



# Public & Stakeholder Consultation Plan

Department Permitting Doc.  
2014.12.16\_NorthConnect\_PER\_REP\_Public Consultation Plan\_V2  
Last approval: 2014.12.16

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# NorthConnect: Public & Stakeholder Consultation Plan

## 1 Executive Summary

NorthConnect is a commercial Joint Venture (JV) established to develop, build, own and operate a 1400MW High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) 'interconnector'. The interconnector will provide an electricity transmission link between Scotland and Norway. The interconnector will allow electricity to be transmitted in either direction across the North Sea.

This consultation plan sets out the Public and Stakeholder Engagement approach to support the planning application for the construction of an Interconnector Converter Station on the 'Fourfields' site and High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cables connecting the Converter Station to the Peterhead Substation.

The Consultation Plan:

- Identifies the objectives and scope of the proposed engagement;
- Outlines the consenting procedure for the development;
- Identifies the key stakeholders;
- Outlines the process for engagement;
- Considers different engagement methods that identifies those that will be utilised;
- Defines how comments will be recorded and reported; and
- Proposes structures for engagement with key stakeholders following the planning submission.

## 2 Project Summary and Information

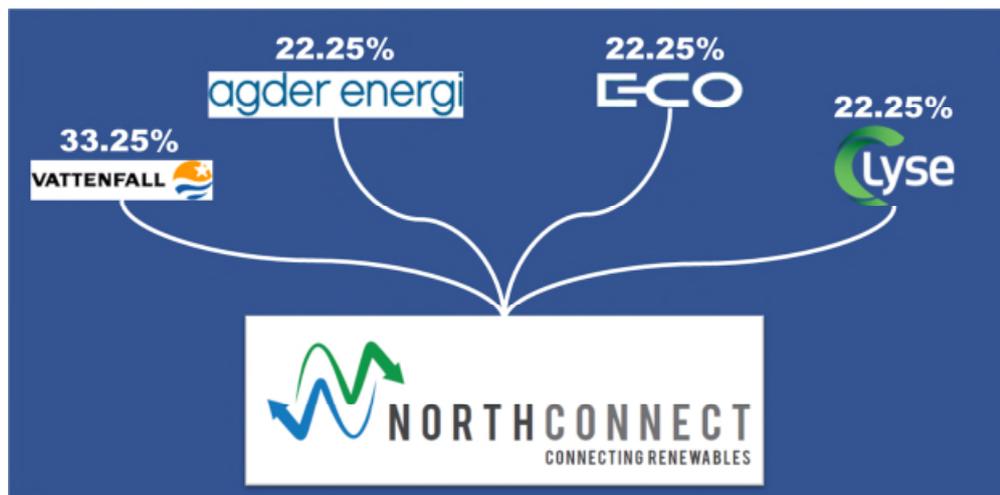
### 2.1 NorthConnect Joint Venture

NorthConnect is a commercial Joint Venture (JV) established to develop, build, own and operate a 1400MW High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) 'interconnector'. The interconnector will provide an electricity transmission link between Scotland and Norway. The interconnector will allow electricity to be transmitted in either direction across the North Sea.

The drivers for the NorthConnect interconnector include:

- Security of Supply
- Move to a Low Carbon Future
- Energy Market Integration
- Reduced Risk to Consumers

The JV partners comprise four owner companies: Vattenfall UK, Agder Energi, E-CO and Lyse. Figure 2.1 shows the division of shareholding.



**Figure 2.1: NorthConnect Joint Venture Partners**

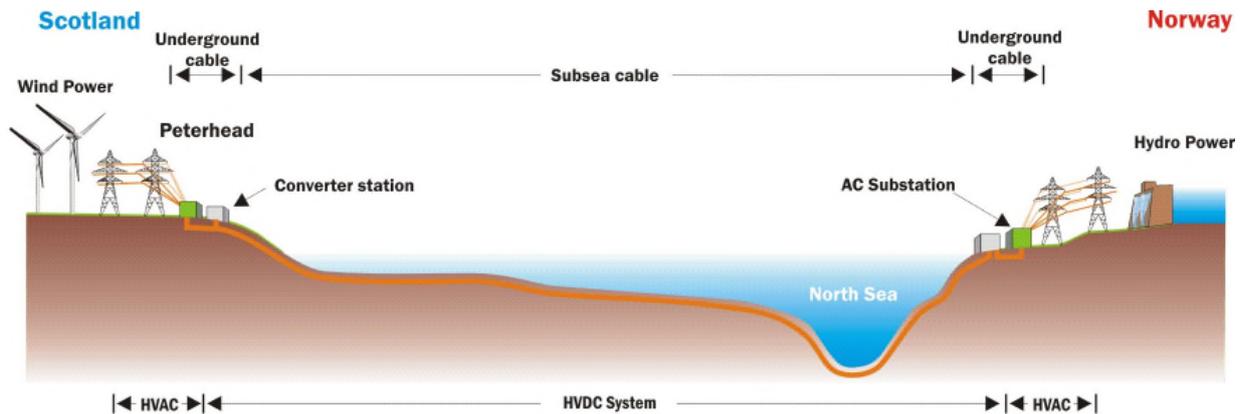
### 2.2 Project Description

The project comprises the following main components:

