



## **Interim Public & Stakeholder Communication Plan**

Department Permitting Doc.

2015.08.13\_NorthConnect\_PER\_REP\_Interim Public Communication Plan\_A

Last approval:

Date: 2015.08.13	By: Fiona Henderson	Control: Jason Ormiston	Approved by: Øyvind Øtterson
---------------------	------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------------------

# 1 Contents

1	Executive Summary.....	3
2	Project Summary and Communication Stages.....	4
2.1	NorthConnect Joint Venture .....	4
2.2	Project Description .....	4
2.3	Planning Application Submitted 2015 .....	5
2.4	Further Planning/Marine Licensing.....	5
2.5	Procurement .....	6
2.6	Construction.....	6
2.7	Operation .....	6
3	Interim Communication Strategy.....	7
3.1	Purpose.....	7
3.2	Engagement Objectives .....	7
4	Consultees .....	8
5	Methodology for Stakeholder Engagement .....	9
5.1	Model for Stakeholders Engagement – SP=EED.....	9
6	Tools Selected for Stakeholder Engagement.....	10
6.1	Face to Face Targeted Meetings.....	10
6.2	Remote Briefings.....	10
6.3	Website .....	10
6.4	Face to Face Forums .....	10
6.5	Local Media.....	10
6.6	Supply Chain Communications .....	11
7	Stakeholder Engagement and Collateral.....	12
7.1	Overview .....	12
7.2	Information Sources .....	12
7.3	Content of Information Sources.....	12
8	Reporting & Recording .....	13
8.1	Data collection.....	13
8.2	Stakeholder Database.....	13
8.3	Recording Feedback & Queries .....	13
8.4	Responding to Feedback & Queries.....	13
9	Project Contact .....	14
10	Conclusion.....	15
11	References .....	16

## 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.

A 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, has been submitted. This was subject to Pre-Application Consultation (PAC). The High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cable route will be subject to both Planning Consent and Marine Licensing, there is a requirement for PAC to support that submission. However this process has not started. Communication plans will be in place for the construction and operational phases for the project.

This Interim Communication Plan has been developed to cover the periods where no PAC process is in place and prior to moving into the Construction Phase. Although there is no formal requirement for consultation or communication it is considered best practice to keep dialogue open with the public and stakeholders. This document has been produced to provide stakeholders visibility of the communications planned.

The Interim Communication Plan:

- Identifies the objectives and scope of the proposed engagement;
- Identifies the key stakeholders;
- Outlines the proposed communication; and
- Provides project contact details.

The stakeholder management strategy is guided by the principles laid down in Planning Aid for Scotland's Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery (SP=EED) framework [1] more information on which is included within the Public & Stakeholder Consultation Plan [2].

The need to communicate with the potential supply chain has been recognised and mechanisms have been incorporated into this plan.

