Save the Deveron Valley

Formal SSEN Response Addenda Package - Public-Facing Safety-Checked Copy

Strathbogie Hub: Site 14 Rivestone / Site 6 Cruchie

Date: 22 June 2026

Public-facing handling note

This version has been checked for public circulation as of 22 June 2026. It does not include personal addresses, private phone numbers, sensitive species locations or detailed operational-security information. It is not evidence that later additions have been redacted unless they have also been checked before publication.

Formal addenda package: prepared to accompany the main Save the Deveron Valley SSEN response. Attach to the main response and submit via the SSEN website and email audit trail.

Contents and handling

Section	Purpose	Suggested handling
Cover note and submission record	Shows how the addenda connect to the main response.	Include at front of emailed package.
Addendum 1 - Third-party BESS interest and community-cohesion risk	Foreseeable associated development and land-option/community pressure questions.	Submit to SSEN; public-safe with caveat wording retained.
Addendum 2 - Wildlife protections, River Deveron ecology and protected species	Ecological survey, water quality, protected species and monitoring safeguards.	Submit to SSEN; use later for planning/NatureScot/fisheries audiences.
Addendum 3 - Infrastructure resilience, emergency access, fire safety and critical infrastructure security	All-hazards resilience, rural access, fire-water containment and security governance.	Submit to SSEN; use later for Ministers/councillors/resilience bodies.
Appendix - Consolidated questions requiring written response	Single question bank for tracking SSEN replies.	Paste into tracker after submission.
Source notes	Key public sources used in drafting.	Keep with public version and full package.

Cover note for package

Please add this addenda package to the formal SSEN consultation record alongside the main Save the Deveron Valley response.

This package should be read as part of one coherent submission. It expands the main response on third-party BESS and community-cohesion risk, wildlife protections and River Deveron ecology, and infrastructure resilience, emergency access, fire safety and critical infrastructure security.

Save the Deveron Valley is not opposed to clean energy or grid reinforcement in principle. The objection concerns the potential selection of Site 14 Rivestone without adequate cumulative assessment, ecological evidence, emergency and infrastructure resilience assessment, community impact assessment, and transparent comparison with Site 6 Cruchie.

Please confirm in writing that the main response and all addenda have been received, logged and will receive a written response.

One-page executive summary - final run-up to 26 June deadline

Save the Deveron Valley asks SSEN not to advance Site 14 Rivestone unless and until it has published a clear, evidence-based comparison with Site 6 Cruchie and shown how cumulative, ecological, landscape, road-safety, farming, emergency-resilience, fire-safety and community impacts have been assessed.

The core concern is not clean energy or grid reinforcement in principle. The concern is that the public is being asked to comment on a major grid node without a full joined-up picture of the infrastructure chain and foreseeable development pattern it may attract or support.

Before a preferred site is selected, SSEN should show: the harm identified; the alternatives tested; the mitigation proposed; what remains unresolved or deferred; and why any preferred site is justified against the actual places, people, watercourses, farms, roads, species and landscapes affected.

The community should not be asked to respond in fragments while the land, roads, river, farms and communities experience the whole system.

Addendum 1 - Third-party BESS interest and community-cohesion risk

Since this response was prepared, a public local post associated with Avochie has stated that Avochie was approached by a London-based battery-storage developer about locating a 60-acre battery facility adjacent to any future substation at Rivestone.

Save the Deveron Valley does not present this as evidence of a submitted planning application, nor does it allege that SSEN has promoted, encouraged or been involved in that approach. However, it is highly relevant to cumulative impact, foreseeable associated development and community-cohesion risk.

The reported approach indicates that third-party infrastructure interest may already be responding to the possibility of a Rivestone substation. It also raises concern that private land approaches may be framed around unequal neighbour benefit, with one landowner being invited to consider how they would feel if another neighbour benefited instead.

Large infrastructure projects can create private financial incentives before the public has seen the full cumulative picture. This can place pressure on farms, families and neighbours, and can fragment community participation. SSEN should not assess Site 14 Rivestone as if the hub would exist in artificial isolation from possible follow-on infrastructure, land-option activity, BESS interest, private-wire connections, energy parks or other grid-connected development.

