to be subject to an ‘appropriate assessment’ of the implications for the conservation objectives”*.
- 7.3.21 EIA Report Volume 3, Appendix 8.8 Habitats Regulations Appraisal considers European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Project, including the Firth of Forth SPA and the Slamannan Plateau SPA. Taking account of mitigation measures, such as construction management through the implementation of a CEMP and implemented by the Principal Contractor, together with noise and visual mitigation and the relationship between construction activities and the location of SPA qualifying species, no adverse effects on the integrity of these sites were identified. The appraisal concludes that the Project would not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any European site, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans.
- 7.3.22 Policies 4(c) and 4(d) set out that development proposals affecting nationally or locally designated nature conservation sites will only be supported where the objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the area - such as National Parks, National Scenic Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), or National Nature Reserves - are not compromised. For sites designated in the LDP, including local nature conservation sites and landscape areas, development must avoid significant adverse effects on their integrity or the qualities for which they were identified. Where adverse effects are

unavoidable, proposals must demonstrate that these are clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of national or local importance, as appropriate.

7.3.23 In accordance with NPF4 Policy 4(c) and 4(d), no significant effects have been identified on the following natural places:

- Ecological features of national or local importance, including Slamannan Plateau SPA, Ramsar site, and SSSI; Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar Site; West Fannyside Moss SSSI; Ancient Woodland of semi-natural origin, as assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity and EIA Report Volume 3, Appendix 8.8 Habitat Regulations Appraisal; and
- Local Landscape Areas (LLA), including The Slamannan Plateau/Avon Valley LLA, as assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual.

7.3.24 As detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions, where residual impacts on the identified natural places do occur, these are assessed as not significant. These residual effects should be considered in the broader context of the environmental and economic benefits delivered by the wider Project. In particular its role in facilitating the transmission of electricity from renewable sources and the decarbonisation of the national grid. These benefits clearly outweigh the minor residual effects identified. NPF4 Policy 4 (e) states that “the precautionary principle will be applied in accordance with relevant legislation and Scottish Government guidance”.

7.3.25 NPF4 Policy 4 (f) states that “*development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on species protected by legislation will only be supported where the proposal meets the relevant statutory tests*”.

7.3.26 Proposals affecting protected species must meet the relevant statutory requirements as noted by Policy 4 (f). EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity highlights the legal obligations related to works that may impact specific protected species. Licenses from NatureScot will be necessary before commencing such works, and Species Protection Plans (SPPs) must support the applications for these licenses. Until the licenses are secured, exclusion zones will be established around identified protected species features, and any pre-works survey conducted. The required licenses will include specific mitigation measures to meet legislative standards, which also address species such as bats, otters, badgers, water voles, great crested newts, and barn owls.

7.3.27 While not required to mitigate for the potential of significant adverse effects, further additional mitigation is proposed for water vole to ensure no impacts occur. Similarly, further additional mitigation is proposed for barn owl to reduce effects identified at the local level.

7.3.28 In alignment with Policy 4 (f), although protected species (bats, otter, badger, water vole, great crested newt, barn owl) have been identified as being within the Study Area, protection of these species has been factored into the planning and design of development. Appropriate mitigation has been identified following consideration of potential impacts, including Ecological/Environmental Clerk of Works oversight, staff briefings, pre-works surveys, micro-siting/avoidance measures, species licensing and SPPs where required, nesting bird controls, wildlife escape measures, phased vegetation clearance, and CEMP-secured pollution, biosecurity and habitat protection controls.

- 7.3.29 NPF4 Policy 4 (g) requires development proposals in areas defined as Wild Land in the Nature Scot Wild Land Areas map will only be supported where *“the proposals will support meeting renewable energy targets; or is for small scale development directly linked to support a fragile community in a rural area”*.
- 7.3.30 No Wild Land Areas are impacted by the Project.
- 7.3.31 Subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, and Chapter 9 Water Environment, significant adverse effects on designated sites, landscapes, water features, habitats, and protected or notable species have been avoided or reduced as far as possible through embedded and additional mitigation. There remain significant residual effects in relation to Landscape & Visual due to residual effects at three viewpoints, as well as for Biodiversity relating to loss of ancient woodland. However, given the overriding benefits of the Project, and that effects have been avoided or mitigated as far as possible, it is considered the Project aligns with Policy 4 objectives.
- 7.3.32 All necessary Protected Species Licences and consents will be obtained prior to works, and monitoring will be undertaken as required by licence conditions. The Applicant is also committed to delivering at least 10% BNG in accordance with its Environmental Action Plan.

Table 7-5 Policy 4 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, significant but temporary and localised visual effects are identified for key viewpoints. It is anticipated that there would be likely significant adverse effects on Landscape Character Types (LCTs) during construction. Such LCTs would be directly affected by the construction works affecting key characteristics. Such effects would reduce to non-significant likely effects at operation as the degree of change would be lower and within the context of the removed CB Route and partial undergrounding of the AA Route. These effects will diminish post-construction as landscape mitigation matures. It is anticipated that A803 Falkirk Road (Viewpoint 1), Rough Castle Roman Fort (Viewpoint 4), Core Path off Beam Road (Viewpoint 5), Brackenhirst Road (Viewpoint 12) and Alnwick Crescent, Golfhill, Glenmavis (Viewpoint 13) would experience significant adverse visual effects. Adverse effects are also identified on wider community receptors, including road users along the A803 (Viewpoint 1) and near Riggend (including along Brackenhirst Road) (Viewpoint 12). Recreational users of Rough Castle Roman Fort (Viewpoint 4) and Core Path off Beam Road (Viewpoint 5) would also be affected by the change introduced by the construction activities of the New Build Overhead Line. As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2a ASNW (1860) and AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (both

Project Element	Policy Assessment
	significant in EIA terms) were identified as likely significant adverse effects from the New Build Overhead Line. The AWI ASNW lost will be lost to the New Build Overhead Line only, with 80% of AWI LEPO lost accounts for the New Build Overhead Line. Despite compensatory planting, loss of ancient woodland cannot be mitigated and the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the New Build Overhead Line comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets. EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment identifies that there are moderate significant effects on surface water as a result of the Project for water features BW-10 and BW-14 (as illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 9.1 Surface Water Receptors) for water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillages. It outlines the embedded and additional mitigation measures implemented as part of the Project, including micro-siting for steel towers WB040 and WB023, and a water quality monitoring plan. EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment also outlines the mitigation measures during the construction phase, with measures to control and minimise risks to be outlined in a CEMP and Water Management Plan (WMP) by the Principal Contractor. There are no anticipated significant effects on groundwater receptors.
Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route) Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (significant in EIA terms) was identified as a likely significant adverse effect from all components of the Project. However, it should be noted that these combined components of the project only account for 20% of net AWI LEPO lost. Despite compensatory planting, loss of ancient woodland cannot be mitigated and the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the Upated Overhead Lines comprise essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.

Project Element	Policy Assessment
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	Following the EIA process and consideration against NPF4 Policy 4, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.

7.3.33 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 4.

Policy 5: Soils

7.3.34 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 5 is “*to protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development*”. The Policy Outcomes include “*Valued soils are protected and restored*”.

7.3.35 Policy 5 (a) states that “*...proposals will only be supported if they are designed and constructed: i) in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy by first avoiding and then minimising the amount of disturbance to soils on undeveloped land; and ii. In a manner that protects soil from damage including from compaction and erosion, and that minimises soil sealing*”.

7.3.36 The Project has been designed to avoid unacceptable impacts on ground conditions, including soils and peat, as detailed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 3 Evolution of Design and Alternatives and Chapter 10 Ground Conditions. Where soils are impacted from the Project, soil management measures will be implemented, via a CEMP, to avoid or reduce the adverse effects on soils.

7.3.37 Policy 5 (b) requires careful consideration of development proposals with potential impacts on prime agricultural land, “*or land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use*”.

7.3.38 Policy 5 (c) states that “*...proposals on peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitat will only be supported for*” certain classes of development including: “*Essential infrastructure and there is a specific locational need and no other suitable site;*” and “*The generation of energy from renewable sources that optimises the contribution of the area to greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets;*”.

