

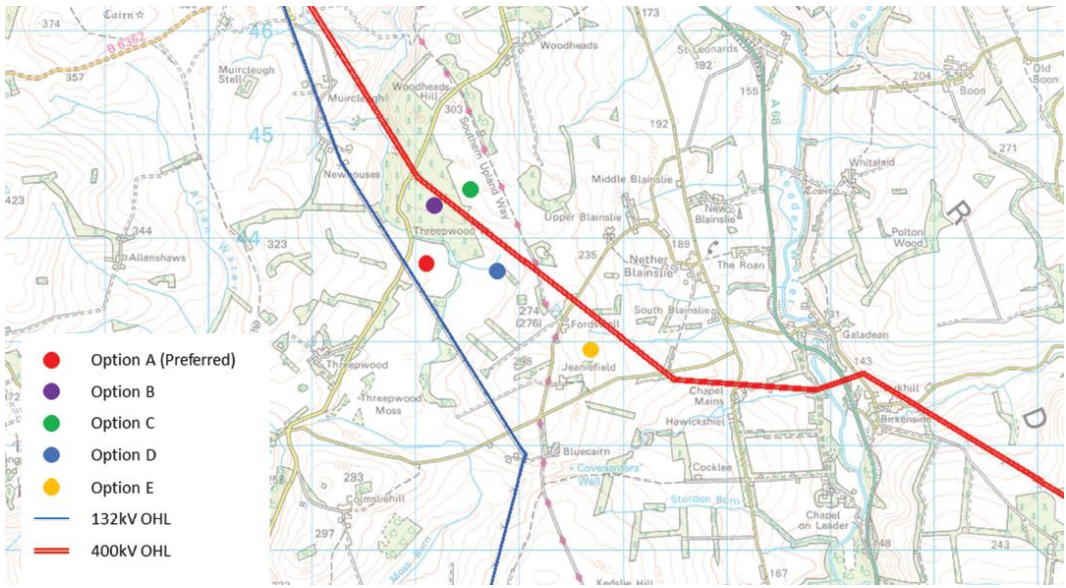


Lauderdale Community Council Briefing

SPEN Response to Questions

Question		SPEN Response
The Gala North Site		
1	What is the total area of the proposed site? What area of the proposed site will be taken up by the currently proposed substation, and what area is earmarked for future expansion? How large might the substation get? Are future expansions covered in this planning proposal, or would they require further planning applications?	The substation will have a footprint of approximately 6 hectares (ha) with the remainder of the land, (approximately 24ha), shown within the 'red-line boundary' utilised for earthworks, access, drainage infrastructure, landscaping and screening purposes. An additional approximate 84ha is included to accommodate the proposed temporary haul road and works that may be required to strengthen and widen the C77. This shows the maximum extent of the site and will be refined as the detailed design of the proposed haul road and works to the C77 are identified. The proposed haul road will be approximately 1.25km in length. None of the land proposed in this development is 'earmarked for future expansion'. The planning application is for the construction of the proposed Gala North substation as outlined in the information shared. If any future expansion was required, it would be subject to a completely new and separate planning application.
2	What led SPEN to choose Lauderdale for the siting of a substation?	SP Energy Networks needs to build a transmission grid that will meet the growth in demand for electricity that is projected over the next twenty years. This will enable the decarbonisation of domestic heating systems, growth in electric vehicle charging and to power the increasing number of domestic appliances and gadgets that we all rely on every day. It will support the decarbonisation of our transport systems – such as electrification of the Border's Railway and any future extension – and the move away from fossil fuel use across multiple industry sectors.