SSEN should therefore confirm whether it is aware of any current, proposed or prospective third-party interest in battery energy storage systems, generation, private-wire connections, data-centre load, energy parks or other grid-connected infrastructure around Rivestone, Avochie, Cruchie, Mayen or the wider Deveron Valley. SSEN should also explain whether any such interest has influenced site selection, land discussions, grid-capacity assumptions, construction planning, environmental screening or cumulative-impact assessment.

This is not a claim that any specific third-party development will proceed. It is a request for transparency before the community is asked to accept a preferred site decision.

Additional cumulative-assessment wording

- reasonably foreseeable third-party BESS, generation, private-wire, data-centre load, energy-park or other grid-connected development that could cluster around either shortlisted hub site.

Additional questions for SSEN

1. Is SSEN aware of any current, proposed or prospective third-party BESS, private-wire, generation, energy-park, data-centre or other grid-connection interest near Rivestone, Avochie, Cruchie, Mayen or the wider Strathbogie Hub search area?
2. Has SSEN had any discussions with landowners, developers, consultants, agents, public bodies or grid-connection applicants about possible BESS or other energy infrastructure adjacent to either shortlisted site?
3. Has any third-party infrastructure interest, grid-capacity enquiry, option discussion, heads of terms, land approach or speculative energy-development activity influenced site selection, land discussions, technical appraisal or comparative scoring between Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie?
4. Has SSEN assessed whether selecting Site 14 Rivestone would make BESS, private-wire, generation, energy-park or other grid-connected development more likely to cluster around Avochie, Rivestone, Mayen or nearby land?
5. If such associated or follow-on infrastructure has not been considered, please explain why it has been excluded from cumulative-impact assessment.
6. What safeguards will SSEN apply to ensure that site selection and associated infrastructure do not encourage community fragmentation through unequal private incentives, opaque land discussions or neighbour-benefit pressure?
7. Will SSEN publish, in non-sensitive plain English, the assumptions used for foreseeable associated development around both shortlisted sites?

8. Will SSEN confirm that cumulative assessment will include the hub itself, associated overhead-line infrastructure, underground cable corridors, access routes, construction compounds, road works, BESS interest, private-wire interest, water impacts, biodiversity effects, farming displacement, landscape change and community-cohesion impacts?
9. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone until the community has been given clear information about foreseeable associated and follow-on infrastructure and has had a meaningful opportunity to respond?

Additional closing request

- confirm whether SSEN is aware of any current, proposed or prospective third-party BESS, generation, private-wire, data-centre load, energy-park or other grid-connected infrastructure interest around Rivestone, Avochie, Cruchie, Mayen or the wider Deveron Valley, and explain how any such interest has been considered in site selection and cumulative assessment.

Addendum 2 - Wildlife protections, River Deveron ecology and protected species

Purpose and position

This addendum should be read alongside the main Save the Deveron Valley response. It is not an objection to clean energy or grid reinforcement in principle. It is an objection to selecting Site 14 Rivestone, or any sensitive Deveron Valley location, without full ecological evidence, cumulative assessment and enforceable protection for the River Deveron, protected species, habitats, farms, roads and communities.

The Deveron Valley should be assessed as a connected ecological system: river, tributary burns, riparian corridors, wetlands, woodland, hedgerows, slopes, road verges, bridges, farmland and settlements. It should not be broken into convenient planning fragments.

Protected species and habitat risk

The area contains or may contain habitats suitable for legally protected and priority species, including Scottish wildcat, otter, red squirrel, badger, pine marten, bats, breeding birds, raptors, salmon, sea trout, brown trout, European eel and freshwater invertebrates.

Before any preferred site is selected or any planning application is supported, SSEN should provide site-specific, multi-season ecological surveys. This should include Scottish wildcat, otter, red squirrel, bat, badger, pine marten, breeding bird, raptor, aquatic ecology and invasive non-native species assessment.

Sensitive species locations should not be published in public documents, but must be available to statutory bodies and qualified ecological reviewers.

River Deveron, salmonids and water quality

The River Deveron is a celebrated salmon, sea trout and brown trout river and is already the subject of active fisheries, restoration and monitoring work. The Deveron catchment has also faced continuing water-quality and diffuse-pollution pressures, including sediment input and pesticide intrusion reported in public fisheries material.

