Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

Report on Consultation - Route Selection

Project: Carn Fearna Wind Farm Connection

Date: November 2024

REF: LT000501

Rev								
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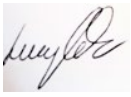
02	K. Leach		L. Soeder		M. Goodwin		22.11.2024	

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line OHL, along with location of key angle structures.
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SSEN Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWIs)	The Ancient Woodland Inventory identifies ancient woodland using presence or absence of woods from old maps, information about the wood's name, shape, internal boundaries, location relative to other features, ground survey, and aerial photography.
Conductor	A metallic wire strung from structure to structure, to carry electric current.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (as amended in 2008) used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes lists those gardens or designed landscapes which are considered by a panel of experts to be of national importance.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
National Scenic Area (NSA)	A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or poles.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from planting.

Term	Definition
Riparian Woodland	Natural home for plants and animals occurring in a thin strip of land bordering a stream or river.
Route	A linear area of approximately 1 km width (although this may be narrower/wider in specific locations in response to identified pinch points / constraints), which provides a continuous connection between defined connection points.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.
Semi-natural Woodland	Woodland that does not obviously originate from planting. The distribution of species will generally reflect the variations in the site and the soil. Planted trees must account for less than 30% of the canopy composition.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Areas of national importance. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Span	The section of overhead line between two structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by The Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive74/409/EEC) to protect important bird habitats. Implemented under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SSEN Transmission works.
Study Area	The area within which the corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
Terminal Structure	A structure (tower or pole) required where the line terminates either at a substation or at the beginning and end of an underground cable section.
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in the Great Britain.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between a landowner upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed and SSEN Transmission.
Wild Land Area (WLA)	Those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission) undertook consultation in September 2024 to request comments on proposals to construct and operate a 132 kV overhead line (OHL) of approximately 9.4 km to connect the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm to the existing Corriemoillie 132 kV Substation. The proposed route options for the development consist of OHL and have been appraised against environmental, engineering and cost criteria. This Report on Consultation presents a summary of the consultation undertaken.

The consultation process included the publication of a Consultation Document (August 2024) (**Appendix B**) to describe the evaluation of the different routeing options and invite interested parties to provide their views. A face-to-face consultation event took place on 4th September at Garve Village Hall between 3pm and 7pm. Statutory consultees were contacted to welcome their response and to invite them to the consultation event. All comments were requested by 4th October 2024.

A full description of the OHL Routeing Selection process is provided in the Carn Fearna Wind Farm Consultation Document, August 2024 (**Appendix B**).

The optioneering process for selection of a Preferred Route considered three overhead line Route Options. This Report on Consultation Document summarises the comments provided by stakeholders, including statutory consultees and member of the public on the three Route Options under consideration and details the actions taken by SSEN Transmission in response to the comments provided. The preferred Route Option that will be taken forward to the optioneering stage is Route Option 2.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Document

SSEN Transmission is proposing to construct a new 132 kV overhead line (OHL) to connect the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm to the existing Corriemoillie 132 kV Substation (hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development would extend approximately 9.4 km of trident wood pole 'H' arrangement. Due to engineering and environmental constraints underground cable (UGC) technology will also be investigated for part of the extent. The Proposed Development incorporates a single circuit 132 kV trident wood "H" pole arrangement supporting the overhead line. The typical height of the trident poles would be 10 to 18 m, with a typical span of between 75 - 100 m.

Three Route Options with corridors of circa 600 m width were identified by SSEN Transmission and a Preferred Route was initially selected according to environmental, engineering and cost appraisal findings detailed in the Consultation Report (**Appendix B**).

A programme of consultation was designed to engage with key stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners, and individual residents to invite feedback on the rationale for and approach to, the selection of the Preferred Route.

This document reports on the consultation responses received from the publishing of the Consultation Document and consultation events, identifying key issues and how they have been considered in finalising the proposed route.

1.2 Document Structure

This report is comprised of six sections as follows:

1. Introduction – setting out the purpose of the Report on Consultation Document;
2. The Proposals within the Consultation – outlines the background/context to the project and provides a description of the key elements;
3. The Consultation Process - describes the framework for consultation and methods which have been employed;
4. Stakeholder Consultation Responses – summarises the range of responses, key comments and issues arising through the consultation process;
5. SSEN Transmission's Responses to Consultation – describes how the comments and issues raised during consultation will be addressed; and
6. Next Steps – provides a summary of the conclusions reached and actions going forward.

