



Scottish Power Energy Networks
Dumfries and Galloway Kendoon to Tongland Strategic Reinforcement Project

I am writing to you on behalf of the GSA Biosphere in relation to your ongoing public consultation regarding the proposed strategic reinforcement project between Kendoon and Tongland within Dumfries and Galloway.

The GSA Biosphere is an international UNESCO designation and the first in Scotland to receive this accolade, it covers an area some 5200Sq Kms in the South West of Scotland, the proposed routes identified within this reinforcement project are located solely within the Biosphere boundary. The GSA Biosphere acknowledges the rationale behind the requirements to upgrade the section of network identified, and accept that the proposals are much improved on the original consultation.

- The GSA Biosphere feel that given the international status and value of the Biosphere designation the area should be given the same level of protection on infrastructure projects that is afforded to National Parks, and we would highlight the recent examples of underground cable installation in the Lake District.
- In addition we would like to see consideration given to other technical options to reduce and minimise the environmental and visual impact such as an underwater cable down the length of Loch Ken rather than above ground, the creation and upgrading of the network will have a negative impact on the regions fragile tourism sector which is already under considerable pressure.
- Any upgrading of the infrastructure within the Biosphere must be monitored by an external independent body to ensure that the impacts of the proposed work are kept to a minimum and that any reinstatement resulting from the works is undertaken to a suitably high quality.
- Finally the GSA Biosphere would like to see links made to the aspirations of the Galloway Glens HLF Project which may be affected by the scope and scale of the reinforcement project

The Biosphere is not against appropriate development and recognises the need for upgrading transmission networks to create a locally smart network that is able to benefit local residents and businesses, but we need to ensure that the impacts locally are outweighed by the benefits the region receives and the initial proposals put forward do not provide that reassurance at this stage.

The GSA Biosphere would reiterate the need to be part of the formal engagement and consultation process as the project develops and would seek to have a further dedicated meeting with Scottish Power Energy Networks in the near future to review activity and discuss the opportunities associated with the GSA Biosphere.

Yours sincerely

Joan Mitchell
Chair of the Biosphere Partnership Board