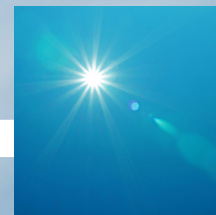
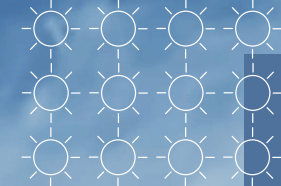


Kintore to Tealing 400kV Overhead Line

Summary Report on Consultation - Alignment Selection

January 2025

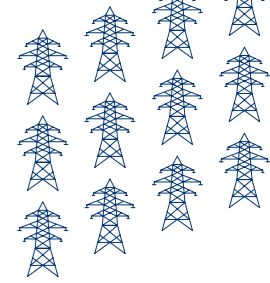


Introduction

Between September and November 2024, we held a series of in-person events for the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV overhead line (OHL) project presenting our Potential Alignment along with a number of Alternative Alignments at a number of locations. The purpose of this consultation was to update our stakeholders on the progress we had made since our corridor and routing consultations which were undertaken in the summer of 2023 and spring of 2024, and to seek further feedback.

The Potential Alignment was presented in Sections A to F with a number of alternative alignments at eight locations:

Section	Locations with Alternative Alignments considered	Alternative Alignments
Section A - Emmock 400kV Substation to Forfar	Location 1: Hayston Hill	Potential Alignment 1a, Alternative Alignment 1b
Section B - Forfar to Brechin	Location 2: Padanaram	Potential Alignment 2a, Alternative Alignment 2b
	Location 3: Justinhaugh	Potential Alignment 3a, Alternative Alignment 3b
Section C - Brechin to Laurencekirk	Location 4: Careston	Potential Alignment 4a, Alternative Alignments 4b, 4c, 4d and 4e
	No Alternative locations	No Alternative locations
Section D - Laurencekirk to Hurlie 400kV Substation	No Alternative locations	No Alternative locations
Section E - Hurlie 400kV Substation to River Dee	Location 5: Durris	Potential Alignment 5a, Alternative Alignment 5b
Section F - North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation	Location 6: North of Drumoak	Potential Alignment 6a, Alternative Alignment 6b and 6c
	Location 7: Schoolhill	Potential Alignment 7a, Alternative Alignment 7b and 7c
	Location 8: Echt	Potential Alignment 8a, Alternative Alignment 8b and 8c



We have undertaken three rounds of consultation for the project since the summer of 2023. Links to the key documents for each of these stages are set out below.

Consultation period	What was consulted on	Consultation documents	Report on Consultation (RoC)
May – July 2023	Corridor and route options	The Corridor Selection Consultation Document can be found here . The Route Selection Consultation Document can be found here .	The RoC for the Corridor and Route Selection consultations can be found here .
March – April 2024	New route options and refined route options	The New Overhead Line Routes Consultation Document can be found here .	The RoC for the New Overhead Line Routes consultation can be found here .
September – October 2024	Potential Alignment	The Consultation Document for the Alignment Selection can be found here .	The RoC for the Alignment Selection consultation can be found on the project webpage. This Summary RoC summarises this report.

For our alignment selection consultation, we hosted public consultation events and meetings with a wide range of stakeholders. We also welcomed feedback via a range of methods including online feedback forms, emails and letters. We have now collated and reviewed this feedback, and our responses and the decisions that we have made based on this feedback have been incorporated into a Report on Consultation which is available on the project webpage: ssen-transmission.co.uk/TKUP

The Report on Consultation highlights the feedback we received in response to our consultation, and how this has influenced our actions and decision-making. The feedback primarily focused on community, environmental and socio-economic impacts. We also received feedback covering a number of other aspects such as the need for the project, alternative technologies,

option selection methodology, the impact of electric and magnetic fields (EMF), health, safety, compensation, and feedback on the consultation process itself. These aspects are addressed within the Report on Consultation, but we have also developed a suite of documents which provide detailed information on many of these themes, as well as a set of responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that can be viewed [here](#).

A number of the comments received related specifically to the Potential Alignment and the Alternative Alignments in Sections A to F, and this feedback is summarised in the Report on Consultation along with details of how it has informed our decision making. This Summary Report on Consultation focuses on these responses and explains what we will take forward to the next stage.

Summary of Public Consultation Engagement

The consultation events were advertised extensively using the following methods:

- The Angus Country Press, The Courier and The Press and Journal.
- Our social media channels and the dedicated project website.
- Community Councillors and Local Elected Members were emailed in advance with information and a poster they could share within their local area.
- A mail drop consisting of a letter and a postcard insert was sent to 56,091 homes and businesses within communities potentially impacted by our proposals.

Where possible, affected landowners were contacted ahead of the consultation period to further discuss land related considerations or concerns, and statutory and non-statutory organisations were also directly contacted.



12 In-person consultation events in September and October 2024



1,444 People registered attendees



872 Written responses to public consultation



15 Statutory organisation responses



12 Non-statutory organisation responses



2 Elected member responses

Public engagement events were supplemented by a number of online and in-person meetings with a variety of stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, members of the public, Community Councils and elected members.

Following the September to October 2024 consultation and review of the feedback, and additional information collected from site surveys and landowner discussions, we have selected which alignments we plan to take forward to the next stage. In addition, we have made some minor alignment design amendments to further minimise impacts and consider localised details such as field boundaries. The alternatives we have selected to take forward to the next stage and the minor design amendments are explained in the tables that follow.

Useful links

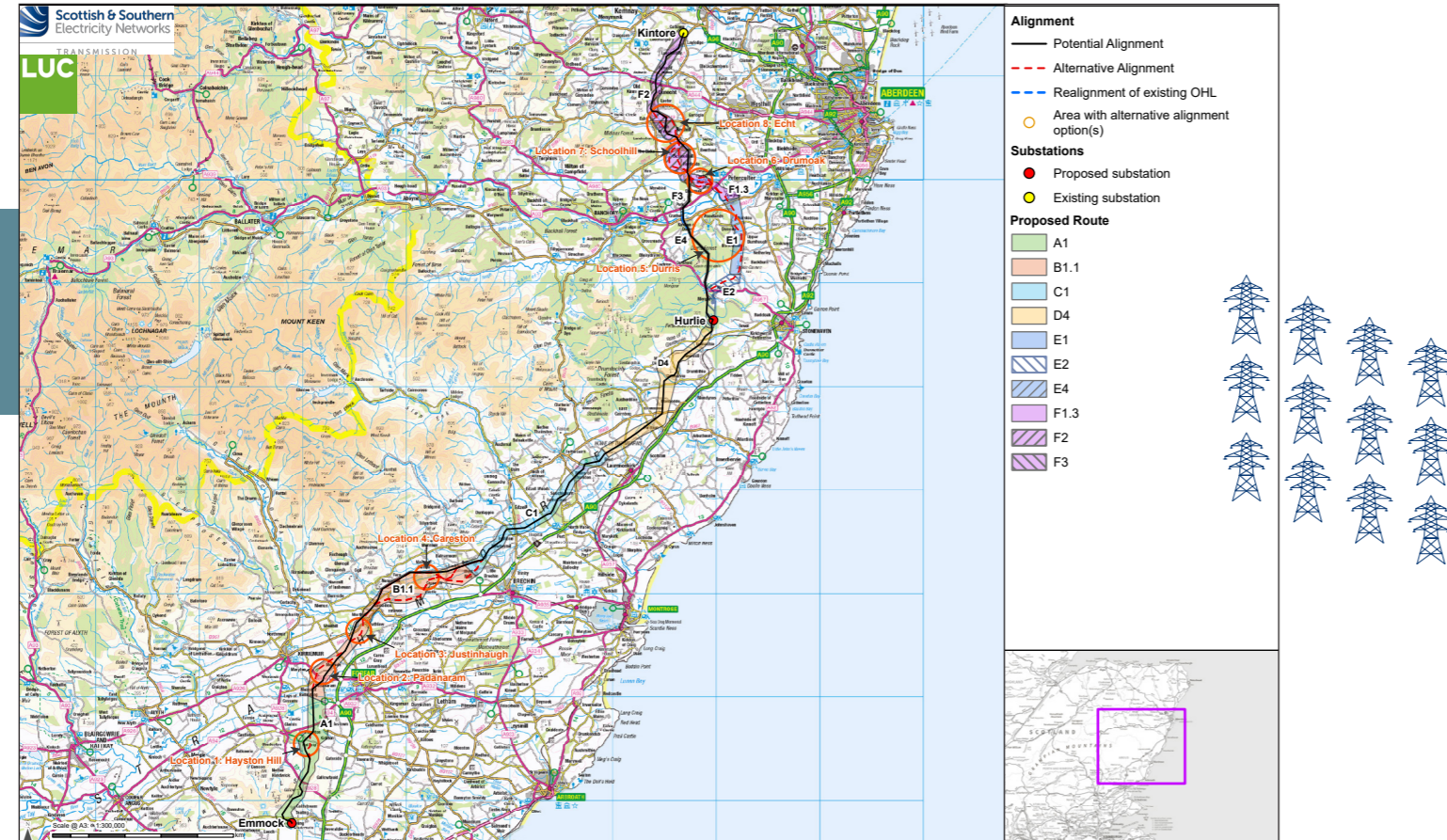
- [Pathway to 2030](#)
- [Why are the Pathway to 2030 Projects needed?](#)
- [Pathway to 2030 FAQs](#)
- [Routeing overhead lines](#)
- [How Stakeholder feedback influences our proposals](#)
- [Working with landowners and occupiers](#)
- [Delivering legacy benefits through Pathway to 2030 Projects](#)
- [Community Benefits](#)



Overview Figure of what we consulted on

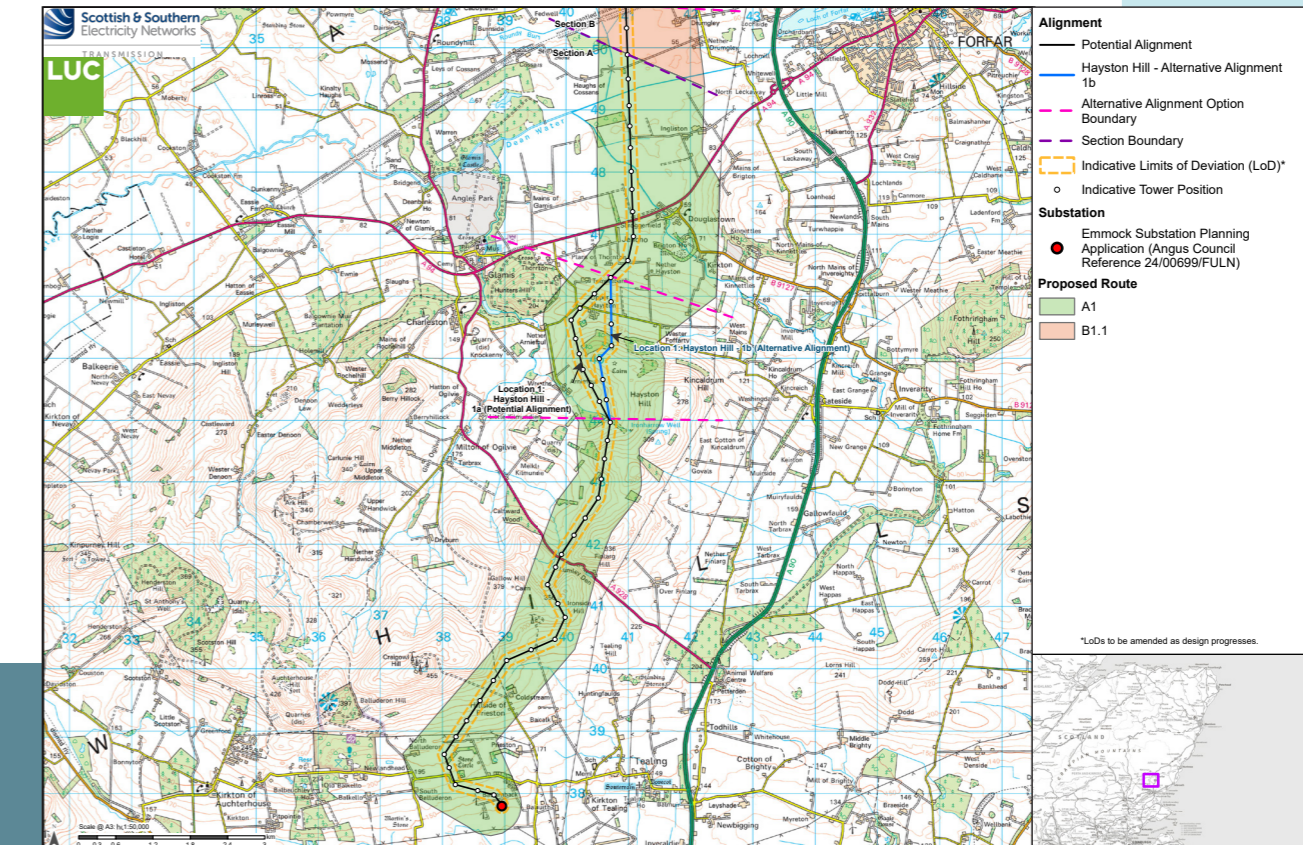
Overview of Potential Alignments and Alternative Alignments