2. THE PROPOSALS

2.1 Project Background

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc who, operating and known as SSEN Transmission, holds a licence under the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated, and economical system of electricity transmission in the north of Scotland and remote islands.

The developer of Carn Fearna Wind Farm (Statkraft UK) has sought a Scoping Opinion from the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for a ~ 85 MW wind farm, which has a contracted connection date of 2029[1]. SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to connect the new development to the transmission network by the contracted connection date of June 2029.

2.2 Project Description

The Carn Fearna Wind Farm is an onshore wind project comprising up to 9 wind turbines and associated infrastructure located to the east of Loch Luichart in the northwest Highlands. The turbines will each have a tip height of approximately 180 m to 200 m.

In accordance with these duties, SSEN Transmission is proposing to construct a new 132 kV OHL to connect the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm to the existing Corriemoillie 132 kV Substation (**Figure 2.1**, **Appendix A**).

Three Route Options with corridors of circa 0.6 km in width have been identified. The environmental constraints present, and potential impact of the Route Options have been assessed in the Carn Fearna Wind Farm Connection Consultation Document[2].

The Proposed Development is a single circuit 132 kV trident wood "H" pole arrangement supporting the OHL running approximately 9.4 km in length. The typical height of the trident poles is between 10 - 18 m, with a typical span of between 75 -100 m.

Plate 2.1. Example 'H' Trident Wood Poles

[1] Energy Consents Unit (2024) Carn Fearna Wind Farm Application Details [online] Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00004732 [Accessed: October 2024]

[2] SSEN Transmission, 2024, 'Carn Fearna Wind Farm Connection' [online] Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/carn-fearna-wind-farm-connection/ [Accessed: October 2024]

2.2.1 Construction Activities

Key tasks during construction of the project would relate to:

- Improvements to the public road network;
- Establishment of suitable laydown areas for materials and installation of temporary track solutions (e.g. trackway), as necessary;
- Upgrades to existing tracks and potentially new tracks where required;
- Delivery of structures and materials to site;
- Assembly and erection of wood pole structures and stays; and
- Stringing of conductors using hauling ropes and winches.

Installation of the wood poles would involve the following tasks:

- Excavation of a suitable area for the wood poles, and backfilling after installation of the pole (backfilling would generally be carried out the same day as excavation so that no open excavations are left overnight). The exact area would depend on the ground conditions at each pole;
- In some pole locations, it may be necessary to add imported hardcore backfill around the pole foundations to provide additional stability in areas where the natural sub soils have poor compaction qualities;
- Conductors would be installed on the wood poles using full tension stringing to prevent the conductor coming into contact with the ground; and
- Remedial works would be carried out to reinstate the immediate vicinity of the structures, and any ground disturbed, to pre-existing use. This would be undertaken using excavated material.

Installation of the underground cable infrastructure would require (to be confirmed if needed):

- Establish a working corridor centred on the cable centreline;
- Installation of an access haul road and bridges where/if required;
- Excavate a trench up to 1.5 m in depth and 2 m wide, widening through benching and battering where stability and safety concerns arise;
- Clear out all materials likely to damage cable ducts, e.g. clods, rocks, stones and organic debris, and employ use of pumps to remove any water;
- Installation of ducting within the trench, surrounded by engineered backfill for protection, with protection tile and warning tape placed above the cable line, reinstatement to sub-soil level;
- Excavation and formation of power cable joint bays with above ground electrical link pillars and associated demarcation; reinstate excavated surface layers in reverse order;
- Transportation of and installation of power cable;
- Mobilisation of jointing containers and jointing of power cable;
- Reinstatement of joint bays and installation of fencing at link pillar locations; and
- Reinstate excavated surface layers in reverse order.

2.2.2 Forestry Removal

Any woodland removal which may be required prior to the construction work will be identified and described after a Proposed Alignment has been identified. Any removal of sections of commercial forest would be undertaken in consultation with Forestry and Land Scotland and other landowners. After felling, any timber removed that is commercially viable would be sold and the remaining forest material would be dealt with in a way that delivers the best practicable environmental outcome and is compliant with waste regulations.

An operational corridor would be required to enable the safe operation and maintenance of the Proposed Development. The Operational Corridor will vary depending on the type of woodland (based on species present) in proximity to the Proposed Development. In areas of native woodland, it is usually possible to provide a narrower corridor due to a reduced risk of trees falling on the Proposed Development.

