

Gala North Substation and ZA Overhead Line Diversion

Lauderdale Community Council meeting – 8th June 2026

Introductions

Mark Flannigan – Senior Project Manager

Alexa Martin – Environmental Planner

Owen Campbell – Stakeholder Engagement

Iain Kinnear – Head of Programme

Ross Laird – Director, Grayling

Background and why is the Gala North Substation Needed?

A Renewable Future

Scotland is committed to becoming net zero in all greenhouse gases by 2045, with England and Wales committed to net zero by 2050.

- To meet our target, **we need to increase the capacity of the electricity network** between Scotland and the rest of the UK.
- Substations play a crucial role in transforming electricity into various voltages, essential for its transmission across the nation and subsequent distribution into local communities, households, and businesses.
- Within substations, specialised equipment facilitates the transformation, or ‘switching,’ of voltage levels. This process involves using transformers positioned within substation premises to either step up or step down the voltage as required.

Gala North substation and ZA overhead line diversion

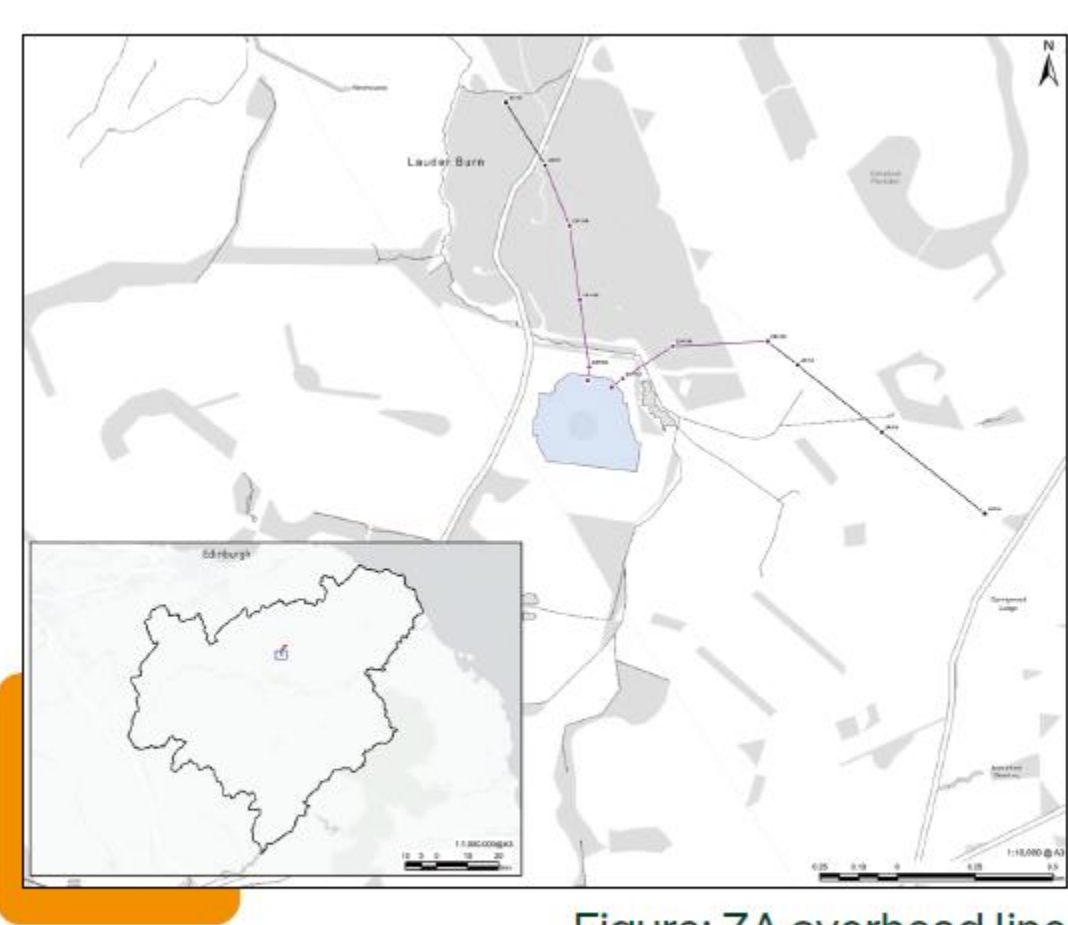


Figure: ZA overhead line diversion location plan

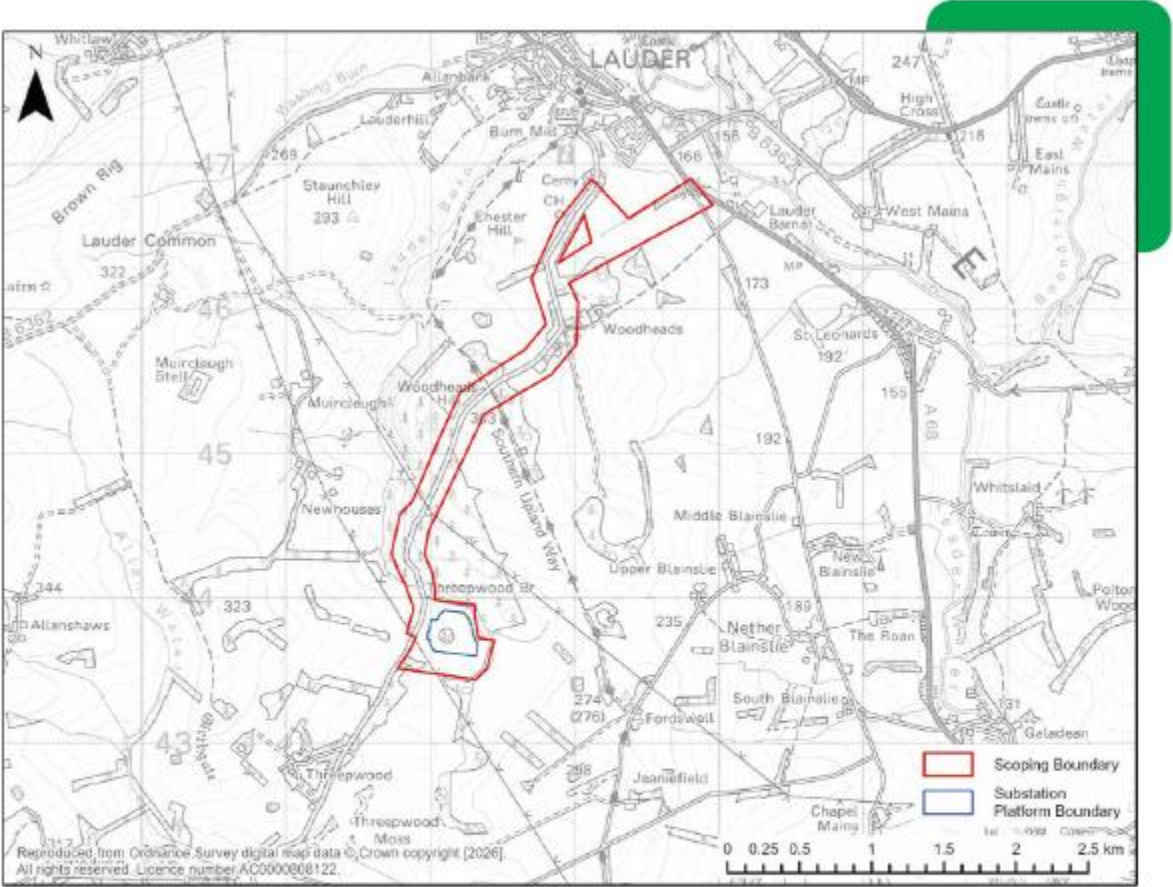


Figure: Substation location plan

Why is the Gala North Substation needed

Why is the Gala North substation needed?