Figure 1: Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options



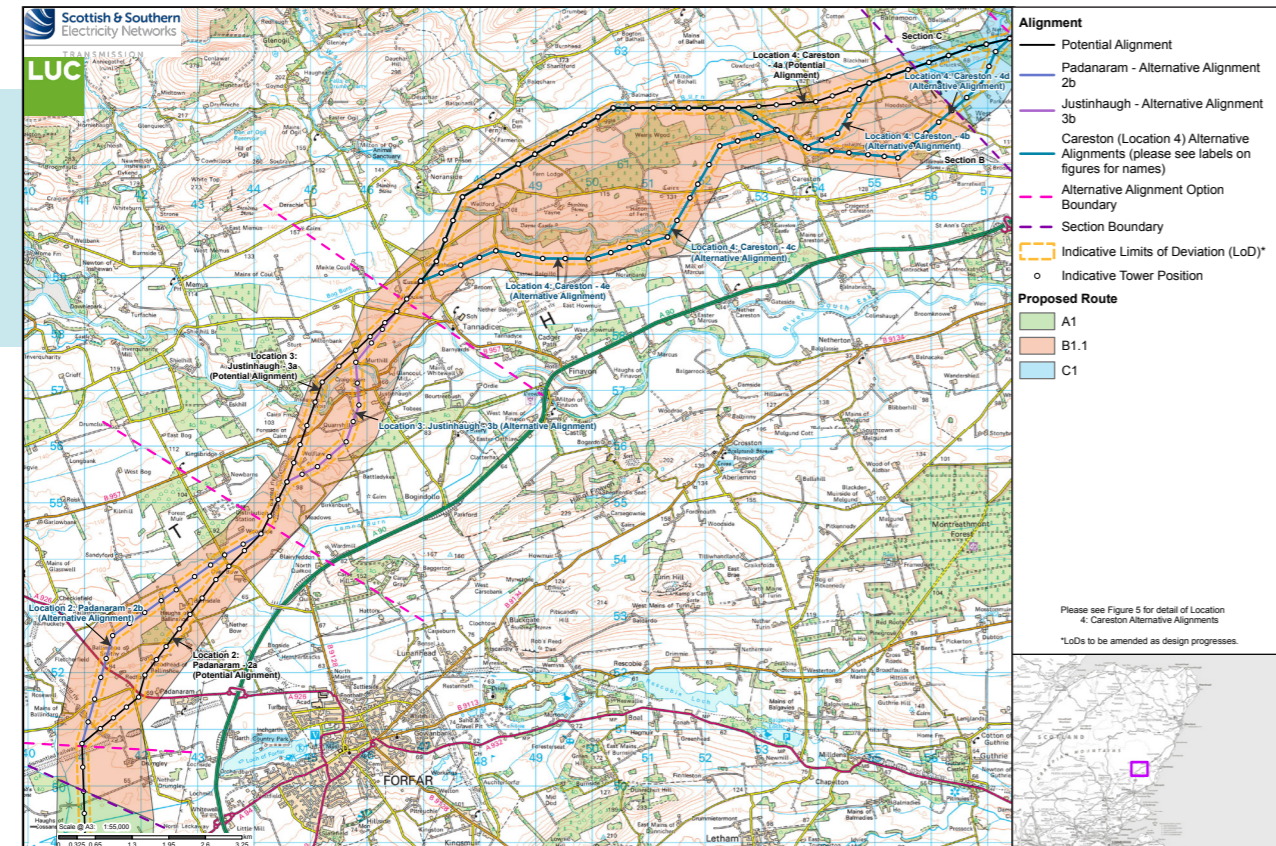
Alignment Section A: What we consulted on

Figure 2 - Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options Section A: Emmock 400kV Substation to Forfar



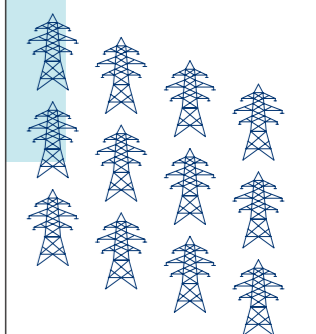
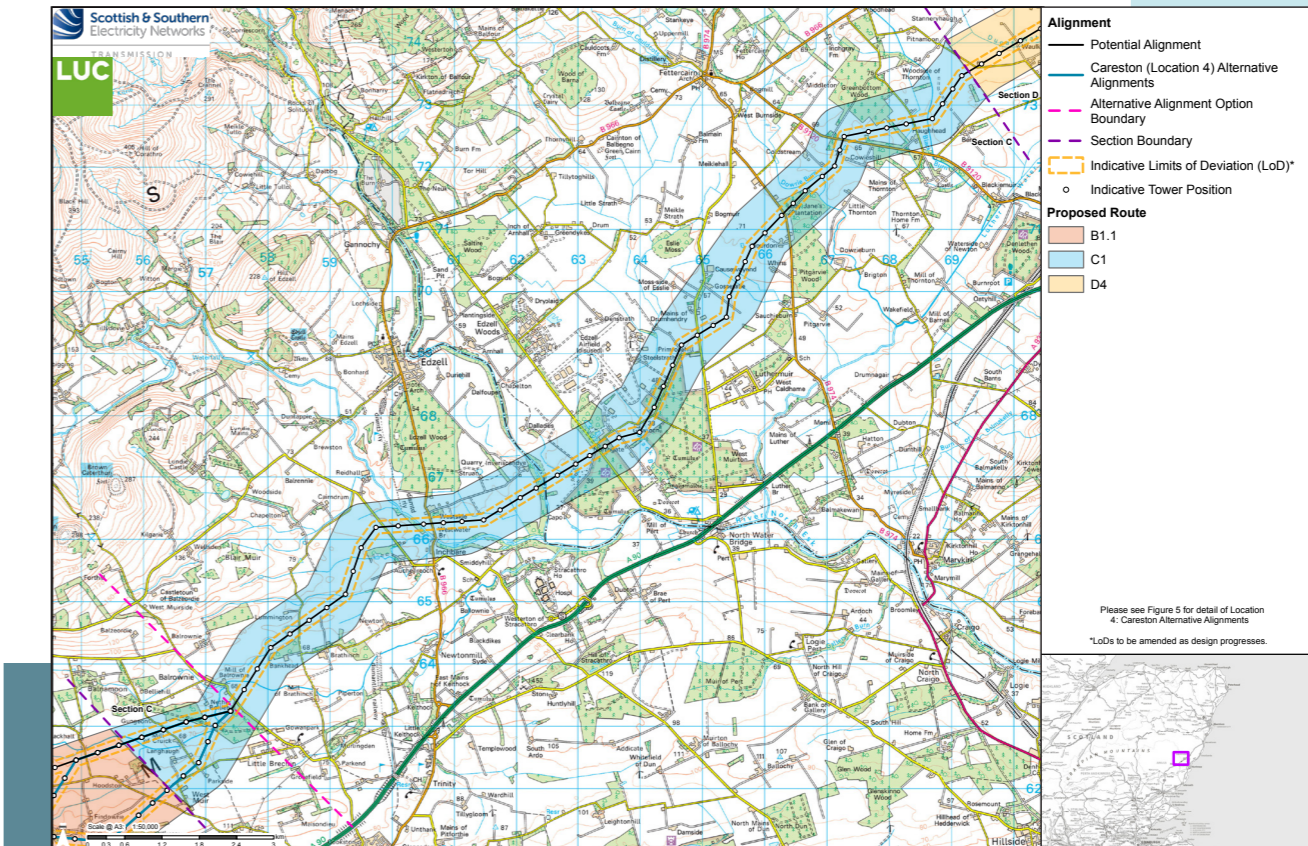
Alignment Section B: What we consulted on

Figure 3 - Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options
Section B: Forfar to Brechin



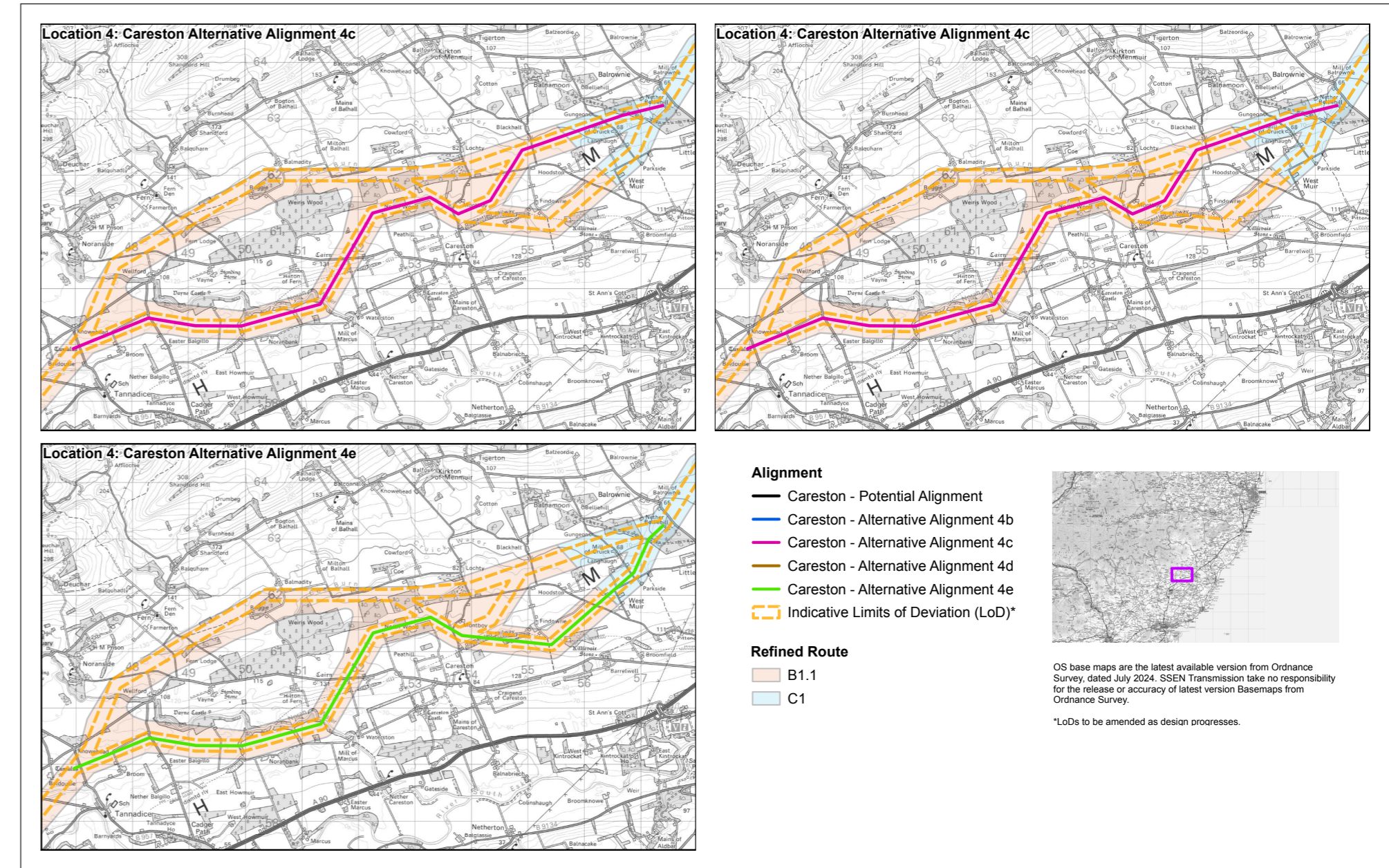
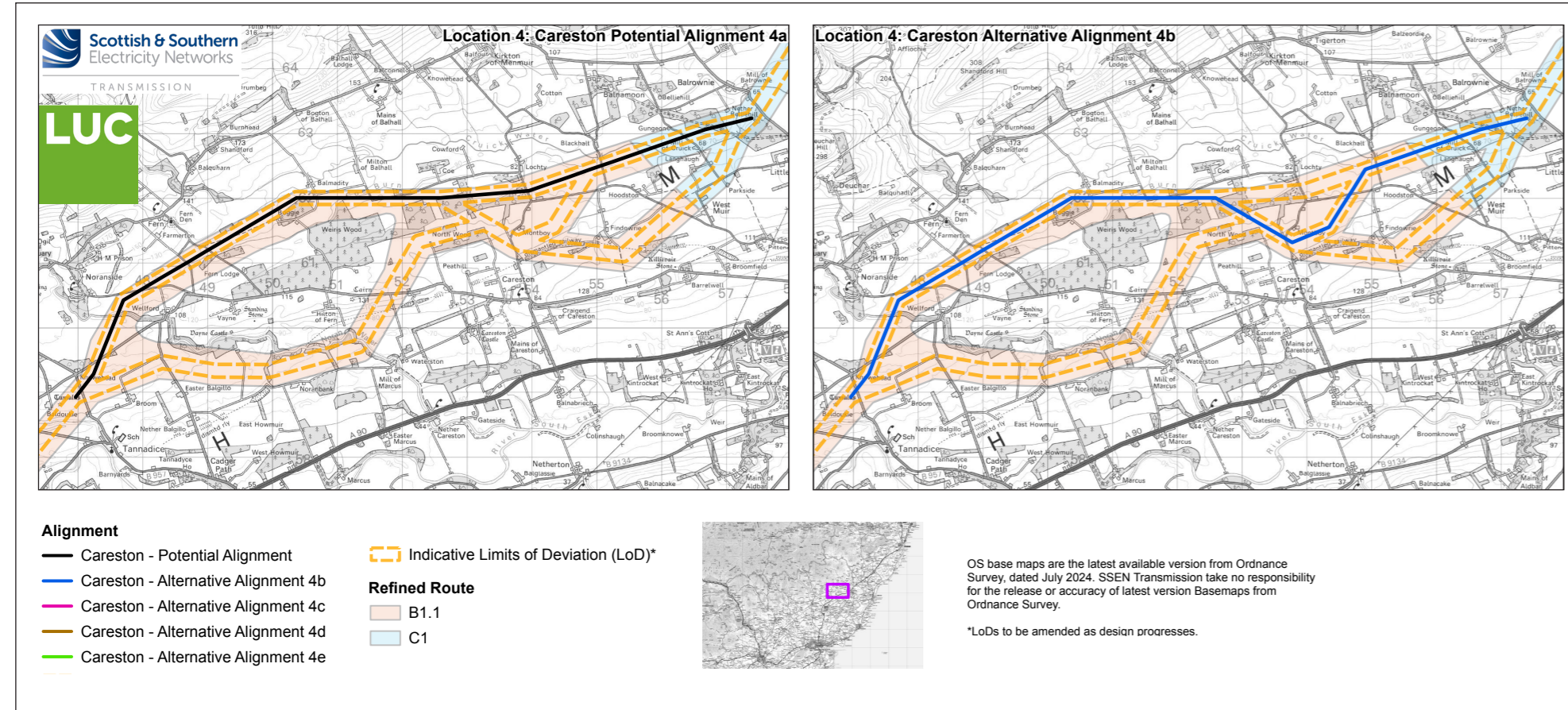
Alignment Section C: What we consulted on