		From understanding the strategic ask and how this aligns with the existing network and associated developments, an initial study identifies the geographical area within which a substation is needed. From this, various potential sites are identified. For Gala North, five site options were assessed within the search area (see map below). The assessment considered a range of technical and environmental factors and identified landscape, ecological and cultural heritage constraints. Existing infrastructure, or protections around areas of conservation or landscape value were avoided where possible. We also work around ancient monuments and listed buildings, and we engage with specialist stakeholders to ensure our proposals respect built and natural heritage. Alongside the environmental considerations, sites are selected and assessed against technical factors – including, accessibility, engineering and construction. The findings of the assessment led to the identification of the proposed site. Specific criteria in relation to the proposed Gala North site included: • proximity to the existing ZA overhead line to facilitate connection to the existing 400kV transmission network, and to the existing P Route to facilitate connection to the 132kV network • avoidance of environmentally designated sites • consideration of landscape and visual impact • avoidance of ecologically designated sites including those where wildlife, habitat and flora and fauna are protected
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		• consideration of the water environment and flood risk • a site with relatively flat terrain to reduce the need for soil-removal and in turn the number of vehicle movements • proximity to the road network • minimal overall impact on the local community The site options and preferred option are shown below: 
3	If the cross-border connection were not proposed to pass through this area, would you still choose to site a substation in Lauderdale?	The project has been developed on the basis of multiple drivers including the need for the Cross-Border Connection project.

		The increasing level of renewable generation that is currently happening within Scotland requires additional capacity within transmission systems to transfer more power from where it is generated to where it is needed. SP Energy Networks is obliged under the Electricity Act 1989 and in our transmission licence to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated, and economical transmission system in accordance with security and quality of supply standards. Part of this is the requirement to offer to connect new power generators to the system and make sure any work we do keeps disturbance to the natural and built environment and the people who live in it, work in it, or enjoy it, to a minimum.
4	Are you in contact with developers who are proposing generation developments in and around the Lauderdale area?	We engage with developers when there is a formal connection request from the National Energy System Operator. We have no say or input into the location or design of any private development.
5	What sort of illumination will be used at the substation? Will it be lit at all times?	Lighting will be in line with industry standards and guidance. The substation will not be lit unless necessary for safe working or security.
Consultation process and extent		
6	What modifications have you made since the last set of community consultations on the Gala North substation?	The proposed temporary construction haul road is the most significant evolution of the proposal. The proposal for the temporary haul road was developed following public feedback in 2024 about how the site would be accessed and the impact on the local road network, particularly through towns and villages. As well as considering access to the site, we have also developed our thinking around screening, drainage and the wider sustainability requirements of the development.

7	Could you provide a map or graphic showing all overhead lines that you are currently aware of that will connect to the substation. We expect that this would include at least the following in addition to the ZA diversion. a) Dun Law connection (132kV) b) Cross Border connection (400kV) c) Harburn to Gala North (400kV)	This public consultation is focussed on the Gala North substation and ZA Diversion project therefore the information we have shared is specific to those developments. There is however information on the projects referenced, including an intention to connect into Gala North, should it proceed. More information can be found on the SP Energy Networks website and in the RIIO- T3 Business Plan. It is important to note that they are all at various stages of the consenting process or in the case of Harburn - Gala North, at an early point of development.
The proposed haul route scoping		
8	What responsibility do you have to help maintain safe access to walking/cycling routes in the area during construction?	We will work with Scottish Borders Council to develop an access management plan that is informed by the existence of walking and cycling routes
9	When we were visited by Lightsource BP regarding the Sheepfold BESS proposal, they indicated to the Community Council that their haul route would be from the A7 rather than the A68. Did you consider a similar route and if so, why did you decide on access from the A68?	Our review of the road network, requirements of the project and constraints of the site have led us to an initial view of the 'best' route. As the design evolves and more information further informs requirements, we will work with the roads authority to agree an appropriate traffic management plan for the development. This will be guided primarily by safety, but also by the need to minimise traffic impact on Lauder, key access roads and the wider road network surrounding the area. The main drivers are proximity to the substation site and suitability for construction vehicles. The A68 is significantly closer to the site than the A7.

