

 MORAY FIRTH OFFSHORE WIND • THE CABLE ON THIS COAST

Shetland HVDC Link 2: what is proposed for Boyne Bay and Boyndie Bay

Paid for by the public: as electricity billpayers, and as taxpayers standing behind the loans.

Everything below is read from published documents, mostly SSEN's, Ofgem's and DESNZ's own; items with a fact-sheet entry carry its number. No preference is given between the two landfall sites, and nothing here is an argument.

[Moray Firth Energy: home](#) · [How the money works](#) · [The missing figures](#)

What it is

The project carries three names and codes. SSEN calls it **Shetland HVDC Link 2**. Ofgem's project code, from its 1 August 2024 consultation, is **SHL256**, "New 1.8GW HVDC link Shetland – Coachford". Ofgem's December 2024 decision describes the same row as "HNDFUE AC project: Shetland to Blackhillock".

FS 1

Ofgem's 1 August 2024 consultation and SSEN's September 2024 announcement give the **link as 1.8GW**. SSEN's Autumn 2026 booklet, under its heading "HVDC Converter Station", describes "A **2GW** bi-pole, 525kV HVDC link", beside an indicative design for a "2GW 525kV bipole converter station".

FS 2

The route is subsea from Shetland, with landfall proposed at **Boyne Bay or Boyndie Bay**, then about **30km** of underground cable, crossing parts of Aberdeenshire and Moray, to the **Strathbogie Hub** at Cruchie or Rivestone, north-east of Huntly.

FS 3

SSEN's published timeline puts energisation in **2035**. The stated feedback window for this landfall consultation closes **6 November 2026**. FS 5

No capital cost has been published for this project by SSEN, Ofgem or NESO. FS 7

The company proposing to build it is **SSEN Transmission**, owned **75% by SSE plc and 25% by Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan** of Canada, which paid £1,465.0m for its stake in November 2022. FS 14

Who pays: Ofgem classifies community benefit as a fully pass-through cost, recoverable from billpayers through network charges; the transmission owner earns a regulated return set by Ofgem (cost of equity 5.70% CPIH-real; WACC 5.74% semi-nominal, 4.67% CPIH-real; for the five years to March 2031). FS 8

FS 12

The two landfall sites

SSEN's own constraint and opportunity tables, read from its Autumn 2026 Aberdeenshire booklet. The same booklet contradicts itself on one point at Boyne Bay, and abbreviates a designation inconsistently at Boyndie Bay; both are given below.

Site 9: Boyne Bay

- SSEN's booklet lists as a constraint that the site "overlaps with the 'Cullen to Stake Ness Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest'" and that "the Cullen to Whitehills Local Nature Reserve is located within the site boundary". FS 44
- The same page lists, as a technical constraint, that "Caledonia Offshore wind farm export cables are making landfall in this area" — and, as a technical opportunity on the same table, "No offshore cables or pipelines in the vicinity of the landfall". The same page lists the same Caledonia cables as both a technical constraint and, under "opportunities," as their absence. FS 43

Site 10: Boyndie Bay

- The same booklet prints "Whitehills to Melrose Coast SSS" as a constraint for this site, on the same page where it elsewhere writes "Site of Special Scientific Interest" in full (SSSI). FS 44
- SSEN's own figure for the nearest scheduled monument is "Boyndie Old Kirk (SM5668) located approximately 140m to the south"; the booklet does not

- SSEN's booklet states: "There are two scheduled monuments within 2km of the Boyne Bay site and 'Craig of Boyne Castle' is located within the site." The site "is located within 1km of the Southern Trench Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (NCMPA)".
- The booklet's constraints for Boyne Bay also include "Prime agricultural land" and "Area of high fishing activity (demersal gear, dredges, pots, traps, rod and line)"; "A new core path runs along the coast, in front of the HDD drilling compound"; and a "Temporary haul road will need to be constructed from the nearby B9139 road, during the construction phase".

say which point of the site it is measured from. [FS 46](#)

- Boyndie Bay is a designated bathing water (SEPA, designated 1999, classified Good in 2025); the word "bathing" does not appear anywhere in SSEN's booklet.