7.3.39 NPF4 Policy 5 (d) states that “*...where development on peatland, carbon-rich soils or priority peatland habitat is proposed, a detailed site-specific assessment will be required*”. In response to Policy 5 (c) and 5 (d) it is noted that EIA Report, Volume 1 Chapter 10 Ground Conditions, which assesses impacts on peatland, carbon-rich soils or priority peatland habitat, that there are two localised areas of the Study Area (to the east of Cumbernauld Substation) that contain Class 1 (National important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat which are likely to be of high conservation value), and Class 3 and Class 5 mapped locally throughout the Project area. EIA Report Volume 1, Figure 10.3 Geology – Peat shows the location of Class 1 to Class 5 Soils within the vicinity of the Project. The effect on the peat soils has been assessed as per the general process outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 2 Approach to EIA and Chapter 10 Ground Conditions.

7.3.40 Moreover, as per Policy 5 (d), given that peat may be disturbed or excavated as part of the Project, a Peat Management Plan (PMP) would be required to be developed. Due to the limited amount of peat identified within the Project, limited Ground Investigation

information is available at this stage. Outline PMPs have been developed, with a detailed PMP to follow the completion of peat probe surveying. This PMP will be submitted for review and approval to the relevant stakeholders prior to construction.

- 7.3.41 The detailed PMP will be reviewed and updated throughout the design and construction process by the Principal Contractor based on any new relevant information becoming available.
- 7.3.42 No significant effects on Ground Conditions are reported within EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions.
- 7.3.43 Furthermore, the Project aligns with Policy 5 (c), as it constitutes essential infrastructure with a specific locational need and no suitable alternative site and as it directly supports the generation of renewable energy by enabling greater grid capacity and transmission. Policy 5 is discussed further below.

Table 7-6 Policy 5 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions outlines two localised areas of Class 1 (national important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat which are likely to be of high conservation value) soils present beneath the New Build Overhead Line to the east of Cumbernauld Substation. Peat depth surveys associated with the New Build Overhead Line (where potential Class 1 carbon-rich soils are present) will be undertaken to allow estimations of peat depth and extent and facilitate avoidance of the deepest areas of peat.
Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against NPF4 Policy 5, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	

- 7.3.45 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 5.

Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland and Trees

- 7.3.46 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 6 is “*to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees*”. The Policy Outcomes are that “*existing woodlands and trees are protected, and cover is expanded*” and “*woodland and trees on development sites are sustainably managed*”.
- 7.3.47 Policy 6 (a) outlines support for proposals that enhance, expand, and improve woodland and tree cover.
- 7.3.48 Policy 6 (b) states that “*development proposals will not be supported where they result in: i. any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition; ii. Adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value, or identified for protection in the Forestry and*

Woodland Strategy; iii. Fragmenting or severing woodland habitats, unless appropriate mitigation measures are identified and implemented in line with the mitigation hierarchy; iv. Conflict with Restocking Direction, Remedial Notice or Registered Notice to Comply issued by Scottish Forestry”.

- 7.3.49 Policy 6 (c) outlines that woodland removal will only be supported where the proposal would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in accordance with Scottish Government policy. Where woodland is removed, compensatory planting would be expected to be delivered.
- 7.3.50 Policy 6 (d) states that “...on sites which include an area of existing woodland or land identified in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy as being suitable for woodland creation will only be supported where the enhancement and improvement of woodlands and the planting of new trees on the site (in accordance with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy) are integrated into the design”.
- 7.3.51 EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 14 Forestry identifies that in relation to the Project, the effects to forestry are considered to be major in significance, including;
- The removal of 6.4ha of semi natural woodland classified partly as long-established woodland of plantation origin (LEPO, W5); and
 - The removal of 1.9ha of a forest unit which is part designated as ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW, W115). From the part designated as ASNW, 0.4ha is proposed for removal.
- 7.3.52 Effects on the following forestry units are considered to be moderate in significance:
- W2 (semi natural), W4 (semi natural), W11 (commercial conifer), W13 (mixed broadleaved/conifer), W111 (mixed broadleaved/conifer), W120 (semi natural), W143 (semi natural) and W145 (semi natural).
- 7.3.53 NPF4 defines ancient woodland as “land that has maintained continuous woodland habitat since at least 1750” (page 144). There is no woodland of this classification affected by the Project, as all impacted ancient woodland has been identified as being from the OS 1st Edition 1860 maps.
- 7.3.54 It is acknowledged that the Project would result in the loss of woodland not considered to fall within NPF4’s definition of ‘ancient woodland’. The significant effect of the removal of 6.4ha of LEPO and 1.9ha of forest, of which 0.4ha is identified as ASNW, has the potential to be further reduced through detailed design.
- 7.3.55 As the Project would result in the permanent loss of forestry or woodland, the Applicant is committed to the provision of compensatory planting to meet the Scottish Government’s Control of Woodland Removal Policy. This compensatory planting will be implemented through Compensatory Planting Plans with monitoring conditions. This is in line with the mitigation hierarchy as required by Policy 6 (b), requirements for compensatory planting under Policy 6 (c) and highlights that the planting of new trees on the site has been integrated into the design as required by Policy 6 (d). It should be noted that Annex C of the Control of Woodland Removal Policy provides guidance on acceptability criteria, including the objective of no net loss. The Project meets these criteria through the inclusion of replacement and enhancement planting embedded in the design.

- 7.3.56 The Project will also deliver significant public benefits required by Policy 6 (c) as it will enable the transmission of electricity from renewable sources and support decarbonisation of the national grid, facilitating renewable energy generation across the UK, supporting jobs at the construction stage, and contributing to on-site biodiversity enhancement.

Table 7-7 Policy 6 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2a ASNW (1860) and AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (both significant in EIA terms) were identified as likely significant adverse effects from the New Build Overhead Line. The AWI ASNW lost will be lost to the New Build Overhead Line only, with 80% of AWI LEPO lost accounts for the New Build Overhead Line. Despite compensatory planting, loss of ancient woodland cannot be mitigated and the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the New Build Overhead Line comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route) Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (significant in EIA terms) was identified as a likely significant adverse effect from all components of the Project. However, it should be noted that these combined components of the project only account for 20% of net AWI LEPO lost. Despite compensatory planting, loss of ancient woodland cannot be mitigated and the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the Project comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	In respect of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site, partial felling proposed to facilitate development works represents an opportunity to fell and extract for commercial forestry purposes. Both stands are at economic clear-felling age but currently, extraction opportunities are limited. The Cumbernauld Substation Extension represents an opportunity to extract the timber to roadside given it will open up access during the construction phase. Therefore,

Project Element	Policy Assessment
	extended management felling, beyond those identified in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 14 Forestry, is considered to be a minor positive effect rather than a negligible adverse effect.

- 7.3.58 Despite tension with NPF4 Policy 6, given efforts made to avoid loss of ancient woodland and minimise impacts on other woodland, alongside the proposed compensation measures, and public benefits, the Project is considered to align with the intent of NPF4 Policy 6.

Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places

- 7.3.59 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 7 is “*to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places*”. The Policy Outcomes include “*the historic environment is valued, protected, and enhanced, supporting the transition to net zero and ensuring assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change*”.
- 7.3.60 Policy 7 (a) states that “*Development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets or places will be accompanied by an assessment*”. In compliance, an assessment has been undertaken in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage. This considered effects on historic environment assets (archaeological remains, historic buildings, and historic landscapes) within and surrounding the Project. The assessment concluded that effects would not be significant for all designated and non-designated heritage assets identified within the study area.
- 7.3.61 Policy 7(c) states that “*Development proposals affecting the setting of a listed building should preserve its character, and its special architectural or historic interest*”. Policy 7 (h) states that “*Development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported where: i. direct impacts on the scheduled monument are avoided; ii. significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the setting of a scheduled monument are avoided; or iii. exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impact on a scheduled monument and its setting and impacts on the monument or its setting have been minimised*”. The assessment provided in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage: concluded that there would be no significant effects resulting from the construction and operational phases of the Project on the setting of any listed buildings, or on scheduled monuments, either directly or on the integrity of the setting of any schedule monument.
- 7.3.62 The Antonine Wall forms part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site and is therefore a heritage asset of international significance. In accordance with NPF4 Policy 7(l), development proposals affecting a World Heritage Site or its setting will only be supported where the Outstanding Universal Value of the asset is protected and preserved. The potential for effects on the Antonine Wall, including its setting and contribution to Outstanding Universal Value, has therefore been considered as part of the assessment. On the basis of the assessment undertaken, the Project would not give rise to significant adverse effects on the Antonine Wall or its setting, and its Outstanding Universal Value would be protected and preserved. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with NPF4 Policy 7(l).
- 7.3.63 Policy 7 (o) states that “*non-designated historic environment assets, places and their setting should be protected and preserved in situ wherever feasible*”. It further states that

‘where there is a potential for non-designated buried archaeological remains to exist below a site, developers will provide an evaluation of the archaeological resource at an early stage so that planning authorities can assess impacts’.