Figure 4 - Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options
Section C: Brechin to Laurencekirk



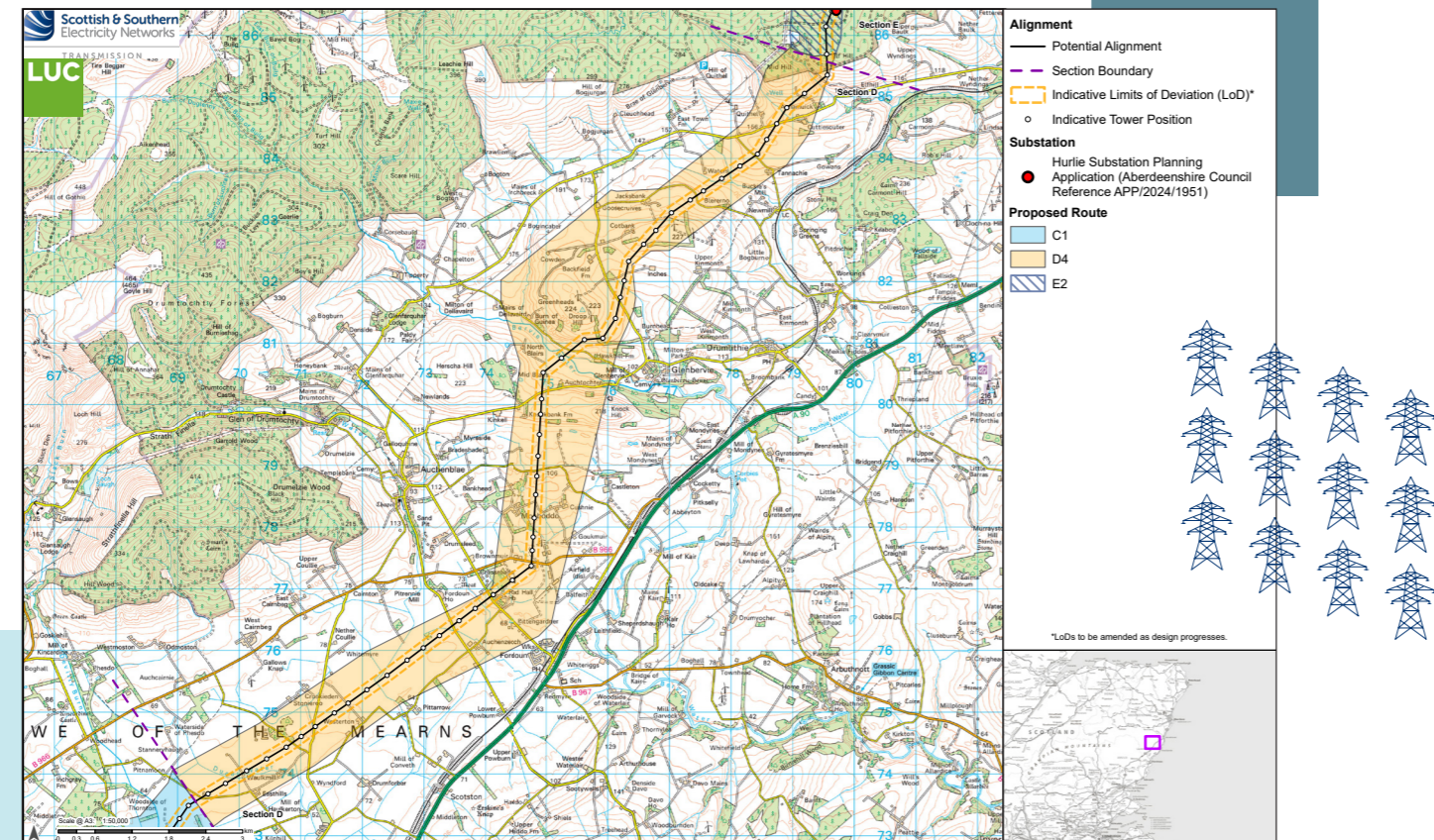
Alignment Section B: What we consulted on

Figure 5 - Location 4: Careston Alternative Alignments Detailed Plan



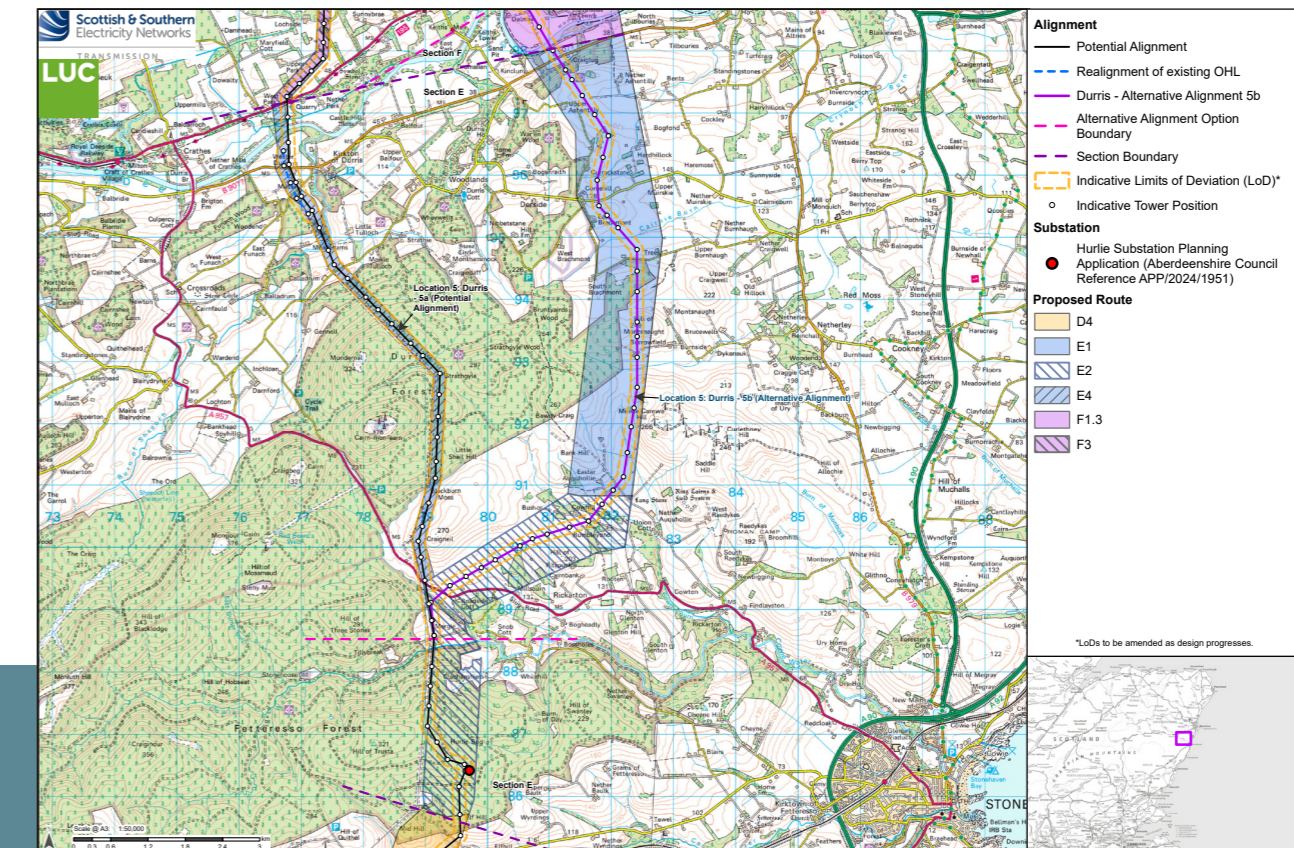
Alignment Section D: What we consulted on

Figure 6 - Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options
Section D : Laurencekirk to Hurlie 400kV Substation



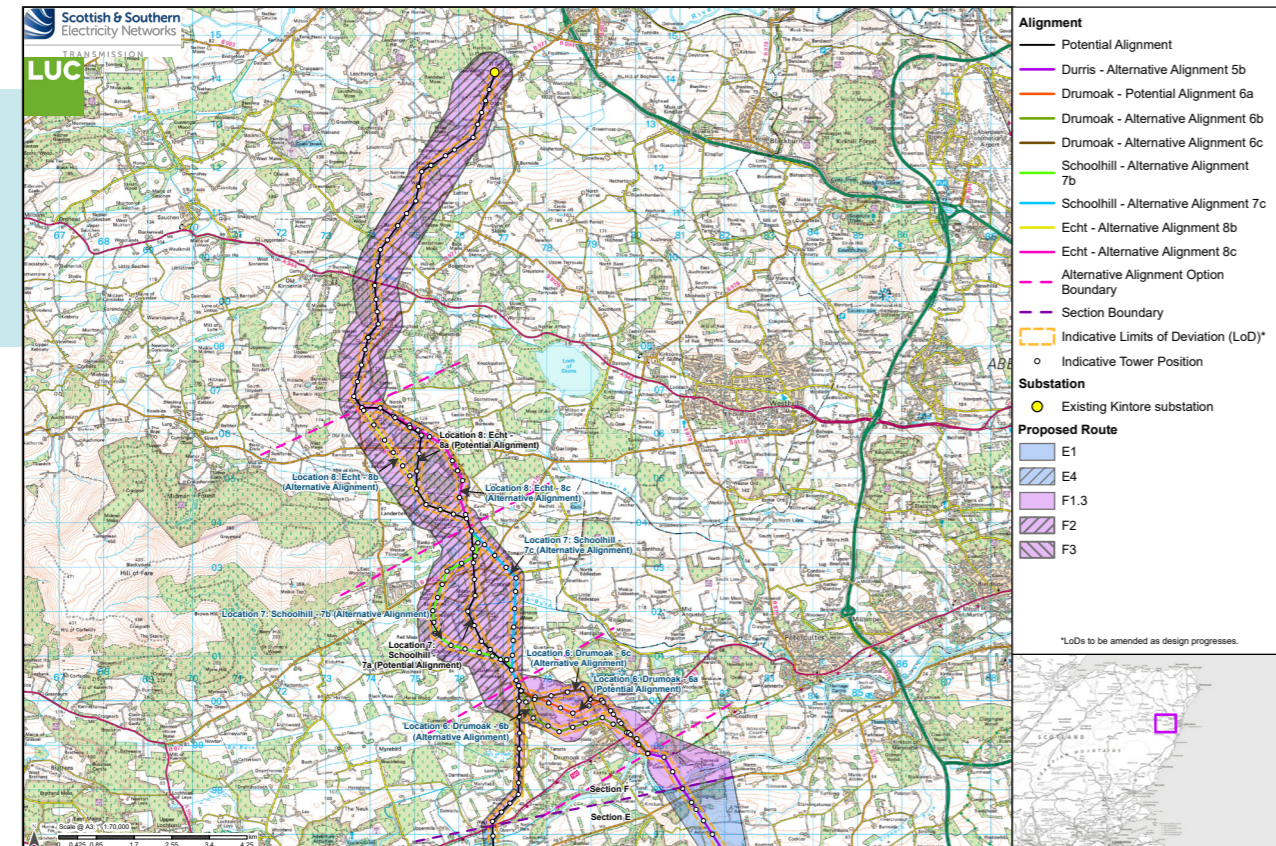
Alignment Section E: What we consulted on