[FS 45](#)

- SSEN's booklet discloses that "Offshore wind farm cables and a telecommunication cable make landfall in Boyndie Bay", and names no operator for them. [FS 36A](#)

The maps SSEN has published

Two cautions before reading these. The outlines on the survey-block map (file 06 below) are labelled **survey blocks** in SSEN's legend, and SSEN's heading on the same page calls them "indicative landfall areas"; they are not a landfall footprint, which has not been published. And the corridor maps (files 05 and 09) show a broad **area of search with route options**, at 1:125,000; they do not show a chosen route, a width, or which land is affected.

The five maps below are reproduced from SSEN Transmission's published consultation booklets and remain the copyright of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission; where a map carries an Ordnance Survey base, that base is Crown copyright as marked on the original. They are shown here, unaltered and with the booklet and printed page given under each, for the purpose of criticism and review of the consultation. SSEN may ask for any of them to be taken down and this site will comply.

Landfall selection

Through a desk-based exercise, we initially identified 12 sites on the Scottish mainland, as having the potential to be suitable for a landfall of the HVDC marine cable. Taking into consideration engineering, community, consenting and environmental factors, these have now been refined to Boyne Bay and Boyndie Bay to take forward to the marine routeing exercise.

Our search area concentrated on the Moray and Aberdeenshire coast as denoted by the red rectangle on the map, shown at our public consultation event in June 2025.

Feedback and discussions from the consultation events have fed into the considerations for landfall selection.

An initial appraisal was conducted of the 12 landfall sites, through desk based studies and site visits. This resulted in discounting five landfall sites. There was a variety of engineering, community and environmental reasons for discounting sites including:

- HDD feasibility:
- Limited space to construct a drilling compound.
- Lack of road access.
- Unsuitable ground conditions.
- Close proximity to residential properties and local amenities.
- Close proximity to environmental designations.
- Proximity to military firing practice areas.
- Proximity to third party assets.

We appointed external environmental specialists (both marine and terrestrial focused) and an engineering company who specialise in Horizontal Directional Drills (HDD). Each specialist comprehensively studied each of the seven landfall sites. As a result of these studies, landfall areas were refined further and a further four sites were ruled out.

Three sites were shortlisted and taken forward to stage 2 design, which were: Sandend, Boyne Bay and Boyndie Bay, as presented in the public consultation event in November 2025. Following this event, the Sandend landfall was discounted on the basis that it interacted with more Marine Protected Areas as opposed to Boyne Bay and Boyndie Bay, and resulted in a longer, more technically complex onshore route.

Please note: The site referred to in this document as Boyndie Bay is also known as Inverboyndie.



All twelve candidate landfall sites.

Site 9 Boyne Bay and Site 10 Inverboyndie are the two the map marks "Proceed to Stage 2". The facing text says Sandend was also taken forward to stage 2 design and was discounted after the November 2025 consultation event. Source: SSSEN,

Shetland HVDC Link 2 – Aberdeenshire coast landfall options
consultation booklet, Autumn 2026, printed pages 14–15.

Marine approaches progressing to stage 2 design

Site 9 - Boyne Bay

Environment including Community	
Opportunities	Constraints
Few residential properties located close by	The site overlaps with the 'Cullen to Stake Ness Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI), designated for geological and biological features. And the Cullen to Whitehills Local Nature Reserve is located within the site boundary
No seal haul outs within 2km of the landfall	There are two scheduled monuments within 2km of the Boyne Bay site and 'Craig of Boyne Castle' is located within the site.
No active or inactive aquaculture sites within the vicinity of the landfall	Site is located within 1km of the Southern Trench Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area (NCMPA)
	A new core path runs along the coast, in front of the HDD drilling compound.
	Prime agricultural land
	Area of high fishing activity (demersal gear, dredges, pots, traps, rod and line)
Technical	
Opportunities	Constraints
HDD is deemed feasible	Caledonia Offshore wind farm export cables are making landfall in this area.
Space for a HDD drilling compound and auxiliary equipment	Temporary haul road will need to be constructed from the nearby B9139 road, during the construction phase
No offshore cables or pipelines in the vicinity of the landfall	
No ferry routes or chartered anchorages within the vicinity of the landfall	