## 2 Project Summary and Communication Stages

### 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.

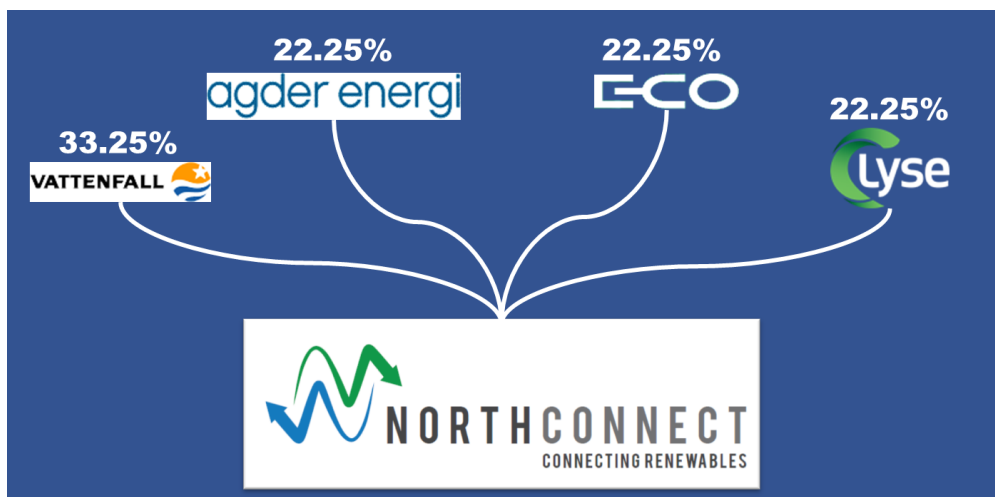


Figure 2.1: NorthConnect Joint Venture Partners

### 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.
- 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.

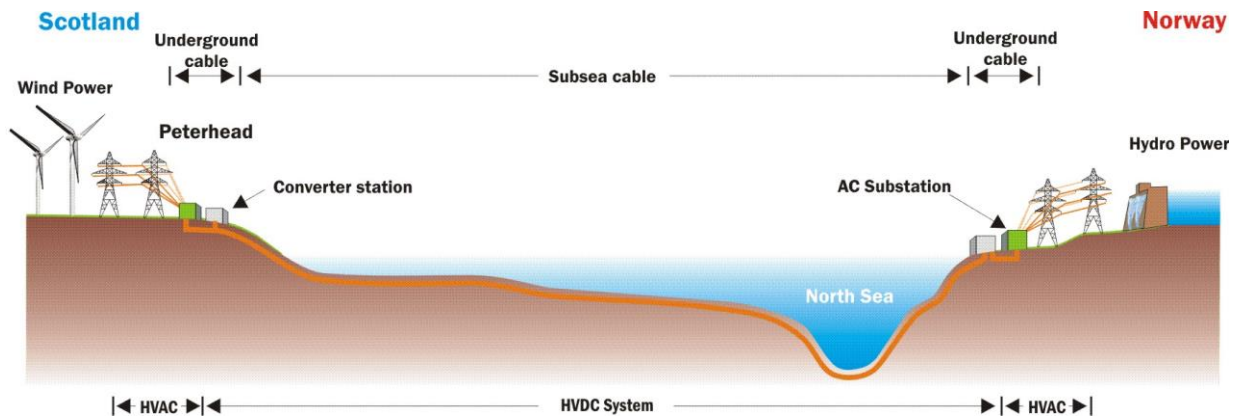


Figure 2.2: Scheme Components

### ***2.3 Planning Application Submitted 2015***

The scope of the initial planning application which was subject to Pre-Application Consultation was:

- 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.

Full details of the planning application including the Environmental Statement and Pre Application Community Consultation Report [3] can be found on the Aberdeenshire Planning Website under application number APP/2015/1121 or [www.NorthConnect.no](http://www.NorthConnect.no)

The application has been subject to public consultation as part of the planning process, it is been through a Pre-Determination Hearing stage and is currently being determined by Aberdeenshire Council, a decision is expected by the end of August 2015.

### ***2.4 Further Planning/Marine Licensing***

The HVDC Cable route will require planning for the onshore stretch from the Interconnector Converter Station in Fourfields to the Mean Low Water Spring (MLWS) and a Marine Licence for all elements below the Mean High Water Spring (MHWS).

The application will be supported by an Environmental Statement and will require Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) to be carried out under The Marine Licensing (Pre-application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2013.

A PAC Plan will be produced and implemented through the Environmental Impact Assessment process, however this will not start until mid 2016 at the earliest. The process will be similar to that utilised for the Converter Station and HVAC planning application but will seek to include marine stakeholders within the engagement process.

