



Gala North ZA OHL Diversion

Pre-application Consultation and
Engagement Strategy

May 2026

Contents

1.	Introduction	5
1.1.	Purpose of the Report	5
1.2.	SP Transmission’s Duties and Licence Obligations	5
1.3.	Overview of the project	6
2.	Stakeholders	9
2.1.	Stakeholder Engagement	9
3.	Approach to consultation	10
3.1.	Definition of the Project	10
3.2.	PAC Event 1	10
3.3.	PAC Event 2	12
3.4.	Project timeline	12
3.5.	Consultation materials	13
3.6.	Communication and promotion methods	13
4.	Feedback and reporting	16
4.1.	Feedback methods	16
4.2.	Next step	16
	APPENDIX A - Figures	17

Tables

Table 1: Text table (Consultation materials)12

Table 2: Text table (Project timeline).....15

Glossary

Term	Definition
CSE	Cable sealing end
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ECU	Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit
Electricity Act	The Electricity Act 1989
Holford Rules	Guidelines developed by the late Lord Holford in 1959 for routeing overhead lines
kV	Kilo-volt capacity of an electricity power line
OHL	Overhead line: an electric line in the open air and above ground level
PAC	Pre application consultation
PAC Notice	A Notice to be submitted to ECU. To be issued to ECU, Local Authorities, Local MP & MSPs, Local Councillors & Community Councils
PAC Strategy	Document to be submitted to ECU detailing how TO intends to progress multi-stage consultation
Preferred Route	The preferred route identified through the siting study process
Proposed Route	The amended proposed route which will go forward to Environmental Appraisal
RCD	Routeing Consultation Document
Section 37 (s37) application	An application for development consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act
SP Energy Networks	ScottishPower Energy Networks
SPT	ScottishPower Transmission
TO	Transmission Owner and licence holder under the Electricity Act 1989.
UGC	Underground cable circuit

01.

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 As transmission licence holder for southern Scotland, SP Energy Networks (SP Energy Networks) is required under Section 9(2) of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission. SP Energy Networks is required, in terms of its statutory and licence obligations, to provide for new electricity generators wishing to connect to the transmission system in its licence area. SP Energy Networks is also obliged to make its transmission system available for these purposes and to ensure that the system is fit for purpose through appropriate reinforcements to accommodate the contracted capacity.
- 1.1.2 This document outlines SP Energy Networks approach to pre-application consultation and engagement for the Gala North ZA Diversion component of the overall Gala North Substation project. It sets out the strategy for engaging with local communities, statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and other interested parties. The aim is to ensure that stakeholders are informed about the project and have the opportunity to contribute to its development.
- 1.1.3 In May 2025, the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) published 'Electricity Act 1989 pre-application consultation and engagement guidance for electricity transmission line projects which require Environmental Impact Assessment' (s.37 PAC Guidance).¹ This document recommends how the ECU would like Transmission Operators to undertake Pre application Consultation (PAC) for these type of projects, and in section 3, it describes the drafting and submission of a PAC Strategy in alignment with this guidance.
- 1.1.4 SP Energy Networks attaches great importance to the effect that its works have on the environment and on people. In seeking to achieve 'least disturbance', SP Energy Networks is keen to engage with key stakeholders including local communities and others who may have an interest in the project. This engagement process begins at the early stages of development of projects to ensure that the project design balances the views of the stakeholders and communities with SP Energy Networks statutory obligations.
- 1.1.5 The document sets out how SP Energy Networks intends to progress the multi-stage consultation in accordance with the s.37 PAC Guidance. This includes specific details of the planned stages of consultation, setting out clearly what is to be consulted on at each stage of planning and design and any areas of specific feedback sought. The document also provides links to where more information is available and contact information for those seeking further details of the project and consultation process, ensuring the public and other bodies are fully informed and aware of the proposed project.