2.2.3 Access

The access strategy has not yet been determined. It is anticipated that minimal access track would be required to be installed in close proximity to the OHL to enable construction and maintenance.

More detailed plans for access during construction will be prepared once a Proposed Alignment has been identified. Where possible, existing access tracks will be used and upgraded as required. New access tracks may be required and where there is a justified long-term requirement they will be left in place.

Where ground conditions permit, it is preferable to construct the infrastructure without an access track (e.g. on dry and level pasture). Temporary matting may be used in sensitive areas subject to an assessment of gradients and ground conditions. Preference will be given to lower impact access solutions including the use of low pressure tracked personnel vehicles and temporary track solutions in boggy / soft ground areas to reduce any damage to, and compaction of, the ground.

2.2.4 Programme

It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development would take place over an 18 to 22 months period, following the granting of consents, although detailed programming of works would be the responsibility of the Principal Contractor in agreement with SSEN Transmission. The programme for the project is currently under development, an indicative programme is as follows:

- Construction Start: July 2027; and
- Operation: June 2029.

2.3 Route Options

The approach to Route selection was informed by SSEN guidance which aims to balance environmental, engineering and economic considerations throughout the Route Options process.

This section provides a summary of the three Route Options, Route Options 1, 2 and 3 (**Figure 2.2**, **Appendix A**).

Route Option 1

Route Option 1 begins at the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm Substation and travels west for approximately 2 km. The Route then crosses the A835 and continues north-west running parallel to the forestry plantation at

Garve. The Route diverts south-west for approximately 0.5 km towards the existing Corriemoillie Substation. Route Option 1 is approximately 8 km in length.

Route Option 2

Route Option 2 begins at the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm Substation and travels west for approximately 2 km. The Route then crosses the A835 and continues west following the existing access tracks within the forestry plantation at Garve. The Route diverts south-west for approximately 0.5 km towards the existing Corriemoillie Substation. Route Option 2 is approximately 7 km in length.

Route Option 3

Route Option 3 begins at the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm Substation and travels west for approximately 2 km. The Route then crosses the A835 and travels in a south westerly direction towards Little Garve. The Route follows the A832 and railway line west towards the existing Corriemoillie Substation. Route Option 3 is approximately 8 km in length.

2.4 Identification of a Preferred Route

The Preferred Route presented within the Consultation Document (Route Option 2) was selected on the basis that it was considered to provide an optimum balance of environmental, engineering and economic factors.

From an environmental perspective, all Route Options have identified similar constraints. However, Route Option 1 is considered to be the environmentally Preferred Route because it has a lower impact on irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland and impacts to commercial forestry operations (**Figure 5.1**, **Appendix A**). In addition to this, Route Option 1 is located furthest away from the settlements of Gorstan and Little Garve and the two recreation core paths in the area (**Figure 5.2**, **Appendix A**).

From an engineering perspective, based upon on the RAG ratings developed in accordance with the methodology given in PR-NET-ENV-501, Route Option 2 is considered to be the Preferred Route. From comparison, certain aspects of each Route Option have some issues. However, it is apparent that Route Option 3 has several issues that make the route unfeasible mainly due to existing lines, two major road crossings and being closer to residential properties. Route Option 1 has more undulating terrain as compared to Route Option 2. Therefore, Route Option 2 appear to have the least number of engineering constraints out of all the routes considered.

From an economical perspective, all Route Options are within 120% of the lowest capital and operational cost option, therefore all options are considered acceptable from a cost perspective.

The overall Preferred Route for the connection between the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm to the existing Corriemoillie 132 kV Substation is Route Option 2. This is achieved through consideration of environmental, engineering and economic appraisals for all Route Options. Although environmentally Route Option 1 is marginally preferrable, from a technical perspective, Route Option 2 is substantially more favourable due to elevation and access constraints.

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 Overview

SSEN Transmission places great importance on, and is committed to, consultation and engagement with all parties and stakeholders likely to have an interest in proposals for new projects such as this. Stakeholder engagement is an essential part of an effective development process.

In accordance with the SSEN Transmission guidelines and as set out in the routeing strategy report for the project, a process of consultation on the Preferred Route was implemented. This is described in the sections below.

3.2 Methods of Consultation

Following identification of a preferred route, a Consultation Document on the route selection was produced and distributed for comment in August 2024[2]. The Consultation Document presents the findings of an environmental, engineering and cost appraisal of the three Route Options identified by SSEN Transmission and describes the process by which a Preferred Route for the OHL has been selected.

