

# Delting Community Council

## MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING HELD IN MOSSBANK SCHOOL ON TUESDAY 1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2024

### **2024/10S/01 PRESENT**

Mr A Cooper (Chairman)

Mr E Smith (Vice Chairman)

Ms R Griffiths

Ms E MacDonald

Mr A Hall

Ms J Dennison

Mr J Milne

Ms A Manson

### **2024/10S/02 IN ATTENDANCE**

Ms L Ratter - Clerk

Ms L Hall - Community Involvement & Development Officer

Mr A Kelly – Lead Project Manager - SSEN Transmission

Ms T Groat – Community Liaison Manager - SSEN Transmission

Mr J Alexander – Head of Local Authority Engagement - SSEN Transmission

Mr M Mckenzie – Project Manager - SSEN Transmission

Members of Public

### **2024/10S/03 CIRCULAR**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

### **2024/10S/04 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr M Duncan, Mr B Moreland and Mr T Morton.

### **2024/10S/05**

#### **SSEN Transmission - SSENT projects in Shetland**

Mr A Cooper welcomed community councillors, SSEN Transmission representatives and members of the public to the special meeting. Mr A Cooper outlined the course of proceedings the meeting would take. SSEN Transmission representatives would deliver their presentation, Community Councillors would be able to ask questions then, if time, the public could ask questions.

SSEN Transmission representatives introduced themselves to the meeting. Mr A Kelly, Lead Project Manager at SSEN Transmission. Ms T Groat, Community Liaison Manager at SSEN Transmission. Mr J Alexander, Head of Local Authority Engagement at SSEN Transmission and Mr M Mckenzie, Project Manager at SSEN Transmission. Mr Mckenzie previously worked on the delivery Gremista to Kergord project and is partly on this team to try and harness the lessons learned from this.

SSEN Transmission is the branch of SSEN that transmits the electricity from where it is generated to where it is used. They are part of SSEN but are a separate company to the other SSEN groups and there are business separation laws which must be strictly adhered to. They cannot share information across the groups. They are regulated by Ofgem and they set how much they can earn, how they interact with the public and how they deliver projects. They are funded by consumers and developers.

They have been tasked by Ofgem to find a Whole System Solution. Their goal is to build a future proof network. They want to take their time to plan a future proof network to have strategic hubs so that infrastructure is minimised and the impact on communities and environment is minimal. They need to be economic and efficient; this is a licence obligation they have been given by Ofgem as its not their money. What they develop needs to be deliverable, so it needs to be buildable, workable, and maintainable to allow it to work.

Building a future proof network is about accommodating the near-term connections they are aware of. All the projects on the on the East side of Shetland have submitted connection requests to SSEN Transmission. They need to deliver this and think ahead about what is coming in the future. The goal

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would be to build something that caters for growth. They want to create a meaningful legacy, for example, housing, jobs, or other community infrastructures. SSEN Transmission wants to meaningfully engage with the communities affected to understand the legacy that they want.

Their typical project process is split into five gate stages, these are, Opportunity Assessment, Development, Refinement, Execution, Operate and Evaluate. This is regulated by Ofgem and can take between 5-7 years to get from gate one to five. In the Development phase, usually year 2, is the only part SSEN Transmission must consult. There is a statutory consultation obligation in the development section where they come to the community with their plans and they consult and listen and they submit their planning application. This is how SSEN Transmission typically delivers a project. SSEN Transmission has listened to the community, SIC and feedback received from Gremista to Kergord project and they are aware they need to do meaningful community engagement earlier and much more of it.