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Site 10 - Boyndie Bay

Environment including Community	
Opportunities	Constraints
No cultural heritage designations located within the site	A core path runs along the coast, in front of the HDD drilling compound.
No seal haul outs within 2km of the landfall	Landfall is located within 1km of the Southern Trench NCMPA
No active or inactive aquaculture sites within the vicinity of the landfall	Overlap with Whitehills to Melrose Coast SSSI designated for geological features.
	There are nearby properties and a caravan park, a noise assessment will be undertaken to understand and identify any potential impacts and requirements for mitigation during construction.
	Area of high fishing activity (demersal gear, dredges, pots, traps, rod and line)
	There are 4 Scheduled Monuments within 2km of the Boyndie Bay Site. The closest is Boyndie Old Kirk (SM5668) located approximately 140m to the south
Technical	
Opportunities	Constraints
HDD is deemed feasible, industry experience of drill at nearby Offshore wind farm.	Offshore wind farm cables and a telecommunication cable make landfall in Boyndie Bay, therefore consultation with asset owners will be required and stand-off distance maintained.
Space for a HDD drilling compound and auxiliary equipment	Temporary haul road will need to be constructed from the nearby B9038 road during the construction phase, this would be more technically challenging due to the steep embankment
No ferry routes or chartered anchorages within the vicinity of the landfall	



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The full site tables for both landfalls, with the aerial boundary photograph.

This page also records two scheduled monuments

within 2km of the Boyne Bay site, and Craig of Boyne Castle within the site boundary itself, and four scheduled monuments within 2km of the Boyndie Bay site; and the haul roads

each site would need during construction, the B9139 for Boyne Bay and the B9038 for Boyndie Bay, the latter flagged as "more technically challenging due to the steep embankment". Source: SSEN, Autumn 2026 booklet, printed pages 18–19.

Onshore cable route

The onshore cable will run for approximately 30km from the landfill to the substation site. The cable will be entirely underground, meaning it will not be visible once installation is complete.

As the route is developed, we will work to avoid or minimise impacts to environmental constraints, such as the River Deveron, areas of ecological importance, farmland and existing infrastructure. Where required, specialist construction techniques such as trenchless crossings will be used to minimise disturbance.

Ongoing environmental surveys and engagement with landowners and statutory bodies will ensure the route is delivered responsibly with minimal long-term impact. We will provide an update on the onshore cable route in due course.

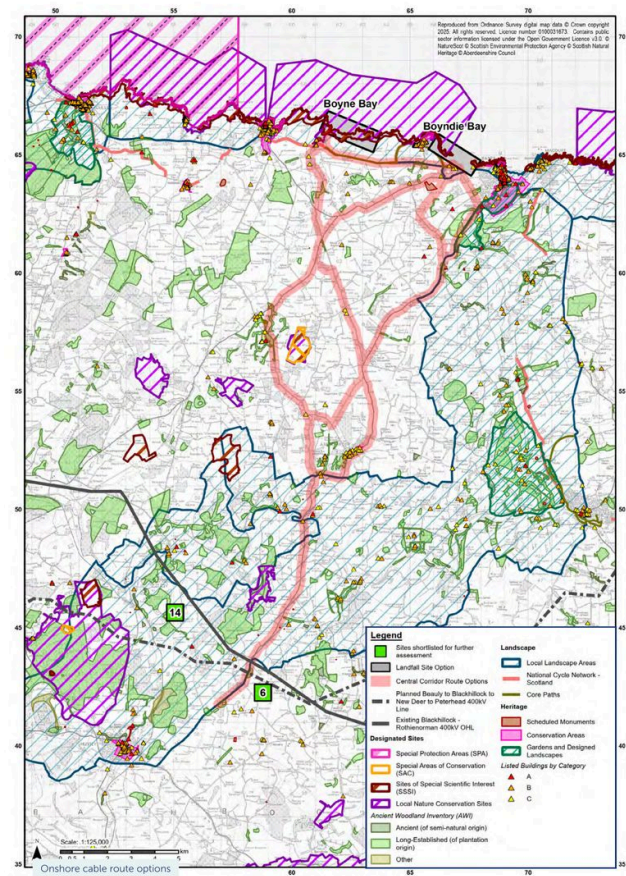
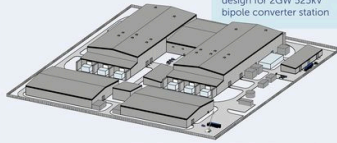
Strathbogie Hub