## ***2.5 Procurement***

NorthConnect will develop a Supply Chain Plan as it moves into the detailed design stage of the project, in addition to laying out the procurement packages it will detail the supply chain engagement strategy. This will include mechanisms to encourage and facilitate the involvement of locally sourced suppliers of many of the materials and services that will be required to construct, maintain and operate the converter station, providing this adheres to the legal frameworks for procurement. This can be carried out through:

- Holding supply chain events locally to encourage businesses to become part of the project before tendering of the main contracts take place;
- Establishing a mechanism for suppliers to register interest and make contact with other 1st Tier, 2nd Tier, etc. suppliers; not just for the direct labour and material supply, but for hotels, B&B's, catering and other areas of the 2nd, 3rd, tier supply chain;
- Structuring NCKS's procurement strategy and the 1st Tier main contract tenders so that local content is recognised and scored as part of the tenderers quality submissions;
- Establish protocols for Tier 1 supplier monitoring and reporting of the supply chain's use of local suppliers;
- Establishing a supplier forum, through the duration of construction to encourage collaborative working, maximisation of opportunities, best practice and HSE initiatives; and
- NCKS will seek to maximise the opportunities to build positive messages around the local supply chain concepts.

## ***2.6 Construction***

The need for a Communications Plan to be developed and implemented through the construction phase was identified within the Environmental Statement for the Converter Station and HVAC Cable route and it was explicitly mentioned within the Schedule of Mitigation. As such it will become part of the Construction Environmental Management Document which will be agreed with Aberdeenshire Council prior to works commencing.

If consented a communications plan will be developed by NorthConnect and the main construction contractors to ensure that local residents are kept informed about the project. Contact details will be provided to allow any concerns residents may have to be raised and dealt with in a timely manner.

## ***2.7 Operation***

Once operational the need for regular communications will reduce and as such formal communications will reduce. A communications protocol will be incorporated into the Environmental Management System to ensure that members of the public, local residents and recreational users alike can easily contact NorthConnect and that issues will be addressed promptly.

As with the construction phase the need for a communications protocol for the operational phase is identified within the Environmental Statement and included within the Schedule of Mitigation.

## **3 Interim Communication Strategy**

### ***3.1 Purpose***

The purpose of this interim communication strategy is to ensure that in the period where NorthConnect are not working to a PAC and they have not as yet produced a communications plan or protocol for construction and operations, communication with stakeholders continues.

Stakeholders need to be kept up to date with regard to the status of the project and have a route to raise any concerns they may have to allow them to be addressed in a timely manner.

### ***3.2 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, throughout its lifecycle. While there is no formal consultation process in place, it is important to ensure that the links made are maintained.

This Interim Public and Stakeholder Communications 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”), in this interim period.

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

- To ensure ongoing communication links are in place, to allow stakeholders to raise concerns and receive timely responses.
- To provide information about the project to the community prior to construction.
- To show NorthConnect’s commitment to working with the local community.

## 4 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.

- Aberdeenshire Council
- BEAR Scotland Ltd
- Boddam Community Association
- Boddam Community Council
- Boddam Estates (Land Owner)
- Breedon Aggregates (Quarry owners)
- Energetica
- Health and Safety Executive
- Historic Scotland
- Landowners
- Local Residents including Boddam and Longhaven
- Marine Scotland
- Ministry of Defense
- MP/MSPs (constituency and regional)
- Peterhead Port Authorities
- Relevant Banff and Buchan Councilors
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Scottish Water
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- SHETL
- SSE Generation Limited
- Transport Scotland
- Local businesses/supply chain

This list is kept under review and will be updated to incorporate marine consultees once the HVDC Planning and Marine Licensing process commences.



## 5 Methodology for Stakeholder Engagement

### 5.1 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.

Full details on the SP=EED approach were included within the PAC Plan for the Interconnect Converter Station and HVAC cable route [2] and as such are not repeated here. Appropriate techniques have been selected from the SP=EED Framework for interim communications.

## **6 Tools Selected for Stakeholder Engagement**

### ***6.1 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. Contact details will be provided to allow stakeholders to request meetings.

### ***6.2 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.

A pamphlet was previously produced and distributed to residents in Boddam, Longhaven, Lendrum Terrace and rural properties in the vicinity of the development. It is proposed that a pamphlet format is utilised again.