- 7.3.64 No significant effects on the setting of any non-designated heritage assets have been identified in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant has proposed to undertake archaeological monitoring during site clearance throughout the Project site as additional mitigation. All mitigation works will be agreed with the relevant Local Authority Archaeological Advisor once details of the construction works have been agreed and prior to works commencing.

Table 7-8 Policy 7 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	One non-designated heritage asset was recorded along the CB Route as part of the New Build Overhead Line Ancillary Works. However, as a result of the design, there are no direct impacts on this asset predicted. The assessment in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage has identified that the Project will have no impact on any non-designated heritage assets.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	Nine non-designated historic environment assets were recorded within a 250m buffer from the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site, all of which dated to the post-medieval period onwards. No assets have been recorded within the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site, and the baseline has also suggested that the potential for impacts on previously unrecorded assets is low due to the archaeological potential being low. The assessment in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage has identified that the Project will have no impact on any non-designated heritage assets.
Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route) Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 7, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.

- 7.3.66 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7.

Policy 8: Green Belts

- 7.3.67 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 8 is *“to encourage, promote and facilitate compact urban growth and use the land around our towns and cities sustainably”*.
- 7.3.68 Policy 8 (a) states that *“Development proposals within a green belt designated within the LDP will only be supported if:*
- They are for: essential infrastructure or new cemetery provision; intensification of established uses, including extensions to an existing building where that is ancillary to the main use; and the following requirements are met:*

- *essential infrastructure or new cemetery provision;*
- *reasons are provided as to why a green belt location is essential and why it cannot be located on an alternative site outwith the green belt;*
- *the purpose of the green belt at that location is not undermined;*
- *the proposal is compatible with the surrounding established countryside and landscape character;*
- *the proposal has been designed to ensure it is of an appropriate scale, massing and external appearance, and uses materials that minimise visual impact on the green belt as far as possible; and*
- *there will be no significant long-term impacts on the environmental quality of the green belt”.*

7.3.69 The Project is located within the Coatbridge and Airdrie, Shotts Countryside, Cumbernauld (North Lanarkshire), and Skinflats (Falkirk) Green Belts and constitutes essential energy transmission infrastructure. The Project directly supports renewable energy generation by enabling greater grid capacity and transmission, which is critical to achieving sustainability goals. The design of the Project ensures that it is of an appropriate scale, massing, and external appearance, and materials have been chosen to minimize visual impact on the Green Belt as far as possible. Furthermore, the Project will not result in significant long-term impacts on the function of the Green Belt.

Table 7-9 Policy 8 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 8, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	The site of the Project has a specific locational requirement, in particular for the Cumbernauld Substation Extension as the works must be carried out at the location of the existing substation, which is already within the Green Belt. There is no suitable alternative site outside the area of Green Belt available for this infrastructure. The Cumbernauld Substation Extension maintains the existing use of the site and does not encroach into large sections of undeveloped Green Belt land. The proposal is compatible with the surrounding established countryside and landscape character, as it is an extension of existing infrastructure rather than the introduction of a new or unrelated use. The selected location of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension to border the existing Forest Road will keep Green Belt development to the periphery of the area

Project Element	Policy Assessment
	and will avoid fragmentation and splitting of designated land.

7.3.70 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 8.

Policy 11: Energy

7.3.71 The primary overarching policy for energy developments is NPF4 Policy 11: Energy. The Policy Intent is to “*encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development. This includes... new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure...*” with the ‘*expansion of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies*’ being the Policy Outcome.

7.3.72 Policy 11 (a) states that “*Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported. These include:*

- i. ... *wind farms including repowering, extending, expanding and extending the life of existing wind farms;*
- ii. ...*enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure; ...*”.

7.3.73 The Project directly supports NPF4 Policy 11 (a) by providing essential grid transmission infrastructure thereby reinforcing the national electricity transmission network and enabling the transfer of renewable energy generation from across Scotland to areas of demand. The Project will support Scotland’s renewable energy and GHG emissions reduction targets. It therefore represents essential strategic infrastructure that underpins the continued decarbonisation and resilience of Scotland’s electricity system.

7.3.74 Policy 11 (c) states that “*Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities*”.

7.3.75 The Project would deliver:

- Employment and supply chain opportunities during construction; and
- Socio-economic benefits through enabling the operation of the DWNO upgrade, supporting wider electricity network efficiency and connectivity, and facilitating renewable energy distribution to the national grid.

7.3.76 At a broader level, SPEN (the parent company of the Applicant):

- Offer community benefits aimed at helping communities by supporting their Net Zero plans and accelerating decarbonisation. From 2022 to 2026 this is offered through the Transmission Net Zero Fund, with the RIIO-T3 Community Benefit Funding Plans increasing the original funding available to continue these projects until 2031²⁴; and
- As part of their engagement with the UK Government, Scottish Government, and other Transmission Operators to develop a consistent approach to community benefits has identified three types of community benefit funding through the RIIO-

²⁸ SP Energy Networks Community Funding Homepage:
https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/community_funding_homepage.aspx

T3 Business Plan which would help communities hosting new transmission infrastructure projects, such as the Project. It is envisioned that there would be three funding mechanisms available: local funds (to address the priorities of local communities hosting transmission infrastructure), strategic funding (for larger community projects over a wider geographical area aligned to local authority, Scottish Government or regional priorities) and micro funding (to support smaller community initiatives).²⁵

7.3.77 Policy 11 (d) notes that *“Development proposals that impact on international or national designations will be assessed in relation to Policy 4.”*

7.3.78 In accordance with NPF4 Policy 11(d), and with reference to the assessment undertaken under Policy 4(c) and 4(d), no significant effects have been identified on the following designations:

- Ecological features of international and national importance, including the Ecological features of national or local importance, including Slamannan Plateau SPA, Ramsar site, and SSSI; Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar Site; West Fannyside Moss SSSI; Ancient Woodland of semi-natural origin, as assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity and EIA Report Volume 3, Appendix 7.6 Habitat Regulations Appraisal; and
- Sites designated for geological conservation purposes, as assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions.

7.3.79 Policy 11 (e) outlines impact criteria to be addressed in project design and mitigation, which are focused on community and environmental constraints. However, it is noted that significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on GHG emissions reduction targets.

7.3.80 As set out within EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 3 Evolution of Design and Alternatives, the route alignment and siting of the substation extension have been designed to avoid environmental constraints and residential areas as far as reasonably practicable, in line with the impact criteria detailed in Policy 11 (e). Moreover, given the landscape’s openness and elevation, the Cumbernauld Substation Extension is sited and designed to minimise prominence, integrate with existing shelterbelts/hedgerows, and adopt context-appropriate materials, with robust screening (particularly to the north) and mitigation that take into account the two adjacent CGA to the west (Palacerigg) and east (Mid-Forrest).

7.3.81 Only a limited number of significant environmental effects were identified through the EIA, as summarised in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 18 Summary and Conclusions. This reflects the steps taken to avoid and minimise effects through the route development, assessment process and the nature and scale of the development. Furthermore, these effects are anticipated and arise from the delivery of transmission infrastructure, which aligns with the intent of NPF4 Policy 11.

7.3.82 Policy 11 (e) also states that *“In the case of proposals for grid infrastructure, consideration should be given to underground connections where possible”*.