Major construction, haul roads, hardstanding, drainage works, vegetation clearance, trenching, watercourse crossings and compounds could increase sediment, runoff, pollution, water temperature and habitat fragmentation.

SSEN should publish watercourse crossing plans, drainage and sediment-control strategy, baseline turbidity, suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH and conductivity data, salmonid spawning and juvenile habitat mapping, macroinvertebrate baseline data, private-water-supply risk assessment, pollution incident response plan and construction method statements for all works near burns, ditches, drains, wetlands and the River Deveron.

Cumulative ecological impact

Cumulative assessment should include the substation footprint, HVDC converter infrastructure, underground cable route, associated overhead line infrastructure, access roads, compounds, laydown areas, drainage works, haul routes, quarrying pressures, forestry and estate traffic, and any reasonably foreseeable BESS, private-wire, energy-park, data-centre load or other grid-connected development that could be attracted to, facilitated by, or seek connection around the hub.

The correct test is not whether each individual element can be made to look tolerable on paper. The correct test is whether the combined burden on landscape, wildlife, roads, water, farms and community life is acceptable.

NPF4 Policy 3 biodiversity enhancement

For national, major or EIA development, biodiversity enhancement cannot be treated as a decorative afterthought. SSEN should show how each shortlisted site would conserve, restore and enhance

biodiversity, including nature networks, so they are left in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, in addition to any mitigation for harm.

Required safeguards

No vegetation clearance, tree felling, hedge cutting, ground clearance, blasting, trenching, bridge works, culvert works, night lighting or heavy construction near sensitive habitats should take place until protected species surveys are complete and independently reviewed.

Conditions should require appropriate seasonal exclusions, protected-species buffers, dark corridors, low-glare lighting, Ecological Clerk of Works oversight, stop-work authority, public reporting of monitoring results and a legally secured restoration and remediation bond.

Where watercourse crossing is required, the least damaging practicable method should be selected. Horizontal Directional Drilling or other trenchless methods should be required for sensitive river and burn crossings unless independently demonstrated to be infeasible.

Required pre-selection and pre-determination information

- Full multi-season protected species surveys.
- Scottish wildcat survey and Species Protection Plan.
- Otter survey and Species Protection Plan.
- Red squirrel, bat, badger, pine marten and breeding bird surveys.
- Aquatic ecology assessment for salmon, sea trout, brown trout, eel and macroinvertebrates.
- Water quality baseline and construction-phase monitoring plan.
- Drainage, sediment and pollution prevention plan.
- Watercourse crossing method statements.
- Cumulative ecological and landscape assessment.
- Full haul-route ecological and road-safety assessment.
- Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Pollution Incident Response Plan.
- Independent ecological review funded by the developer but appointed or approved by the authority.
- Restoration, remediation and monitoring bond secured before works begin.

Wildlife and River Deveron questions for SSEN

10. Will SSEN publish full multi-season ecological baseline surveys for both Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie before selecting a preferred site?
11. Will SSEN commission targeted Scottish wildcat survey, including appropriate buffer around development footprints and associated works?
12. Will SSEN publish otter, red squirrel, bat, badger, pine marten, breeding bird, raptor and aquatic ecology survey methods and results, with sensitive locations redacted from public versions?
13. Will SSEN confirm that no vegetation clearance, future intrusive ground investigation, enabling works, drainage works, road upgrades, tree works or watercourse works will proceed before surveys and Species Protection Plans are complete?
14. Will SSEN provide baseline water-quality monitoring for turbidity, suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH and conductivity at relevant upstream and downstream locations?
15. Will SSEN provide salmonid spawning and juvenile habitat mapping and assess fish passage risk before any watercourse crossing or drainage design is accepted?
16. Will SSEN require trenchless crossing methods for sensitive watercourses unless independently demonstrated to be infeasible?
17. Will SSEN publish enforceable stop-work triggers for water quality, protected species disturbance, sediment plumes, pollution incidents and damage to mapped sensitive habitats?
18. Will SSEN provide an independent ecological audit route and make non-sensitive monitoring summaries public?

19. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone unless Site 14 and Site 6 have been transparently compared on protected species, river risk, habitat connectivity, landscape impact and cumulative ecological burden?