		The A68 is also a trunk road, and more suitable for construction traffic and large vehicle movements. (The A7 between Edinburgh and Galashiels isn't a trunk road). For general construction traffic, we looked at various route options via the A7, but these were not preferred. One potential route option was to get to site via the A7 at Stow, using the B6362 over to Lauder. However, the tight turns and road widths through Stow constrain this route and the extent of strengthening and widening works that would be required to make it suitable for construction traffic influenced the decision to not take it forward as the preferred option. Another option was to get to site via the A7 at Galashiels to the south. However, similar constraints were again identified on this route, and it was not taken forward as the preferred option.
10	Your map showing the scoping area indicates that you intend to turn onto the A68 onto what is known locally as the 'Blainslie Road' and join the 'Langshaw Road'. Can you comment on this based on the local knowledge of these roads listed below: a) There have been accidents and near misses involving traffic heading south on the A68 turning right into the Blainslie road.	We are grateful for the comments and suggestions from the community council and from local people who attended the community drop-in events who shared their views on traffic management and vehicle movements. Traffic and Transport will be assessed within the EIA. The assessment will consider the sensitivity of Study Area roads, road users and their surroundings against changes in traffic forecast to result from the Proposed Development. Environmental topics to be assessed include severance, road safety, non-motorised traffic, delays to vehicular traffic and large loads. Study area roads will be assessed for potential sensitive receptors by identifying the presence of the following interest groups on roads used by construction traffic: • People at home or work (residential or commercial land-uses or frontages);

	b) The Blainslie Road and 'Blainslie Path' (running from Lauder parallel to the A68) form part of local cycling and walking routes, promoting safe routes for active travel between towns in the area. The proposed haul route scoping area appears to intersect this route. c) There is a well used walking route and nature corridor running along the side of the Langshaw Road which your haul route scoping area appears to intersect. d) The Langshaw road is a well used commuting route, although it is already regarded as a fast and dangerous road. How would you manage traffic turning onto and off this road?	• Locations with concentrations of vulnerable people (schools, hospitals, places of worship); • Retail areas; • Recreation areas and tourist attractions; • Roads with injury accident clusters or road safety concerns; and • Junctions and highway links observed have capacity issues. The results of the assessment will be used to inform what measures are put in place to mitigate any potential impacts that have been identified and this will include safety measures, maintaining safe access for all road users and traffic management.
11	It appears from your scoping map that you are planning to build a new road. Will this be temporary? If so, for how long would you expect it to be in use? Will it be open to the public? If not, how would you prevent the public from using it?	The proposed haul road is temporary for construction only. The construction period is estimated to be three years, and the haul road would be constructed in the first phase of the programme. The proposed temporary haul road would not be open for use by the public. Appropriate measures will be in place to restrict use to construction traffic only.
12	How much construction traffic will pass through Lauder?	When we have appointed a Primary Contractor and worked with the Council to develop a robust traffic management plan, we will be in a better position to advise on the routes vehicles will take to access site.

		We are clear that part of the intention around this will be to avoid vehicles passing through Lauder where possible.
13	Do you have estimates of the volume of traffic that will be involved in the construction? Can you give this in terms of lorries per day?	We don't yet have anticipated traffic volumes for the project at this stage. Examples from other similar projects indicate that during peak periods of construction, vehicle movements could be up to 130 per day and outside of peak periods circa 64 movements per day. We are likely to appoint a primary contractor by the end of 2026 and will work closely with SBC so that all stakeholders are well informed.
14	Have you already secured the land on which you plan to build any additional road?	We are engaging with a number of landowners in the area directly on this development with a view to progressing appropriate land, access, way leaves etc that would be required should the project proceed.
Construction phase		
15	During construction, how many people will work on the site and where will they stay? Will their commute to work have a significant impact on traffic volumes on local roads?	For a new substation we estimate between 30-50 people will be employed on site at various phases of the construction. When a Primary contractor is appointed to the project, we will be able to advise on specific travel and accommodation arrangements. More generally, we are looking at this in the context of other potential SP Energy Networks projects and other separate developments which may be in delivery in the same timeframe. We will have more information on this during the PAC 2 consultation in autumn.

16	How many jobs will the development create during both construction and operation phases?	Indicative number estimates at this this stage of the project are as follows: • Operational phase could have between 5-20 jobs • Construction from previous SPEN examples up to 30-50 jobs • Supply chain up to 500 jobs across the UK
Community benefits		
17	In the information leaflet distributed to the community you state that “The Gala North substation project will attract community benefit funding”. Could you explain what that means?	The Gala North substation project will be eligible for community benefit funding. The total funding available to the project will be based on the final scope of the development and will be accessible should the project be consented.
18	Would the ZA Overhead Line diversion generate community benefit for Lauderdale? If yes, can you state the amount?	The proposed new Overhead line would generate community benefit funding for the local community hosting the infrastructure. It equates to £200k per kilometre.
19	Is community benefit a government requirement of SPEN or is it voluntary? Is there a particular fund from which any community benefit would come? (We note that Birgham Village hall has received funding from your Transmission Net Zero Fund).	In March 2025, the UK Government published the guidance on community funding for transmission infrastructure, setting out eligible infrastructure and key principles underpinning this new form of funding. As a regulated electricity transmission business, SP Energy Networks' is overseen by Ofgem, the UK's energy regulator, to ensure all spending is fair, efficient, and delivers measurable value for electricity consumers and local communities. Community benefit funding is now a regulatory requirement for new and upgraded transmission infrastructure. We have been given guidance from the