We are proposing a new converter station and substation hub to the north-east of Huntly to facilitate the connection of the Shetland HVDC Link 2 project to the transmission network.

The hub brings together key elements of infrastructure for this project on a single site, including an HVDC converter station, AC substation, substation buildings, terminal tower platforms, lighting, access roads, landscaping and screening, and temporary construction facilities. We held consultation events in May 2026 for the Strathbogie Hub and are grateful for public feedback. The project team have selected two sites, at Cruchie and Rivestone, for detailed assessment, which includes undertaking ground investigations across the sites. We will update the local community and key stakeholders with further information sessions in the months ahead.

Overview

- **400kV Substation** - is required in the area to facilitate offshore and onshore electricity generation connections in addition to the connection for the Shetland HVDC Link 2 project. The substation will connect into the 400kV transmission network.
- **HVDC Converter Station** - A 2GW bi-pole, 525kV HVDC link is proposed between Aberdeenshire and northern Shetland, enabling the efficient, high-volume transmission of renewable electricity from Shetland and the far north of Scotland directly into the wider UK transmission network. This project element consists of two HVDC converter stations, one at each end of the link, connected via a subsea and underground HVDC cable circuit.



The onshore corridor route options map, 1:125,000, with its designations legend

(

SSSI

,

SAC

,

SPA

, Local Nature Conservation Sites, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, ancient woodland,

core paths

, listed buildings). This is an area of search with options, not a chosen route. Source: SSN, Autumn 2026 booklet, printed pages 22–23.

Indicative landfall areas on Aberdeenshire coast



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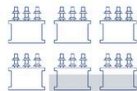
25

Onshore Cable

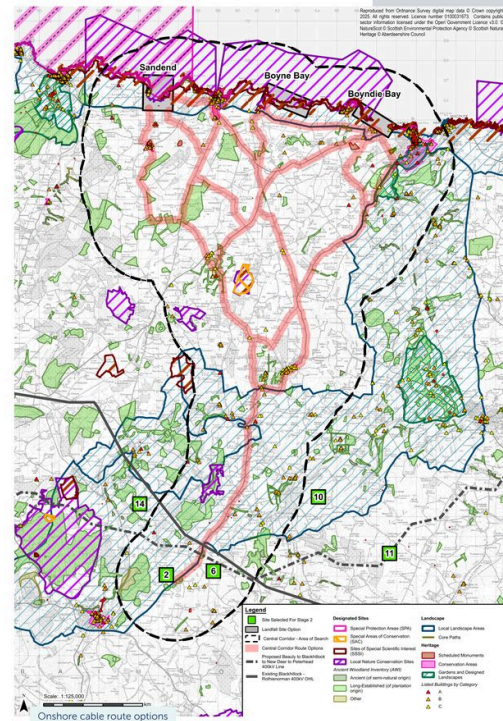
The onshore cable will run for approximately 30km from the landfall to the substation site. The cable will be entirely underground, meaning it will not be visible once installation is complete.

As the route is developed, we will work to avoid or minimise impacts to environmental constraints, such as the River Deveron, areas of ecological importance, farmland and existing infrastructure. Where required, specialist construction techniques such as trenchless crossings will be used to minimise disturbance.