- High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) connections from existing substations in Peterhead and Simadalen to new interconnector converter stations (Drawing 3013).
- Onshore interconnector converter stations located near Peterhead, Aberdeenshire and Simadalen in Norway along with associated infrastructure.
- Onshore underground cabling requirements from landfall to converter stations.
- Landfall sites at Longhaven and Simadalen.
- Subsea interconnector between the UK and Norway.

The interconnector utilises HVDC as Direct Current (DC), as it is subject to less transmission loss than Alternating Current (AC). The converter stations are required to allow AC electricity to be converted to DC for exporting, and for the imported power to be converted from DC back to AC, so that it can be utilised by the national grid systems. The interconnector has a design life of 60 years.

Figure 2.2 shows the main components of the NorthConnect project.



**Figure 2.2: Scheme Components**

## 2.3 Current Scope

The scope of the initial planning application and hence this element of the consultation process is limited to:

- The Interconnector Converter Station including services, auxiliary buildings and parking, to be situated at Fourfields; south of Peterhead.
- The HVAC Cable from the Interconnector Converter Station to the boundary of Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Ltd's (SHE-Transmission) land; where the substation connection will be made.
- The access road to the converter station.
- Temporary construction requirements.
- Associated landscaping.
- Service connections.

### 2.3.1 Converter Station – Fourfields

The Fourfields site is approximately 2.6km south of the outskirts of Peterhead; 4.5km south of Peterhead town center; and 1km southwest of the village of Boddam.

The Fourfields site was so named as it is made up of four fields, the corners of which meet at NK119412 (Drawing 3011). The Fourfields site covers an area of approximately 20ha.

The Fourfields site is located to the south of Lendrum Terrace and Highfield, west of the Den of Boddam, Sandfordhill and Denhead and east of the Hill of Boddam and the Quarry.

The proposal is to position the converter station primarily within the north east field, although it will extend slightly into the north east and south east field also, the remainder of the site would then be appropriately landscaped, to minimise the landscape and visual impact of the building.

### 2.3.2 HVAC Cable Route

The proposed route for the HVAC cable route is along the northern edge of the Fourfields site, past Highfield, into the fields on the west side of the Highfield access road. The cables would then run due north, parallel to the access track, and then along the west side of the unnamed road past Denend, with the cable then passing under the road somewhere between Denend and Haitland. It would finally continue to follow northward, on the east side of the unnamed road, before cutting east, to connect into a proposed 400kV extension to the

Peterhead Substation (Drawing 3011). Note that the proposed substation extension is planned by another party, and is not subject to this Scoping Report, or the NorthConnect project.

The exact routing will be determined through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, and take account of environmental, technical and wayleave issues.