The consultation process comprised the following:

- The Consultation Document and covering letter were submitted to key statutory and other relevant stakeholders inviting comments in August 2024;
- The Consultation Document was made available on the SSEN Transmission website[2] on 26th September 2024;
- A summary information booklet was also made available on SSEN Transmission website and during the public consultation event detailed below;
- A public consultation event was held at Garve Village Hall in Garve on 4th September between 3pm and 7pm; and
- A poster advertising the public consultation event was made available on the SSEN Transmission website on 22nd August 2024.

The consultation period closed on 4th October 2024. Responses were received via a variety of methods, including completed feedback forms, emails, comments via the project website and written letters.

3.3 Consultees

Table 3.1 lists the stakeholders invited to consider the Consultation Document.

Table 3.1. List of Stakeholders and Community Councils

Stakeholders	
Statutory Consultees	
NatureScot	Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
The Highland Council (THC)	
Community Councils	
Garve and District Community Council	

Landowners were made aware of the Consultation Document and local community councils and ward councillors were notified regarding the consultation events.

Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through the following methods:

- A series of questions were asked within the Consultation Document requesting comments on specific aspects of the project as follows:
    1. Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand what is being proposed and why?
    2. Which of the three Route Options would you consider the best option for SSEN Transmission to develop? Please provide an explanation of your answer.
    3. Which of the three Route Options would you consider the least preferable option for SSEN Transmission to develop? Please provide an explanation of your answer.
    4. Are there any potential risks or benefits associated with this project, that you believe have not been included in the Consultation Document?
    5. Do you have any other comments on the Proposed Development?
- A feedback form was also provided on the project webpage allowing users to submit comments.

3.4 Public Consultations

A A5 postcard with details of the date, location and time was posted to 47 households within the vicinity of the Proposed Development, and an email was sent inviting the Community Council and Ward Councillors asking them if they could share the details on social media to promote the event, including the project details as provided in **Appendix B**. The public consultation event provided a forum to share information about the project and the Preferred Route Option.

All members of the public were invited to complete a feedback form (see **Appendix C**).

10 members of the public attended the public consultation exhibition held in Garve Village Hall. A total of 3 completed feedback forms were received following the exhibitions.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Summary of Comments

In total, 11 consultation responses were received during the consultation process; 3 from statutory consultees, 2 community councillors, 5 from community members and 1 other. A list of the consultees set out in **Table 4.1** (in alphabetical order).

Table 4.1 Consultees Responded

Consultees	Response status
Statutory Consultees	
FLS	No response received
HES	No response received
NatureScot	Response received 30th September
SEPA	Response received 4th September
THC	Response received 26th August
Community Councils	
Community Councillor	Response received during consultation
Community Councillor	Response received 9th September
Community Members	
Community member	Response received during consultation
Community member	Response received during consultation
Community member	Response received during consultation
Community member	Response received 4th September
Community member	Response received during consultation
Other	
Field Energy	Response received 4th October

Table 5.2 sets out the feedback received for the grid connection from statutory consultees, community councillors, community members and others following the consultation period. A response to the feedback is also provided by SSEN Transmission in the table, together with confirmation of the action to be taken, where relevant.

Table 4.2: Statutory Consultees, Community Councillors, Community Members and Others Feedback on Grid Connections

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
Statutory Consultees		
NatureScot (A Survey methodology statement was issued to NatureScot to obtain their views on the proposed survey methods)	Ornithology Overall the proposed survey methodology set out in the scoping document looks to be satisfactory. We wish to provide some advice which is set out below. Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA) SPA golden eagles are known to be in the area and the Golden Eagle Topographical (GET) model shows suitable habitat within the boundary of Route Option 3 where it runs south of the road. We therefore advise Route Option 3 would pose a potential collision risk for SPA golden eagle. If Route Option 3 is selected, then we advise that further consideration should be given to this potential risk, and we can provide further advice. Ben Wyvis SPA We advise that breeding and migrating dotterels are not likely to be a cause for concern for either of the 3 route options. This is since this species does not use the lower altitude hills surrounding the SPA. Additional Points We advise that the following points should be taken into consideration: Protected species have been sighted in the area. Consideration to disturbance to breeding white-tailed eagle and potential collision risk should be considered further in the ornithology assessment. We advise that the RSPB's Capercaillie Project Officer is contacted to request capercaillie desk study records for this area and for advice on survey and assessment, including the extent of existing survey coverage so as to avoid any unnecessary duplication and potential for disturbance. If the area is not currently surveyed and suitable habitat exists then surveys would be recommended in line with our guidance at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/recommended-bird-survey-methods-inform-impact-assessment-onshore-windfarms and https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-licensing-capercaillie-survey-methods	SSEN Transmission acknowledge NatureScot's comments in respect to ornithology. SSEN Transmission acknowledge the ornithological risks associated with Route Option 3 and as the Project develops, SSEN will mitigate the risk of collision should Route Option 3 be progressed. SSEN Transmission welcome advice regarding the breeding and migrating dotterel in the area. SSEN Transmission have commissioned 12 months' worth of bird surveys (Sept 24 – Sept 25). All bird surveys are undertaken as per NatureScot guidance and will cover the protected species noted. During the consenting stage of the project ornithological impacts will be assessed and appropriate mitigation measures determined. SSEN Transmission will contact the RSPB's capercaillie Project Officer to request desk study records for this area. SSEN welcomes advice on survey and assessment and will take on board the NatureScot guidance.

