

Strathnairn Community Council's Observations or Immediate Concerns as Stakeholder in representing the Local Community (from information presented to date/within the following Planning Application)

26/02433/FUL | Temporary material laydown area & associated helispot for Aberarder Wind Farm Grid Connection / Aberarder Wind Farm Connection (SSEN Transmission)

HC Case Officer: Niamh Coyne

Strathnairn Community Council's Observations or Immediate Concerns >

1.0 Formation of 'Temporary' Helispot

- The applicant is applying for the formation of a 'temporary' helispot.
 - The community supports a helispot being formed, if this reduces the formation of extensive tracks across the wider site, to bring in the equivalent infrastructure, should works be consented.
 - This is to minimise further erosion of natural habitats.
 - However the formation of a temporary helispot - in itself - as a large area of hardstanding on which materials and fuel will be 'temporarily' stored, means the erosion of natural habitats and reduction of biodiversity (as part of this process).
 - Given it is 'temporary' SNCC wishes to be informed of plans now - as part of this current application - to reverse these sites works, reinstate natural landscaping and replant to this area thereafter.
 - This aligns with the LPP and promotes Nature Restoration.
-

-
- Furthermore the community seeks assurance that the formation of a helispot is for the works as detailed in this application alone; and does not give rise to 'other' projects gaining consent through this (then existing) 'base' facilitating works for other projects.

2.0 Proposed traffic route & construction traffic along the B851:

- There is an assumption across the application that the use of the B851 as a route to site is a given, and secondly that in so doing there is little to no impact on the Community (or that this has been addressed).
- This is to be challenged on both counts.
- SNCC continues to express concern over B851 being used as the main traffic route to site for this and ALL other identified/related major infrastructure construction projects impacting the community.
- To realise these works there is a planned transporting - along the B851 - of large scale components, bulk materials, fuel and plant to first form and service a laydown space; and when in place to transport imported materials from here by helicopter, and refuel from this base, to reach isolated & hilly locations. This is for the construction or erection of 'pole' footings & structures, from which an overhead grid connection will be formed and the wind farm connected in.
- Concern is raised by the community across all these individual but interconnected projects (all of which add to the cumulative impact and which could be masterplanned at the outset resulting in greater transparency) over the proposed use of the B851; a single track road, with infrequent passing places, and the main route to access settlements by the local community.
- Cumulatively the existing and increasing volume of traffic (in general, and prior to any further consents, including this proposal) along with high and increasing numbers of HGVs on the B851, to erratic driver behaviour, is currently testing the community to the limit and affecting their personal safety as 'other' road users or local residents.
- This is before any further traffic volume increase - through this application - is added into the mix.

-
- Therefore SNCC attach a community-led Traffic Impact Assessment Report/Evidence; as reports/evidence prepared earlier by Strathnairn Community Council (earlier in 2026) to challenge the route selection (of the B851) and submitted to the Planning Enquiry for Loch Kemp/Loch Ness PSH (with Statera as Developer) / ECU00003398, but entirely applicable to any incoming developers and/or major infrastructure works proposed within the area.
 - Impact of traffic on B851 and emerging issues are the same - as projects (WFs, PSH, Transmission or Grid Connections) gain consent - so this resource is being openly shared; and SNCC ask that this is consulted as part of this application.
 - In addition cumulative (traffic) impacts are intensified when these projects are consented & the construction program is delivered together; or prolonged if they are consented but delivered separately or programs elapse.
 - Equally there are alternatives to accessing this site, which radically shortens the distance travelled on the predominantly single track B851 - for example transporting materials and components on the B862 - but this seems to have been overlooked or ruled out entirely.
 - If the B851 is determined to be the final route selection - SNCC have requested that any improvements are carried out in advance of the project gaining consent (should this be the case) and not after the planned delivery period; and in contrast with the proposed assessment of the road prior to and again after the construction period, with reinstatement at the tail end.
 - This is intended to ease the community's pain, at the outset, with the community requesting that it is consulted on this aspect and any agreements with HC.

3.0 Elapsed timetable:

- The Applicant alludes to a construction timetable that can not be met.
- The date of the application, only received by HC on 05 June 26, means the construction start & program has elapsed ahead of point of application (cited as May 26, under the Applicants Traffic Management Plan Section 2.1).

-
- SNCC requests that an updated timetable is issued and the community is given advance sight of this, ahead of any consent; intended to keep the community informed.
 - Slippage of the construction program planned from May 26 to September 27, and a loss of two summers which bookended this will, in all likelihood, prolong the project and the resultant impact on the local community.
 - SNCC therefore requires clarity on the revised timing and duration of the program of works.
 - With this an assessment can be made locally of the impact on the community, with regards to overlapping nature or otherwise, of several major construction projects.

4.0 Cumulative Impacts:

- From the *Traffic Management Plan Section 7* the *Public Access Management* details considered under *7.1 Rural Environments & 7.2 Urban Environments* are considered insufficient.
- Whilst it is acknowledged under 7.2 that there is not a disruption to - or a negligible impact on - Urban Environments, and therefore this is disregarded by the Applicant, there is inadequate consideration given to (or a separate provision made for) the equivalent Rural Settlements/Villages of which there are multiple enroute to site; nor is this considered to be adequately picked up in 7.1.
- A proposed 10/11 days on and 3/4 days off working pattern/shift means whilst the contractors gain a 'work efficiency' by contrast established, sizeable, local and roadside villages and linear settlements like Inverarnie, Farr and Croachy, will be made to 'live' with (additional) construction traffic for an 18 month period (or longer) for this project alone; daily and over the weekends (with only the assurance of no HGV movements - rather than no construction traffic movements - on a Sunday).
- Cumulative impacts individually and across these projects are having a direct (and negative) bearing on landscape & environment, traffic levels, roads & services, noise, quality of life, wildlife & biodiversity within the host community of Strathnairn.

5.0 Co-ordinated Community Liaison

- SNCC have expressed their concern over the demand placed on the community, volunteers and volunteer time to address numerous applications coming through the consenting process.
- As per the suggestion of Stratherrick & Foyers Community Council, SNCC is requesting that all developers are part of a co-ordinated and transparent community liaison effort, with key project information - and timelines - brought to the table and openly discussed.
- The applicant alludes to this being part of the process, but without any input from the affected community.
- SNCC seek a more transparent system.

Strathnairn Community Council (SNCC) 06.08.2026