1.2. SP Transmission's Duties and Licence Obligations

¹ See [Electricity Act 1989 pre-application consultation and engagement guidance for electricity transmission line projects which require Environmental Impact Assessment \(May 2025\)](#)

- 1.2.1 SP Transmission plc (SPT), the Transmission Owner (TO) and Licence Holder under the Electricity Act 1989, is responsible for the electricity transmission network in central and southern Scotland. As the holder of a transmission licence under the Act, SPT is subject to a number of statutory duties and licence obligations. These include a requirement *“to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission”*. This requires SPT to provide for new electricity generators wishing to connect to the transmission system in its licence area; to make its transmission system available for these purposes; and to ensure that the system is fit for purpose through appropriate reinforcements to accommodate the contracted capacity.
- 1.2.2 In addition, in formulating proposals for network reinforcements or grid connections such as that proposed for the Gala North ZA Diversion project, SPT is subject to duties under Schedule 9 of the Act: *“(a) to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and, (b) to do what it reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.”*
- 1.2.3 SP Energy Networks acting on behalf of SPT, is undertaking work to connect the proposed Gala North Substation to the transmission network through the proposed Gala North ZA Diversion. This work is undertaken in accordance with SPT’s statutory duties and licence obligations with the objective of ensuring that the grid connection is technically feasible, economically viable and on balance, causes the least disturbance to both the environment and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.

1.3. Overview of the project

- 1.3.1 To facilitate renewable forms of generation supported by UK and Scottish Government policy and targets for offshore and onshore wind, new electricity transmission network infrastructure is needed to ensure that energy can be transported from where it is generated to where it is used. Traditionally the electricity transmission system was developed to transport electricity in bulk from power stations to cities and towns where it is transported via the electricity distribution network, but as renewable energy sources such as onshore and offshore wind are typically located in more geographically remote locations this requires new electricity network infrastructure both to connect it to the network as well as to transport it to areas of demand.
- 1.3.1. SP Transmission has a number of statutory duties and licence obligations which underpin the need for the proposed Gala North ZA Diversion. The proposed Gala North ZA Diversion is an integral part of planned network reinforcements which will connect proposed renewable energy generation and storage to the electricity network.
- 1.3.2. The proposed Gala North ZA Diversion comprises the construction of six new towers, two gantries and two sections of diverted overhead lines (Turn-Ins) into the proposed Gala North Substation. The proposals are summarised as follows:
- Approximately 910m of an existing overhead line (known as ‘ZA Route’) from north of the proposed Gala North Substation to the north east of the proposed

Gala North Substation will be removed. Approximately 630m of existing overhead line and two towers of this section will temporarily remain in place during construction and will be removed at the end of construction.

- Approximately 765m of temporary overhead line and two associated towers will be installed to allow for continued operation of the ZA route during construction. These will be removed at the end of the construction period.
- Approximately 710 m of new overhead line, three towers and one gantry from the existing ZA route north of the proposed Gala North Substation southwards to connect into the proposed Gala North Substation.
- Approximately 545 m of new overhead line, three towers and one gantry from the existing ZA route east of the proposed Gala North Substation westwards to connect into the proposed Gala North Substation.

1.3.3. A separate planning application for the proposed Gala North Substation will be made to Scottish Borders Council under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 while also having regard to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017.

1.3.4. The two projects will be jointly consulted on due to their interdependence. A separate Proposal of Application Notice for the proposed Gala North Substation has been submitted to Scottish Borders Council.

02.