Addendum 3 - Infrastructure resilience, emergency access, fire safety and critical infrastructure security

Purpose and position

This addendum addresses infrastructure resilience, emergency access, fire safety, critical infrastructure security and cumulative infrastructure risk. It should be read alongside the main response and the wildlife and BESS/community-cohesion addenda.

The proposed Strathbogie Hub should not be assessed as a single fenced site. It should be assessed as an interconnected infrastructure system involving substation infrastructure, converter infrastructure, underground cable corridors, possible overhead line infrastructure, construction compounds, road works, drainage systems, operational security requirements and foreseeable follow-on infrastructure.

All-hazards resilience assessment

Before selecting a preferred site, SSEN should complete and publish a non-sensitive all-hazards resilience assessment for each shortlisted site.

This should cover severe winter weather, flooding, surface water runoff, extreme rainfall, wildfire, storm damage, equipment fire, hazardous materials release, firefighting water contamination, road closure, bridge failure, emergency access failure, physical security threat, cyber or control-system disruption, and cumulative risk from nearby existing, proposed or foreseeable infrastructure.

Emergency access and rural road resilience

The Deveron Valley road network is narrow, rural, weather-exposed and already under pressure. A conventional Traffic Management Plan is not enough for infrastructure of this scale.

SSEN should provide full emergency access plans, bridge and culvert assessments, winter access and gritting plans, road-closure contingency plans, construction traffic scenario modelling and evidence of early engagement with emergency services.

Fire safety, hazardous materials and BESS risk

Major electricity infrastructure can involve transformer fire risk, oil containment, fuel storage, electrical fault scenarios, drainage isolation and contaminated firefighting runoff. Where BESS is proposed, adjacent, enabled, reasonably foreseeable or likely to seek connection because of the hub, cumulative fire and emergency risk should be assessed now.

SSEN should provide a Fire Safety Assessment, Hazardous Materials Assessment, emergency water-supply assessment, firefighting water containment plan, pollution incident response plan, specialist contractor arrangements and clear responsibility for emergency costs.

Critical infrastructure security and cyber-physical resilience

The proposed hub would form part of strategically important electricity transmission infrastructure. Sensitive security detail should not be published, but decision-makers and the community need a non-sensitive assurance statement showing that site selection has considered physical security, access control, physical access and site-security risk, surveillance, cyber-physical systems, emergency communications, recovery after disruption and coordination with relevant protective security bodies.

Security cannot be deferred until after site selection. Location is part of security and resilience.

Climate adaptation and community resilience

A project justified in the name of climate action should be designed around future climate risk, not yesterday's weather. SSEN should assess future rainfall intensity, drainage capacity, runoff pathways, wildfire and drought risk, heat stress, storm access and long-term maintenance access.

Infrastructure resilience is not only about protecting equipment. It is also about protecting farms, carers, school transport, emergency services, road access, private water supplies, rural livelihoods, landscape value and community cohesion.

National AI, data-centre and future-demand policy context

This section is included as national policy context only. It is not a claim that the Strathbogie Hub is being proposed for data centres, nor that any specific data-centre project is linked to Site 14 Rivestone or Site 6 Cruchie.

Scotland's 2021 Artificial Intelligence Strategy set a clear ambition for Scotland to develop trustworthy, ethical and inclusive AI, supported by digital and data infrastructure. The strategy also briefly linked to green data centres and green digital infrastructure.

By 2026, House of Commons Library briefing material makes the infrastructure layer much clearer: data centres require land, electricity, grid connections, cooling, resilience, backup systems and planning support. The briefing also notes that planning policy in Scotland is supportive of data centres that utilise renewable energy produced in Scotland.

Current Scottish Parliament activity shows growing concern about hyperscale data centres, energy demand, backup generation, air quality, domestic bills and the unclear definition of green data centres. This reinforces the need for SSEN to disclose whether future high-demand connections form part of the assumptions, connection enquiries or foreseeable development context around either shortlisted Strathbogie Hub site.

Save the Deveron Valley does not claim that the Strathbogie Hub is being proposed for data centres. The request is narrower: SSEN should disclose, in non-sensitive plain English, whether future demand-side connections - including data centres, AI-compute infrastructure, BESS, private-wire connections, energy parks, hydrogen or other high-load infrastructure - form part of the assumptions, connection enquiries or foreseeable development context around either shortlisted site.