7.3.83 EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 3 Evolution of Design and Alternatives set out the considerations given to underground cables as part of the design process. SP Energy

²⁵ SPEN (2024) RIIO-T3 Business Plan 2026 – 2031: https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/riio_t3_docs.aspx

Network's Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment²⁶ provides further detail on the approach to underground cabling. This states that wherever practical, an overhead line approach is taken when planning and designing major electrical infrastructure projects. Only under certain circumstances will the Applicant consider underground cables, where no suitable route for an overhead line can be identified.²⁷

- 7.3.84 It also acknowledges that underground cables offer visual benefits, however they present disadvantages, including greater land requirement, increased costs, maintenance difficulties and fault repair time, the need for cable sealing end compounds and being less efficient at transporting electricity.
- 7.3.85 The outcome of the assessment undertaken in developing the design of the Project is that underground cabling is proposed for four sections of the route, due to specific constraints including railway crossings, dense urban development, other infrastructure, and limited space for overhead line construction. This has been carefully considered to balance the technical, economic viability and environmental aspects of the Project in line with Policy 11 (e).
- 7.3.86 Overall, the Project draws significant support from NPF4 Policy 11. While a limited number of significant impacts are identified, these are localised in nature and will be appropriately mitigated, managed, or compensated. Such impacts are consistent with the expected effects of new transmission infrastructure.
- 7.3.87 Furthermore, Policy 11 is to be considered in light of the overarching policy aims set out in NPF4 Policies 1 and 2 in tackling the climate and nature crisis and establishing support for the principle of the Project. Significant weight should be given to the contribution of the Project to renewable energy targets and on GHG emissions reduction targets, as part of the wider transmission network, in accordance with Policy 11(e).
- 7.3.88 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 11.

Policy 18: Infrastructure First

- 7.3.89 The Policy Intent of Policy 18: Infrastructure First is to “*encourage, promote and facilitate an infrastructure first approach to land use planning, which puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of placemaking*”, with “*existing infrastructure assets... used sustainably, prioritising low-carbon solutions*” and “*infrastructure requirements, and their planned delivery to meet the needs of communities are clear*”, being the Policy Outcomes.
- 7.3.90 The Need for the Project, is set out in Section 5 of this statement. In addition, as the Project will increase the capacity for electricity generated from renewable energy sources to be transmitted to areas of demand across the UK, it supports the expansion of the renewable energy sector which will contribute to Scotland and UK targets to reduce carbon emissions. The Cumbernauld Substation Extension ensures that existing infrastructure is used sustainably by reusing the site of the existing Cumbernauld Substation.

²⁶ SPEN (2020) Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment. [online] Available at: [SPEN Approach to Routeing.pdf](#)

²⁷ These circumstances are detailed in Section 3.6 of the Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment publication.

Table 7-10 Policy 18 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 18, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Up-rated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	
Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	

- 7.3.91 As such, it is considered that the Project aligns with the intent and outcomes of Policy 18.

Policy 22: Flood Risk and Water Management

- 7.3.92 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 22 is ‘...to strengthen resilience to flood risk by promoting avoidance as a first principle and reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flooding’. The Policy Outcomes include: ‘Places are resilient to current and future flood risk’ and ‘Water resources are used efficiently and sustainably’.
- 7.3.93 Policy 22 (a) states that ‘Development proposals at risk of flooding or in a flood risk area will only be supported if they are for ...(i) essential infrastructure where the location is required for operational reasons....’
- 7.3.94 EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment assesses the potential effects of the Project on surface water features (including hydromorphology), groundwater, water resources, flood risk, and drainage.
- 7.3.95 Policy 22 (c) states that development proposals will: ‘...i) not increase the risk of surface water flooding to others, or itself be at risk, ii) manage all rain and surface water through sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and iii) seek to minimise the area of impermeable surface’.
- 7.3.96 EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment assesses the potential effects associated with the Project on the water environment, including on water quality, flows, levels of surface water and groundwater features, and the fluvial hydromorphology of watercourses.
- 7.3.97 Furthermore, EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment identifies that there are no anticipated significant effects arising from the Ancillary Works (CB Route Removal and AA Route Undergrounding) on surface water or groundwater receptors. However, moderate significant effects on surface water as a result of the New Build Overhead Line itself for water features BW-10 and BW-14 (as illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 9.1 Surface Water Receptors) for water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillages.
- 7.3.98 The New Build Overhead Line and Ancillary Works lie within areas of low flood risk from all sources and has therefore been scoped out of the assessment.

Table 7-11 Policy 22 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Cumbernauld Substation Extension	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment identifies that there are moderate significant effects on surface water as a result of the Project for water features BW-10 and BW-14 (as illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 9.1 Surface Water Receptors) for water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillages. It outlines the embedded and additional mitigation measures implemented as part of the Project, including micro-siting for steel towers WB040 and WB023, a water quality monitoring plan and surface water drainage at the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site via a network of perforated pipes into two SuDS ponds – one located to the northeast and the other to the west of the Site. Both SuDS ponds are designed to provide water quality treatment through natural filtration and sedimentation processes, helping to remove suspended solids and potential contaminants prior to discharge into receiving watercourses, and reduce surface water runoff to the 1-in-2-year greenfield runoff rate. EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment also outlines the mitigation measures during the construction phase, with measures to control and minimise risks to be outlined in a CEMP and WMP by the Principal Contractor. There are no anticipated significant effects on groundwater receptors.
Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route) Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 22, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.

- 7.3.100 Given the findings of EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment and the proposed mitigation the Project is considered to accord with Policy 22.

Policy 23: Health and Safety

- 7.3.101 The Policy Intent of NPF4 Policy 23 is *“to protect people and places from environmental harm, mitigate risks arising from safety hazards and encourage, promote and facilitate development that improves health and wellbeing”*. The Policy Outcomes include *“Safe places that protect human health and the environment”*.
- 7.3.102 Policy 23 (a) states that *“...proposals that have positive effects on health will be supported”*.
- 7.3.103 The proposed BNG measures have the potential to have a positive effect from access to increase natural capital and enhanced green networks as a result of the proposed biodiversity enhancements.

- 7.3.104 Policy 23 (b) states that “...proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on health will not be supported. A Health Impact Assessment may be required”.
- 7.3.105 Policy 23 (d) states that “...proposals that are likely to have significant adverse effects on air quality will not be supported. Development proposals will consider opportunities to improve air quality and reduce exposure to poor air quality. An air quality assessment may be required where the nature of the proposal or the air quality in the location suggest significant effects are likely”.
- 7.3.106 No significant air quality effects are expected as a result of the construction of the Project. Emissions are associated with construction plant and construction dust, however these will be managed, via the CEMP, to avoid significant adverse effects and ensure compliance with Policy 23 (d) is met.
- 7.3.107 Policy 23 (e) states that “proposals that are likely to raise unacceptable noise issues will not be supported. The agent of change principle applies to noise sensitive development. A Noise Impact Assessment may be required where the nature of the proposal or its location suggests that significant effects are likely”.

Table 7-12 Policy 23 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 12 Noise and Vibration outlines that construction noise has been subject to desk-based assessment. Following assessment, some construction activities for the Project have been identified to result in residual short term moderate significant effects. Daytime noise would result in Major impacts and Large/Very Large effect significance prior to mitigation. Standard best-practice measures (e.g. avoiding overlapping phases, reducing equipment on-time, and temporary noise barriers) would reduce effects to Minor impacts and Slight significance. The construction activities that will result in short term major significant effects include construction of access arrangements, removal and reinstatement of temporary works, and bellmouth construction (Construction noise and vibration). The construction activities that will result in short term moderate significant effects for the Ancillary Works include the dismantling of existing routes. All receptors result in long term negligible effects in terms of operational noise as a result of the Project and therefore are not considered to be significant.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy 22, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	

- 7.3.110 Given the findings of EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 12 Noise and Vibration, the temporary nature of the construction work and the proposed embedded and additional mitigation, which includes construction and noise management measures, the Project is considered to accord with NPF4 Policy 23.

7.4 North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (2022)

- 7.4.1 As part of the Project, the following elements are within the North Lanarkshire Local Authority Area, and are therefore subject to assessment against the policies in the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (2022):

- New Build Overhead Line Development;
- Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX & XR Route); and
- Cumbernauld Substation Extension.

- 7.4.2 The following considers how those parts of the Project situated within North Lanarkshire Council's local authority area comply with the relevant NLLDP policies.

Policy PROM LOC4: Special Landscape Areas and Green Network Improvements

- 7.4.3 Policy PROM LOC4 of the NLLDP promotes understanding and awareness of the "distinctive character and special qualities of the designated Special Landscape Areas".
- 7.4.4 North Lanarkshire Council require that any proposals "...affecting the Special Landscape Areas", and any proposals "...affecting the...Green Network in North Lanarkshire and other natural areas and green space" will both be required to "satisfy the provisions of all EDQ (Environment and Design Qualities) and PROT (Protecting Assets) Policies." Policy PROM LOC4 is considered further below.