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	Priority Peatland Habitat We note that there is potential for areas of blanket bog to be located within each of the 3 route options. We recommend that you refer to our updated peatland guidance at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/advising-peatland-carbon-rich-soils-and-priority-peatland-habitats-development-management. In line with our guidance an assessment of peatland condition should be provided in the EIAR, and we recommend this is guided by the template provided in Annex 1 of the guidance. Our guidance also provides advice on the mitigation hierarchy; survey and assessment; and mitigation and enhancement, including peatland restoration techniques, Habitat Management Plans and the level of information which would be expected for a future application. The route of the OHL should seek to avoid areas of blanket bog habitat through careful design. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised, and our current recommendation is that restoration to achieve offsetting (i.e. compensation rather than biodiversity enhancement) should be in the order of 1:10 (lost:restored), i.e. 1ha loss of peatland should result in measures to restore 10ha of peatland. Any peatland restoration should be detailed in a peatland management plan. Links to current guidance relevant to peatland survey and assessment can be found at: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/planning-and-development-standing-advice-and-guidance-documents.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge NatureScot's comments in respect to peatland habitats. At each step in the design process, SSEN look to increase the understanding of site sensitivities through desk study, consultation and eventually specific site surveys. At each step in the process as these sensitivities become better understood the design is adjusted to reduce and minimise impacts (balanced against other factors). For the Proposed Development SSEN Transmission will undertake habitat surveys of the Proposed Alignment when it is developed, these will be used to inform any impact assessment (and appropriate mitigation) undertaken as part of the consent application, particularly in respect to any Annex 1 habitats. A peat probing survey has been undertaken within the preferred Route where peat is likely to be present. Further to this these surveys will inform our internal Biodiversity Net Gain objectives for the project. SSEN Transmission acknowledge NatureScot's recommendations on guidance for peatland survey and assessment and will use this to inform such documents as part of the consent application.
	Protected Species We are in agreement with the list of protected species likely to occur within the 3 route options. We would expect the EIAR to demonstrate that all survey, assessment and mitigation has followed our standing advice for protected species at: https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/planning-and-development-standing-advice-and-guidance-documents. Surveys should also cover any proposed access routes.	SSEN Transmission welcome NatureScot's comments in respect to protected species. SSEN Transmission have commissioned a suite of protected species surveys which will look to confirm presence / likely absence of species within the Proposed Route (including identification of shelters) and use the results of these surveys to inform impact assessments to accompany the consent application and any required licensing in advance of construction.