Without that information, communities may not have been fully informed of the future-demand context needed to assess cumulative impact.

Additional AI/data-centre demand questions for SSEN

20. Has SSEN considered current or foreseeable data-centre, AI-compute, private-wire, BESS, hydrogen, energy-park or other high-demand connection interest when planning the Strathbogie Hub or comparing Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie?
21. Will SSEN publish, in non-sensitive plain English, whether either shortlisted site may create, attract, facilitate or make more likely further grid-connected infrastructure nearby?
22. How will SSEN ensure that communities can assess the cumulative impact of the hub, associated infrastructure and foreseeable future demand before a preferred site is selected?

22 June evening evidence integration - additional issues to test before preferred site selection

The following points are included as concise final-run evidence leads and questions. They should not be read as separate allegations. They identify information SSEN should publish so communities can assess the whole system before a preferred site is selected.

1. Deadline, ground investigations and AI-assisted feedback analysis. SSEN material confirms the Strathbogie Hub feedback period runs to 26 June 2026, and SSEN has stated that ground investigations have started at Cruchie and Rivestone. SSEN also says it uses AI to help analyse stakeholder and customer feedback. SSEN should therefore explain how specific local evidence will be preserved, reviewed and reported rather than flattened into broad themes.

2. Landscape visibility and comparative ZTV evidence. A publicly shared local landscape analysis reports that Rivestone could be substantially more visible across the surrounding study area than Cruchie. Save the Deveron Valley does not present this as verified expert evidence unless the methodology is provided, but it

is a serious lead. SSEN should publish comparative Zone of Theoretical Visibility and landscape/visual impact evidence for both shortlisted sites.

3. Policy application, not policy citation. Schedule 9 and NPF4 duties are not satisfied by citing policy language alone. SSEN should show the receptor-specific balancing exercise: harm identified, alternatives tested, mitigation considered, residual impacts and reasoning for any preferred site.

4. BESS/fire-safety planning gap. Scottish Government figures show a growing BESS pipeline in Scotland, and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service states that it is not a statutory consultee in the BESS planning process. Where BESS is proposed, foreseeable, adjacent, connection-driven or likely to cluster around a grid node, fire-safety expertise should be considered before site selection and not only later.

5. Biodiversity enhancement. NPF4 Policy 3 and NatureScot/Scottish Government guidance require biodiversity enhancement, with national, major and EIA development expected to demonstrate significant enhancement beyond mitigation and leave biodiversity in a demonstrably better state. SSEN should show how this applies to the actual habitats and nature networks affected by each site option.

6. Joined-up infrastructure and consultation pattern. SSEN consultation material for Shetland presents substations, wind farm connections, overhead/underground routes, hubs and landfall options as parts of a wider strategy. Strathbogie communities should be given equivalent joined-up clarity on the hub, landfall, cable route, overhead line implications, compounds, access routes, future demand and cumulative effects.

7. Permitted-development and preliminary works transparency. Where ground investigation, access works, vegetation clearance, drainage works or other preliminary activity is taking place, communities should not be left guessing whether works are authorised, what safeguards apply, or who is accountable if harm occurs.

8. Product-compliance and hazardous-materials assurance. Recent reporting about hazardous materials found in some energy-infrastructure components illustrates why major grid proposals should include clear product-compliance, hazardous-materials, inspection, remediation and long-term maintenance assurance, especially where equipment depends on complex international supply chains. This is a governance point, not a claim that SSEN equipment is affected.