Table 7-13 Policy PROM LOC4 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, there is no potential for the New Build Overhead Line to result in significant adverse effects on landscape designations such as Special Landscape Areas. As outlined in the EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, there are no direct impacts to the NLC Green network.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, there is no potential for the Cumbernauld Substation Extension to result in significant adverse effects on landscape designations such as Special Landscape Areas. The Site is also not located within any NLC Green Networks, with the nearest Green Network is located on the north side of Forest Road approximately 60m from the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site. As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, there are no direct impacts to this green network.

- 7.4.6 The Project is therefore considered to be in accordance with NLLDP Policy PROM LOC4.

Policy PROM ID2: Utilities Improvements

- 7.4.7 Policy PROM ID2 of the NLLDP supports utilities development, including renewable energy infrastructure, in principle, subject to compliance with legislation and other LDP policies. It states that “...*Planning Applications will be assessed for their suitability for being located in the Land Use Character Area in which they are proposed in terms of specific protection and environmental qualities*” and furthermore North Lanarkshire Council require “...*An assessment of the impact of proposed renewable energy generation development on features... in particular the integrity of World Heritage Sites, European sites, Historic Battlefield and peatlands, as well as more local considerations, should seek to address issues of scale, amenity, cumulative impact, community benefit and restoration.*”
- 7.4.8 It is noted that policy PROM ID2 states that “*Proposals for renewable energy development must have regard to the considerations set out in Scottish Planning Policy paragraph 169*”. SPP has now been superseded, and the Project has been assessed against NPF4 in Section 7.3. The Project is considered to accord with all relevant policies in NPF4.
- 7.4.9 In addition, as careful consideration has been given to minimise and avoid impacts on protected features and assets through the design development process, outlined in the assessment of the Project against NPF4 policies (Policy 3: Biodiversity, Policy 4: Natural Places, Policy 5: Soils, Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places), significant impacts will be limited through embedded mitigation. Furthermore, community benefits are detailed under the assessment against NPF4 Policy 11: Energy.

Table 7-14 Policy PROM ID2 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, it is considered that the New Build Overhead Line is suitable for its location in Landscape Character Areas Lowland Plateaux – Central, Lowland River Valleys – Central, Plateau Farmland – Glasgow and Clyde Valley, Urban Fringe Farmland, and Plateau Moorlands – Glasgow and Clyde Valley. Effects on landscape designations are not anticipated to be significant at construction and operational phases (year 1 and year 15).
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy PROM ID2, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, it is considered that the Cumbernauld Substation Extension is suitable for its location in Landscape Character Area ‘Plateau Farmland’ as it comprises an extension to the existing Cumbernauld Substation and effects are not assessed as significant.

- 7.4.10 The Project is therefore considered to be in accordance with NLLDP Policy PROM ID2.

Policy PROT A: Natural Environment and Green Networks Assets

- 7.4.11 Policy PROT A of the NLLDP seeks to protect natural and resilient sustainable places by safeguarding natural heritage assets.
- 7.4.12 PROT A identifies international, national, and local locations site categories, and urban green networks and protected species, as categories which are protected for their importance for species or habitats, or other environmental value.
- 7.4.13 As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity and NPF4 Policy 4: Natural Places and subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity all significant adverse effects on designated sites, landscapes, water features, habitats, and protected or notable species have been avoided or reduced to negligible or minor levels through embedded and additional mitigation, and any remaining effects are not significant in EIA terms. In addition, the Applicant is also committed to delivering at least 10% BNG in accordance with its Environmental Action Plan.

Table 7-15 Policy PROT A Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual, significant but temporary and localised visual effects are identified for key viewpoints. These effects will diminish post-construction as landscape mitigation matures. As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2a ASNW (1860) and AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (both significant in EIA terms) were identified as likely significant adverse effects from the New Build Overhead Line. The AWI ASNW lost will be lost to the New Build Overhead Line only, with 80% of AWI LEPO lost accounts for the New Build Overhead Line. Despite compensatory planting, loss of ancient woodland cannot be mitigated and the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the New Build Overhead Line comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets. EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment identifies that there are moderate significant effects on surface water as a result of the Project for water features BW-10 and BW-14 (as illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 9.1 Surface Water Receptors) for water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillages. It outlines the embedded and additional mitigation measures implemented as part of the Project, including micro-siting for steel towers WB040 and WB023, and a water quality monitoring plan.

Project Element	Policy Assessment
	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment also outlines the mitigation measures during the construction phase, with measures to control and minimise risks to be outlined in a CEMP and WMP by the Principal Contractor. There are no anticipated significant effects on groundwater receptors.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route) Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As assessed in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, loss of AWI 2b LEPO (1860) (significant in EIA terms) was identified as a likely significant adverse effect from all components of the Project. However, it should be noted that these combined components of the project only account for 20% of net AWI LEPO lost. Moreover, subject to mitigation measures, the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. However, the Project comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment identifies that there are moderate significant effects on surface water as a result of the Project for water features BW-10 and BW-14 (as illustrated on EIA Report Volume 2, Figure 9.1 Surface Water Receptors) for water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillages. It outlines the embedded and additional mitigation measures implemented as part of the Project, including a water quality monitoring plan and surface water drainage at the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site via a network of perforated pipes into two SuDS ponds – one located to the northeast and the other to the west of the Site. Both SuDS ponds are designed to provide water quality treatment through natural filtration and sedimentation processes, helping to remove suspended solids and potential contaminants prior to discharge into receiving watercourses, and reduce surface water runoff to the 1-in-2-year greenfield runoff rate. EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment also outlines the mitigation measures during the construction phase, with measures to control and minimise risks to be outlined in a CEMP and WMP by the Principal Contractor. There are no anticipated significant effects on groundwater receptors.

- 7.4.15 Given the BNG measures and embedded and additional mitigation proposed in relation to significant adverse impacts on biodiversity, the Project is considered to comply with NLLDP Policy PROT A.

Policy PROT B: Historic Environment Assets

- 7.4.16 Policy PROT B of the NLLDP seeks to protect and create resilient sustainable places by safeguarding historic environment assets.
- 7.4.17 As per the assessment against NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places, it has been determined that there will be no significant effects on historic environment assets resulting from the construction and operational phases of the Project. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant has committed to undertake archaeological monitoring during site clearance at the Cumbernauld Substation Extension site as additional mitigation. All mitigation works will be agreed with the relevant Local Authority Archaeological Advisor once details of the construction works have been agreed and prior to works commencing. Policy PROT B is considered further below.

Table 7-16 Policy PROT B Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in the assessment against NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places, and with the information provided in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage, no significant historic environment effects are expected as a result of the construction of the Project.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	

- 7.4.18 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NLLDP Policy PROT B.

Policy PROT C: Mineral Resources

- 7.4.19 Policy PROT C of the NLLDP states that there is ‘a presumption against proposals for development that would potentially sterilise valuable mineral resource’.
- 7.4.20 The Project avoids significant sterilisation of mineral resources, embeds mitigation for ground instability and contamination, and ensures all adverse effects are reduced to not significant through design and management measures. The Project will not affect any existing quarries or pits associated with historic, now-inactive operations in the area. Policy PROT C is considered further below.

Table 7-17 Policy PROT C Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy PROT C, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	

Project Element	Policy Assessment
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	

- 7.4.21 In conclusion, the Project will not sterilise valuable mineral resources and therefore complies with Policy PROT C of the NLLDP.

Policy PP 4: Green Belt

- 7.4.22 Policy PP 4 of the NLLDP states that North Lanarkshire Council will ‘*protect the setting of communities, support regeneration by directing growth to urban areas, protect natural assets and provide a high-quality environment, by promoting a Green Belt*’.
- 7.4.23 Although the Project is partially located within the Coatbridge and Airdrie, Shotts Countryside, Cumbernauld (North Lanarkshire) Green Belts, development may still be acceptable where it constitutes essential infrastructure. The Project is considered to be essential infrastructure, as it constitutes infrastructure with a specific locational need and no suitable alternative site. It also directly supports the generation of renewable energy by enabling greater grid capacity and transmission.