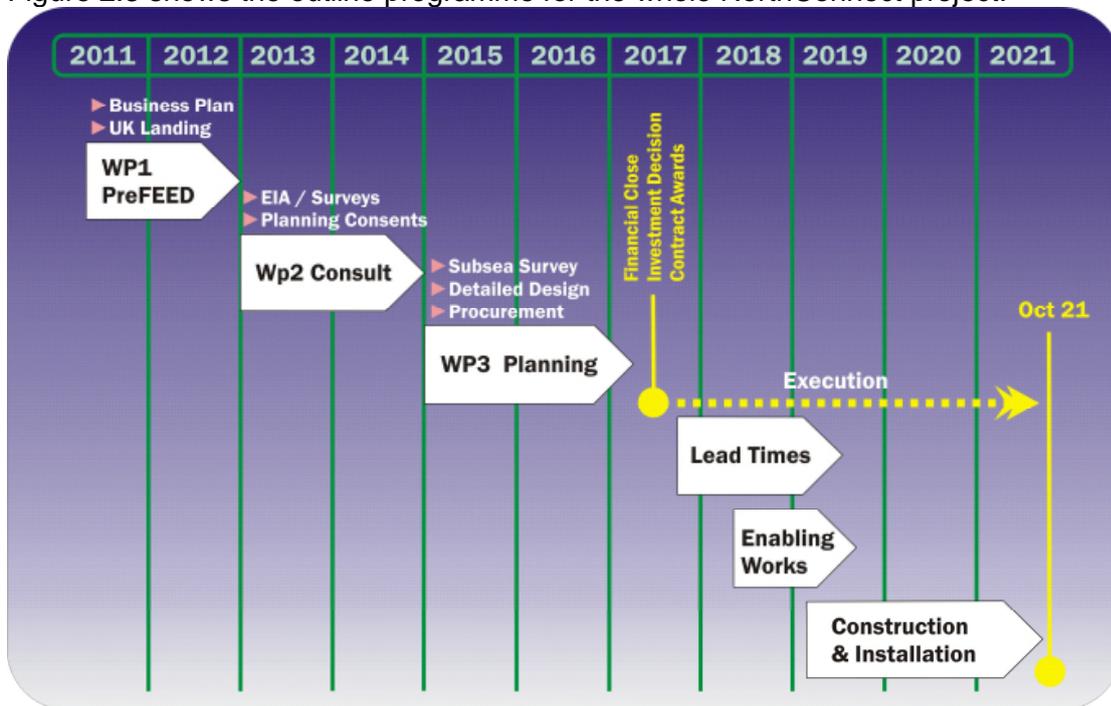
### 2.3.3 Access Road

NorthConnect are in discussion with Breedon Aggregates with regard to gaining access, through the existing quarry access roads to the east of the site. There is likely to be a need to improve the road, including the junction with the A90.

The delivery of large components by sea into Peterhead could then be brought south down the A90, to the improved quarry junction and taken the short distance to the site, minimising the impact on public highways.

## 2.4 Project Programme

Figure 2.3 shows the outline programme for the whole NorthConnect project.



**Figure 2.3: Project Programme**

It can be seen that the project is currently seeking to ensure the onshore (HVAC Cable and Converter Station) permits (consents) for the UK by early 2015. A programme constraint for the project connected with the Norwegian Energy Act, is preventing the project from undertaking subsea surveys at the present time, hence the offshore (HVDC Cable) consents for the project will not commence until the middle of 2015. This phased approach has been discussed and agreed with Aberdeenshire Council, Marine Scotland and the Scottish Government.

The HVDC Cable will be subject to consultation during its permitting process and as such is not included within these plans.

## **3 Engagement Strategy**

### ***3.1 Overview***

The proposed development will have the potential to interact with existing social, cultural, aesthetic and environmental setting. It is therefore vital that the organisations, communities and individuals in the local vicinity and further afield whom have an interest in the project are able to be involved in the development.

As part of the Environmental Scoping process [1] opportunities have been identified to enhance the area around the development for the benefit of the local community and the environment, as such NorthConnect are keen to involve stakeholders in the initial design process.

### ***3.2 Engagement Principles***

The consultation and engagement strategy is founded on sound principles and best practice drawn from the organisations professional experience as well as Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery – A Practical Guide to Better Engagement in Planning in Scotland, 2011).

### ***3.3 Engagement Objectives***

NorthConnect wants to work with all stakeholders (organisations, individuals and communities) who have an interest in the project, whether as a result of their activities or by merit of their location. This will enable the development to benefit from the considerable experience of the stakeholders and will allow the project to develop with the involvement of those stakeholders whom it will ultimately impact on.

This public and stakeholder Consultation Plan seeks to outline the engagement activities that NorthConnect plans to undertake with all its stakeholders, including the general public (sometimes referred to as the “community”).

NorthConnect's objectives in relation to the engagement process can therefore be summarised as follows:

- To incorporate input from stakeholders into the design process, with particular regard to landscaping and use of the Fourfields area.
- To fulfill planning obligations.
- To achieve best practice in engagement (including applying Planning Aid for Scotland's SP=EED criteria).

### ***3.4 Engagement Definitions***

Stakeholder engagement comprises two main elements; communication and consultation. These terms can be defined as follows:

- **Communication:** Keeping stakeholders fully informed on the progress of the development and educating them about: the relevant processes involved and the project itself so that they can make informed decisions regarding the proposal. This is typically a one way process.

- Consultation: Providing information/options and discussing these with stakeholders, thereby giving them the opportunity to influence the design of the development. This is an interactive and iterative process which involves listening and being responsive.
- Engagement: A combination of communication and consultation.

### ***3.5 Stages of Engagement***

It is proposed that the engagement activities will take place at key milestones during the project's development and will follow the established pattern outlined below:

- Identify: identification of stakeholders;
- Communicate: provide appropriate information to stakeholders;
- Consult: discussing issues which influence the final design of the development;
- Communicate again: provide information to stakeholders detailing the results of consultation;
- Record: throughout the engagement it will be important to systematically capture the views and opinions of all stakeholders.