Additional evening-update questions for SSEN

23. How will SSEN ensure that AI-assisted feedback analysis does not flatten, merge, deprioritise or lose specific local evidence submitted by residents, farms, community groups and local businesses?
24. Will SSEN publish, in plain English, how feedback from the Strathbogie Hub consultation is coded, themed, reviewed and carried through into site-selection decisions?
25. Will SSEN publish comparative ZTV/LVIA evidence for Rivestone and Cruchie, including visibility within 5km, 10km and 20km; modelled structure heights; pylon/building visibility; lighting; terrain data; screening assumptions; and selected viewpoints?
26. What specific receptor-by-receptor balancing exercise has SSEN carried out for Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie, showing harm identified, alternatives tested, mitigation proposed, residual impacts and reasons for any preferred site?
27. Where BESS or other high-risk energy infrastructure is proposed, foreseeable, adjacent, connection-driven or likely to cluster around a new hub, how will SSEN ensure Scottish Fire and Rescue Service expertise is considered before site selection?
28. Will SSEN publish a plain-English note explaining which current or proposed works at Cruchie and Rivestone are being undertaken under permitted development rights or other authorisations, what safeguards apply, and who residents should contact if they see unexplained works, access changes, vegetation clearance, road damage or environmental disturbance?
29. What product-compliance, hazardous-materials and long-term maintenance assurance will SSEN require for major substation, converter, cable, transformer, pylon, lift/hoist, access and auxiliary equipment, including supply-chain checks for banned or restricted materials?

Infrastructure resilience questions for SSEN

30. Has SSEN completed an all-hazards resilience assessment for Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie? If yes, will it publish a non-sensitive summary?
31. Will SSEN publish an emergency access and winter resilience assessment for each shortlisted site?
32. Will SSEN publish bridge, culvert, verge and haul-route capacity assessments for all construction and emergency routes?
33. Has Scottish Fire and Rescue Service been consulted at this stage on transformer, converter, hazardous materials and any foreseeable BESS risk?
34. Will SSEN publish a Fire Safety Assessment, Hazardous Materials Assessment, firefighting water containment plan and pollution incident response strategy before site selection?
35. Will SSEN confirm whether it is aware of any BESS, private-wire, energy-park, data-centre load or other high-load connection interest near Rivestone, Avochie, Cruchie, Mayen or the wider search area?
36. Will SSEN publish a non-sensitive critical infrastructure security assurance statement covering physical, cyber-physical and emergency communications resilience?
37. Will SSEN assess each site against future climate conditions, including extreme rainfall, winter access, flooding, wildfire, heat stress and storm recovery?
38. Will SSEN explain how local community resilience will be protected, including farms, carers, emergency access, school transport, road safety, private water supplies and rural livelihoods?
39. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone if Site 14 performs worse than Site 6 Cruchie on emergency access, resilience, fire safety, water containment, security, road constraints, landscape impact or cumulative infrastructure risk?

Appendix - Consolidated questions requiring written response from SSEN

The following question bank is provided to make it easier for SSEN and recipients to identify the written responses requested. It should not narrow or replace the wider submission.

A. Receipt and record

40. Will SSEN confirm that the website submission, emailed submission and all addenda have been added to the formal consultation record?
41. Will SSEN confirm that each addendum will be considered alongside the main response, not treated as separate informal correspondence?

B. BESS, third-party infrastructure and community-cohesion risk

42. Is SSEN aware of any current, proposed or prospective third-party BESS, private-wire, generation, energy-park, data-centre or other grid-connection interest near Rivestone, Avochie, Cruchie, Mayen or the wider Strathbogie Hub search area?
43. Has SSEN had any discussions with landowners, developers, consultants, agents, public bodies or grid-connection applicants about possible BESS or other energy infrastructure adjacent to either shortlisted site?
44. Has any third-party infrastructure interest, grid-capacity enquiry, option discussion, heads of terms, land approach or speculative energy-development activity influenced site selection, land discussions, technical appraisal or comparative scoring between Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie?
45. Has SSEN assessed whether selecting Site 14 Rivestone would make BESS, private-wire, generation, energy-park or other grid-connected development more likely to cluster around Avochie, Rivestone, Mayen or nearby land?
46. If such associated or follow-on infrastructure has not been considered, please explain why it has been excluded from cumulative-impact assessment.
47. What safeguards will SSEN apply to ensure that site selection and associated infrastructure do not encourage community fragmentation through unequal private incentives, opaque land discussions or neighbour-benefit pressure?
48. Will SSEN publish, in non-sensitive plain English, the assumptions used for foreseeable associated development around both shortlisted sites?
49. Will SSEN confirm that cumulative assessment will include the hub itself, associated overhead-line infrastructure, underground cable corridors, access routes, construction compounds, road works, BESS interest, private-wire interest, water impacts, biodiversity effects, farming displacement, landscape change and community-cohesion impacts?
50. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone until the community has been given clear information about foreseeable associated and follow-on infrastructure and has had a meaningful opportunity to respond?