Table 7-18 Policy PP 4 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 8: Green Belts and NLLDP Policy PE 15: Green Belt, the development is considered essential infrastructure and the route connecting transmission between Bonnybridge and Glenmavis is the most efficient route and cannot reasonably be proposed within another location.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 8: Green Belts and NLLDP Policy PE 15: Green Belt, the development is considered essential infrastructure. As the Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route) involve reconductoring of transmission infrastructure within an existing corridor it cannot reasonably be proposed within another location.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 8: Green Belts and NLLDP Policy PE 15: Green Belt, the development is considered essential infrastructure. As the Cumbernauld Substation Development involves the extension of transmission infrastructure within an existing substation it cannot reasonably be proposed within another location.

- 7.4.24 In conclusion, the Project therefore complies with Policy PP 4 of the NLLDP.

Policy EDQ 1: Site Appraisal

- 7.4.25 Policy EDQ 1 requires that Project be appraised in terms of the site and its surroundings to ensure it will integrate successfully into the local area and avoid harm to neighbouring amenity.

- 7.4.26 To achieve appropriate form and design and to allow consideration of the proposal, Planning Applications will require to be accompanied by an appraisal of the site and its surrounding Land Use Character Areas. Policy EDQ 1 is considered further below.

Table 7-19 Policy EDQ 1 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual provides an assessment of the New Build Overhead Line in context of the surrounding Land Use Character Areas, significant effects identified in the accompanying Landscape Assessment being appropriately managed through embedded mitigation measures.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual provides an assessment of the Upgraded Overhead Lines in context of the surrounding Land Use Character Areas, significant effects identified in the accompanying Landscape Assessment being appropriately managed through embedded mitigation measures.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual provides an assessment of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension in context of the surrounding Land Use Character Areas, with significant effects identified in the accompanying Landscape Assessment being appropriately managed through embedded mitigation measures. In addition, there are no significant effects identified in relation to the Cumbernauld Substation Extension. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) submitted alongside the planning application for the Cumbernauld Substation Extension provides further details of the design evolution of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension, including environmental and technical considerations; the appraisal methods for various stages of the design; and the consultation that has taken place throughout the design process.

- 7.4.27 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NLLDP Policy EDQ 1.

Policy EDQ 2: Specific Features for Consideration

- 7.4.28 Policy EDQ 2 addresses development in areas with specific constraints, including hazardous zones (flood risk, contaminated land, ground instability) utilities infrastructure and noise management areas. Policy EDQ2 is considered further below.

Table 7-20 Policy EDQ 2 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	The hazardous zones, identified in Category EDQ 2A were considered as constraints and informed the routing of the New Build Overhead Line.
Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy EDQ 2, no specific planning policy considerations relating to the Upated Overhead Lines have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	The hazardous zones, identified in Category EDQ 2A were considered as constraints and informed the siting and design of the Cumbernauld Substation Extension. Design work has avoided areas of historic coal workings, especially recorded mine entries. Temporary access tracks and hardstanding have also avoided recorded mine entries. Consideration of the effect on shallow underground coal mine workings has been given, and the key impacts arising are addressed by the recommendations made within the Phase 1 Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Reports, which accompany this Planning Application.

7.4.29 EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions identified that the Project will not have any significant effect on ground conditions.

7.4.30 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NLLDP Policy EDQ 2.

Policy EDQ 3: Quality of Development

7.4.31 Policy EDQ 3 requires that development will only be permitted where high standards of site planning and sustainable design are achieved. Planning Applications will need to demonstrate that the Project takes account of the site appraisal carried out as a requirement of Policies EDQ 1 and, if appropriate, EDQ 2, assets protected under Policy PROT, any evaluation of design options, and achieves a high-quality development.

7.4.32 To achieve high standards of site planning and sustainable design and to allow consideration of the proposal, Planning Applications will require to take account of the Site Appraisal required by Policies EDQ 1 and, if appropriate, EDQ 2. Policy EDQ 3 is considered further below.

Table 7-21 Policy EDQ 3 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As demonstrated in the assessment against Policies EDQ 1 and EDQ 2, the Project appropriately addresses policy requirements through the design process.
Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	Following the EIA process and consideration against Policy EDQ 3, no specific planning policy considerations have been identified beyond those already assessed as part of the wider Project.

Project Element	Policy Assessment
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	As demonstrated in the assessment against Policies EDQ 1 and EDQ 2, the Cumbernauld Substation Extension appropriately addresses policy requirements through the design process. The development also supports the transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy by increasing transmission capacity for sustainable energy within the local network and making effective use of existing infrastructure at Cumbernauld Substation. Reusing this site represents a more sustainable approach than developing an equivalent greenfield location.

7.4.33 The Project is therefore considered to comply with NLLDP Policy EDQ 3.

7.5 Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (2020)

7.5.1 As part of the Project, the following developments are within the Falkirk Local Authority Area, and are therefore subject to assessment against the policies in the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (2020):

- New Build Overhead Line; and
- Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route).

7.5.2 The following considers how those parts of the Project situated within Falkirk Council's local authority area comply with the relevant FLDP2 policies.

Policy PE05: Antonine Wall

7.5.3 Policy PE05 of the FLDP2 states that *"The Council will seek to retain, protect, preserve and enhance the Antonine Wall, its associated archaeology, character and setting"*.

7.5.4 Policy PE05 further notes:

- *"There will be a presumption against development which would have an adverse impact on the Antonine Wall WHS. There will be a presumption against development with the Antonine Wall WHS Site buffer zones which would have an impact on the Site and its setting, unless mitigating action to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland can be taken to address the adverse impact and there is no conflict with other LDP policies; and*
- *Supplementary Guidance SG11 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) WHS' will be applied in assessing development proposals along the line, or affecting the setting, of the Antonine Wall."*

7.5.5 The Project (where located within Falkirk Council's local authority area) is considered to have no significant effects on the setting of the Antonine Wall, as outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places.

Table 7-22 Policy PE05 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage, there are no likely significant effects resulting from the construction and operational phases of the New Build Overhead

Project Element	Policy Assessment
	Line, or the Ancillary Works (CB Route Removal and AA Route Undergrounding). In relation to the Ancillary Works (CB Route Removal), the removal of a pylon within the WHS, as well as the overhead line that oversails the WHS and WHS buffer would result in a moderate positive significance of effect. Works during the construction phase have the potential to result in physical impacts on scheduled components of the WHS, as well as other scheduled monuments north of the Antonine Wall. Any work within the scheduled area would require Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), and an application for SMC will be submitted which will include a detailed proposal for site specific mitigation.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage, no significant effects are likely to result from the reconductoring of the ZG Route.

7.5.6 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE05.

Policy PE06: Archaeological Sites

- 7.5.7 Policy PE06 of the FLDP2 requires Scheduled Monuments (SM) and other identified nationally important archaeological resources to be preserved in situ and within an appropriate setting, with developments which have an adverse effect on SM or the integrity of their setting not being permitted.
- 7.5.8 All other archaeological resources will be preserved in situ wherever feasible.
- 7.5.9 As assessed against NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places, no significant effects on archaeological sites will result from the construction and operational phases of the Project.

Table 7-23 Policy PE06 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage, there are no likely significant effects resulting from the construction and operational phases of the New Build Overhead Line, or the Ancillary Works (CB Route Removal and AA Route Undergrounding). It is not anticipated that there will be any impact on the scheduled Antonine Wall, however any works in the scheduled area during the construction phase with the potential to result in physical impacts on scheduled components of the WHS, as well as other scheduled monuments north of the Antonine Wall would require SMC. Any applications for SMC would be submitted as appropriate and would include a detailed proposal for site specific mitigation.

Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 7 Cultural Heritage, no significant effects are likely to result from the reconductoring of the ZG Route.
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7.5.10 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE06.

Policy PE07: Listed Buildings

7.5.11 Policy PE07 of the FLDP2 requires that development proposals “*within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building should not adversely affect the character, appearance, special architectural or historic interest of the building, or its setting*”.

7.5.12 Additionally, Projects that will affect “*listed buildings or their setting*” should confirm with SG12: Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas.

Table 7-24 Policy PE07

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As assessed against NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places, no significant effects on listed buildings will result from the construction and operational phases of the Project.

7.5.13 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE07.

Policy PE08: Conservation Areas

7.5.14 Policy PE08 of the FLDP2 requires that the Council “*protect the historic character and visual amenity of each Conservation area*”.