Figure 7 - Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options
Section E: Hurlie 400kV Substation to River Dee



Alignment Section F: What we consulted on

Figure 8 - Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment Options
Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation



Summary of Feedback and Our Decisions



Alignment Section A: Emmock 400kV Substation to Forfar

What we proposed at consultation



Section A: Emmock 400kV Substation to Forfar

Potential Alignment in Section A

Feedback received



- Location: The overhead line was considered to have significant effects on the areas where people live. Suggestions were made that the overhead line should be moved further away from communities and homes.
- Landscape and visual: Concerns included the landscape and visual impact of the overhead line and towers on the area.
- Ecology: NatureScot noted potential impacts to specific designated areas e.g. the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA). Concerns raised by others related to impacts on migrating birds, bats and other wildlife, as well as habitats.
- Cultural heritage: Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Services (ACAS) noted a number of cultural heritage assets that may be impacted. Concerns raised by other respondents included impacts to local heritage such as ancient monuments near Tealing.
- Agriculture: Concerns were raised over the potential to damage farmland and impacts to farm animals given the amount of livestock in the area.
- Access: Concerns were raised about impacts of the project on roads including historic roads and roadside stone dykes and walls.
- Technical issues: Internet and phone services are considered to be poor in the area, and concerns were raised over the impact on internet and telecommunication services.
- Stakeholder communication: Concerns raised over the communication between SSEN Transmission and the community in relation to current survey activities being undertaken.

Response to feedback



- Location: We have aimed to route the overhead line a target distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible taking account of other land uses.
- Landscape and visual: A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken and reported in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), which will set out the measures to avoid, reduce and minimise landscape or visual impacts where possible.
- Ecology: Wherever possible, the alignment has avoided designated sites (such as SPA) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between the project and designated sites to reduce impacts. The overhead line design has been developed to avoid and reduce impacts on habitats and species as far as possible. A full ecological assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR setting out relevant mitigation proposals.
- Cultural heritage: Impacts to cultural heritage designations and interests will be assessed and reported in the EIAR, including any mitigation measures required.
- Agriculture: The alignment has been developed wherever possible to minimise effects on farms and farmland. We will continue to discuss access and construction arrangements with landowners to reduce disturbance.
- Access: Access to the project will avoid routes that could affect sensitive areas. Access is being developed working closely with landowners to minimise disruption.
- Technical issues: We are working closely with telecommunications operators to ensure that there will be no significant impacts from the project on telephone, internet and other communications infrastructure.
- Stakeholder communication: We will continue to work with affected landowners and communities to ensure that disruption from advance works is minimised. Any issues can be reported to the SSEN Transmission Community Liaison Manager.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for Section A, no significant changes to the Potential Alignment are proposed.

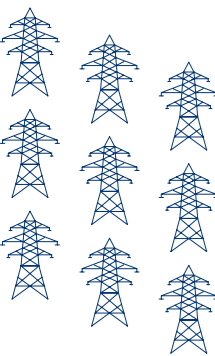
In Section A we will take the Potential Alignment forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 9: Proposed Alignment - Section A**.

Alignment Section A: Emmock 400kV Substation to Forfar

What we proposed at consultation



Location 1: Hayston Hill
Potential Alignment 1a and Alternative Alignment 1b



Feedback received



- A minority of respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 1a**. A key point raised was:
- Preference for Potential Alignment 1a as Alternative Alignment 1b was much closer to the scheduled monument at Arniefoul Cairn, as raised by HES and ACAS.
- The majority preferred **Alternative Alignment 1b**. Key points raised were:
- Angus Council noted Potential Alignment 1a may be closer to residential properties.
 - Alternative Alignment 1b would better protect the unique character of the environment and would have less impact on ecosystems, people and local tourism businesses.
 - Alternative Alignment 1b would be shorter, would have fewer impacts overall, would require less material and time to build and cause less access and road damage and disruption.
 - Alternative Alignment 1b would have a lesser impact on agricultural land.
 - It was felt the Nether Arniefoul Unenclosed Settlement was considerably closer to Potential Alignment 1a than Alternative Alignment 1b.
 - Alternative Alignment 1b would have less impact on watercourses and flood risk, and less impact on forestry.

Response to feedback



- It is recognised that the majority of respondents to the consultation expressed a preference for Alternative Alignment 1b.
- We have reviewed the findings of the environmental, technical and cost appraisals which were presented in the Consultation Document in light of the feedback received. In response to the main points raised:
- Proximity to property and the potential for adverse visual effects at locations such as Arniefoul and Hayston is considered to be similar for both alternatives and the alignment will be developed to target a separation distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible, taking account of other land uses.
 - The Potential Alignment 1a provides greater opportunity to reduce landscape impacts by crossing areas that are less hilly.
 - Cultural heritage constraint is considered to be greater for Alternative Alignment 1b and any potential impacts on archaeology will be assessed and mitigated wherever possible in the EIAR.
 - Alternative Alignment 1b would cross more extensive areas of upland hill land with more sensitive heath habitats. The alignment design will be developed to minimise woodland loss where possible and mitigation for any potential effects on water supplies will be set out in the EIAR.
 - Alternative Alignment 1b is slightly shorter than the Potential Alignment 1a and is considered to have similar technical challenges, although it crosses more challenging ground conditions at higher altitude.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee responses, it is considered that Potential Alignment 1a remains less constrained overall in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

In this location we will take **Potential Alignment 1a** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 10: Proposed Alignment for Location 1: Hayston Hill**.

Alignment Section A: What we are taking forward

Figure 9 - Proposed Alignment: Section A

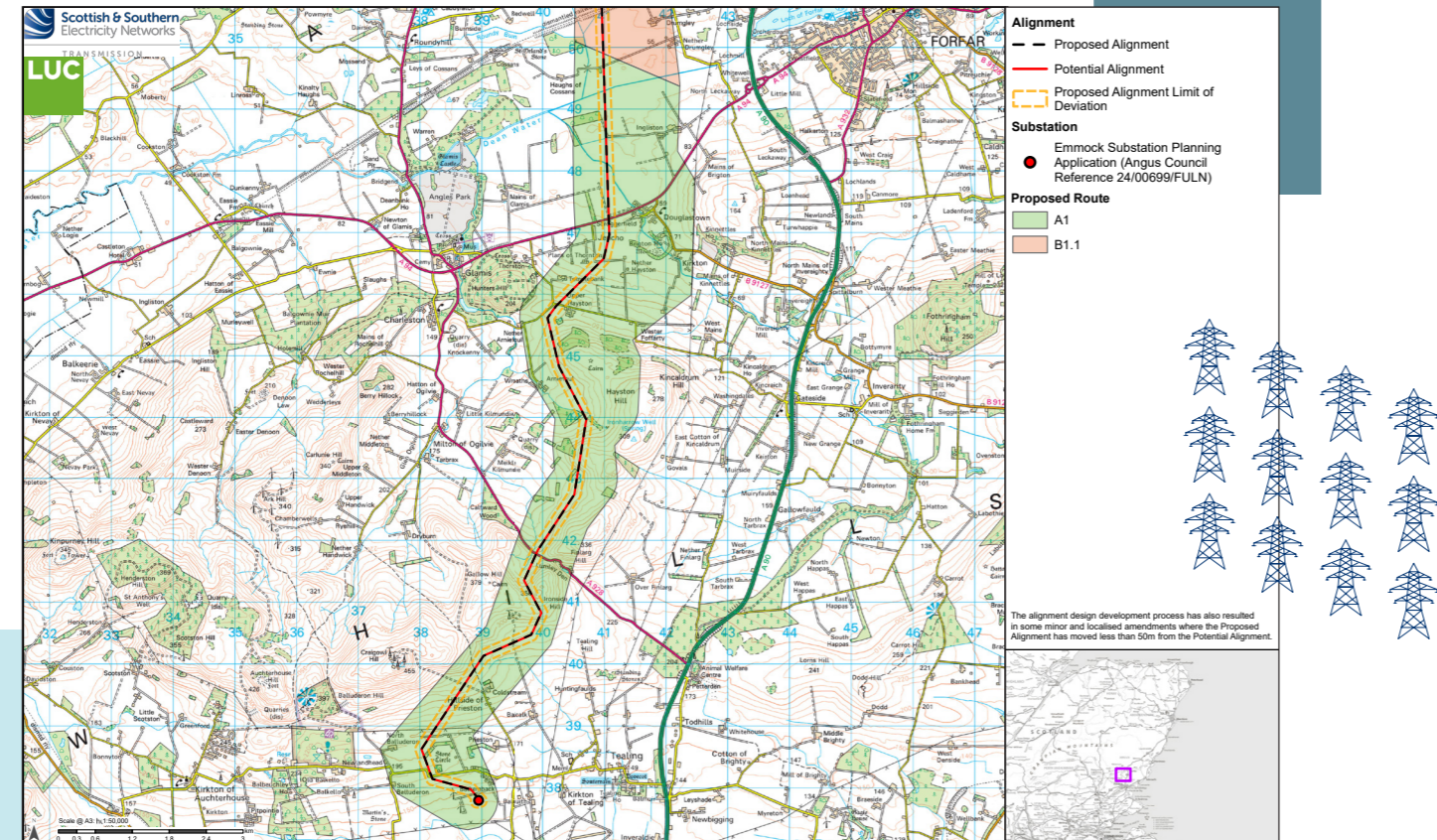
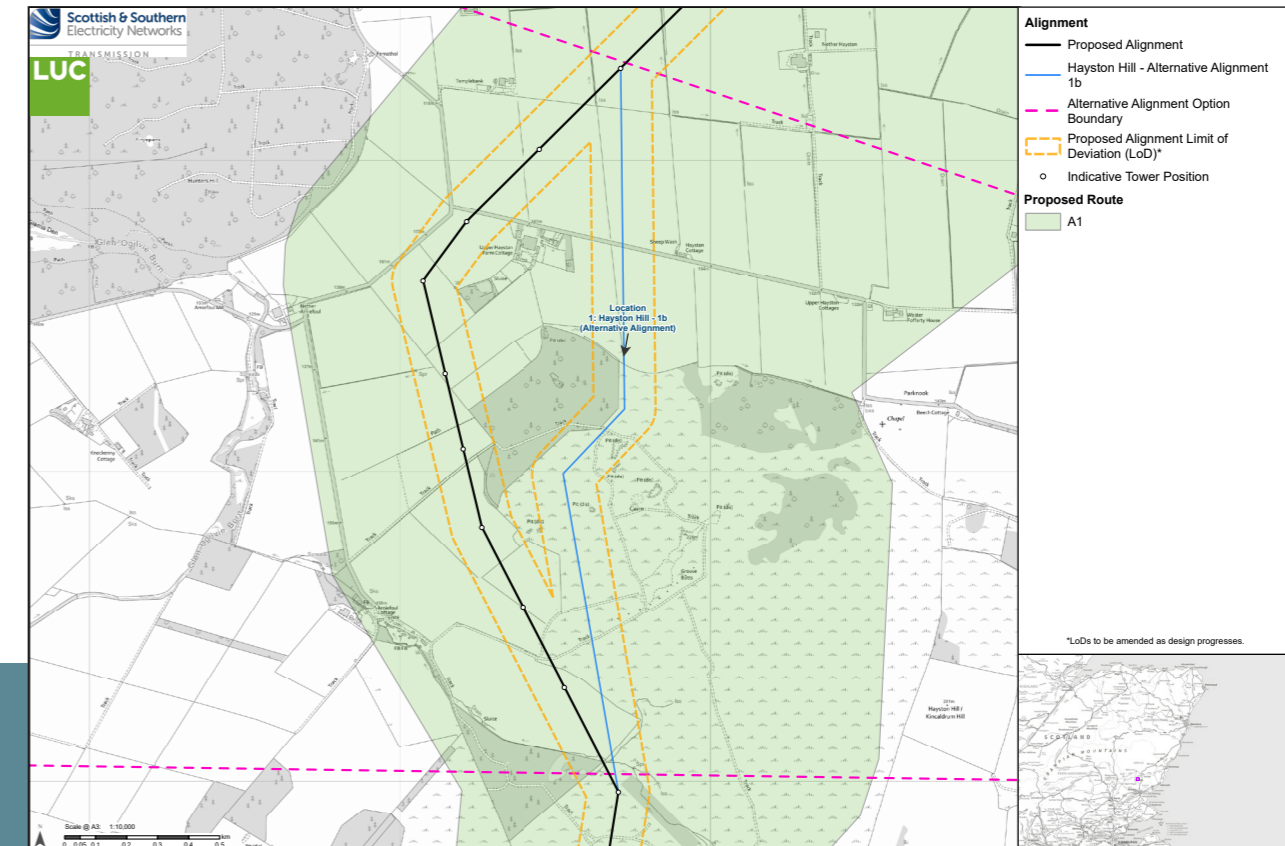