For future projects in Shetland, SSEN Transmission is in the Project Inception – Increased Consultation phase which is before the Opportunity Assessment Gate One. They have consulted with potential developers who may want to do work in Shetland, like Statkraft and Scotwind and small community developers. They received lots of responses ranging from large projects to very small projects, some in the idea stage. They then built system studies around the responses received which then generated the technical requirements of the network. Over the last 3-4 months they have been engaging with Shetland Island Council and discussed how the plans were coming on. Tonight is the first meeting engaging with Community Councils as they wanted to give community councils their place in the consultation. There are other meetings this week with other community councils and the Fisherman's Association in the next couple of weeks and lots of community body engagements between now and Christmas. They will then consider all feedback and produce a Draft Shetland Strategy which takes them to the next phase, gate one, Opportunity Assessment where they will look at where the infrastructure may go. They will then bring back the ideas to the community councils, fishermen bodies and get feedback which will direct how they progress. They will be doing technical and environmental assessments and will look at the options, then another round of consultation to get feedback which then brings them into Gate Two Development Phase. In this phase they narrow down options of where infrastructure will go and what will be proposed. They then consult again although, they cannot just proceed with community feedback, there is technical and environmental requirements they need to meet. They will finalise the options then they will move to the statutory consultation required by Ofgem in Gate Two phase.

There are two projects in construction, HVDC link to Scottish Mainland and connecting Kergord to Gremista and creating a grid supply point. This will connect the Scottish mainland to the Gremista grid supply point which means Shetland will be part of the GB grid electricity network and will be complete by the end of 2025.

The projects which have requested a connection are, Scotwind (three Offshore windfarms), Statkraft (two onshore windfarms on Yell), Hydrogen facility at Scatsta and electrification of West of Shetland Oil Field.

To deliver this they want to provide a Hub. They are proposing a Northern Substation Hub possibly Scatsta, Sullom Voe Area. There would be circuits linking the Substation to Kergord. Over time the electricity needs to arrive at the Northern Substation Hub at a higher voltage than currently at Kergord. Somewhere between Kergord and the Northern Substation there needs to be a site where they transform that voltage, therefore an AC Substation which is necessary for the whole system to work. There will be a submarine cable connection to Yell from the Northern Substation Hub which will in turn go to a substation on Yell to split the circuit to connect to both windfarms separately. Ofgem have publicised that their proposal is that there will need to be a second HVDC link. This one will be 2GW and the cable will be the same size. It will go from the Northern Substation to the Scottish Mainland and it will facilitate Scotwind to connect and West of Shetland to be electrified.

SSEN think this option is optimal because it can be built in stages. The Northern Substation Hub is key to it all, the AC substation is not, so if a project does not happen or is delayed, they can alter it or delay it. With the hub, if something happens that they have not considered then the Northern Substation does facilitate growth and the network can expand in a measured and planned way.

The process for site selection for the Northern Substation Hub will be based on community feedback, environmental impact, Safety, Visual impact, ground conditions, access and land use, connectivity, constructability, and operability & maintenance. They have consulted with Shetland Island Council and are looking at the site around Scatsa airport and Sullom Voe area.

The Government wants net zero to happen and there are opportunities for communities to benefit from the transition. The Government through Ofgem are still in discussing what the regulations are going to be

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about community benefit. SSEN Transmission have set up a 10 million pounds community benefit fund and made initially 2 million pounds available to community projects, this benefit fund is for the whole of Scotland not just Shetland.

To summarise the Whole System Solution the next steps will be site selection, bird surveys, looking at possible routes for connecting Kergord to Northern Substation Hub, ongoing engagement then a follow up consultation in Spring 2025. This was the end of the SSEN Transmission presentation.

Mr A Cooper asked what the footprint of the converter station was. Mr A Kelly said the Northern Substation Hub for the converter station will be a HVDC converter and an AC substation, those two do not need to be on the same site but their starting point would be one site big enough for both. This substation will be 1.5 to 2 times the size of Kergord about 800mx500m. Mr A Cooper asked if it was future proofed for extensions. Mr A Kelly says they are confident as they can be that it will be big enough to consider what may arise. They will look for a site that is not hemmed in and will be easy to expand.

Mr A Hall said 10 million is not a lot of money for the whole of Scotland. Mr A Kelly understands the comment about the community benefit being insufficient. Mr A Hall said a lot of people will not be thinking about how much money they can get but more on it being a fair and reasonable process as we are sacrificing a lot for it. The new station will dwarf the old one and there will be lines going south using which routes. Mr A Kelly said there was three possible routes they could take once out of the Kergord valley, and through the area of Hillside in Voe they can follow the West Road, East Road or over the top. Mr J Alexander stated there will also be local funds specifically for Shetland. They are trying to look beyond these funds and look at other things like the housing strategy and develop and deliver some of that impact and leave for the community as a legacy. Mr A Hall said that is what BP did in the 70s.