### ***3.6 Main Design Areas to be Consulted On***

The engagement programme will focus on the aesthetics of the interconnector convertor station and the landscaping of the Fourfields site. NorthConnect wish to understand how the community would wish to utilise the Fourfields area; outwith the converter station site. This will allow stakeholders desires to be incorporated into the design, wherever possible taking account of technical and environmental constraints.

Once installed the HVAC cable route will be returned to its previous use; primarily agricultural as such there is no scope for stakeholder input.

The proposed access route is via an existing road, all be it with upgrades to meet load requirements, this affords little scope for stakeholder input to the design process.

## 5 Consenting Procedure

### 5.1 Scottish Planning Policy

The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and associated secondary legislation make provisions for enhancing opportunities for people to get involved in the planning system. The Government's policy on community engagement is further set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and in Planning Circulars 1/2009: Development Planning and 4/2009: Development Management Procedures.

Scottish Government advice and information on technical planning matters is contained in specific Planning Advice Notes (PANs) including PAN 3/2010 Community Engagement. PAN 3/2010 provides advice to developers on ways of effectively engaging with communities on planning matters and links directly to the National Standards for Community Engagement. It also endorses Planning aid for Scotland's SP=EED framework.

### 5.2 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework for Scotland 3 [2] sets out the Scottish Government's development vision for Scotland. The NPF3, published in June 2014, guides Scotland's spatial development to 2030 by identifying national developments, other strategically important development opportunities in Scotland, and setting out strategic development priorities to support the Scottish Government's central purpose of promoting sustainable economic growth.

NPF3 recognises the commitment from the Scottish Government with the continued expansion of renewable energy development by stating:

*'We [the Scottish Government] have seized the opportunities arising from our ambition to be a world leader in low carbon energy generation, both onshore and offshore...'*

*'We want to meet at least 30% of overall energy demand from renewables by 2020 – this includes generating the equivalent of at least 100% of gross electricity consumption from renewables, with an interim target of 50% by 2015.'*

A priority for the Scottish Government in terms of carbon emissions is stated in the NPF3 as follows:

*'Our ambition is to achieve at least an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.'*

The Government's spatial strategy shows where there will be opportunities for investment in the low carbon economy and improved connections across the country. Within the section 'A low carbon place' the Scottish Government identify Peterhead area as an important National Renewables Infrastructure Plan (NRIP) site and Energy Hub. The reasons why the area is given such relevance are according to NPF3:

- Conversion of the existing Peterhead power station to provide Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS).
- Area being the landfall point for an international North Sea interconnector.

- Development of the Energetica corridor where energy-driven opportunities are being used to focus investment.

A number of key National Developments are identified in NPF3 as needed to help deliver the Scottish Government spatial strategy. 'An Enhanced High Voltage Energy Transmission Network' is needed to facilitate renewable electricity development and its export. It is stated in the NPF3 that:

*'Key connections include links to Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, and interconnectors to emerging international grid networks'.*

It needs to be noted that the spatial strategy set in the NPF3 document emanates from the previous National Planning Framework (NPF2) [26] in which the need for a North Sea subsea grid connection between Scotland and other northern North Sea countries was recognised and Peterhead was highlighted as a key area suitable for a potential subsea energy network.

### ***5.3 The Planning and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process***

The scale of the project (>0.5ha) is such that it potentially falls within Category 10 (Infrastructure Projects) of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011. NorthConnect are therefore undertaking an EIA.

The scope and terms of reference for the project have been established through a Scoping Report which has been produced and submitted to Aberdeenshire Council, whom have provided a response. The EIA process is underway, the outcome of which will be reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will be submitted in conjunction with the planning application.

### ***5.4 Permitting the HVDC Cable***

The HVDC cable will require planning consent for the section between the convertor station and the Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS), the section between the Mean High Water Spring (MHWS) and the boundary of UK waters will require a Marine License. The applications for these will be supported by a voluntary ES and will be subject to public consultation as required under The Marine Licensing (Pre-application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

## 6 Consultees

NorthConnect has identified the following key groups and individuals to be consulted regarding this stage of the project. This list is not exhaustive and we welcome feedback in this regard regarding any additional individuals or groups which should be considered.

- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategy Development Plan Team
- Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group
- Aberdeenshire Council – Environmental Protection
- Aberdeenshire Council – Paths and Outdoor Access
- Aberdeenshire Council – Planning and Environmental Services
- Aberdeenshire Council – Roads Department
- BEAR Scotland Ltd
- Boddam Community Association
- Boddam Community Council
- Boddam Estates (Land Owner)
- Breedon Aggregates (Quarry owners)
- British Telecom Network Radio Protection
- British Trust for Ornithology
- Cable and Wireless
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Department of Energy and Climate Change
- Eastern HVDC Link
- Energetica
- Health and Safety Executive
- Historic Scotland
- Historic Scotland
- Landowners
- Marine Scotland
- Ministry of Defense
- MP/MSPs (constituency and regional)
- National Air Traffic Services
- North East Scotland Bat Group
- North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
- North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- North East Scotland Raptor Study Group
- Peterhead Port Authorities
- Relevant Banff and Buchan Councillors
- RSPB (Scotland)
- Scottish Badgers
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish European Green Energy Centre
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Wildlife Trust

- SHETL
- Site Neighbours
- SSE Generation Limited
- Sustrans Scotland
- Transport Scotland

It is noted that the consultees required for the later stages of the project will differ in that it will include those with a maritime interest.