Ongoing environmental surveys and engagement with landowners and statutory bodies will ensure the route is delivered responsibly with minimal long-term impact.



An example of a 400kV Gas Insulated Switchgear substation



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The May 2026 corridor map

, from the earlier

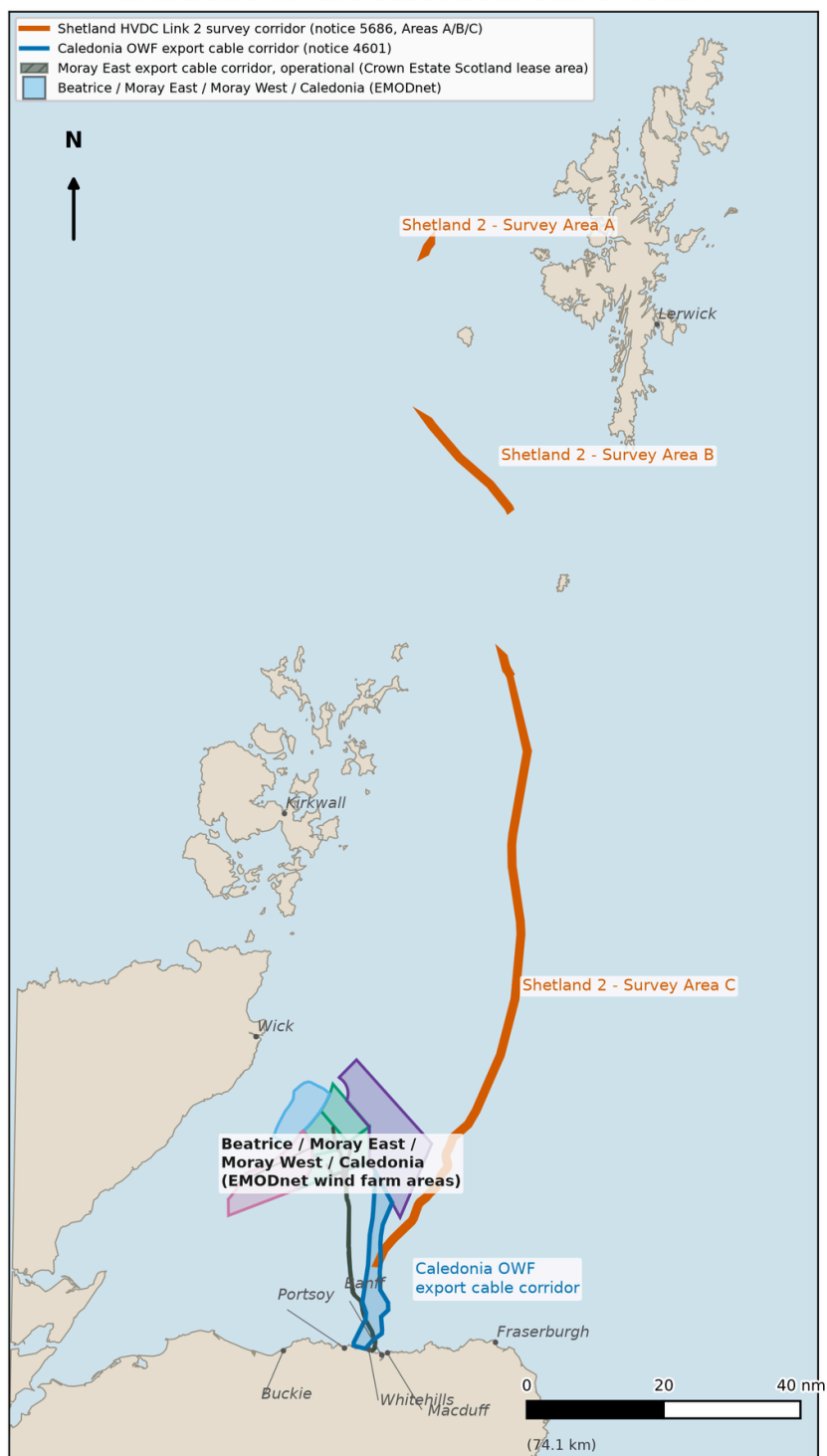
The survey corridor at sea

Strathbogie Hub

SSEN Transmission's marine cable route survey for the link was planned to begin outside the 12 nautical mile line on 23 February 2026 (SSEN's booklet says it started in February 2026) and was due to finish in August 2026. Reach Subsea's vessel VIKING REACH carries