C. Wildlife, River Deveron ecology and protected species

51. Will SSEN publish full multi-season ecological baseline surveys for both Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie before selecting a preferred site?
52. Will SSEN commission targeted Scottish wildcat survey, including appropriate buffer around development footprints and associated works?
53. Will SSEN publish otter, red squirrel, bat, badger, pine marten, breeding bird, raptor and aquatic ecology survey methods and results, with sensitive locations redacted from public versions?
54. Will SSEN confirm that no vegetation clearance, future intrusive ground investigation, enabling works, drainage works, road upgrades, tree works or watercourse works will proceed before surveys and Species Protection Plans are complete?
55. Will SSEN provide baseline water-quality monitoring for turbidity, suspended solids, dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH and conductivity at relevant upstream and downstream locations?

56. Will SSEN provide salmonid spawning and juvenile habitat mapping and assess fish passage risk before any watercourse crossing or drainage design is accepted?
57. Will SSEN require trenchless crossing methods for sensitive watercourses unless independently demonstrated to be infeasible?
58. Will SSEN publish enforceable stop-work triggers for water quality, protected species disturbance, sediment plumes, pollution incidents and damage to mapped sensitive habitats?
59. Will SSEN provide an independent ecological audit route and make non-sensitive monitoring summaries public?
60. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone unless Site 14 and Site 6 have been transparently compared on protected species, river risk, habitat connectivity, landscape impact and cumulative ecological burden?

D. Infrastructure resilience, emergency access, fire safety and security

61. Has SSEN completed an all-hazards resilience assessment for Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie? If yes, will it publish a non-sensitive summary?
62. Will SSEN publish an emergency access and winter resilience assessment for each shortlisted site?
63. Will SSEN publish bridge, culvert, verge and haul-route capacity assessments for all construction and emergency routes?
64. Has Scottish Fire and Rescue Service been consulted at this stage on transformer, converter, hazardous materials and any foreseeable BESS risk?
65. Will SSEN publish a Fire Safety Assessment, Hazardous Materials Assessment, firefighting water containment plan and pollution incident response strategy before site selection?
66. Will SSEN confirm whether it is aware of any BESS, private-wire, energy-park, data-centre load or other high-load connection interest near Rivestone, Avochie, Cruchie, Mayen or the wider search area?
67. Will SSEN publish a non-sensitive critical infrastructure security assurance statement covering physical, cyber-physical and emergency communications resilience?
68. Will SSEN assess each site against future climate conditions, including extreme rainfall, winter access, flooding, wildfire, heat stress and storm recovery?
69. Will SSEN explain how local community resilience will be protected, including farms, carers, emergency access, school transport, road safety, private water supplies and rural livelihoods?
70. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone if Site 14 performs worse than Site 6 Cruchie on emergency access, resilience, fire safety, water containment, security, road constraints, landscape impact or cumulative infrastructure risk?

E. National AI, data-centre and future-demand context

71. Has SSEN considered current or foreseeable data-centre, AI-compute, private-wire, BESS, hydrogen, energy-park or other high-demand connection interest when planning the Strathbogie Hub and associated transmission infrastructure?
72. Will SSEN publish, in non-sensitive plain English, whether the Strathbogie Hub is intended only to connect renewable generation/export capacity, or whether it may also support future demand-side connections such as data centres, AI-compute infrastructure, energy parks or large industrial loads?
73. How is SSEN ensuring that communities are not asked to comment on grid infrastructure without being shown the wider future-demand assumptions that may drive, attract or follow from it?
74. Will cumulative assessment include not only generation and transmission infrastructure, but also foreseeable demand infrastructure that could be attracted to, facilitated by, or seek connection around major grid capacity?
75. How will SSEN avoid a piecemeal process in which grid infrastructure is consulted on first, and follow-on demand infrastructure appears later as a separate matter?