7.5.15 Additionally, Projects that will affect “*buildings in Conservation Areas or their setting*” should confirm with SG12: Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas.

Table 7-25 Policy PE08 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Up-rated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As assessed against NPF4 Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places, no significant effects on conservation areas will result from the construction and operational phases of the Project.

7.5.16 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE08.

Policy PE14: Countryside

7.5.17 Policy PE14 of the FLDP2 states that new developments in the countryside should demonstrate that their “*scale, siting and design is such that there will be no significant adverse impact on the rural environment*”.

Table 7-26 Policy PE14 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 4: Natural Places and NPF4 Policy 5: Soils no significant adverse effects were identified on the integrity or functionality of the rural environment and land. The Project comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure with a specific need for a rural location.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	

7.5.18 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE14.

Policy PE15: Green Belt

7.5.19 Policy PE14 of the FLDP2 states that *"the purpose of the Green Belt is to direct development to the most appropriate locations, protect and enhance the character and identity of the settlement, and provide access to open space"*.

7.5.20 Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal satisfies the relevant countryside policies, and it can be demonstrated that it will be within the most appropriate locations and will not be to the detriment of the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement, including maintaining visual separation, and will not diminish access to open space.

Table 7-27 Policy PE15 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 8: Green Belts and NLLDP Policy PP 4: Green Belt, the development is considered essential infrastructure and the route connecting transmission between Bonnybridge and Glenmavis is the most efficient route and cannot reasonably be proposed within another location.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 8: Green Belts and NLLDP Policy PP 4: Green Belt, the development is considered essential infrastructure. As the Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route) involve reconductoring of transmission infrastructure within an existing corridor it cannot reasonably be proposed within another location.

7.5.21 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE15.

Policy PE18: Landscape

7.5.22 Policy PE18 of the FLDP2 states that the Council will *"seek to protect and enhance landscape character and enhance landscape quality...in accordance with Supplementary Guidance SG09 'Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations'"*, with any development within a *"Local Landscape Area...designed to minimise any adverse effects on the landscape character and scenic interest"*.

7.5.23 In addition, any development proposals which are *"likely to have significant landscape and visual effects must be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment"*

demonstrating that, with appropriate mitigation, a satisfactory landscape fit will be achieved”.

Table 7-28 Policy PE18 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 4: Natural Places and NPF4 Policy 11: Energy, no significant adverse effects were identified on the integrity or functionality of local landscape areas as reported in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual. It is anticipated that there would be likely significant adverse effects on LCTs during construction. Such LCTs would be directly affected by the construction works affecting key characteristics. Such effects would reduce to non-significant likely effects at operation as the degree of change would be lower and within the context of the removed CB Route and partial undergrounding of the AA Route. The embedded mitigation has reduced the likely effects on landscape and visual effects as far as possible. However there are residual significant adverse effects on visual receptors in localised areas in close proximity (A803 Falkirk Road near to Bonnybridge, Rought Castle Roman Fort near Bonnybridge Substation, the Core Path network off Beam Road to the south of Bonnybridge, Brackenhurst Road near Tower WB003 and Alnwick Crescent near Tower XX019). However, the New Build Overhead Line has also resulted in likely residual beneficial visual effects in two locations due to the routeing of the New Build Overhead Line in comparison to the existing overhead lines.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	The upgrading of the existing ZG overhead line route and works at Denny North Substation, have been scoped out of the landscape assessment at the outset, in accordance with the Scoping Report, on the basis that they are not anticipated to give rise to likely significant landscape and visual effects due to their limited, localised, temporary or contextually contained nature.

7.5.24 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE18.

Policy PE19: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

7.5.25 Policy PE19 of the FLDP2 states that the Council will “*protect and enhance habitats and species of importance and will promote biodiversity and geodiversity through the planning process*”.

Table 7-29 Policy PE19 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	Significant residual effects have been identified in relation to the New Build Overhead Line: • Permanent loss of areas of woodland classified as ASNW; • Permanent loss of areas of woodland classified as LEPO. With the exception of ancient woodland and as outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity, Policy 4: Natural Places, and Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland and Trees; subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, significant adverse effects on designated sites, landscapes, water features, habitats, and protected or notable species have been avoided or reduced to negligible or minor levels through embedded and additional mitigation, and any remaining effects are not significant in EIA terms. The New Build Overhead Line comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 3: Biodiversity, Policy 4: Natural Places, and Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland and Trees; subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 8 Biodiversity, all significant adverse effects on designated sites, landscapes, water features, habitats, and protected or notable species have been avoided or reduced to negligible or minor levels through embedded and additional mitigation, and any remaining effects are not significant in EIA terms.

7.5.26 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE19.

Policy PE20: Trees Woodland and Hedgerows

7.5.27 Policy PE20 of the FLDP2 establishes a presumption against removal where it would harm “*landscape, local amenity, nature conservation, recreation or historic environment interests, or erosion and natural flood management*”. Ancient, long-established, and semi-natural woodlands are recognised as “*a resource of irreplaceable value*” and will be protected, while development in areas subject to Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Areas must ensure trees’ health, stability, and biodiversity are not adversely affected. The policy also requires Tree Surveys, Constraints Plans, and appropriate Management Plans to guide development, and

encourages enhancement and replacement planting where tree or hedgerow loss is unavoidable.

Table 7-30 Policy PE20 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	The New Build Overhead Line would result in the permanent loss of woodland, including areas recorded in the AWI and areas of ancient semi-natural woodland. These effects are assessed as moderate adverse and significant. The removal of AWI, LEPO and ASNW woodland is in tension with the objectives of Policy PE20, particularly the requirement to protect ancient, long-established, and semi-natural woodland as an irreplaceable resource. Despite compensatory planting, loss of ancient woodland cannot be mitigated and the residual effects would remain significant in relation to forestry and woodland resources. The New Build Overhead Line comprises essential electricity transmission infrastructure which would deliver overriding public benefits, including supporting grid capacity, enabling the connection and distribution of low-carbon electricity, and making a material contribution towards meeting statutory net zero targets.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	An assessment of the Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route) has been scoped out of the Forestry assessment in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 14 Forestry. The Upgraded Overhead Lines can be undertaken entirely from within the existing wayleave and therefore avoid impacts to forestry. However, should forestry removal be subsequently proposed, localised assessment would be undertaken as appropriate.

- 7.5.28 As outlined in the assessment against NPF4 Policy 6 and given the findings of EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 14 Forestry, given the compensation measures, public benefits, and mitigation of significant effects on high sensitivity receptors, the Project is therefore considered to align with FLDP2 Policy PE20.

Policy PE22: The Water Environment

- 7.5.29 Policy PE22 of the FLDP2 recognises “*the importance of the water environment within the Council area in terms of its landscape, ecological, recreational and land drainage functions*”.
- 7.5.30 Additionally, the policy emphasises the protection and enhancement of watercourses for their “*landscape, ecological, recreational and land drainage functions*”. The Council supports measures from the Forth Area River Basin Management Plan to improve ecological status and encourages restoring natural watercourses, removing redundant engineering, and opening culverts where possible. There is a presumption against development that would harm “*the integrity and water quality of aquatic and riparian ecosystems*” or reduce recreational amenity, and unnecessary engineering works such

as new culverts or diversions are discouraged. The policy also promotes the water environment as a recreational and ecological resource, safeguarding existing riparian access and encouraging enhancements where consistent with nature conservation objectives.

Table 7-31 Policy PE22 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9 Water Environment, a significant effect has been predicted for water features BW-10 and BW-14 for water quality impacts from sediment-laden runoff and accidental chemical spillages in the construction phase. The close distance between these steel towers and their respective water features means there are fewer contaminant pathways blockages, meaning there is a greater risk of contaminated water entering the water feature. There are no anticipated significant effects as a result of the construction of the New Build Overhead Line and associated works on groundwater receptors.
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	There are no anticipated significant effects as a result of the Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route) and associated works on water quality or groundwater receptors.

- 7.5.31 As outlined in the assessment against NPF4 Policy 22: Flood Risk and Water Management, given the findings of EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 9: Water Environment: Water Environment and the proposed mitigation, the Project is considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE22.