Stakeholders

2. Stakeholders

2.1. Stakeholder Engagement

- 2.1.1. Stakeholder engagement, including public involvement, is an important component of the Scottish planning and consenting system. Legislation and government guidance aim to ensure that the public, local communities, statutory and other consultees and interested parties have an opportunity to have their views taken into account throughout the consenting process.
- 2.1.2. SP Energy Networks recognises the importance of consulting effectively on proposals and is keen to engage with key stakeholders, including local communities and others who may have an interest in the Gala North ZA diversion project. This engagement process continues through to the construction of SP Energy Networks projects.
- 2.1.3. SP Energy Network's approach to stakeholder engagement for major electrical infrastructure projects is outlined in Chapter 2 of the SP Energy Networks document 'Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment'. SP Energy Networks aims to ensure effective, inclusive and meaningful engagement with the public, local communities, statutory and other consultees and interested parties through four key engagement steps:
- Pre-project notification and engagement: Discussions are undertaken with consenting bodies, planning authorities, and statutory consultees such as NatureScot and SEPA. Early and proactive engagement enables the views of these consultees to inform project design, assessment methodologies and further engagement. It also provides consultees with an early understanding of the likely programme to submission of the application for consent.
 - Information gathering: To inform the project design stage, information on relevant environmental and planning considerations and proposed data gathering techniques (e.g. for seasonal ecological surveys) is requested from statutory consultees and other relevant organisations.
 - The EIA stage: The results of stakeholder engagement are taken into consideration and used to confirm the 'proposed design' for progression to EIA. Further consultation is carried out during the EIA stage, including additional information gathering, and the preparation of a publicly available Screening/Scoping Report which accompany either a 'Request for a Screening or Scoping Opinion' to the consenting authority.

3. Approach to consultation

3.1. Definition of the Project

- 3.1.1. The Gala North ZA Diversion forms part of the proposed Gala North Substation. The proposed Gala North Substation is a separate application for which consent is being sought from Scottish Borders Council under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Due to the interlinked nature of the two projects, it is considered appropriate to hold joint consultation for the two projects.
- 3.1.2. The consultation will include plans for the proposed Gala North Substation, including the need for the development, and will also cover the need for the proposed Gala North ZA Diversion and the corridor between the two projects.
- 3.1.3. SP Energy Networks is committed to ongoing consultation with interested parties, including statutory and non-statutory consultees and local communities. Responses to the consultation will be evaluated and will inform confirmation of a proposed route to be taken forward to Stage 2. Details of the approach to the first public consultation event are set out below.

3.2. PAC Event 1

- 3.2.1. We intend to hold the PAC Event for Stage 1 at the following times and location. This will be clarified in the PAC notice to be submitted in May 2026. At this event, relevant technical experts from the SP Energy Networks project team will be in attendance, in addition to specialists in specific topic areas, as necessary.

Table 1: Consultation event details

Date	Location	Time
09/06/2026	Lauder Public Hall, Market Place, Lauder, TD2 6SR	3pm – 7pm
10/06/2026	Blainslie Village Hall, Blainslie, TD1 2QF	3pm – 7pm

- 3.2.2. The relevant project information that will be available at the event is set out in table 2 below.

Table 2: Consultation materials

Material	Description
Consultation Leaflet	An easy-to-read overview of the Proposed Development for the public, designed to help the public understand the scheme to provide informed feedback.
Maps	Visual representations of the proposed development and design for the overhead line to help explain the project.

Information Banners	Pull-up banners to be displayed at public events.
Feedback summary	After each event a summary of feedback will be produced along with SP Energy Networks response.
Feedback Form	Adapt SP Energy Networks standard questionnaire, made available online and at in-person events.

3.2.3. Online Engagement Opportunities: A dedicated project website (SP Energy Networksergynetworks.co.uk/pages/gala_north_substation.aspx) will be live for the duration of the project, where all of the relevant project information documents will be available and a project specific FAQ page. The website will also include opportunities to leave written feedback or raise specific queries for SP Energy Networks technical experts, via an online form.

Contact details are provided below.

Table 3: Consultation Contact Details

Email address	Postal address	Phone Number
info@galanorth.com	Freepost SP Energy Networks. c/o Grayling, 33 Castle Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DN	+44 20 3861 3733

3.2.4. Publication of the consultation will be as follows:

- PAC Notice sent to Energy Consents Unit, Scottish Borders Council, Local MP and MSPs, Local Councillors and Community Councils within the study area. This notice to be submitted a minimum of 12 weeks prior to S.37 application submission.
- Adverts in the local media (Southern Reporter and Borders Telegraph) at least 21 days prior to the events.
- Project leaflet with information on the project and public events sent to addresses within 5km of the proposed development at least 21 days prior to the events.
- Landowners impacted by the proposed development will be contacted directly by the SP Energy Networks Transmission Land Team in advance of the publication of the above.
- Updates on the proposal, consultation and project banners and the consultation process will be held on the dedicated project website. This will include links to relevant government guidance and SP Energy Networks Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment.

