Eastern Green Link 1 (EGL1) and Branxton Substation Site Visit Report

4 December 2025

Attended by

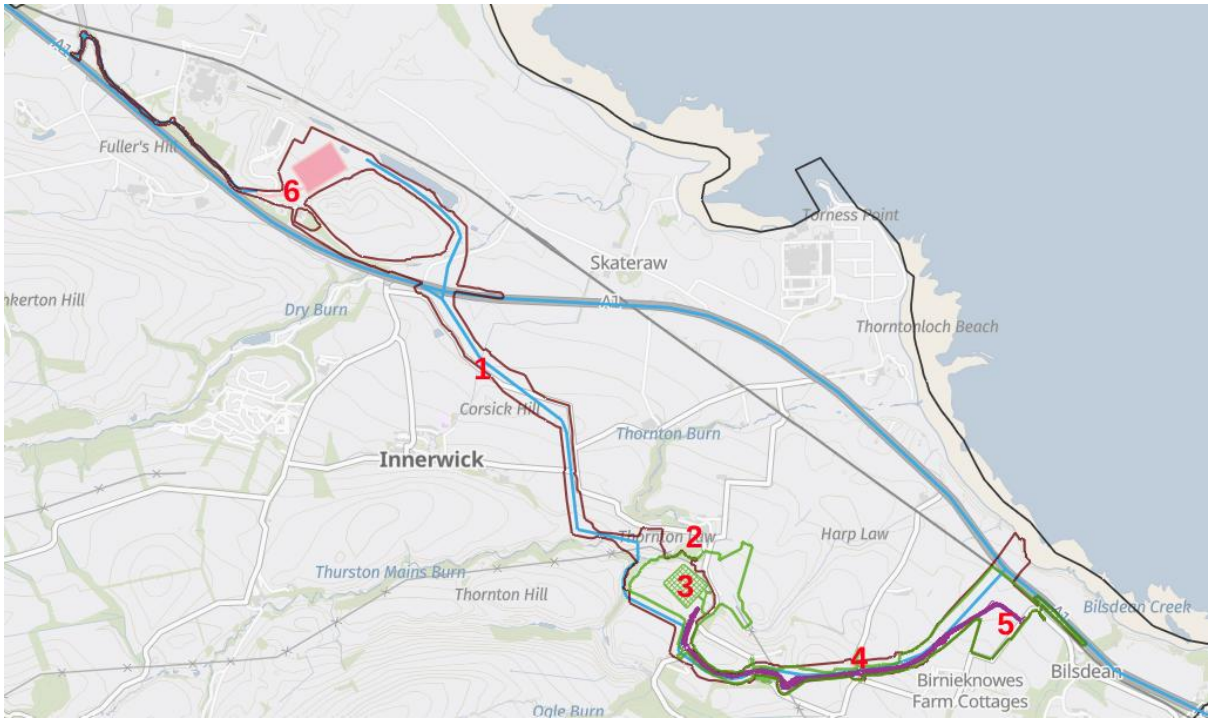
Members of the Biodiversity Community Liaison Group (BCLG) and Community Traffic and Travel Forum (CTTF): Fiona McGibbon, Ben Macnair, Philip Revell, Philip Immirzi and Beth Landon (Energy Projects Partnership Manager)

Debbie McNichol (EGL1 Community Liaison), Joana Mestre (ELG1 Biodiversity), Chris Wilson (Branxton Substation), Prysmian representatives (ELG1 cables contractor) and other specialists for each project.

Organised by Joana Mestre, Chris Wilson and Beth Landon

Purpose: for community representatives to view sites at the early stages of construction / pre-construction, to better understand impacts on traffic and biodiversity and to highlight relevant aspects of local knowledge or concern to the SP Energy Network (SPEN) teams.

Sites visited



1. Open cut water crossing and NnG cable underpass in EGL1 cable route
2. EGL1 cable Braidwood Burn crossing
3. Branxton Substation site

4. Haul road crossings
5. Bilsdean compound
6. Convertor station site

Pre- visit presentations

The group gathered for the site visits at Innerwick Old School house to view presentations on each project. A few key points of note were:

Cable route:

- 1740m hedgerow being removed and reinstated with a 5-year maintenance contract
- New woodland planting too
- Not just like for like, trying to improve
- This doesn't count as BNG as can't guarantee maintain for 30 years due to not owning the land (requirement for BNG). Land will revert back to agricultural land.
- Landowner relationships key, link to liaise with them via BCLG

Convertor station:

- Site will have BNG for cable route as well as convertor station as can maintain for 30yrs
- Ground nesting habitat
- Soil contamination found

Branxton substation

- Landscaping plan maps were presented by the landscape architect
- Chris to make these available to Beth for the Energy Developments website documents library
- BCLG reps raised the issue of multiple projects connecting to substation on BNG / relandscaping plans
- Details of connections to the substation are up to project developers
- Some gaps have been left in replanting for known connections
- At peak (2028) 80 people on site

Notes and photos from each stop

Stop 1 - open cut water crossing and NnG cable underpass in EGL1 cable route

- An open is being made to place cables under the stream bed, this will involve a temporary stop to the water flow.