F. Site comparison and decision-making

76. Will SSEN publish a transparent comparison of Site 14 Rivestone and Site 6 Cruchie covering cumulative impact, ecology, landscape, roads, emergency access, resilience, fire risk, security, community impact and likely follow-on infrastructure?
77. Will SSEN commit not to select Site 14 Rivestone unless it can demonstrate, using public evidence, why Site 14 is preferable to less damaging alternatives?
78. How will SSEN ensure specific local evidence is not flattened, merged, deprioritised or lost through AI-assisted categorisation or thematic summary of feedback?

Source notes

These source notes support the public-facing drafting and should be checked again before any later statutory planning objection. They are not a substitute for site-specific surveys or legal advice.

79. **SSEN Transmission - Strathbogie Hub Information Event, 27 May 2026:** https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/events/2026/strathbogie-hub---huntly-information-event-part-of-shetland-hvdc-2-link-project/
80. **SSEN Transmission - Shetland HVDC Link 2 project page:** https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/shetland-hvdc-link-2/
81. **NatureScot - Planning and development: protected species:** https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/planning-and-development-protected-species
82. **NatureScot - Guidance: Wildcat Survey Methods:** https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-wildcat-survey-methods
83. **NatureScot - Standing Advice for Planning Consultations: Wildcats:** https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-wildcats
84. **NatureScot - Standing Advice for Planning Consultations: Otters:** https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-otters
85. **NatureScot - Standing Advice for Planning Consultations: Red Squirrels:** https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-red-squirrels
86. **NatureScot - Standing Advice for Planning Consultations: Birds:** https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-birds
87. **Deveron District Salmon Fishery Board / River Deveron Trust - Annual Reports and Fishery Management Plans:** https://www.deveron.org/resources/annual-reports/
88. **Deveron Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24:** https://www.deveron.org/site/wp-content/uploads/Dev-report-2024-for-web.pdf
89. **Deveron Fisheries Management Plan Storymap:** https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/635bd7f2e66a42fa943d376384118d46
90. **National Fire Chiefs Council - Grid Scale Energy Storage System Planning Guidance for Fire and Rescue Services:** https://nfcc.org.uk/our-services/building-safety/grid-scale-energy-storage-system-planning-guidance-for-fire-and-rescue-services/
91. **National Protective Security Authority - Critical National Infrastructure:** https://www.npsa.gov.uk/about-npsa/critical-national-infrastructure
92. **National Cyber Security Centre - Cyber Assessment Framework:** https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/cyber-assessment-framework
93. **Scottish Government - NPF4 planning guidance: Policy 2, Climate mitigation and adaptation:** https://www.gov.scot/publications/npf4-planning-guidance-policy-2-climate-mitigation-adaptation/
94. Scotland's Artificial Intelligence Strategy, March 2021: https://www.scotlandis.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Scotlands_AI_Strategy_Final.pdf
95. House of Commons Library - Data centres: planning policy, sustainability, and resilience, CBP-10315, 27 May 2026: https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10315/CBP-10315.pdf
96. Scottish Government - National Planning Framework 4: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/

Additional source notes added 22 June evening

SSEN Shetland 2 Strathbogie Hub Information Event Booklet - feedback period to 26 June 2026: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/shetland-hvdc-link-2/consultation-documents/shetland-2-strathbogie-hub-information-event-booklet.pdf

SSEN AI FAQ - AI use in analysis of stakeholder/customer feedback: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/information-centre/AI-FAQ/

Scottish Government BESS page - 0.5GW operating and 2.7GW consented awaiting construction as of end September 2025: https://www.gov.scot/policies/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy/battery-energy-storage-systems/

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service BESS page - SFRS follows NFCC guidance and is not a statutory consultee in the BESS planning process: https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/businesses-and-landlords/battery-energy-storage-systems/

NatureScot Scottish Planning Biodiversity Metric page - NPF4 Policy 3b significant biodiversity enhancement and demonstrably better state: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/scottish-planning-biodiversity-metric

Scottish Parliament motions: S7M-00419 and S7M-00428 on hyperscale/AI data centres: https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S7M-00419 and https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S7M-00428

Fife data-centre planning application 26/01243/PPP listing: https://planning.org.uk/app/194/TE9GGMHFFWY00

SSEN Shetland HVDC Link 2 page - Shetland/Yell consultation and connected infrastructure: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/shetland-hvdc-link-2/

Electricity Act 1989 Schedule 9: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/29/schedule/9