Figure 10 - Proposed Alignment for Location 1: Hayston Hill



Alignment Section B: Forfar to Brechin

What we proposed at consultation



Section B: Forfar to Brechin

Potential Alignment in Section B

Feedback received



- Location: Some felt that some properties were missing from the mapping used in the Consultation Document (e.g. around Padanaram). The overhead line was considered to have significant effects on the areas where people live especially where there are already overhead lines in the area, with the suggestion that the new overhead line will create a 'wrap around' effect along with other overhead lines. Suggestions were made that the overhead line should be moved further away from communities.
- Ecology: Feedback highlighted concern about impacts on specific sites, e.g. Lochty Wood, Ancient Woodland, wetlands and protected species. The Esk District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) noted River South Esk salmon spawning grounds and fishing areas. The possibility of potential impacts on designated sites e.g. the Montrose Basin Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), SPA and Ramsar site was raised by NatureScot.
- Cultural heritage: Feedback from HES and ACAS highlighted potential for setting impacts on specific sites, e.g. the Brown and White Caterthun hill forts, Battledykes Roman Camp. Local residents noted some local historical aspects, e.g. Lochty fields crop marks.
- Water resources: Concerns were raised by the Esk DSFB with regards to the potential risk of riverbank erosion and an increase of fine sediments in the River South Esk. Concerns were raised relating to the possible increase in the risk of flooding, noting a long history of flooding in the area.

Response to feedback



- Location: With regard to properties not shown on our base mapping, the Ordnance Survey (OS) base maps we have used are the latest available, dated July 2024. We do not however rely on OS base maps to identify properties, and we use the latest versions of AddressBase data, which we overlay on our mapping systems. We also collect up to date aerial imagery to ensure we are including all properties. Our land teams are also on the ground liaising directly with landowners. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR, it will consider existing overhead lines and set out relevant measures to avoid, reduce and minimise landscape or visual impacts.
- Ecology: Wherever possible, the alignment has avoided designated sites (such as SPA) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between the project and designated sites to reduce impacts. The overhead line design has been developed to avoid and reduce impacts on habitats and species as far as possible. A full ecological assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR setting out relevant mitigation proposals.
- Cultural heritage: Impacts to cultural heritage designations and interests will be assessed and reported in the EIAR, including any mitigation measures required.
- Water resources: We are liaising with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and will undertake a full water resources and flood risk assessment which will be reported in the EIAR along with mitigation measures. Watercourses will be protected during construction.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for Section B, no significant changes to the Potential Alignment are proposed.

In Section B we will take the Potential Alignment forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 11: Proposed Alignment - Section B.**

Alignment Section B: Forfar to Brechin

What we proposed at consultation



Feedback received (continued)



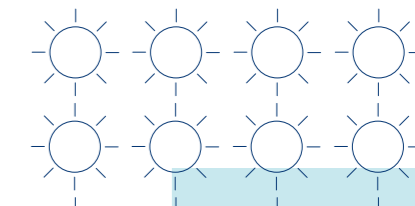
- Access: Concerns were raised about the poor existing road conditions and single track roads. It was noted that many bridges are historic with traffic and weight restrictions. Road conditions and traffic management are felt to be currently under pressure across the area.
- Health: Concerns raised over the impact on health due to the proposed proximity of the overhead line to residents and schools.
- Agriculture: Concerns over the impact to farming practices (e.g. size of plant operating around overhead line and towers) access to fields, impacts on prime agricultural land, biosecurity issues and impacts on field drains.
- Technical issues: Concerns were raised over the possible impact to internet and telecommunication services from electromagnetic interference. The area is also used for low flying military aircraft. Potential impacts on the existing sewerage system were also identified.
- Stakeholder communication: It was noted by some tenants/tenant farmers that they have not been directly contacted in the same way that landowners have despite being directly impacted.

Response to feedback (continued)



- Access: We will undertake surveys of all roads and access points prior to construction and undertake a Traffic and Transport Assessment. Traffic will be carefully managed and road conditions will be monitored, photographed and repaired if damaged.
- Health: We have aimed to route the overhead line a target distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible taking account of other land uses.
- Agriculture: The alignment has been developed wherever possible to minimise effects on farms and farmland. We will continue to discuss access and construction arrangements to reduce disturbance.
- Technical issues: We are working closely with telecommunications operators to ensure that there will be no significant impacts from the project on telephone, internet and other communications infrastructure. We are also liaising with the Ministry of Defence and Scottish Water.
- Stakeholder communication: Our land teams are liaising directly with landowners and are aware of affected properties. We will continue to work with affected landowners, land managers, tenants and communities as the project progresses.

Explanation of decision



Alignment Section B: Forfar to Brechin

What we proposed at consultation



Location 2: Padanaram

Potential Alignment 2a and Alternative Alignment 2b

Feedback received



Some respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 2a**. Key points raised were:

- Some felt that Potential Alignment 2a has an overhead line near it already and infrastructure should be kept together to minimise impacts elsewhere.
- It was felt that Alternative Alignment 2a would have less impact on telecommunications.
- Potential Alignment 2a would significantly reduce the impact on high quality agricultural farmland and farming operations.
- Concerns were raised by ACAS about the potential impact on the setting of cultural heritage features including Ballinshoe Castle, citing a preference for Potential Alignment 2a.

Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 2b**. Key points raised were:

- Angus Council noted that Potential Alignment 2a could result in greater impacts on residential receptors north of Padanaram around Ballinshoe and to some residential and farm settings than Alternative Alignment 2b.
- Some residents of Padanaram were concerned that the existing overhead line near the village has not been considered in the assessments and residents would be over-exposed to the environmental, socio-economic and health effects from overhead lines, with noise noted as a particular issue from the existing overhead line.
- The route of the overhead line near Padanaram of Potential Alignment 2a would have a direct impact on migratory geese and swans.
- Alternative Alignment 2b significantly reduces the impact to farmland compared to Potential Alignment 2a.
- Potential Alignment 2a includes works to protect a gas main and would have more construction impacts than Alternative Alignment 2b.
- Some respondents, including Forfar Community Council, had a preference for Alternative Alignment 2b based on the fewer number of dwellings impacted and that it would be less impacted by flooding.

Response to feedback



It is recognised that some of the respondents to the consultation expressed a preference for Alternative Alignment 2b.

We have reviewed the findings of the environmental, technical and cost appraisals which were presented in the Consultation Document in light of the feedback received. In response to the main points raised:

- Both alignments were developed to avoid the main settlement area at Padanaram.
- Proximity to property and potential for adverse visual amenity and related effects such as operational noise from the overhead line is considered to be similar for both alternatives. The overhead line will be developed to maintain a target separation distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible, taking account of other land uses. Constraint from farmland and areas at risk of flooding is not materially different between the two alternatives.
- Similarly, the level of constraint from migratory birds such as geese and swans was appraised as being comparable.
- Alternative Alignment 2b has been evaluated as being more technically constrained than the Potential Alignment 2a in relation to proximity to an adjacent high pressure gas pipeline.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee responses, it is considered that the Potential Alignment 2a remains less constrained overall in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

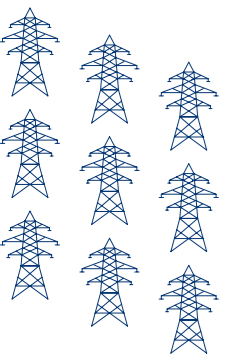
In this location we will take **Potential Alignment 2a** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as shown in **Figure 12: Proposed Alignment for Location 2: Padanaram**.

Alignment Section B: Forfar to Brechin

What we proposed at consultation



Location 3: Justinhaugh
Potential Alignment 3a and Alternative Alignment 3b



Feedback received



- Some respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 3a**. Key points raised were:
- Any overhead line along Alternative Alignment 3b would be seen from the A90 and nearby houses, this was not the case with Potential Alignment 3a.
 - Concerns were raised from ACAS regarding the potential to impact cultural heritage features including Battledykes Roman Camp and Battledykes Cairn, and respondents noted a preference for Potential Alignment 3a.
 - The crossing of the river by Alternative Alignment 3b was raised as a concern due to flooding issues.
 - Particular concerns were raised about the unsuitability of local roads for access, Potential Alignment 3a was considered to be more suitable.
 - It was judged by some that Alternative Alignment 3b would have adverse detrimental impacts on farmland and residential properties, with Potential Alignment 3a preferred.
- Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 3b**. Key points raised were:
- Respondents felt that fewer homes would be impacted by Alternative Alignment 3b. It was felt that noise impacts from the overhead line during operation could not be mitigated and that SSEN Transmission's target to site the overhead line no closer than 170m from homes could not be met on Potential Alignment 3a.
 - Visual impact on viewpoints in the area of Potential Alignment 3a would be significant; of note would be the impact on the view north to the Glens across the River South Esk. Alternative Alignment 3b would be less detrimental.
 - Concerns were raised relating to the crossing of the River South Esk by Potential Alignment 3a, particularly in relation to aquatic ecology, salmon spawning, fishing areas and osprey nesting.

Response to feedback



- It is recognised that some of the respondents to the consultation expressed a preference for Alternative Alignment 3b.
- We have reviewed the findings of the environmental, technical and cost appraisals which were presented in the Consultation Document in light of the feedback received. In response to the main points raised:
- Proximity to property is considered to be similar for both alternatives and the overhead line will be developed to maintain a target separation distance of at least 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible, taking account of other land uses.
 - There is potential for adverse effects on views and visual amenity from some properties adjacent to both alternatives and these will be assessed further in the EIAR. Alternative Alignment 3b crosses a pronounced area of raised ground north-west of Battledykes which was considered to have particular landscape and visual impacts compared with the Potential Alignment 3a.
 - Both alternatives cross the River South Esk which formed a key part of the appraisal of several environmental criteria. The Potential Alignment 3a would span the river and its flood plain with less impact on surface and groundwaters and less potential to impact on the ecological designation compared with the Alternative Alignment 3b.
 - Potential Alignment 3a includes some tower locations which involve more challenging topography; however, overall it has been evaluated as being less technically constrained overall than Alternative Alignment 3b.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee views, on balance it is considered that Potential Alignment 3a remains less constrained overall in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

In this location we will take **Potential Alignment 3a** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 13: Proposed Alignment for Location 3: Justinhaugh**.

Alignment Section B: Forfar to Brechin

What we proposed at consultation



Location 4: Careston

Potential Alignment 4a and Alternative Alignments 4b, 4c, 4d, 4e

Feedback received



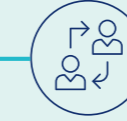
Some respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 4a**. Key points raised were:

- It was considered that Potential Alignment 4a has less impacts on the environment, residents, properties, and visual amenity compared to the Alternative Alignments.
- Concerns were raised by HES and ACAS regarding impacts on cultural heritage features including Vayne Castle, Vayne Standing Stone and Law of Windsor Cairn. HES confirmed that the Potential Alignment 4a was considered to have least impact.
- Angus Council noted that Potential Alignment 4a was situated within a larger scale landscape and may be more suitable for large structures.
- Some preferred Potential Alignment 4a as it runs in a straighter line and would be better for the environment and the community.
- Potential Alignment 4a was considered to cross poorer quality and flood-prone farmland and therefore was appropriate for an overhead line.
- Potential Alignment 4a and Alternative Alignments 4b and 4d were considered by the Esk DSFB as more preferable for salmon migration.

Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 4b**. Key points raised are listed below:

- It was felt that Alternative Alignment 4b would have less impact on the environment, impacting less woodland and wildlife.
- Alternative Alignment 4b would not cause as much disruption and could traverse poorer agricultural ground, areas that flood and recent conifer planting.
- Some had a preference for Alternative Alignment 4b due to fewer impacts on properties.

Response to feedback



It is recognised that there is a complex set of alternative alignments in this location and a wide range of different preferences was received.

We have reviewed the findings of the environmental, technical and cost appraisals which were presented in the Consultation Document in light of the feedback received. In response to the main points raised:

- Proximity to property has been reconfirmed and the Potential Alignment 4a is constrained by a slightly greater number of properties than the other alternative alignments. However, it provides the opportunity to maintain a greater distance between the overhead line and residential properties, particularly around the groups of properties in the area of Careston. The overhead line will be developed to maintain a target separation distance of at least 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible, taking account of other land uses.
- There is a clear difference in landscape and visual constraints with Alternative Alignments 4c and 4e least preferred due largely to their alignment over a prominent and elevated ridge feature. Alternative Alignment 4b is considered to be more visually constrained than Alternative Alignment 4d and the Potential Alignment 4a due to its proximity and wrapping around receptors at Montboy.
- All of the alternative alignments would require some loss of woodlands including areas associated with riparian planting at watercourse crossings and the woodlands at Duns Wood and Lochty Wood. The Potential Alignment 4a would intersect part of Lochty Wood and is more constrained in this location than the comparable Alternative Alignments 4b and 4d however it is considered that groundwater dependent habitats associated with the woodland area could be avoided or mitigated. Alternative Alignment 4d also intersects part of Barrelwell Bog Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) which can be avoided with the Potential Alignment 4a.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee views, and following further survey and design development, on balance it is considered that Potential Alignment 4a remains least constrained overall in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

In this location we will take **Potential Alignment 4a** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 14: Proposed Alignment for Location 4: Careston**.

Alignment Section B: Forfar to Brechin

What we proposed at consultation



Feedback received (continued)



Response to feedback (continued)



Explanation of decision



Some respondents preferred **Alternative Alignment 4c**. Key points raised were:

- Alternative Alignment 4c would have less impact on the environment destroying fewer woodland areas and wildlife.
- Some considered that Alternative Alignment 4c would have less impact on residents, properties and the landscape.
- Alternative Alignment 4c has poorer quality and flood-prone farmland and lends itself more to an overhead line.
- Alternative Alignment 4c would help protect the River Cruick and its valley.

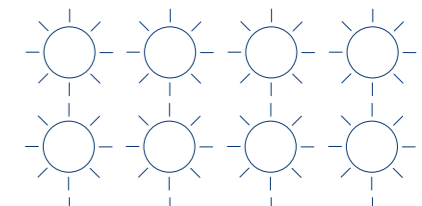
Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 4d**. Key points raised are listed below:

- Fewer people would be affected by Alternative Alignment 4d.
- Alternative Alignment 4d would have less impact on valuable woodland areas and wildlife, and would be better screened by trees.
- It was felt that Alternative Alignment 4d poses the lowest risk to the mains gas pipeline in the area.
- Alternative Alignment 4d would not cause as much disruption as it runs through agricultural ground and recent conifer planting.
- Alternative Alignment 4d would help protect the River Cruick and its valley.

Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 4e**. Key points raised are listed below:

- Alternative Alignments 4e was the most direct option.
- It was felt that Alternative Alignment 4e would have less impact on valuable woodland areas and wildlife.
- Alternative Alignment 4e would have less of an impact on residents and the landscape.

- The Potential Alignment 4a and Alternative Alignments 4b and 4d are considered to be less constrained than Alternative Alignments 4c and 4e in relation to the setting of designated cultural heritage sites with no material difference between them in terms of their potential for effects on archaeology.
- All of the alternatives need to cross the Noran Water however there is no material difference in the level of constraint for flood risk or in the potential to impact water quality of the watercourses during construction.
- The level of constraint from farmland is not considered to be materially different amongst the five alternative alignments.
- The technical appraisal of the alternatives has not identified any significant constraint with respect to telecommunication links. The Potential Alignment 4a follows the shortest and most direct alignment and whilst it is slightly more constrained in relation to high pressure gas pipeline proximity (than Alternative Alignment 4b) it is less constrained in this respect than the other alternatives and all issues could be managed and mitigated.



Alignment Section B: What we are taking forward

Figure 11 - Proposed Alignment: Section B

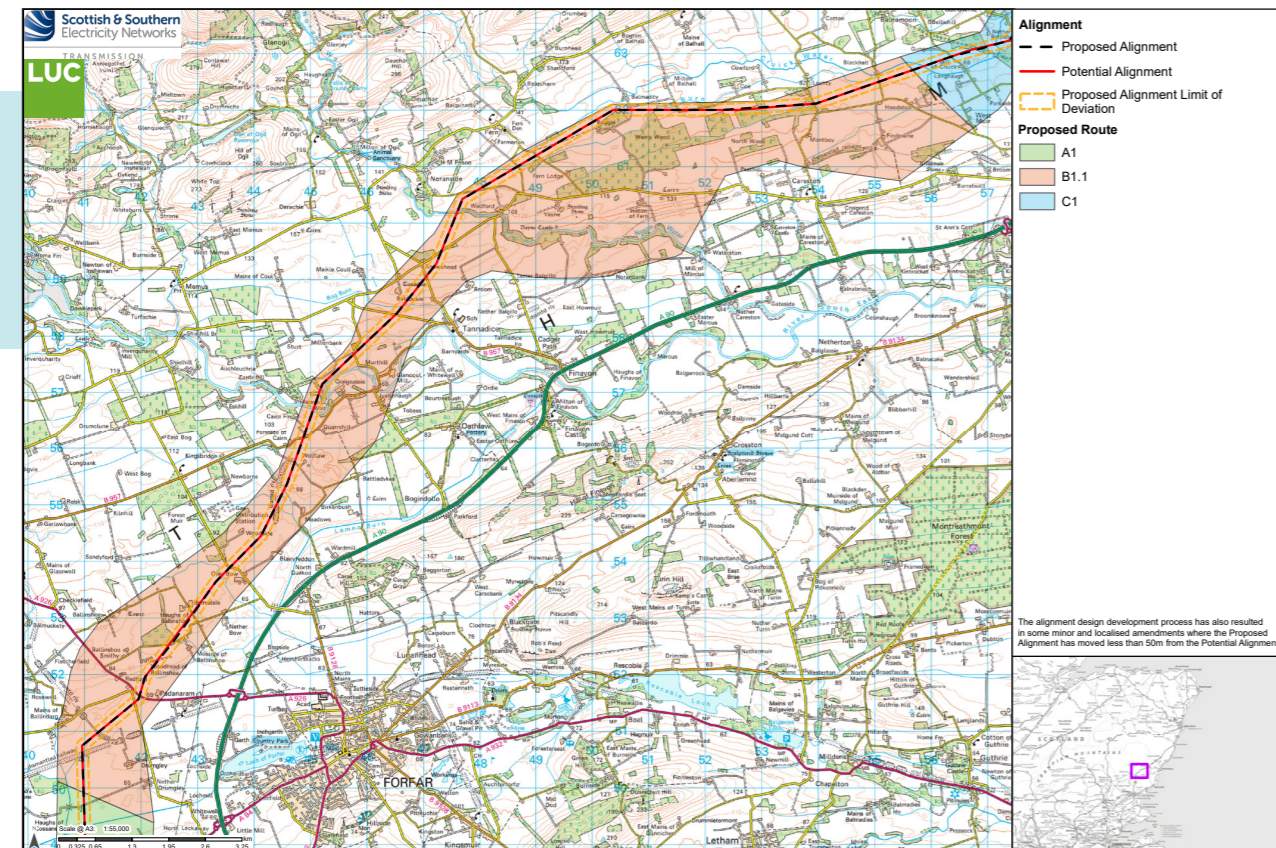
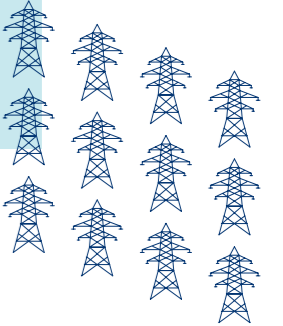
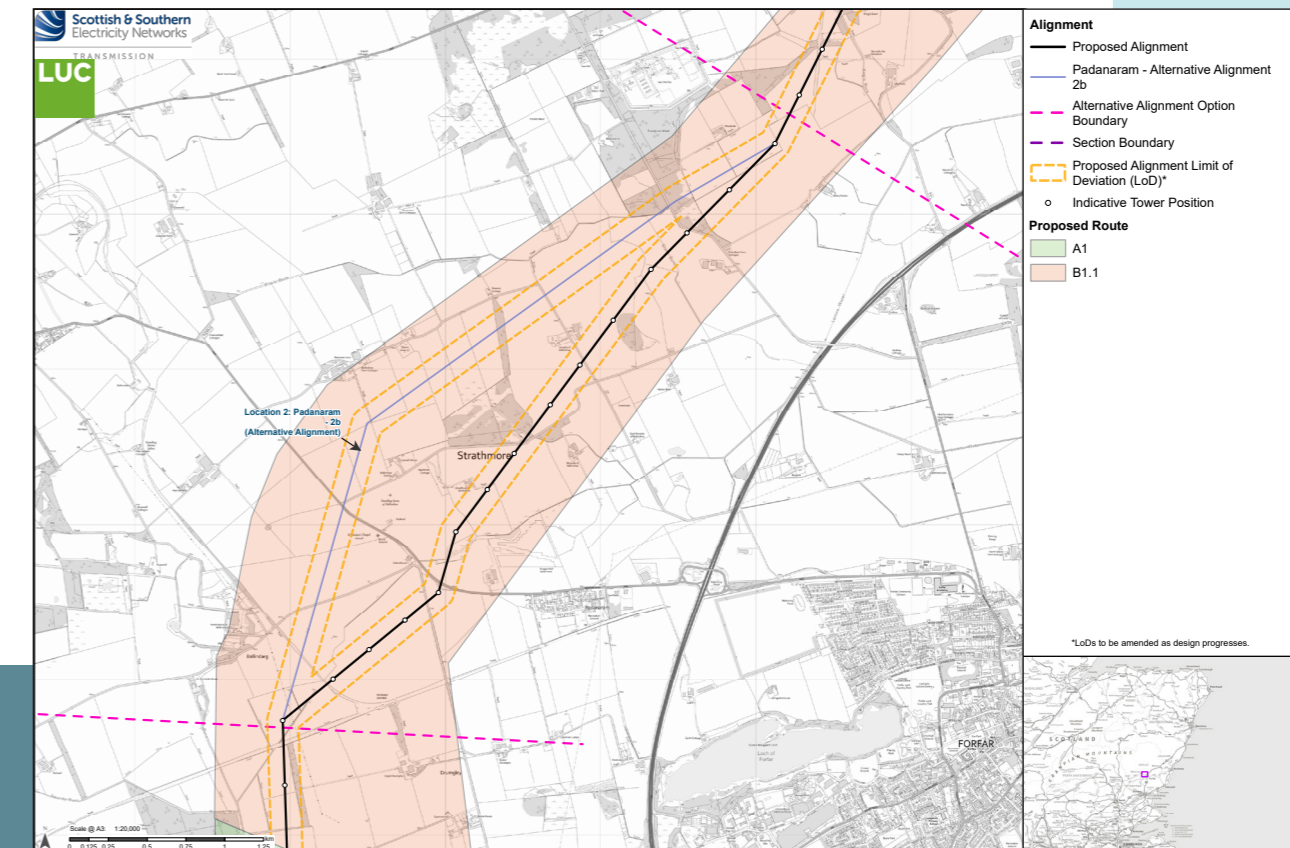