Ms E Macdonald asked how they plan to house the staff they bring up for construction of the project. Are they thinking about building houses for construction staff to leave behind for the community? Mr A Kelly said there is ongoing dialogue with Shetland Island Council regarding housing and they have a housing officer, Ms M Jarvie, and she will engage and get the strategy right. They are looking at how to accommodate 300-500 workers. The houses they typically would build for workers would not be what a family would need so they would need to think about do they build temporary accommodation to be removed and infrastructure left for the community to build on or do they build actual housing and leave that. Mr J Alexander added the housing strategy was being launched in next few weeks and they will share with the community council. The strategy needs to be local authority by local authority they will need to recognise local challenges and opportunities. Part of that is workforce planning which has not all been agreed and they are not on charge of timelines or approvals.

Mr E Smith agreed with Mr A Hall about his concerns regarding pylons. He would like to know in 7 years' time how many full-time jobs will this have created based in Shetland. Mr A Kelly will find out and get back to the community council. Ms T Groat said there was 300 workers at Kergord during construction and now that it is operational there is around 12-15 workers.

Mr J Milne asked for their thoughts on the impact on small communities like Brae, Voe and Mossbank of workers coming to work and using local facilities at the detriment to locals and the HGVs used for the construction damaging the roads. Mr A Kelly said damage to the roads is good feedback and will be looked at. In terms of workers mistreating local resources, they have heard about lawbreaking and they have taken immediate action to remove them from the site. It is part of their induction process about staff behaviour. They visited Sellaness earlier this year to look at options so hotel rooms were not booked out by workers. They are looking at whether they build similar or use Sellaness if it is running down. Mr J Alexander said they are also looking at investment in facilities in the local area.

Ms A Manson wants to know why they will not bury the cables instead of pylons. She knows they are more expensive but can this not be built into the project and bury the cables as people will not put up with pylons. They will destroy the environment; they will be an eyesore. Mr A Kelly responded by stating underground cable has an environmental impact and peat is protected in law and they need to comply with the law and avoid peat where possible. Ms A Manson asked if this was a new law as it was not in place when they constructed the windmills and roads on top of the hills. Mr A Kelly said it was not new but it was allowed if they could demonstrate and justify that there was no other option they need to restore peat. He went on to say as well as underground cable having an environmental impact, all lines can fail and if the cable is underground it is much more difficult to detect a fault. They need to find the fault first and it gives a 100m range for a fault therefore 100m would need dug up to find the fault. Underground cable is more expensive too. They will be putting cables underground in specific sensitive areas eg. Voe.

Mr A Cooper asked if they were installing pylons or trident poles. Mr A Kelly said the options they had were wooden trident poles which are sited in Tingwall Valley which are 18m tall and those cannot carry

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the electrical capacity that this network needs. Steel trident poles are two meters taller and can carry thicker conductor wires and can carry a much heavier capacity of current. The other option would be steel lattice towers or pylons which are 45m tall and 4 legged structures. There is a much higher capacity for the pylons. They could replace four rows of steel trident poles can be by one row of steel lattice towers. Steel trident poles need to be 80m apart and steel lattice towers would be 250m apart.

Mr V Clark asked what their preferred route for pylons would be. Mr A Kelly said they do not have a preferred option at this time.

MOP asked how workers would be commuting and locals having issues getting to and from the, mainland due to reduced capacity. Mr A Kelly said they have a logistics team and they look at that. They have had discussions about capacity on inter island ferry to Yell, not so much to and from the Scottish Mainland. Ms T Groat said they did charter flights for the Kergord project and this could be done again.