## **7 Methodology for Stakeholder Engagement**

### ***7.1 Model for Stakeholders Engagement – SP=EED***

The stakeholder management strategy will be further guided by the principles laid down in Planning Aid for Scotland’s SP=EED framework (Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery). This framework was originally published in 2008 and subsequently updated in 2011. It is derived from PAN 81 and is endorsed in the updated PAN 3/201 (which replaces PAN 81). Though neither prescriptive nor legally binding, SP=EED represents:

“...a practical guide to engagement in planning... targeted at all stakeholders in Scotland’s planning system and is designed to help design, deliver and assess the process of engagement.”

Widely recognised as an accumulation of best practice, SP=EED encourages a front-loaded engagement process in which effective stakeholder engagement commences as early as possible, before too much has been invested and/or irreversible decisions have been made.

### ***7.2 Details of the SP=EED Approach***

The SP=EED approach is based around a matrix describing eight criteria for effective engagement, with three levels of achievement for each criterion. The levels relate to giving information, consulting and listening, and operating in partnership with stakeholders. It is worth noting that while achieving Level 3 (or even Level 2) in relation to all eight criteria may be a realist aspiration for certain types of community-led proposals or large development and regeneration projects, it is unlikely to be achievable in commercial developments such as the proposed development.

Notwithstanding the above, the SP=EED framework has been used in preparing this consultation plan with a view to:

- Planning the engagement well before the process begins;
- Explicitly stating the objectives of the process;
- Managing public expectation;
- Identifying suitable approaches;
- Effectively managing the consultation process;
- Evaluating the learning from the experience.

Table 4 contains a summary of the SP=EED matrix:

	<b>Level 1: Giving Information</b>	<b>Level 2 (Level 1 +) Consulting &amp; Listening</b>	<b>Level 3 (Levels 1 &amp; 2+): Partnership</b>
<b>1. Transparency and Integrity</b>	The purpose of the engagement is clear and people find out about it easily.	Rights to participate are clearly explained and opportunities to express opinions are publicised.	Dialogue will take place with partners about how they will be involved in the engagement process and how their input will be used.
<b>2. Co-ordination</b>	The timetable for the engagement process will be published and relevant relationships explained.	The timetable for the engagement process will include adequate periods for meetings, public events and discussion with stakeholders.	The timetable for the engagement process will include opportunities for partners to develop their own ideas; partners will be involved in discussing how to co-ordinate actions.
<b>3. Information</b>	Information will be relevant, accurate and comprehensible to the target audience.	Information will be communicated and shared, aiming to invite feedback.	Identification, collection and dissemination of relevant new information by partners is encouraged.
<b>4. Appropriateness</b>	Information will be presented to suit its intended audience and can be accessed by all stakeholders at each stage of the process.	Engagement processes to fit the situation to be used, with opportunities for discussion and for answers to be raised and answered.	A collaborative approach to working with partners on proposals, and regular review of the engagement process.
<b>5. Responsiveness</b>	Relevant information will be provided at every stage of the process	Findings from engagement process will be analysed, disseminated, and potentially incorporated.	Partners will be offered the opportunity to present and discuss their own ideas and receive feedback.
<b>6. Inclusiveness</b>	Relevant representative groups/organisations will be identified and information will be designed and disseminated to reach them.	An emphasis will be placed on allowing the voices of seldom heard groups and those most likely to be affected to be heard.	Assistance and advice will be made available to seldom heard groups to enable them to become partners in the process; overall, a representative range of stakeholders will be consulted.
<b>7. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Distribution of information and feedback received on the engagement process will be analysed after the process is completed.	Monitoring and evaluation of the engagement process will take place on an ongoing basis.	Monitoring and evaluation processes will be devised in collaboration with stakeholders.
<b>8. Learning and Sharing</b>	Lessons from the engagement process will be identified and lead to ongoing improvements in quality.	Lessons from the engagement process will be reviewed and shared with a focus on learning and training.	The creation of creative, problem-solving culture where skills and experience are pooled, shared and enhanced.