The intent would be to produce and distribute update pamphlets at regular intervals.

The pamphlets will be distributed to residents in Boddam, Longhaven, Lendrum Terrace and rural properties in the vicinity of the development. Copies will be posted or emailed to the full list of consultees identified in Section 4. Additional copies will be made available in appropriate points of distribution such as the council office and the libraries in Peterhead and Boddam.

### ***6.3 Website***

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

### ***6.4 Face to Face Forums***

If a particular stakeholder group wishes a presentation, exhibition, or question and answer session then NorthConnect would be happy to make the appropriate arrangements. We shall be contacting the local schools to make them aware that we can work with them and align information about the project to their curriculum topics if they would like us to introduce the project to the school children.

NorthConnect will send a representative to the Boddam Community Association meetings from time to time to keep them up to speed with the project as they have requested.

NorthConnect currently has a request for a meeting/question and answer session and keenly awaits proposed dates by the group.

### ***6.5 Local Media***

NorthConnect will issue press releases announcing details and providing updates on the proposal's progress, and maintain an appropriate relationship with the local media outlets.

## ***6.6 Supply Chain Communications***

NorthConnect are not at the point of requiring a supply chain for the construction and operation of the development. However, NorthConnect are already receiving enquiries from potential suppliers, prior to the Supply Chain Plan being in place an interim communications approach is required.

The following process will be implemented for suppliers making contact with a member of the NorthConnect Team:

- We will thank them for their enquiry and make them aware of the project timeframes and that the procurements process has not yet commenced.
- We will answer any non- commercially sensitive questions about the project and procurement process.
- We will collate any information provided by the supplier on their products and services.
- We will ask them if they would like to be included on our supplier communication database.

A central supplier communication database shall be maintained so at the appropriate time they can be contacted in line with the Supply Chain Plan.

## **7 Stakeholder Engagement and Collateral**

### ***7.1 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.

### ***7.2 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);
- Project web pages; and
- Local media.

### ***7.3 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 therefore proposed to align the pamphlets with the Environmental Statement Topics. The project information will not change however the form of communication will ensure a non-technical approach is used to explain the subject matter.

Each pamphlet communication will provide:

- An update on the projects status;
- Non-technical information themed around one of the Environmental Statement chapter topics to explain the issue and how NorthConnect will manage and/or mitigate the issue;
- Sign posting to [www.northconnect.no](http://www.northconnect.no) for further information; and
- Project contact details: phone number, freepost address and email address.

## **8 Reporting & Recording**

### ***8.1 Data collection***

It is important that data is recorded in a consistent format to allow comparisons and quantitative summaries to be made.

### ***8.2 Stakeholder Database***

The stakeholder database will continue to be maintained 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.

Similarly a supply chain communication database will be maintained.

### ***8.3 Recording Feedback & Queries***

Any contact made by stakeholders will be recorded to ensure an appropriate record of communications is kept.

### ***8.4 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.

## 9 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:

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

## **10 Conclusion**

NorthConnect are committed to the ongoing good communication with project stakeholders. The communication process will not therefore be limited to that required as part of the consenting processes, rather an ongoing approach to communications will be taken. If the planning application is approved this will continue from the initial consenting through construction and into the operational phase.

This Interim Public and Stakeholder Communication Plan has been produced to provide information on the communications planned. NorthConnect will keep this plan under review and will add to their engagement activities if deemed appropriate.

## 11 References

- 1) Scottish Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery – A Practical Guide to Better Engagement in Planning in Scotland, 2011
- 2) NorthConnect, Public & Stakeholder Consultation Plan, 2014.12.16\_NorthConnect\_PER\_REP\_Public Consultation Plan\_V2, 2014
- 3) NorthConnect, Pre-Application with Communities Consultation Report, 2015\_04\_01-PER\_REP\_PACC Report\_Rev1, 2015