3.3. PAC Event 2

- 3.3.1. As the ZA Diversion PAC is in combination with Gala North Substation (a TCPA application that requires two rounds of PAC) a second PAC event will be held.
- 3.3.2. It is anticipated that the public consultation will take place in Q4 2026. Precise details to be confirmed with the ECU in advance and relevant publicity of the event will be undertaken as per the format set out above for the PAC 1 event. The PAC Strategy will be updated to reflect the proposed approach to consultation at this stage.

3.4. Project timeline

- 3.4.1. Table 4 provides a summary of the project timeline from identification of the project to submission of Section 37 application.

Table 4: Project timeline

Step	Description	Date
Requirement for substation grid connection identified	Requirement for new substation identified and solution to connect the substation to the grid identified	August 2024
PAC Strategy	Set out stages of consultation in strategy.	May 2026
PAC Notice	Preparation and submission of PAC Notice.	May 2026
Stage 1 Planning and Design: Definition of Proposed Development	Pre-application Consultation Event 1 (PAC Event 1) to gather feedback on proposed development	June 2026
Stage 2 Planning and Design: Final Design Presented	PAC Event 2 to present and gather feedback on final design of proposed development	Q.4 2026
PAC Report	Sets out what consultation and engagement has been undertaken – submitted with Section 37 application	March 2027
Application submission	SP Energy Networks will submit an application under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.	March 2027

3.5. Consultation materials

3.4.1 In line with Scottish Government guidance, information provided throughout the consultation will be accurate, easy to understand, accessible and relevant. All information will be provided in good time and in an appropriate format. As a minimum the following information on the project will be made available on the SP Energy Networks website:

- PAC Notice and PAC Strategy
- The reasons/need for the project
- Benefits of project
- How the project has been identified and by who
- Project location and description of proposals
- Potential environmental effects and constraints
- Information on process used to identify option
- Contact information
- Feedback methods
- Summary of feedback and SP Energy Networks response
- Frequently asked questions
- All materials provided at consultation events.

3.4.2 The consultation materials will be developed to ensure this information is included. Table 4 at paragraph 3.4.1, above, provides an overview of the materials that will be produced for the public consultation event required for PAC 1.

3.6. Communication and promotion methods

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

- **Leaflet distribution:** clear, concise leaflets will be created to inform local residents and businesses about the consultation. These will be delivered to properties within a set area from the project;
- **Newspaper advertisements:** in line with statutory requirements, public notices will be prepared and published 21 days before the relevant public consultation event;
- **Stakeholder emails:** using the Stakeholder Map, targeted email communications will be sent to key stakeholders;

- **Project website:** A dedicated project website will be live for the duration of the project, where all of the relevant project information documents will be available.

04. Feedback and Next Steps

4. Feedback and reporting

4.1. Feedback methods

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

- Online copy of the feedback form provided on the website
- by email to project email info@galanorth.com
- by post to;