Figure 12 - Proposed Alignment for Location 2: Padanaram



Alignment Section B: What we are taking forward

Figure 13 - Proposed Alignment for Location 3: Justinhaugh

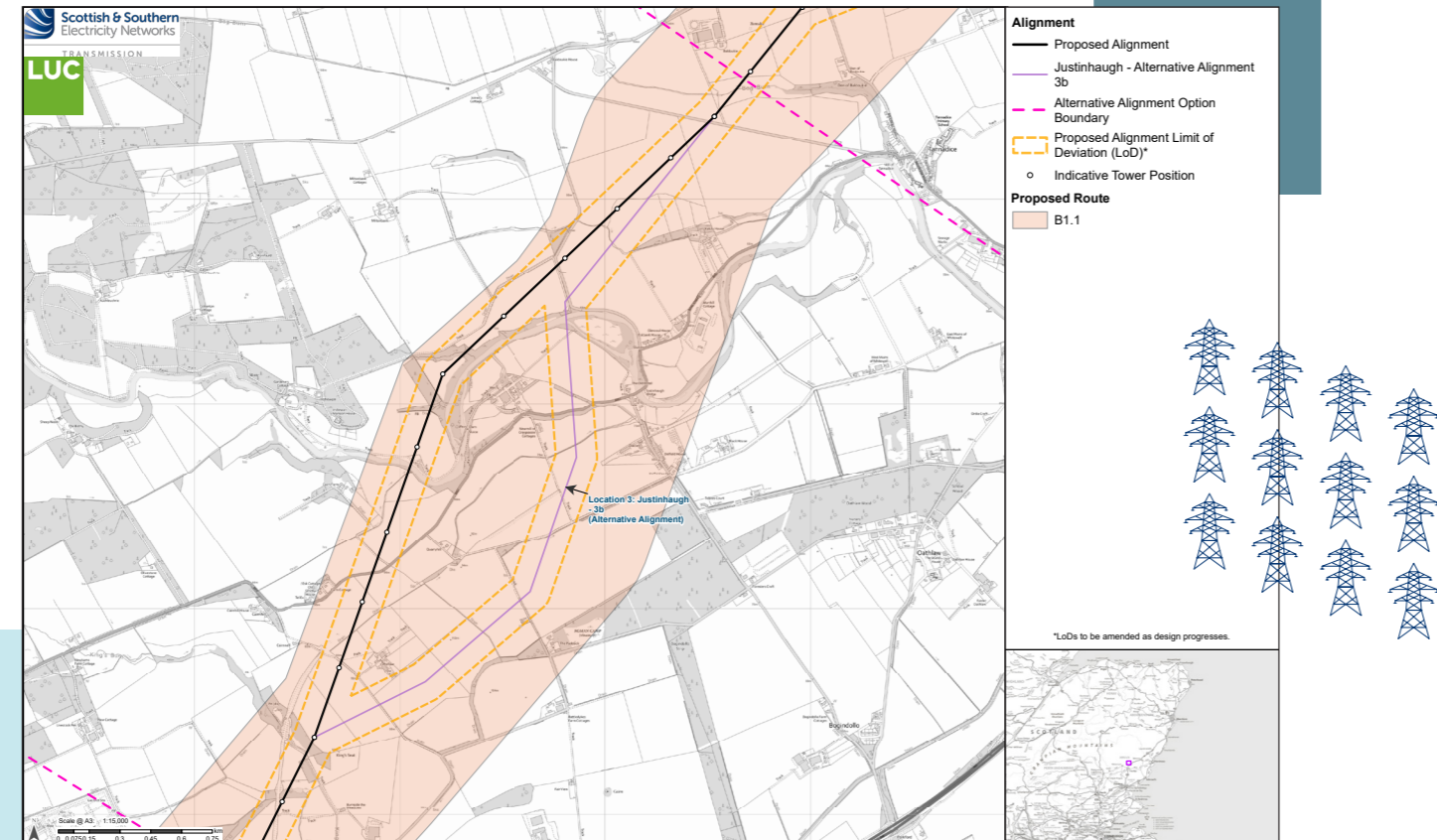
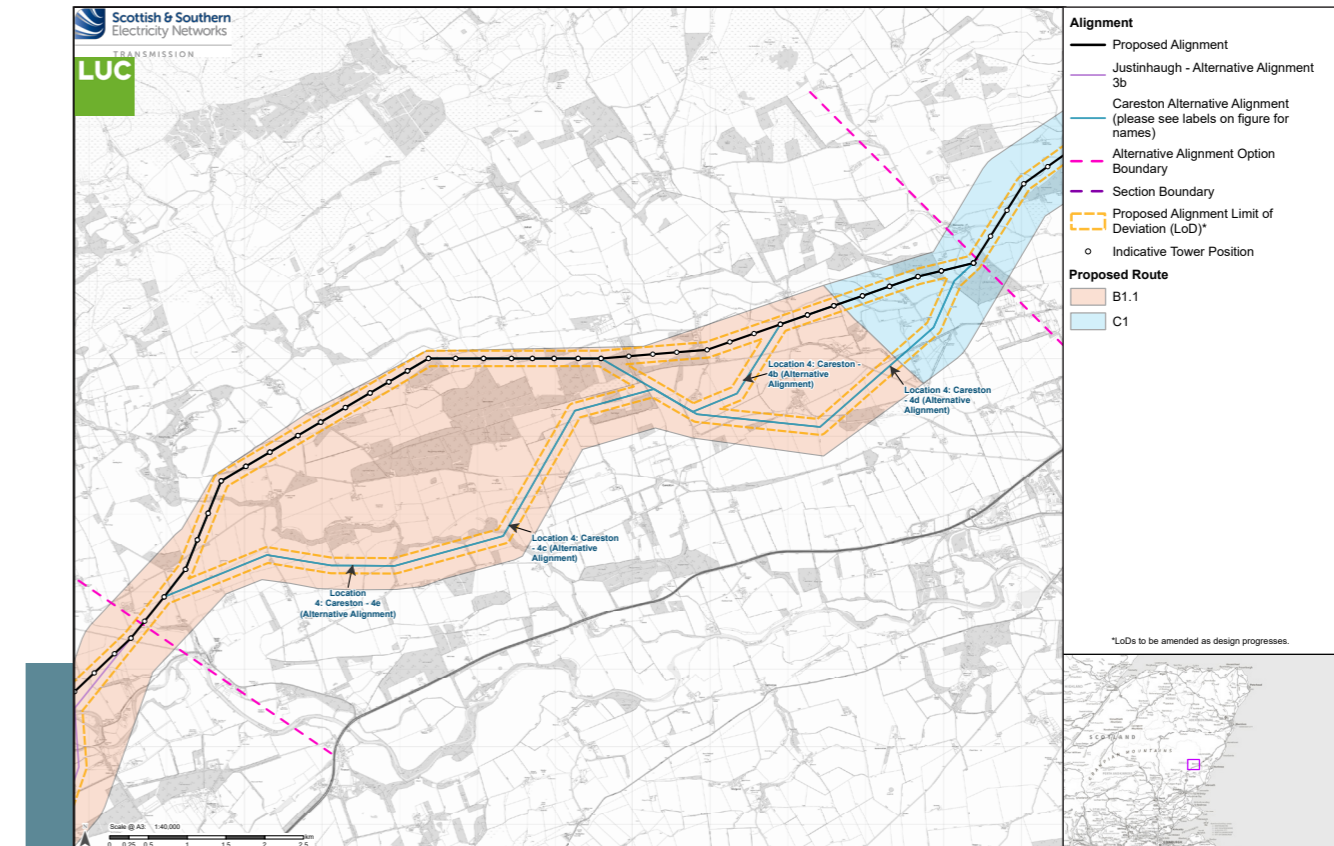


Figure 14 - Proposed Alignment for Location 4: Careston



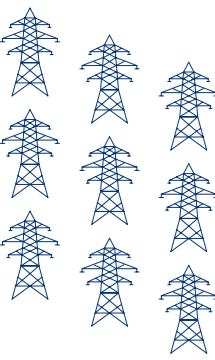
Alignment Section C: Brechin to Laurencekirk

What we proposed at consultation



Section C: Brechin to Laurencekirk

Potential Alignment in Section C



Feedback received



- Location: The overhead line was considered to have significant effects on the areas where people live and on the Mearns Countryside. Suggestions were made that the overhead line should be moved away from communities and homes.
- Ecology: Concerns included the impact on Ancient Woodland, veteran trees and protected species e.g. red squirrels. NatureScot noted possible impacts on designated sites e.g. the Loch of Kinnordy SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site.
- Cultural heritage: HES identified the potential for some cultural heritage features to be affected e.g. scheduled monuments at Finavon Fort and Stracathro Roman Camp.
- Agriculture: Concerns were raised about the impact of the project on high quality agricultural land, and operating issues around overhead line towers.
- Access: Concerns were mentioned about the impact of the proposed project on local infrastructure e.g. on minor roads in the Little Brechin area.
- Water resources and flooding: Concerns were raised regarding surface water flooding risks following the removal of trees, and the risk of the contamination of watercourses.
- Community benefits: Suggestions included support for new cycle paths and tree planting to soften the visual impact of the proposed overhead line specifically around Fettercairn.

Response to feedback



- Location: We have aimed to route the overhead line a target distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible taking account of other land uses. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR, it will set out the measures to avoid, reduce and minimise landscape or visual impacts where possible
- Ecology: Wherever possible, the alignment has avoided designated sites (such as SPA) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between the project and designated sites to reduce impacts. The overhead line design has been developed to avoid and reduce impacts on habitats and species as far as possible. A full ecological assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR setting out relevant mitigation proposals.
- Cultural heritage: Impacts to cultural heritage designations and interests will be assessed and reported in the EIAR, including any mitigation measures required.
- Access: We will undertake surveys of all roads and access points prior to construction and undertake a Traffic and Transport Assessment. Traffic will be carefully managed and road conditions will be monitored and photographed and repaired if damaged.
- Water resources and flooding: We are liaising with SEPA and will undertake a full water resources and flood risk assessment which will be reported in the EIAR along with mitigation measures. Tree removal will be minimised and watercourses will be protected during construction.
- Community benefits: We appreciate all suggestions for community benefits and will ensure to consider these as we develop our community benefit proposals.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for Section C a small change has been made to the Potential Alignment in one location as described below. No other significant changes to the Potential Alignment are proposed.

At Auchenreoch the alignment has been refined to provide greater separation of the overhead line from an area providing habitat for protected species.

In Section C we will take the Potential Alignment forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 15: Proposed Alignment - Section C.**

Potential Alignment Section D: Laurencekirk to Hurlie 400kV Substation (no alternatives)

What we proposed at consultation



Section D: Laurencekirk to Hurlie 400kV Substation

Potential Alignment in Section D

Feedback received



- Location: Concerns were raised regarding impacts of the project on various locations, e.g. Auchenblae and the Mearns. Key concerns included the visual impact and effects on the landscape.
- Ecology: Some issues were noted by NatureScot in relation to the potential for impacts to breeding raptors as well as protected sites, e.g. the Montrose Basin SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site.
- Cultural heritage: HES and ACAS identified the proximity of a number of cultural heritage features, the settings of which may be affected e.g. scheduled monuments at Droop Hill Cairns and Cairn o'Mount.
- Local businesses: Concerns were expressed about the impact on farming and local businesses in areas like the Braes of the Mearns.

Response to feedback



- Location. We have aimed to route the overhead line a target distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible taking account of other land uses. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR, it will set out the measures to avoid, reduce and minimise landscape or visual impacts where relevant.
- Ecology. Wherever possible, the alignment has avoided designated sites (such as SPA) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between the project and designated sites to reduce impacts. The overhead line design has been developed to avoid and reduce impacts on habitats and species as far as possible. A full ecological assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR setting out any relevant proposals.
- Cultural heritage. Impacts to cultural heritage designations and interests will be assessed and reported in the EIAR, including any mitigation measures required.
- Local businesses. The alignment has been developed wherever possible to minimise effects on farms and farmland. We will continue to discuss access and construction arrangements with land managers to reduce disturbance. We will also prepare a socio-economic report.

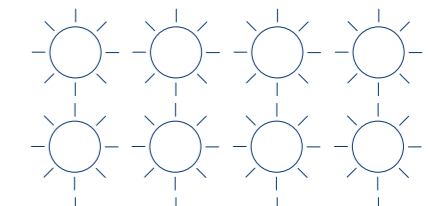
Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for Section D, a small change has been made to the Potential Alignment in two locations as described below. No other significant changes to the Potential Alignment are proposed.