- With the increasing level of demand for electricity, **additional capacity is needed within transmission systems**, creating the need for greater power transfer capability and upgrades within the network.
- A number of energy generation and storage projects could contract into the Gala North substation.

Why this site?

- The site is preferred from a landscape and visual perspective because it occupies lower-lying terrain.
- The site is not situated within any nationally or locally designated landscapes and is relatively flat reducing the amount of earthworks required.

Why is the ZA overhead line diversion needed?

- A key consideration of this site was the proximity to an existing 400kV overhead line (known as ZA route).
- This is because the substation requires to be connected to the existing transmission system and the increased proximity to ZA route reduces the requirement for new overhead line infrastructure.

Gala North Substation

- SP Energy Networks carried out pre-application public consultation for Gala North substation on initial proposals in June 2024.
- Since then, we have continued talking to stakeholders and conducting technical and environmental studies.

Since Our Previous Consultation

- Since the initial pre-application engagement, changes have been made to the plans to reflect initial feedback and technical requirements including the proposal for a temporary haul road.
- SP Energy Networks is now consulting on the revised proposals, which will form a new planning application to Scottish Borders Council for the proposed Gala North substation and application for section 37 consent for ZA OHL diversion to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit.

The Project

- Gala North will be built on a site located near Blainslie, approximately 4km south of Lauder and 8km north of Galashiels. The substation will have a permanent footprint of approximately 6ha.

The Gala North substation will consist of several elements, including a combination of:

- A 400kV, gas insulated switchgear (GIS) in which electrical components are enclosed in metal casings filled with insulating gas
- A 132KV, air insulated switchgear (AIS) in which electrical equipment is arranged in open air compartments with air as the primary insulating medium

ZA Overhead Line Diversion

- In order to connect the proposed substation to the electricity network, an existing overhead line will be diverted into the site
- The turn-in will require the removal of some existing towers as well as the construction of new ones, resulting in an overall reduction in length of existing overhead line

Following our pre-consultation engagement in 2024, your input has helped to further develop the proposals:

Visual impact

- Residents raised concerns about the substation's potential visual impact
- As part of the EIA process, we are developing a landscape and ecological mitigation plan to incorporate planting to the southwest and southeast of the substation

Sensitivity to flooding

- Residents raised concerns about flooding in the area
- The EIA will assess the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the water environment including surface and groundwater as well as flood risk. We will also consult with SEPA as part of the EIA process, and the findings will inform the design