Gala North
Grayling
33 Castle Street
Edinburgh
Freepost RUCR-BSLH-JEKY

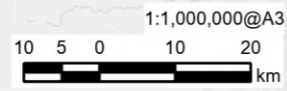
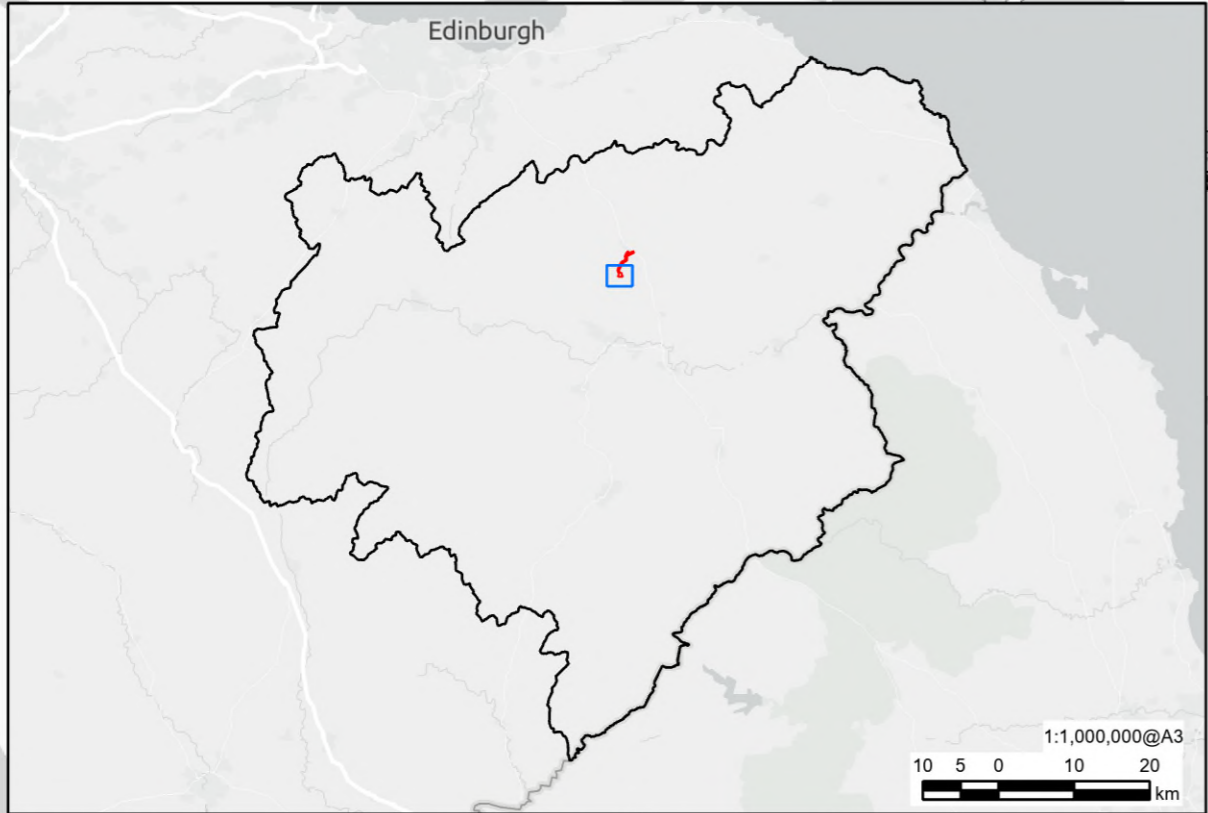
4.2. Next step

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

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

APPENDIX A - Figures

Figure 1: Location Plan



PROJECT

ZA Diversion

CLIENT

SP Energy Networks

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
One Trinity Gardens
Newcastle
NE1 2HF
www.aecom.com

LEGEND

- Existing - To be retained
- Proposed New
- Existing - To be retained
- Proposed New
- Platform Boundary
- Scottish Borders Council Area

NOTES

Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown copyright and database rights 2026
Ordnance Survey AC0000808122.
Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2020
Contains data from OS Zoomstack, Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2025

ISSUE PURPOSE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

PROJECT NUMBER

60682035

FIGURE TITLE

ZA Diversion Site Location

FIGURE NUMBER

Figure 2

This drawing has been prepared for the use of AECOM's client. It may not be used, modified, reproduced or relied upon by third parties, except as agreed by AECOM or as required by law. AECOM accepts no responsibility, and denies any liability whatsoever, to any party that uses or relies on this drawing without AECOM's express written consent. Do not scale this document. All measurements must be obtained from the stated dimensions.