### 7.3 Criteria for Selecting Engagement Methods

The effectiveness of any stakeholder engagement strategy is ultimately dependent upon the appropriateness and robustness of the actual methods of engagement selected. In this regard, a number of key criteria have been considered when determining which methods to employ. These are detailed in the following table:

Table 5 – Engagement Methods Selection Criteria

Criteria	Options
<b>Stage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very early stages may require more informative techniques to establish a knowledge base amongst stakeholders;</li> <li>• Subsequent stages will be more participative and interactive as the consultation seeks to canvass the views and comments of stakeholders;</li> <li>• Late stages are likely to involve further informative elements to disseminate the findings and evaluate the effectiveness of engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholders needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Support services (eg: for those with caring responsibilities)</li> </ul>
<b>Type of data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative – used for categorising, measuring, profiling.</li> <li>• Qualitative – gathering opinions, feelings, and suggestions.</li> <li>• Balance to be struck between capturing more complex, in depth responses from fewer stakeholders and less detailed input from a larger number of participants.</li> <li>• Methods of analysis and reporting to be applied to data.</li> </ul>

### 7.4 Stakeholder Involvement in Consultation Design

Although general principles of best practice in relation to effective engagement can be appropriately applied across many different situations, the best way of ensuring that the consultation approach is appropriate to a particular context is to involve stakeholders in its design. Existing stakeholders and community groups will typically be well aware of their own communication needs and have an understanding of what is likely to work in their communities.

NorthConnect invites comments for local planning authority and community council on the consultation plan design.

## 7.5 Tools for Stakeholder Engagement

For the purposes of this exercise, engagement tools have been broadly grouped into six main categories. Each category features a range of vehicles or instruments but they are essentially variations on the theme of the category. The following table summarises the different forms of engagement commonly used in this type of stakeholder engagement process and details the pros and cons of each approach.

Examples	Pros	Cons
<b>One-way communications</b>		
<b>YouTube/Social media</b>	Useful way of informing large numbers of stakeholders about the project	Not easily focused on target audiences
<b>Posters</b>		
<b>Press releases</b>	May access stakeholders not previously identified	Not interactive – participants cannot typically ask questions or supply responses
<b>Newspaper articles</b>		
<b>Television/radio</b>	Can be relatively cost-effective given the number of people reached.	Media can be perceived as being subjective
<b>Mailshots</b>		
<b>E-mails</b>		
<b>Leaflets/newsletters</b>	Media can be perceived as being objective.	
<b>Telephone information line</b>		
<b>Face-to-face, open forums/events</b>		
<b>Public meetings</b>	Potentially large numbers of participants.	Some participants can feel intimidated by peer pressure.
<b>Exhibitions</b>	Can attract stakeholders not previously identified	Strong voices can dominate and may not be representative of stakeholders as a whole.
<b>Stalls at wider community events (eg: village fetes).</b>		
<b>Open day</b>	Can be designed to be non-threatening and inclusive.	
<b>Library bus</b>	Good during communications stage.	Do not always know who has attended.
<b>Village pub</b>		Less effective during consultation stage.
<b>Face-to-face, restricted access forums</b>		
<b>Focus groups</b>	Good qualitative information can be captured	Can be costly as there may be a need to hire a venue, pay incentives and travel expenses, hire translators or child minders and send out
<b>Workshops</b>		
<b>In depth, face-to-face interviews</b>	Allows in depth discussion of issues and	

Examples	Pros	Cons
<b>Drop-in-sessions – schools</b>	resolution of problems.	teams in advance to recruit people face-to-face to attend the session.
<b>School lessons/assemblies</b>	Face to face contact ensures attendees understand issues and detailed information.	Consultation with a relatively small number of people means that information gathered may not be representative.
<b>Door-to-door</b>	Interactive nature of such discussions often stimulates respondents to develop their views and ideas.	Groups may not represent the majority opinion.
	Good way of exploring a range of subjective issues in considerable depth and can cover confidential aspects.	Not appropriate if data to be gathered is sensitive or views of respondents are likely to be too diverse.
	Allow detailed analysis of a complex situation to be conducted addressing attitudes and motivations.	Time consuming.
		High potential for interviewer bias when recording responses.
<b>Non-face-to-face, restricted surveys</b>		
<b>Postal surveys</b>	Allows a large number of participants to be contacted relatively inexpensively.	Respondents are not able to seek clarification regarding question content.
<b>Email/online surveys</b>		
<b>Telephone interviews</b>		
<b>Opinion polls</b>	Participants can complete questionnaires in their own time; often delivering higher response rate.	Not a good way of obtaining large amounts of qualitative data such as detailed insights into attitudes.
	Not subject to interviewer error through inaccurate recording of responses.	Contact details can be difficult to obtain and data collection requires degree of technical expertise.
	Responses are more likely to be based on individual opinion rather than guided by the group.	

