## Key Issues

The key environmental issues considered during the EIA for this nationally significant project included the following:

- **Disposal of Rock**: The majority of excavated rock will be removed via tunnel portals near the shore at Loch Lochy. Discussions were held between the EIA team and statutory consultees to consider options for rock disposal, including transport by barge via the canal network.

- **Water Management**: The water management of Loch Lochy and connecting canals and water bodies was an important consideration during the scheme design and EIA process.

- **Landscape and Visual**: The scheme falls within a Special Landscape Area. ASH worked closely with the project engineers to ensure a high standard of aesthetic and functional design. Suitable mitigation measures were incorporated to minimise potential landscape and visual impacts, both at the upper reservoir and at the lower outlet works.

- **Land Use and Recreation**: The scheme is located in an area popular for recreational activities and full consideration was given to minimise impacts.

- **Traffic**: A thorough assessment of the capacity of the trunk road network was required as part of the EIA.

## Purpose of the Project

The primary function of the development will be to extract, store and release energy to and from the electricity transmission system to help balance supply and demand for power at a national scale.

ASH project managed the production of the Environmental Statement for the Section 36 Application, providing specialist landscape and visual, land use, recreation and planning inputs. ASH also coordinated inputs from specialist sub-consultants including architects, engineers, ecologists, archaeologists and noise consultants.

## Description of the Project

SSE Renewables is proposing to construct a new pumped storage scheme within the Great Glen. The scheme outlet is located on the banks of Loch Lochy, approximately 13km to the south west of Fort Augustus. The development will consist of a new dam and reservoir, an underground cavern power station, an underground tunnel system, a tail race outfall structure and jetty on the shore of Loch Lochy, an above ground administration building, and access tracks to the lower and upper reservoir components.

Consent for the 600MW scheme was granted by Scottish Ministers in December 2013.
Lessons Learnt
A number of lessons were learnt during the design development and EIA stages of the scheme, these included:

- **Importance of good design** should not be underestimated. Consideration of the design, finish and appearance of above ground elements of the scheme during the application were key in achieving consultee and public buy-in and ultimately a smooth consenting process.

- **Arranging a joint EIA team site visit** with the design engineers during the early stages of the project proved to be extremely beneficial to fully understand the complexities of the scheme and the key concerns from specialist consultants, in order to address potential issues head on from the outset.

- **Maintaining contact with consultees** throughout the EIA process and arranging site visits where required, enabled decision makers to have a full understanding of the application and its key issues, prior to determination.

- **Community consultation** was key and was carried out early on and throughout the design process. In some instances, face to face discussions between the developer and property owners prior to public exhibition events went a long way to dispelling myths and fears about a project and receiving community support.

Lessons Learnt cont. -

- Early familiarisation with the key aspects of a pumped storage scheme proved extremely useful to ASH as EIA co-ordinators and landscape architects. Coire Glas will potentially be the first pumped storage scheme built in the UK since 1984. In order to familiarise ourselves with the key elements of pumped storage schemes, as well as fully understanding the potential constraints and opportunities of building a new pumped storage facility, ASH undertook a series of site visits to existing pumped storage plants in the UK. This included visits to Foyers (Highlands), Cruachan (Argyll) and Dinorwig (North Wales). These visits proved to be extremely useful to inform the EIA process, particularly when discussing the project with stakeholders and the community. The site visits also enabled ASH as landscape architects to promote simplicity in the finished design for all of the above elements of the scheme, with careful consideration of siting, design and finishes.

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