Policy PE24: Flood Management

- 7.5.32 Policy PE24 of the FLDP2 prioritises protecting people, property, and the environment from flood risk, supporting the objectives of Local Flood Risk Management Strategies and Plans. There is a clear presumption against development that “*would be likely to be at risk of flooding*” or “*increase the level of risk of flooding for existing development*”, and proposals in medium to high-risk areas must provide a flood risk assessment demonstrating that risks can be managed, climate change allowances are included, and safe access and egress are provided. The policy also restricts vulnerable uses on previously developed flood-prone land and ensures that development does not compromise land that contributes to sustainable flood management.

Table 7-32 Policy PE24 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line	As outlined in the assessment against NPF4 22: Flood Risk and Water Management, the New Build Overhead Line and Upgraded
Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Overhead Lines lie within areas of low flood risk from all sources, and flooding has therefore been scoped out of the assessment.

- 7.5.33 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE24.

Policy PE25: Soils and Agricultural Land

- 7.5.34 Policy PE25 of the FLDP2 safeguards high-quality and carbon-rich soils, with a presumption against development that would result in the loss of “*prime quality agricultural land (Classes 1, 2 and 3.1)*” unless it meets an overriding local or national need, is allocated in the LDP, supports a rural business, or facilitates renewable energy or minerals extraction consistent with other policies. Proposals affecting carbon-rich or rare soils must submit a Soil or Peat Management Plan to demonstrate that “*areas of highest quality soil or deepest peat have been avoided,*” disturbance is minimised, and any greenhouse gas release is offset. Development must also ensure sustainable soil use, reducing sealing, erosion, and compaction during construction and operation.

Table 7-33 Policy PE25 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in the assessments against NPF4 Policy 5: Soils, no significant risks to high-quality or carbon-rich soils were identified as reported in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions. While some localised areas of Class 1 peat were identified in proximity to the New Build Overhead Line, this area is currently undergoing peat probing to inform the Peat Management Plan and any associated mitigation which may be required.

- 7.5.35 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE25.

Policy PE26: Air Quality

- 7.5.36 Policy PE26 of the FLDP2 ensures that development does not worsen existing air quality or create new pollution without mitigation, with particular attention to Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Developments may require an Air Quality Assessment where they could “*cause or significantly contribute towards a breach of National Air Quality Standards*”. Proposals that would breach these standards or significantly increase pollution within an AQMA will not be permitted unless there are overriding national or local priorities.

Table 7-34 Policy PE26 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in the assessment against NPF4 Policy 23: Health and Safety and with the information provided in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 15 Other Environmental Matters, no significant air quality effects are expected as a result of the construction of the Project. Emissions are associated with construction plant and construction dust, however these will be managed, via the CEMP, to avoid significant adverse effects.

- 7.5.38 The Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE26.

Policy PE27: Vacant, Derelict, Unstable and Contaminated Land

- 7.5.39 Policy PE27 of the FLDP2 supports proposals that reduce the extent of vacant, derelict, unstable, or contaminated land, provided they comply with other LDP policies. Development on unstable or contaminated sites will only be permitted where

“appropriate remediation or mitigation measures have been undertaken” ensuring safe and sustainable reuse of such land.

Table 7-35 Policy PE27 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As outlined in the assessment against NPF4 Policy 5: Soils and with the information provided in EIA Report Volume 1, Chapter 10 Ground Conditions, no significant geology, soils, or mining effects are expected as a result of the construction of the Project.

7.5.41 Therefore, the Project is therefore considered to comply with FLDP2 Policy PE27.

Policy IR12: Energy Generation Development

7.5.42 Policy IR12 of the FLDP2 sets out that energy infrastructure proposals will be assessed on multiple factors, including economic and community benefits, contribution to renewable energy targets, landscape and visual impacts, ecological and water environment effects, impacts on forestry, soils, green belt, heritage, aviation, digital infrastructure, communities, and tourism. Developments must also consider cumulative effects and waste minimisation, following detailed guidance in Supplementary Guidance SG14 ‘Renewable and Low Carbon Energy’. As assessed above, the Project is compliant with the relevant FLDP2 policies, with identified significant environmental effects being managed to acceptable levels through embedded and additional mitigation.

7.5.43 In addition, as the Project will increase the capacity for electricity generated from renewable energy sources to be transmitted to areas of demand across the UK, it supports the expansion of the renewable energy sector which will contribute to Scotland and UK targets to reduce carbon emissions.

Table 7-36 Policy IR12 Summary

Project Element	Policy Assessment
New Build Overhead Line Upgraded Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	As assessed above, the Project is compliant with the relevant FLDP2 policies, with identified significant environmental effects being managed to acceptable levels through embedded and additional mitigation. In addition, as the Project will increase the capacity for electricity generated from renewable energy sources to be transmitted to areas of demand across the UK, it supports the expansion of the renewable energy sector which will contribute to Scotland and UK targets to reduce carbon emissions.

7.5.44 It is considered that the Project aligns with the intent and outcomes of FLDP2 Policy IR12.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support Section 37 applications to the ECU and a planning application to NLC on behalf of SP Transmission for:

Table 8-1 Project Element Summary

Project Element	Ancillary Elements	Consenting Route	Relevant Development Plan
New Build Overhead Line	CB Route Removal AA Route Undergrounding	Section 37	NPF4 (2023) NLLDP ²⁸ (2022) FLDP2 ²⁹ (2020)
Cumbernauld Substation Extension	-	TCPA	NPF4 (2023) NLLDP (2022)
Upated Overhead Lines (ZG Route)	Denny North Substation Works	Section 37	NPF4 (2023) FLDP2 (2020)
Upated Overhead Lines (XX and XR Route)	Newarthill Substation Works Wishaw Substation Extension	Section 37	NPF4 (2023) NLLDP (2022)

- 8.1.2 This Planning Statement demonstrates the necessity to ensure the Applicant can meet its statutory and licence obligations to maintain and reinforce the electricity transmission network, thereby supporting secure and resilient grid infrastructure in the region. The Project is identified as a National Development in NPF4 and is supported by relevant energy, climate, and infrastructure policy, which is a material consideration of significant weight establishing a strong need case.
- 8.1.3 This Planning Statement has assessed the Project against the relevant Development Plan policies, informed by the assessments carried out as part of the EIA.
- 8.1.4 A limited number of significant residual adverse effects of the Project have been identified within the EIA Report Volume 1 and are considered within this Planning Statement. These effects relate to visual amenity, biodiversity, surface water, construction noise and vibration, and forestry.
- 8.1.5 Despite residual significant effects, in particular relating to Landscape & Visual and Ancient Woodland, the Project has avoided or mitigated environmental effects as far as possible. Considering the overarching benefits the Project provides in facilitating transmission of renewable electricity, alongside the proposed mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures, the Project aligns with the

²⁸ North Lanarkshire Council (2022) North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan. Available at: <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building/development-plans/current-north-lanarkshire-local-development-plan>

²⁹ Falkirk Council (2020) Falkirk Local Development Plan 2. Available at: <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/development-planning/falkirk-local-development-plan-2>

intent of the policies contained within the Development Plan (NPF4, the NLLDP, or the FLDP2).

- 8.1.6 In the Scottish Ministers' and North Lanarkshire Council's respective considerations of these effects when determining the applications, it should first be recognised that transmission infrastructure is a National Development. On that basis, the Project has in principle support from NPF4.
- 8.1.7 When applying the planning balance, significant weight should also be given to the renewable energy and GHG reduction benefits the Project will indirectly facilitate by expanding the electricity transmission network available to renewable energy sources, as required by NPF4 Policies 1 and 11.
- 8.1.8 Throughout the design and route development process and EIA, the Applicant has had regard to the matters set out in Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act in respect of the desirability of preserving the natural beauty of the countryside, of conserving flora, fauna and geological and physiological features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic, or archaeological interest and has sought to mitigate the effects of the Project on these factors.
- 8.1.9 It is concluded that the Project will deliver significant benefits in the wider public interest. The Project has been designed and assessed in full accordance with relevant legislative requirements and the underlying aims and objectives of policy framework. The Applicant has had regard to the Schedule 9 considerations and has taken account of the Development Plan and environmental considerations in its design and proposed mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures.
- 8.1.10 The Project is therefore considered to be acceptable in planning terms. Accordingly, it is requested that Section 37 consent and deemed planning permission for the New Build Overhead Line, the Up-rated ZG Route and the Up-rated XX and XR Route, and planning permission for the Cumbernauld Substation Extension be granted.