Impact on the local road network

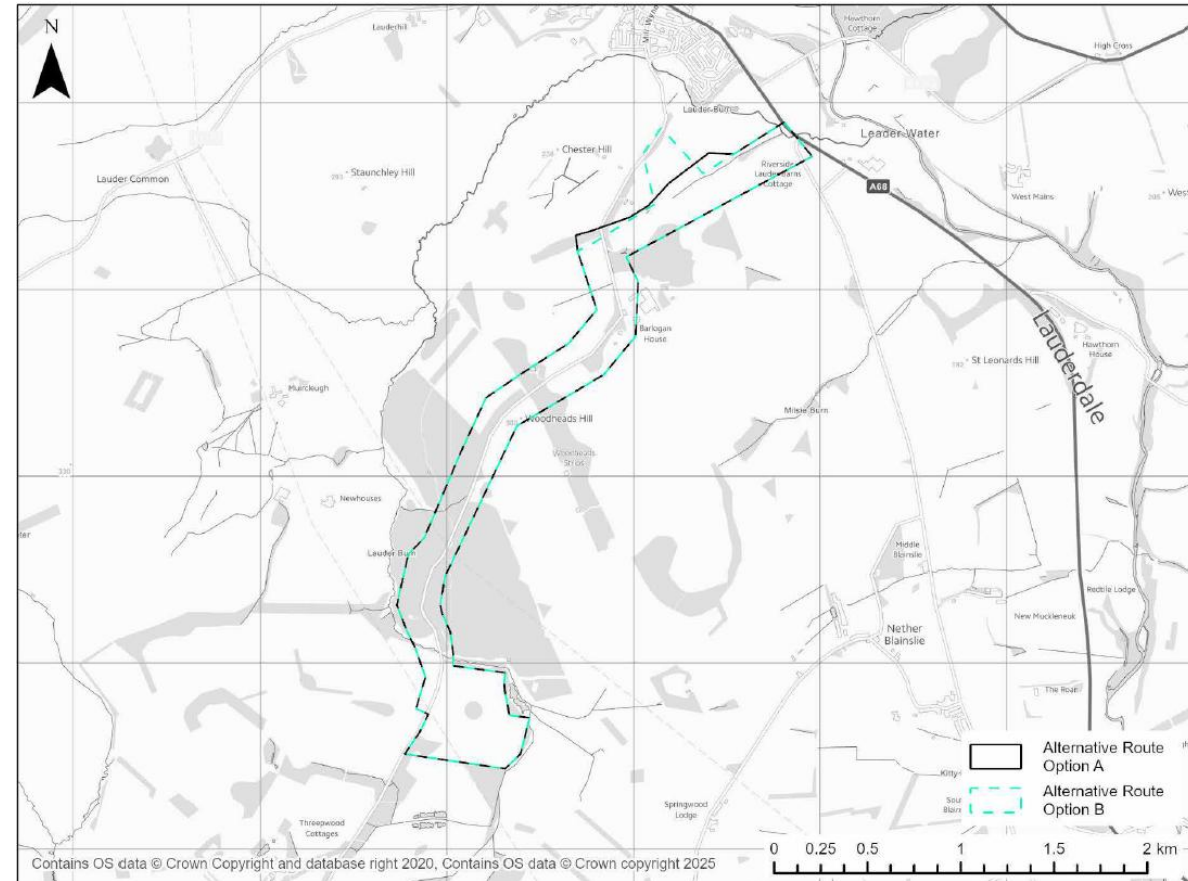
- Concerns regarding traffic and road conditions were raised by some residents
- An access survey has been undertaken to identify the most appropriate route to the proposed substation, and there is more detail on this in the following slide

Impact on the environment and biodiversity

- We are committed to protecting local ecosystems and will integrate mitigation measures into the project design
- We will conserve and enhance biodiversity on and around the site, leaving it in a better ecological state

Access

- We have assessed all nearby public roads to find the safest and most suitable access routes for both abnormal load deliveries and general construction traffic.
- Our preferred option includes a 1.2km temporary haul road connecting the A68 to the C77 Lauder-Galashiels Road, **this option is approximately 4km shorter than alternative options.**
- There are currently two options for this haul road, our preferred option is aligned east to west, with a secondary option contingency routeing north.
- In both scenarios, construction traffic would leave the A68 at Stoneyford Bridge, travel a short distance along the C76, then move onto the temporary haul road to connect to the C77. For the preferred option, the route then rejoins the C77 near Woodheads Plantation before continuing south to the substation.