it out. The notice to fishermen gives the corridor as three survey areas, A, B and C, running from west of Shetland to a point about 13 nautical miles north of Macduff (computed from the notice's coordinates). The chart below draws those coordinates exactly as published, with the Caledonia wind farm's export cable corridor and the wind farm areas for comparison.

Shetland HVDC Link 2 (LT374) survey corridor: Shetland to the Aberdeenshire coast



Survey corridors are areas being surveyed, not laid cable. The Moray East corridor is the operational lease area for its installed export cables, not the cable centreline.

29 further Kingfisher notices in this area are not drawn; list in maps/_build-report.json.

Sources: Kingfisher Bulletin notice 5686 (LT374 Survey Campaign - Shetlands Link 2, Survey Areas A, B, C); Kingfisher Bulletin notice 4601 (Caledonia OWF export cable corridor); EMODnet Human Activities WFS: emodnet:windfarmspoly; Crown Estate Scotland Offshore Wind dataset (OGL v3.0), fetched 2026-10-04; Coastline © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL), osmdata.openstreetmap.de
Kingfisher Bulletin crawl: 2026-10-02 to 2026-10-04 (crawl held under sources/crawl/kingfisherbulletin.org). EMODnet WFS fetched: 2026-10-04 (this run) and 2026-10-04 (earlier morayfirth.json fetches), via <https://ows.emodnet-humanactivities.eu/wfs>. AIS: MarineTraffic AIS, 3 Oct 2026; 4 Oct position supplied by the site author; shipais.uk crawl 2 Oct 2026.

Shetland HVDC Link 2 survey corridor, Shetland to the Aberdeenshire coast.

Corridor from

Kingfisher Bulletin

Community funding: what applies on this coast

notice 5000 (LIS-4 Survey Campaign, Survey Areas A, B and C); Caledonia export cable corridor from notice 4601; Moray East export cable corridor (the operational lease area, not the cable centreline) from Crown Estate Scotland's Offshore Wind dataset; wind farm areas from EMODnet; coastline © OpenStreetMap contributors. Chart drawn for this site, 4 October 2026. A survey corridor is the area being surveyed, not the route of a laid cable.

Under DESNZ's own guidance, buried cable is **out of scope** of the community funds for transmission infrastructure; the in-scope list is "applicable only for overhead HVDC transmission". On the published rules, this coast's community fund entitlement for the buried cable is **£0**. FS 30

The electricity bill discount scheme is closed to buried cable on the face of the statute: Electricity Act 1989 s.38A(3) requires qualifying works to be "wholly or partly above the ground". The buried cable itself cannot qualify, and Shetland HVDC Link 2 is not on DESNZ's 12 August 2026 list of projects expected to be eligible. FS 32

FS 24

Ofgem classifies community fund spending as a fully pass-through cost: transmission owners, including SSEN, may recover **100%** of eligible community fund costs from billpayers, so that they are "not financially disadvantaged" by paying them. FS 8

In the same council area, for one converter station site, SSEN set the Eastern Green Link 2 Peterhead Local Fund at **£2,159,444** — 4.07 times the £530,000 guidance rate for a converter station. FS 34

The **North Aberdeenshire Local Fund** is set at £8,845,000, built from other transmission projects in the area. No community council covering Banff, Whitehills or Boyndie is on its list of benefiting areas, and Shetland HVDC Link 2 contributes nothing to it. FS 35