Mr M Naylor is part of Voe Community Development Association and they have been trying to get speed limits through Voe reduced. It is a 50mph speed limit and have families and children in the village. The Shetland Island Council did a survey and found almost 80% of HGVs exceeded to 40mph speed limit. Resources are limited in Shetland and SSEN were able to get the speed limits reduced during construction phase of Kergord. He would like SSEN to understand that during the next phase they are such a large company coming to an island with limited resources and are they willing to work with SIC and declare you will allocate funding to help reduce speed limits, bus stops, pedestrian crossings, pavement widening. He would like to know if SSEN they were aware of the statistics, and will they be allocating funding directly to the SIC roads. Mr A Kelly was not aware of the statistics but very grateful he is aware now. They will talk internally about it but cannot commit to funding tonight but he will commit to talking to Shetland Island Council to see what they can do. There are two options, one the community benefit fund and there is the process of submitting planning application where they need to do a traffic management plan and could at that point talk about road and infrastructure upgrades. On their construction sites there is trackers on the vehicles and strict speed limits. Mr J Alexander said safety is top priority. He will connect with Mr M Naylor after the meeting.

Ms A Ratter wanted to add cycle lanes to the infrastructure. Mr A Kelly said it's something to consider if they are digging up the road anyway.

Mr A Cooper pointed out that if the hub will be at Sullom Voe a lot of the materials can be brought in by boat but the issue is with the quarries. Trucks are paid per tonne per mile so its in their interest to get as much in as quickly as possible because they make more money. These trucks need to come through Brae. They need to look at how it is contracted. Mr A Kelly says one of the challenges they have is that they are a very considerate client. Their main contractors are chosen well and the problems arise as the contractors filter down into smaller contractors and they lose visibility. They need to make sure it filters down chain. Ms T Groat said the new logistics team which wants to have more control over smaller contractors.

Ms E Ratter would like to know why we need so much of this in Shetland, is there anywhere else in Scotland that has as many wind turbines per head of population. She welcomed the consultation but noted it is going to come no matter what we say and thinks there needs to be a good benefit for those in Shetland. Mr A Kelly said it is happening elsewhere but not to the extent it is in Shetland. There is a lot of interest in Shetland and the seas around it. SSEN does not control the projects but SSEN Transmission provides the cables and infrastructure to allow the companies to proceed with their projects but they are legally obliged to connect them up. It is not necessarily all happening, they still need planning permission, if Shetland Island Council refuse, then they can appeal to the Scottish Government. Mr A Cooper asked if the local authority the ultimate decision maker unless it goes to appeal or is the local authority a consultee for a decision by the Scottish Government. Mr J Alexander said they are regulated by Ofgem at a UK level and energy is not devolved to Scottish Government, however Certain aspects in terms of planning sits with the Scottish Government and the subset of this sits with the local authority and depending on the nature of the application they will be part of the process directly or a consultee in the process. He thinks what would be helpful would be making available the real-world examples of the types of applications they have submitted elsewhere and the process they went through to give us the opportunities to make our voices known and the process they need to go through too.

Ms A Manson asked if anyone here thought it was fair that we were going to have to go through all this construction and still pay the highest energy costs in the country. Mr A Kelly said it was not a question for SSEN Transmission and Mr A Cooper said it was a question for Ofgem.

Mr A Cooper asked if Arwen and Stoura cable will land at Toft, Mossbank area then why can they not look at the Toft Camp. The infrastructure is there already, roads, water etc, so would that not be an ideal landing area for the Northern Substation Hub. Mr A Kelly said they have been there for a look and the

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other camp at Firth. He is not keen due to it being on top of a hill. Mr A Hall said it was there before, it would be nothing new.

Mr A Cooper wants to know how much power supply is needed to convert to Hydrogen for Statkraft and Enquest. Do they know at this stage the demand those two processes will require. Sullom Voe has limited life and we need to secure the future for young people in Shetland. Mr A Kelly said Sullom Voe have not published what they are doing. Statkraft have and they are looking at 400MW in the first phase and 1.3GW in phase three.

Mr V Clark asked what they know about Viking two and three. Mr A Kelly has no knowledge of this.

Mr A cooper would like to see a legacy in the community of building new graveyards in Shetland communities where graveyards are full. Mr A Kelly will take it and come back to us.

Ms E Macdonald said the community would like a new ferry for Yell from the benefit fund.

Ms T Groat asked if the clerk could pass on her contact details. Mr E Smith has asked if they can update their website.

Mr A Cooper thanked SSEN Transmission representatives for coming and discussing the project with us. This concluded the special meeting.