The consultation process

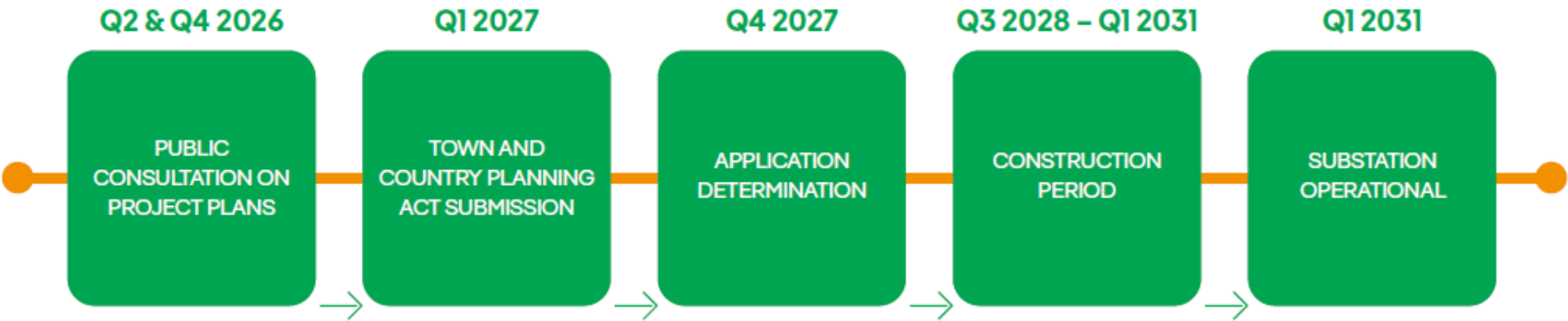
- All residents and businesses within 5km of the site have been written to
- Public consultation period: 8th June to 10th July
- Information has been shared via media and social media channels
- MPs / MSPs and Councillors have been briefed on the project

Public consultation events:

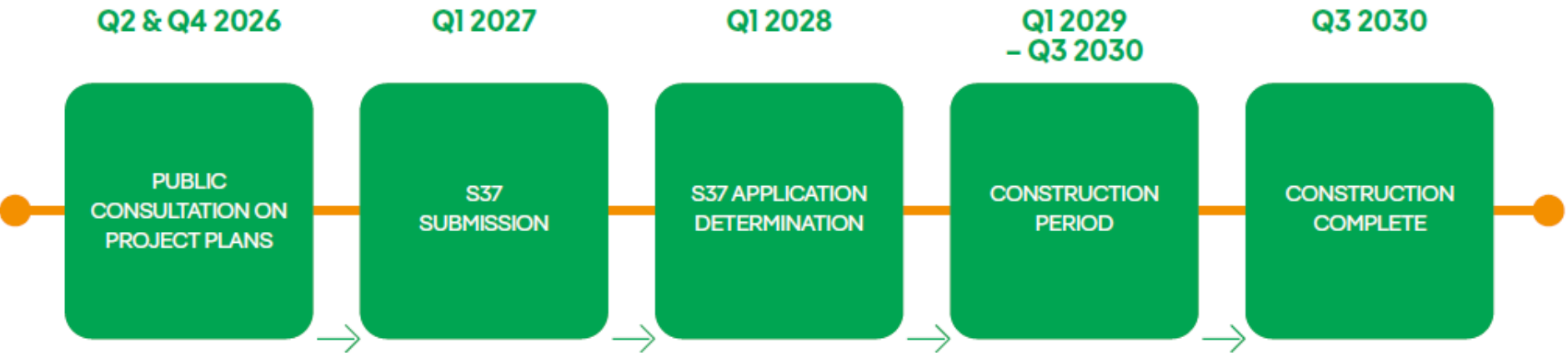
- Tuesday 9th June: Lauder Public Hall, 3-7pm
- Wednesday 10th June: Blainslie Village Hall, 3-7pm

Timeline and Next Steps

Indicative timeline for Gala North substation application



Indicative timeline for ZA overhead line diversion application



Construction of the ZA overhead line diversion is proposed to start in 2029 with construction activities expected to be completed in less than two years.

- Following this round of pre-application public consultation, we will undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment for the substation and ZA overhead line diversion.
- In tandem with the EIA, we will also be developing the detailed design, this will be informed by the EIA and feedback from public consultation.
- A second and final round of public consultation will be held before the applications are submitted.
- On completion of the EIA and design, we will submit a planning application to Scottish Borders Council for the substation and a Section 37 application to the Scottish Government for the ZA overhead line diversion.
- The determining authority will then invite representations from local communities and stakeholders before deciding whether to grant permissions, and to inform any conditions that may be required under permissions.

Q&A