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
SEPA	'Until detailed proposals are put forward in terms of the associated infrastructure required (access roads, construction compounds etc) and exact pole and cable positions, SEPA are unable to express a definite preference considering all our interests.' 'SEPA will be happy to provide a fuller detailed response once formally consulted via the consenting authority on this proposal.'	SSEN Transmission welcome SEPA's response and acknowledges SEPA's standard comments. SSEN Transmission will continue to consult SEPA via the consenting authority during the Alignment stage which will provide more specific details of the Proposed Development.
THC	'Many thanks for passing on the attached consultation document. If you have not done so already, we would encourage you to book in a meeting through THC's Major Pre-application Service to enable THC to advise further. Whilst the proposed wind farm itself has gone through this service it may also be beneficial for the associated OHL to do so.' 'We also note that an EIA Scoping Response has also been sought from the Energy Consents Unit (ECU), however, we don't appear to have received a consultation from the ECU just yet to input into this process.'	SSEN Transmission appreciate the response given by THC and commits to consulting further with THC.
Community Councils		
Community Councillor	Would like full transparency as the proposals develop, inclusive of a bimonthly update via email which will help them inform the local community. The councillors offered full support where they can.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge the response received by Community Councillor and welcomes the opportunity for continued liaisons with the councillors & a general update of overall feedback from the attendees.
Community Councillor	Maps at consultation event were small in scale and difficult to read. Coloured routes on map should be easier to distinguish and identify (yellow was not easily visible). The language used within consultation documents/website conveys that the wind farm and connection are going ahead, as opposed to a proposed development that has not yet been granted consent.	SSEN Transmission have noted feedback from this Community Councillor regarding low legibility of maps and the choice of language used at the consultation events.
Community Councillor	General concerns regarding number of developments in the area (including recently consented Kirkan Wind Farm) and proposed Corriemoillie BESS.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge comments from the community councillor in respect to cumulative impact. Cumulative impacts from the Proposed Development will be considered in the EIA.

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	Resident south of Garve would like to see the Visual Impacts Assessment when they are ready, to see the views from her house.	SSEN Transmission acknowledges the request to send Visual Impact Assessment to the Garve Resident to illustrate the worst-case scenario view from their house to the closest point of Preferred Route Option.
Community Members		
Community member	A community member requested that the maps include other SSEN projects in the area to provide a comprehensive view of the overall impact of all developments. She noted that piecemeal maps make it difficult to consolidate data from different projects, which could potentially overlap or interact at various points. Specifically, she mentioned the Kirkan wind farm, stating that it has already been consented and is situated in close proximity to the Carn Fearna wind farm.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge this community member's request for a map showing all SSEN projects in operation and in development in the area to show cumulative impacts. SSEN Transmission will look to create a map illustrating the SSEN Projects.
Community member	The issue of flashing red obstruction lights on top of each wind turbine was raised as a concern. A resident expressed discomfort with the visual impact of these flashing red lights during the night, citing it as a significant disturbance.	SSEN Transmission's Proposed Development consists of an OHL connecting the proposed Carn Fearna Wind Farm to the National Grid. Although SSEN welcomes the comment from this community member regarding the visual disturbance caused by the red obstruction lights on the wind turbines, this comment is unrelated to SSEN Transmission's Proposed Development. This comment will be shared with the wind farm Developer.
Community member	Inquired why some projects are cabled while others are not and sought clarification on why this is considered a cost issue for certain projects but not for others.	SSEN Transmission welcome the query raised by this community member. Cabling remains an option for all projects, though it is not the preferred first choice. The high cost associated with cabling significantly increases the overall project costs, and if this approach becomes standard practice, the cumulative expenses could lead to higher energy prices. Cables are only considered where it has been demonstrated that overhead lines (OHL) are not feasible due to engineering challenges or environmental constraints.
Community member	No objection to route options. Concerns regarding trees that may need to be felled to give corridor required for overhead line.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge the concern regarding cumulative visual impact of this Proposed Development with a nearby proposed BESS and OHL. SSEN Transmission has

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	Field Energy have a 200MW BESS planned for an area within the same forestry as the substation and they/we are largely relying on the existing trees to provide screening for this. Both routes show the OHL entering the forestry very close to the proposed BESS so we do have concerns that your project would make the Field project even more visible than it would be anyway. Positive comments regarding SSE taking on board local residents' advice and achieving a project which has caused minimal disruption to the local residents (referring to Corriemoillie Substation). They would like to be kept up to date on changes which may impact them regarding the substation extension. Positive feedback received on knowledgeable representatives of the project who were prepared to listen to local people.	been made aware of this planned BESS and will be in close communication with Field Energy to ensure minimal visual impact. SSEN Transmission appreciates the positive feedback pertaining to SSEN's local inclusion in consultation.
Community member	Would like to be contacted when we can show what she will see from her house - 3D Web-Tech.	SSEN Transmission welcome the feedback and has noted to contact this community member when a 3D Web-Tech image showing a view from their house is ready.
Other		
Field Energy	'Field Energy is developing a 200MW/ 400MWh Battery Energy Storage proposal for land to the northeast of Corriemoillie substation, which would interact with the preferred route option 2. Extensive landscaping and biodiversity enhancements are also included within the proposals which form a fundamental part of our scheme, and which need considering as part of the development of a detailed alignment. Our pre-application notification can be found under The Highland Council reference 24/02669/PAN. Additionally, an EIA Screening Opinion can be found under reference 24/02940/SCRE. It is anticipated that a S36 planning application will be submitted to the Energy Consents Unit during October 2024 in advance of a connection date into the Corriemoillie substation in 2029. This follows an extensive and comprehensive programme of planning and environmental assessment work over the past 6 months. Land rights for this project were secured in 2023 and the project discussed as part of a portfolio review meeting with a multi-disciplinary team from SSE in Perth on Thursday 22nd August - with a further meeting	SSEN Transmission welcome the response from Field Energy. At time of writing, the BESS proposal was not considered. During the Public Consultation Event, the proposed BESS development has been noted and discussion will be held with Field Energy.