Examples	Pros	Cons
<b>Non-face-to-face, open forums</b>		
<b>Social. Networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)</b>	Allows access to otherwise hard to reach groups.	Not accessible to all  Can be difficult to manage/control.
<b>Telephone information line</b>	Inexpensive way of communicating with large numbers of people  Can be interactive and allow dialogue with stakeholders.	

## **8 Tools Selected for Stakeholder Engagement**

### ***8.1 Overview***

This section details the methods of stakeholder engagement that have been selected to fulfil the objectives of the consultation plan during the lifetime of the pre-application stage of the project. Discussion around the engagement programme will be held in parallel to the implementation of the plans initial activities.

The results of each engagement activity will be monitored to ensure that the engagement programme meets or exceeds agreed standards. Consistent reporting techniques will be utilised throughout to ensure that the output can be compared.

### ***8.2 Face to Face Targeted Meetings***

Face to Face meetings will be carried out as and when required with Aberdeenshire Council, their statutory consultees, landowners, residents closest to the development and others as deemed appropriate.

### ***8.3 Remote Briefings***

In order to provide a broad audience with the necessary information to express views and opinions on the project, remote briefings will be made and distributed directly and indirectly to stakeholders.

This has already been completed in the form of pamphlet and questionnaire which was distributed to residents in Boddam, Longhaven, Lendrum Terrace and rural properties in the vicinity of the development. The pamphlet provided an overview of the project, the questionnaire had specific regard to the landscaping and use of the Fourfields site and aesthetics of the converter station. In addition there was an option to get involved in a workshop see Section 7.5.

The pamphlet and questionnaire, was also made available electronically via the NorthConnect website. The pamphlet drop was accompanied by a press release and advertisement in the Buchan Observer, which will signpost the website for the full flier and questionnaire.

The website will be updated throughout the project and include all information presented to the public via other media.

A newsletter will be distributed and advertised in the same way as the initial pamphlet and questionnaire, at the beginning of February at least one week prior to public exhibition (see Section 7.6). The newsletter will provide a brief project update and invite people to visit the public exhibition.

### ***8.4 Questionnaire Responses***

All those that returned the questionnaire and asked to attend the workshop, were invited to attend (although not all did). To date a total of 50 questionnaires have been returned from the ~900 delivered. The questionnaire results and input from the workshop are being utilised along with the output of the workshop discuss to inform the aesthetics and landscape design process.

## **8.5 Workshop**

A workshop was held between 6 and 9pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November at the Buchan Braes Hotel. The workshop format was as follows:

- A presentation providing:
  - An Introduction to NorthConnect.
  - A summary of the site selection process.
  - An overview of the main project elements.
  - The timescales for the project.
  - Detailing the specific objectives of the workshop.
- The attendees were then split into 4 groups, each group discussed 4 questions:
  -
- A summing up of the question responses for all.
- An opportunity to ask further questions.

Materials utilised during the workshop included the presentation, photo montages of potential design options, photo's of landscape and building design elements for consideration, maps and a summary of the questionnaire responses recieved to that point.

## **8.6 Public Exhibition**

A Public Exhibition is planned for the 26th of February, 2015 between 2pm and 8pm at the Buchan Brae Hotel. It will be advertised in the Buchan Observer, there will be a press release issued and poster put up in the Buchan and Longhaven area in addition to the newsletter delivered to local residents.

The event will include an afternoon and evening sessions to allow as many people as possible the opportunity to attend. The exhibition will take the form of display boards, with relevant members of the NorthConnect team on hand to explain them and to discuss the project. Feedback will be gained verbally and by asking people to complete feedback forms.

Copies of the display material and feedback forms will be made available on the website.

## **9 Stakeholder Engagement and Collateral**

### **9.1 Overview**

Communication is a critical first stage in the engagement process and it is vital that the associated stakeholder engagement collateral is devised and maintained appropriately and consistently. This section describes the materials to be developed and produced by NorthConnect which will be used during the engagement process. Different stakeholders will have interests in different aspects of the project, and materials will be drafted to reflect this variety.

### **9.2 Information Sources**

NorthConnect plans to communicate with stakeholders through the following information sources during the lifetime of the consultation process:

- Leaflets and flyers (providing details of the proposals and promoting specific events);
- Posters (as above);
- Exhibition materials (storyboards to be displayed at public events);
- Project web pages;
- Press releases/newspaper articles.

### **9.3 Content of Information Sources**

To avoid confusing and conflicting messages, close attention will be paid to ensuring that all content of information sources is consistent and accurate. While each tool may play a different role in the communications strategy, overall themes will be replicated and these will not be contradictory.