- There is also a crossing place with the existing NnG (offshore windfarm) cables, where they are drilling underneath
- The haul road will be alongside the cable route.
- An ecologist will be available, e.g. for nesting bird surveys, as needed. Such surveys are valid for 48h.



Figure 1 Drilling under the NnG cable



Figure 2 Drilling under the NnG cable



Figure 3 Haul road viewed from same site as figure 1 and 2

- Blue NWH wagon spotted on the haul road – these wagons have been seen doing right turns out of the Innerwick junction onto the A1. Following the site visit this was raised with Prysmian who have informed all their site staff and subcontractors that HGVs are to turn left only out of this junction.

Stop 2 - EGL1 cable Braidwood Burn crossing

- No photos from this stop
- Community member said there was not much opportunity to input into the decision on how this crossing will work
- Chris W. said the crossing routes would be down to those responsible for cable routes (EGL1 and Berwick Bank Wind Farm) rather than the Branxton Substation team. Further clarity Is needed on the mechanics of all cables crossing here. A community member pointed out that the design of Branxton Substation dictates this to some extent.

Stop 3 - Branxton Substation site

- Chris Wilson agreed to ask for permission for geologists to examine the site after excavation was complete, to log geological information it made available.

- The biodiversity of the site was noted – this is due to it being left ungrazed in readiness for construction



Figure 4: View of existing transmission infrastructure (sealing end unit) from new substation site



Figure 5 Branxton substation site



Figure 6 Attendees viewing the substation site



Figure 7 Rock exposure being pointed out on nearby site, likely to be similar as excavations start for substation



Figure 8 Close up of rock exposure



Figure 9 Substation site fencing in place

Stop 4 – Haul road crossings

- We visited the crossing sites between the haul road and the public roads
- Banksmen (real people!) will be positioned at these crossings to manage safety at these crossings during construction hours.
- Crossings will be gated.
- Haul road has a speed restriction of 15mph and vehicle speed is tracked for compliance.

Stop 4 - Haul road crossings	



Figure 10 Haul Road

Stop 5 – Bilsdean compound

- Site to be used for temporary storage of earth taken from substation site
- Horse laybys in place, requested by the CTTF
- No photos from this stop

Stop 6 – Convertor station site

- Groundworks are underway for the convertor station site.
- Ground nesting habitat found
- Soil contamination found
- EGL1 vehicle signage seen in action – this was requested by the CTTF and is required for all vehicles entering the convertor station site. We understand that this will be implemented for the cable route site too.



Figure 4 Convertor station site viewed from access road, Viridor waste treatment centre next to it



Figure 5 Groundworks for convertor station



Figure 6 Groundworks for convertor station



Figure 7 Viewing point on access road



Figure 8 Vehicle signage implemented by EGL1 as requested by CTTF

Feeback on the site visit

Biodiversity Community Liaison Group / Community Traffic and Travel Forum feedback:

- Found it useful to uncover issues, e.g. the extent of proposed removal of vegetation from outflow from on the substation site of ~ 100m^2, when highlighted by a community member the project reps conceded that it probably didn't need to be such a large area.
- Until the visit some were not aware about amount of vegetation coming out for Branxton substation, for visibility – hedgerows and trees.
- Helpful to picture the construction process and get "ground truth"
- Too many places, bit of a whistlestop tour – although useful for an overview, separate site visits with more time to focus on each would be helpful, e.g. to Branxton substation site in Spring.
- Each crossing of the haul road with the public road should have a crossing number for ease of communication on potential issues.
- The crossing with U219 (Lawfield Road) looks very dangerous, on the brow of hill down from a corner. This is a well-used stretch of road leading to Oldhamstocks, and there was previously a serious accident on the corner. This needs further attention, perhaps reconsidering the possibility of traffic lights rather than banksmen at this junction.
- Concern about poor visibility for wagons turning left at Bilsdean junction onto A1 as there is no space to accelerate onto the A1. Although it might be too late to make changes to the A1, the public road leading to the junction could still be widened
- The EGL1 vehicle stickers are welcome, but not very visible if only in the windscreen. Ask from the CTTF for larger bumper stickers for HGVs and rear view window stickers for smaller vehicles.

Energy Projects Partnership Manager - the site visit was a very helpful opportunity for active community members interested in the impacts of construction on traffic and biodiversity to see the sites, to ask any questions and to raise concerns. Thank you to the EGL1 and Branxton Substation teams for enabling this visit.