What has not been published

Searching all seven Shetland HVDC Link 2 consultation booklets for "joint bay", "trench width", "working width", "easement", "corridor width", "HGV" and "burial depth" returns zero hits for every term. FS 50

Also absent from every source held for this page: any capital cost FS 7; the subsea cable length; the cable count; any contract value; grid references, hectares, site-specific building heights (only an indicative conceptual converter design is dimensioned) and distance to nearest homes for the Cruchie and Rivestone hub sites; any community benefit figure for Shetland HVDC Link 2 in Aberdeenshire; the consenting route for the subsea cable, the landfall and the onshore cable, which the booklets do not name; whether a new overhead

line is needed at the hub (SSEN lists "terminal tower platforms" among the hub's elements but does not say); and the size and position of the permanent link-pillar cabinet SSEN says will sit in a fenced area at the landfall. [FS 51](#)

The committee papers for a commercial lease between SSEN Transmission and a Tier 1 contractor at Walker Court, Aberchirder (Banff and Buchan Area Committee, 16 June 2026) — the report, site plan and impact assessment — are flagged restricted in the council's own metadata; only the minute is published. [FS 52](#)

Deadlines and rights

6 Nov 2026	SSEN's stated feedback window for the Aberdeenshire landfall closes. It is a developer consultation, not a statutory objection period. FS 53
31 Dec 2027	Ofgem's Price Control Deliverable date for submission of all material planning consents. SSEN's own published timeline puts the planning application in 2027 and the marine licence submission in 2028. FS 54
Determining regime	For the hub only: SSEN's May 2026 booklet says Strathbogie Hub needs planning permission from Aberdeenshire Council under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. No booklet names the authority or statute for the subsea cable, the landfall or the onshore cable. FS 51
Information rights	SSEN Transmission handles requests for environmental information under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004. If its internal review does not settle a request, the appeal goes to the Scottish Information Commissioner. FS 55

Two further dates carry no fact-sheet number: SSEN says it hopes to share "a plan for a least constrained landfall, a proposed underground cable route, and a least constrained site for Strathbogie Hub, within the coming months"; and Aberdeenshire's next Local Development Plan is expected to be published in early **2029**. Compulsory acquisition powers, if ever used, sit under Electricity Act 1989 Schedule 3. [Electricity Act 1989, Sch. 3](#)

SOURCES

SSEN, *Shetland HVDC Link 2 – Aberdeenshire coast landfall options* consultation booklet, Autumn 2026. SSEN, *Shetland HVDC Link 2 Public Information Event* booklet (landfall and northern hub), Summer 2026. SSEN, *Shetland HVDC Link 2 – Landfall Selection*, October 2025. SSEN, Strathbogie Hub consultation booklet, May

2026. Ofgem, *tCSNP2 consultation*, 1 August 2024, and *tCSNP2 decision* (OFG1164), 11 December 2024. Ofgem, *Community Funds for Electricity Transmission Infrastructure Pass-Through: Guidance*, 1 April 2026. Ofgem, *Decision on RIIO-3 licence modifications — reasons and effects*, 3 February 2026. Ofgem, *RIIO-3 Final Determinations — Finance Annex*, 4 December 2025. DESNZ, *Community Funds for Transmission Infrastructure: Guidance*. SEPA bathing water data, Inverboyndie. DESNZ, *Electricity bill discount scheme for transmission network infrastructure: expected eligible projects*, 12 August 2026. Electricity Act 1989 s.38A and Schedule 3. UK Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3391). SSE plc Annual Reports 2023 and 2026. SSEN Transmission news release on the second Shetland link, September 2024; SSEN Transmission project pages and community fund pages (Eastern Green Link 2 Peterhead Local Fund; North Aberdeenshire Local Fund). Kingfisher Bulletin notices 5686 and 4601. EMODnet Human Activities; Crown Estate Scotland Offshore Wind dataset; OpenStreetMap. Aberdeenshire Council committee records (Banff and Buchan Area Committee, 16 June 2026) and Local Development Plan 2029 page. Full citations with file and line number are in `FACT-SHEET.md`.

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