It is anticipated that the leaflets, flyers, posters and press releases will typically take the role of signposting stakeholders to the other sources of information such as the website and public exhibitions. The exhibitions will provide more detailed information including:

- The project need.
- The site selection process.
- An overview of the project components.
- The site layout and design.
- Environmental topics such as:
  - Landscape and Visual Effects
  - Noise and Vibration
  - Archaeology
  - Ecological Impacts

Achieving a robust level of participation is heavily reliant on effectively publicising the consultation processes and activities. NorthConnect will issue regular press releases announcing details of specific events and providing updates on the proposal's progress. The main advertising media will be the Buchan Observer, this will be

augmented as appropriate following discussions with the Aberdeenshire Council and Buchan Community Council. Adverts will also be placed on local notice boards prior to the public exhibitions.

In addition to the above, it is proposed that mailshots will be promoting the public exhibitions to the local communities of Boddam, Longhaven and rural properties in and around the converter station and cable route.

## 10 Reporting & Recording

### 10.1 Data collection

Data will be collected through a variety of channels including questionnaires, face-to-face feedback and online submissions. It is important that data is recorded in a consistent format to allow comparisons and quantitative summaries to be made.

### 10.2 Stakeholder Database

A stakeholder database will be established to record contact details of anyone who wishes to be kept apprised of the proposal's evolution. This will be maintained and employed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and will solely be used to provide information about the proposed project.

### 10.3 Recording Feedback & Queries

In addition to the above, it is necessary to devise a system of recording the collected data which will trigger a response process so that NorthConnect is able to consider all responses received and act accordingly. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of comments and queries will be obtained through the public events, either through the questionnaire that participants will be asked to complete or in the form of face-to-face discussions between project staff and attendees. Project staff will therefore be provided with standardised forms where they can record an outline of any discussions they have held with stakeholders. These forms will also be used to record telephone or email comments and the data collected will be entered into the same database as the questionnaire responses.

### 10.4 Responding to Feedback & Queries

NorthConnect has appointed a point of contact to take responsibility for disseminating received feedback and ensuring that it is responded to accordingly. In this regard, it is not expected that all comments will require personal responses (and many may be submitted confidentially) but instead NorthConnect (PACC) Report to respond to issues raised through the consultation and report back to stakeholders.

### 10.5 Engagement Audit

It is proposed that the engagement process will be audited prior to submitting the PACC Report to ensure that the engagement objectives have been achieved. In this regard, it is anticipated that NorthConnect will measure the extent to which the engagement process has fulfilled the requirements of the SP=EED framework.

### 10.6 Pre-application Consultation with Communities (PACC) Report

It is intended that information about the final proposal, as submitted to Aberdeenshire Council will be published at the time the planning submission is made. Detailed documents will include the Environmental Statement and the Pre-application Consultation with Communities (PACC) Report.

The Pre-application Consultation with Communities (PACC) Report, or equivalent, has become an increasingly important document in the planning system and aims to ensure that the consenting authority has assurance that the developer, prior to a planning application being submitted, has undertaken consultation effectively.

The Pre-application Consultation with Communities (PACC) Report document will allow stakeholders to review the engagement process, identify how consultation has

influenced the project, and understand how and why decisions about the development proposals have been reached.

This Pre-application Consultation with Community's (PACC) Report will include:

- Details of stakeholder and community consultation
- A list of everyone consulted
- A summary of the discussions with consultees
- Details of how the proposal has changed throughout the engagement programme
- A summary of issues that have been raised and how they have been addressed, describing whether action has been taken, or if none has been taken the rationale for that decision
- An analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data collated throughout the engagement process.

## 11 Post Application

### 11.1 On-going Engagement

This document has focused on pre-application stakeholder engagement. Although consultation with stakeholders becomes the responsibility of statutory bodies after the application is submitted. NorthConnect will continue to work closely with stakeholders and with Aberdeenshire Council while the formal application is being considered.

### 11.2 Learning & Sharing

At an appropriate stage following submission of the planning application, it is proposed that an informal debrief be conducted with the NorthConnect team. This will identify lessons for the engagement process and to facilitate the transfer of key engagement skills and techniques to the NorthConnect staff.

### 11.3 Project Contact

For more information contact: [Fiona.Henderson@NorthConnect.no](mailto:Fiona.Henderson@NorthConnect.no), or call Fiona on 07773353399

Comments on the proposal are invited and may be given at the above events or in writing to:

Freepost RTKY-CSZT-UXGY  
NorthConnect  
Lochview of Duntelchaig  
Farr  
Inverness  
IV2 6AW

## 12 References

- The Scottish Government, 2014. Scotland's Third National Planning Framework.
- The Scottish Government, 2009. National Planning Framework for Scotland