		regulator around what this should cover, how it should apply and the financial amounts applicable to different types of infrastructure. More details on the criteria and how to apply can be found here https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/community_benefits_funding.aspx
Biodiversity and natural environment		
20	Has a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) been carried out (or will it be carried out) given proximity to SSSI/SAC site at nearby Threepwood Moss?	A number of environmental studies and assessments will be undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and will be reported within the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). The topics proposed to be scoped into the EIA include: • Landscape and Visual Amenity; • Ecology and Nature Conservation; • Water Environment; • Traffic and Transport; and • Socio-Economics, Land Use and Tourism. Topics will be confirmed when scoping responses are received from Scottish Borders Council and the ECU. Initial desktop studies and on-site ecology surveys for the substation and ZA overhead line diversion have been undertaken, with additional surveys ongoing for the temporary haul road. Outside of the substation site, habitats will not be impacted directly or indirectly with mitigation controls in place throughout the construction period to control and manage any pollution risk.

		Any protected species present in the wider area will be avoided directly and indirectly with additional protection in place where required. Threepwood Moss SAC/SSSI is 360 m south of the proposed substation site and is not hydrologically connected to the SAC, as it is downstream of the SAC.
21	Will any of the EIA reports be available to the public prior to any planning Submission?	The EIA Report will be submitted as part of the planning application to Scottish Borders Council and the first time it will be publicly available will be when they publish it on their planning portal at which time members of the public will be able to review and provide comments to the council as part of the statutory consultation period. The same applies to the EIA for the ZA Diversion which will be made publicly available on the ECU planning portal. The EIA documents will also be published on the SP Energy Networks website.
22	Will construction of the substation affect the water table and potentially affect Threepwood Moss?	Water environment will be assessed in the EIA. The assessment will identify and assess the likely significant effects of the proposed development on surface and groundwater features and flood risk. This includes consideration of water quality, water quantity and water features. Threepwood Moss SAC/SSSI is not hydrologically linked to the proposed development site.

23	What will be the impact of construction on the Lauder Burn, which feeds eventually into the Tweed?	As above.
24	In considering sensitive environmental sites bordering the proposed development, have you allowed for the impact of likely or known future expansion?	The environmental impact assessment is focussed on the development as proposed as there are no plans for future expansion. (See Question 3)
25	What impacts on the local wildlife have you considered, and how do you intend to mitigate them?	Through prior assessment and identification of any species, habitats, flora or fauna we will put in place any appropriate measures to protect or mitigate. Surveys undertaken and ongoing include habitats and wildlife including protected species and birds. The ecological survey results of the substation site indicate that none of the site comprises notable habitats. The site comprises primarily grassland with the centre of the site containing a circular feature containing non-notable disturbed flora with remaining tree stumps from historical felling. No evidence of protected species or notable ornithological species were recorded within the substation site.
General		
26	What steps has SP Energy Networks undertaken to increase transmission capacity with the current infrastructure? How much additional transmission capacity has that added?	We assess our network and the opportunity to increase capacity through advancements in technology or efficient management of the asset on an ongoing basis. Opportunities do this on adjacent infrastructure do not deliver the capacity uplift that is required and deliverable though the new infrastructure that is being proposed.

		We will however continue to manage the existing network in a proactive way to optimise its performance in terms of capacity, efficiency and reliability
27	To what extent do you see these plans fit in with the NESO Strategic Spatial Energy Plan?	This project is part a wider programme of investment to increase the UK's energy resilience and to add more capacity into the electricity transmission network. The need to do this has been outlined by the NESO and aligns with both Scottish and UK government clean power ambitions.