Stakeholder	Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	scheduled prior to our planning submission, with the Grid Connection Agreement being signed in November 2023'. 'Field Energy are keen to engage with SSE to share our proposals and assist in finding a workable solution' 'Interaction with our project needs considering given the advanced nature of our scheme. Slightly disappointing not to have been consulted during the route optioneering stage given the publicly available information about our connection but would be keen to engage with SSE going forwards.'	

4.2 Issues Emerging from Consultation Feedback

Responses covered a range of topics with a number raising specific issues in relation to the Preferred Route connection option.

Common themes emerging from the consultation responses received related to:

- The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development; and
- The potential environmental and social impact within the Preferred Route Option.

5. PROJECT RESPONSES TO CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Overview

This section of the report documents how the Preferred Route Option, set out within the Consultation Document, has subsequently responded to the issues emerging from the consultation feedback.

5.2 Design Responses

As the Proposed Development progresses, there will be opportunity to refine the Preferred Route Option to protect the sensitive areas within the Route Option. Once alignments have been developed, further environmental assessments will be conducted and modification to the design will be made, if required. SSEN Transmission will endeavour to amend the Alignment Options in line with the comments received during the routeing Public Consultation.

5.3 Proposed Route

Based on the consultation responses received, whilst no changes to the Preferred Route Option corridor selection process are necessary. Route Option 2 will now be taken forward as the Proposed Route for further refinement in the routeing and alignment process.

5.4 Responses Relevant to Subsequent EIA

SSEN received some consultation responses that related directly to specific environmental issues which would be appropriate to consider when defining and delivering the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Table 4.2 displays the key issues raised and identifies how SSEN Transmission proposes to respond to address the main concerns.

6. CONCLUSION

This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken for the project in September 2024. The programme of consultation was designed to engage with stakeholders including statutory and other consultees to invite feedback on the rationale for and approach to, the selection of the Preferred Route.

A number of stakeholder responses provided information on further material to be considered for the alignment appraisals. The specific comments raised will be incorporated in the further assessment work to be undertaken. The points raised include:

- The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development; and
- The potential environmental and social impact within the Preferred Route Option.

To address these points, SSEN Transmission will seek to undertake further environmental assessments to understand fully the environmental impacts of the Proposed Development and continue to consult with statutory consultees and other key consultees to design and mitigate potential impacts.

The Consultation Document concluded that Route Option 2 was the Preferred Route. The consultation process furthered highlighted that Route 2 has lowest impact. Route 2 will now be taken forward as the Proposed Route.

6.1 Next Steps

The project will now be taken into Stage 3 (Alignment Selection), commencing with identification of alignment options within the Proposed Route. These will be informed by this and further consultation exercises, and through detailed surveys, which may identify any additional and / or currently unknown engineering, environmental or land use constraints.

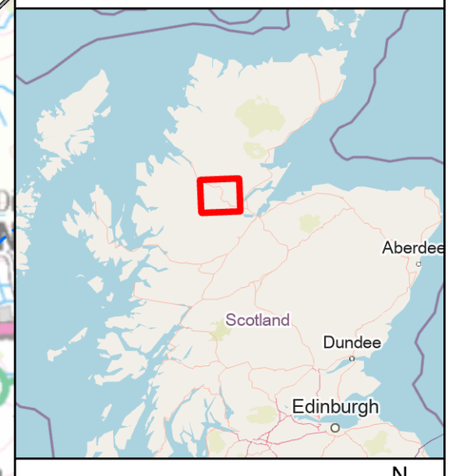
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

APPENDIX A – FIGURES

Proposed Route Options
- Route Option 1
- Route Option 2
- Route Option 3
- Indicative Corriemoillie Substation Extension
- Carn Fearna - Proposed Route Options - 10km Buffer
- Proposed Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL

Existing OHL
- Existing 132kV OHL
- Existing 275kV OHL



0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometres

N

SCALE: See Scale Bar	VERSION: A01
SIZE: A3	DRAWN: DN
PROJECT: 0738456	CHECKED: LS
DATE: 24/10/2024	APPROVED: KG

Figure 2.1
Study Area

ERM

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks TRANSMISSION

PROJECTION: British National Grid

Path: \\uksprdgisfs01\Data\London\Projects\0738903 - Abhainn Dubh & Carn Fearna\Map\0738903 - Carn Fearna.aprx / 0738903 - Carn Fearna - Fig 2.1 - Routeing Option Study Area - A01

Proposed Route Options

- Route Option 1
- Route Option 2
- Route Option 3
- Indicative Corriemoillie Substation Extension

Existing OHL

- Existing 132kV OHL

0 250 500 750 1,000 1,250

Metres

N

SCALE: See Scale Bar	VERSION: A01
SIZE: A3	DRAWN: DN
PROJECT: 0738456	CHECKED: LS
DATE: 11/11/2024	APPROVED: KG

Figure 2.2
Carn Fearna Proposed Routing Options

ERM

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks TRANSMISSION

PROJECTION: British National Grid

Path: \\uksprdgisfs01\Data\London\Projects\0738903 - Abhainn Dubh & Carn Fearna\Map\0738903 - Carn Fearna.aprx

Proposed Route Options

- Route Option 1
- Route Option 2
- Route Option 3
- Indicative Corriemoillie Substation Extension
- Carn Fearna Proposed Routes 5km Buffer

Natural Heritage Constraints

- Carbon And Peatland - Class 1 Importance
- Carbon And Peatland - Class 2 Importance
- Wildcat Protection Areas
- Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)
- Special Areas Of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Sites Of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

0 1 2 3 Kilometres

N

SCALE: See Scale Bar	VERSION: A01
SIZE: A3	DRAWN: DN
PROJECT: 0738456	CHECKED: LS
DATE: 24/10/2024	APPROVED: KG

Figure 5.1
Natural Heritage Constraints

ERM

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks TRANSMISSION

PROJECTION: British National Grid

Path: \\uksprdgisfs01\Data\London\Projects\0738903 - Abhainn Dubh & Carn Fearna\Map\0738903 - Carn Fearna.aprx / 0738903 - Carn Fearna - Fig 5.1 - Routeing Natural Heritage Constraints - A01

Proposed Route Options

- Route Option 1
- Route Option 2
- Route Option 3
- Indicative Corriemoillie Substation Extension
- Carn Fearna Proposed Routes 5km Buffer

Cultural Heritage Constraints

- Scheduled Monument
- Garden and Designed Landscape
- Category A Listed Building
- Category B Listed Building
- Category C Listed Building

0 1 2 3 Kilometres

N

SCALE: See Scale Bar	VERSION: A01
SIZE: A3	DRAWN: DN
PROJECT: 0738456	CHECKED: LS
DATE: 24/10/2024	APPROVED: KG

Figure 5.2
Cultural Heritage Constraints

ERM

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks TRANSMISSION

PROJECTION: British National Grid

Path: \\uksprdgisfs01\Data\London\Projects\0738903 - Abhainn Dubh & Carn Fearna\Map\0738903 - Carn Fearna.aprx / 0738903 - Carn Fearna - Fig 5.2 - Routeing Cultural Heritage Constraints - A01

Proposed Route Options

- Route Option 1
- Route Option 2
- Route Option 3
- Indicative Corriemoillie Substation Extension
- Carn Fearna Proposed Routes 5km Buffer

Landscape and Visual Constraints

- Core Paths
- Garden and Designed Landscape
- Wild Land

0 1 2 3 Kilometres

N

SCALE: See Scale Bar	VERSION: A01
SIZE: A3	DRAWN: DN
PROJECT: 0738456	CHECKED: LS
DATE: 24/10/2024	APPROVED: KG

Figure 5.3
Landscape and Visual Constraints

ERM

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks TRANSMISSION

PROJECTION: British National Grid

Path: \\uksprdgisfs01\Data\London\Projects\0738903 - Abhainn Dubh & Carn Fearna\Map\0738903 - Carn Fearna.aprx / 0738903 - Carn Fearna - Fig 5.3 - Routeing Landscape and Visual Constraints - A01