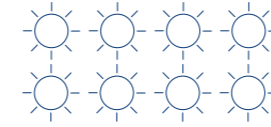
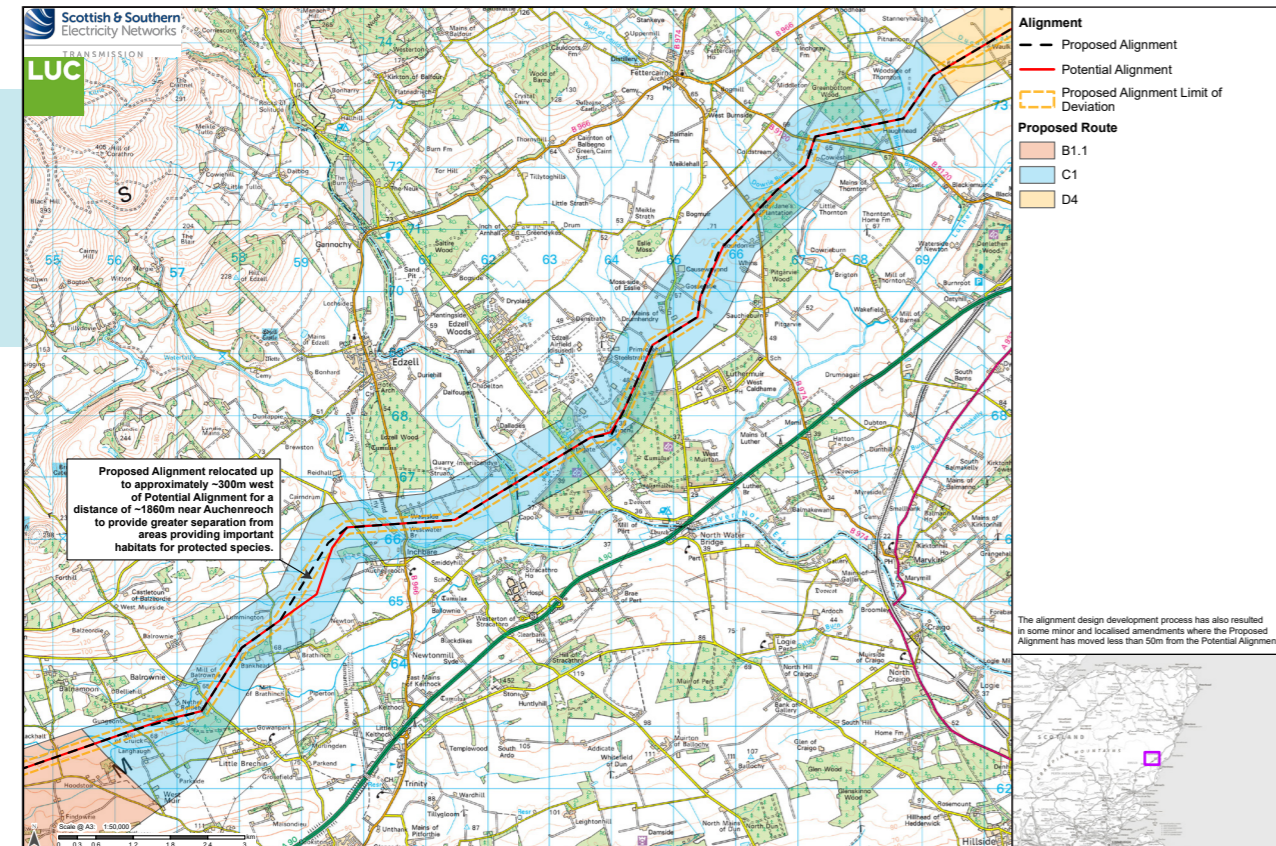
At Monboddo the alignment has been refined to provide greater separation of the overhead line from a major gas pipeline. The alignment has also been slightly adjusted in the forested area at Elf Hill to align the overhead line with the finalised position of the proposed Hurlie Substation.

In Section D we will take the Potential Alignment forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 16: Proposed Alignment - Section D**.



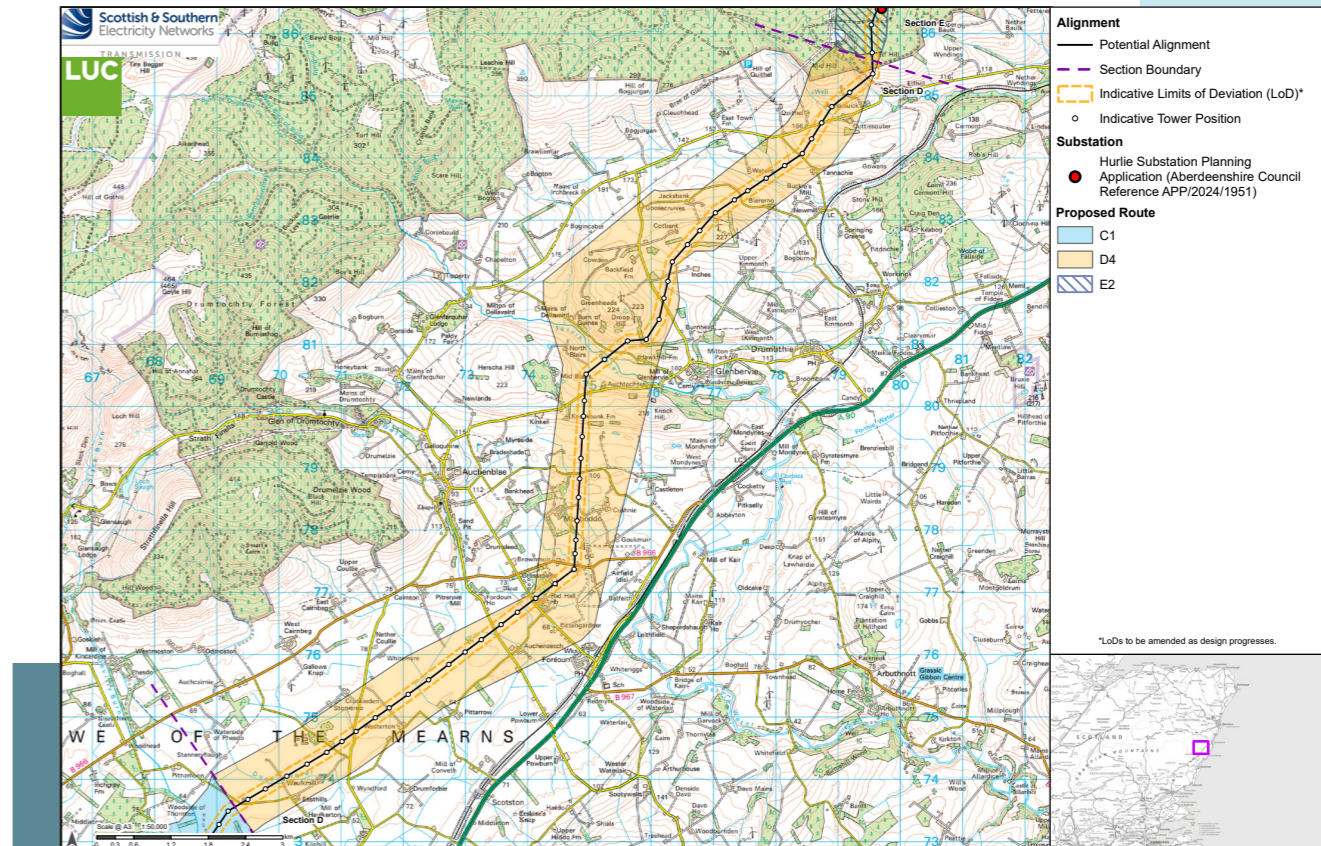
Alignment Section C: What we are taking forward

Figure 15 - Proposed Alignment: Section C



Alignment Section D: What we are taking forward

Figure 16 - Proposed Alignment: Section D



Alignment Section E: Hurlie 400kV Substation to River Dee

What we proposed at consultation



Section E: Hurlie 400kV Substation to River Dee

Potential Alignment in Section E

Feedback received



- Location. Residents raised concerns, particularly in Drumoak and Durris, about the impact the overhead line would have on communities and landscape and visual aspects. Particular concerns were raised about the close proximity of the overhead line to schools. Residents proposed specific alternative routes, such as moving the line to the east side of the A90 and to the east of Kirkton of Durris to minimise residential impacts or using existing routes through Fetteresso Forest.
- Ecology. Some issues were raised in relation to potential for impacts to breeding raptors. NatureScot noted the possibility of impacts on protected sites e.g. the Fowlsheugh SPA. The Dee DSFB commented that the overhead lines crosses the River Dee near wild salmon fisheries and fishing areas, and raised concerns regarding the effects on migratory fish.
- Cultural heritage. HES and ACAS identified the presence of a number of cultural heritage features, the settings of which may be impacted by the proposals e.g. scheduled monuments at Nether Auquhollie Standing Stone and Cairn-Mon-Earn cairn.

Response to feedback



- Location. We have aimed to route the overhead line a target distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible taking account of other land uses. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR, it will set out the measures to avoid, reduce and minimise landscape or visual impacts where possible.
- Ecology. Wherever possible, the alignment has avoided designated sites (such as SPA) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between the project and designated sites to reduce impacts. The overhead line design has been developed to avoid and reduce impacts on habitats and species as far as possible. A full ecological assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR setting out any mitigation proposals. This will include impacts on aquatic species and habitats, and birds.
- Cultural heritage. Impacts to cultural heritage designations and interests will be assessed and reported in the EIAR, including any mitigation measures required.

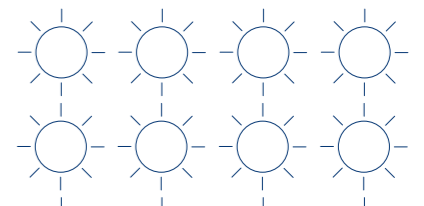
Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for Section E a small change has been made to the Potential Alignment in one location as described below. No other significant changes to the Potential Alignment are proposed.

At Wester Durris the existing Kintore to Fetteresso overhead line will be realigned slightly further west from its current position to allow for a western adjustment of the Potential Alignment which would increase the separation of the proposed overhead line from properties at Milton and Wester Durris.

In Section E we will take the Potential Alignment forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 17: Proposed Alignment - Section E.**



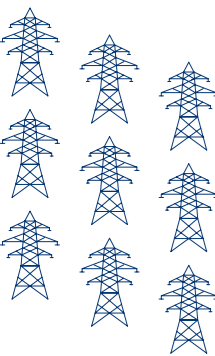
Alignment Section E: Hurlie 400kV Substation to River Dee

What we proposed at consultation



Location 5: Durriss

Potential Alignment 5a and Alternative Alignment 5b



Feedback received



The majority of respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 5a**. Key points raised were:

- Potential Alignment 5a was considered preferable as it would have fewer impacts on the community, farms and properties and places of historical importance.
- Potential Alignment 5a removes the need to pass by a primary school and a woodland used by the school on the edge of Drumoak.
- Concerns were raised by ACAS regarding the potential to impact cultural heritage features including Nether Auquhollie Standing Stone and Campstone Hill Field System and Cairns, with a preference for Potential Alignment 5a.
- Potential Alignment 5a was considered pragmatic due to it being parallel to an existing overhead line thus minimising disruption.
- Potential Alignment 5a would avoid properties being situated between two sets of overhead lines.
- Other concerns about Alternative Alignment 5b included its interaction with farms and with the Green Belt around Aberdeen.

Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 5b**. Key points raised were:

- A few people considered Potential Alignment 5a to be more impactful as it would place a new overhead line directly alongside an existing overhead line.
- HES noted that Potential Alignment 5a may be in key views of Park House Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) and therefore Alternative Alignment 5b was preferred in this regard.
- However, HES also noted that Alternative Alignment 5b would be closer to Drum Castle GDL.

Response to feedback



It is recognised that some respondents to the consultation expressed a preference for Alternative Alignment 5b.

We have reviewed the findings of the environmental, technical and cost appraisals which were presented in the Consultation Document in light of the feedback received. In response to the main points raised:

- The location of the Potential Alignment 5a alongside an existing overhead line for a part of its length is considered to help contain and reduce the potential for amenity and disruption effects on people and communities and on land management activities compared with Alternative Alignment 5b.
- The design of the Potential Alignment 5a and the existing Kintore to Fetteresso overhead line has been reviewed at a key location near Wester Durriss where the infrastructure would be in close proximity to properties. Overall Potential Alignment 5a is less constrained than Alternative Alignment 5b in relation to property proximity and has much greater separation from the large number of residential properties and the school in Drumoak.
- There are fewer scheduled monuments near to Potential Alignment 5a than Alternative Alignment 5b. Overall there is not considered to be a material difference in the level of constraint between the alternatives for cultural heritage, with the Potential Alignment 5a passing in proximity to Park House GDL and Alternative Alignment 5b close to the edge of Drum Castle GDL.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee views, and following further survey and design development, it is considered that the Potential Alignment 5a remains less constrained overall in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

In this location, we will take **Potential Alignment 5a** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our **Proposed Alignment, as shown in Figure 18: Proposed Alignment for Location 5: Durriss.**

Alignment Section E: What we are taking forward

Figure 17 - Proposed Alignment: Section E

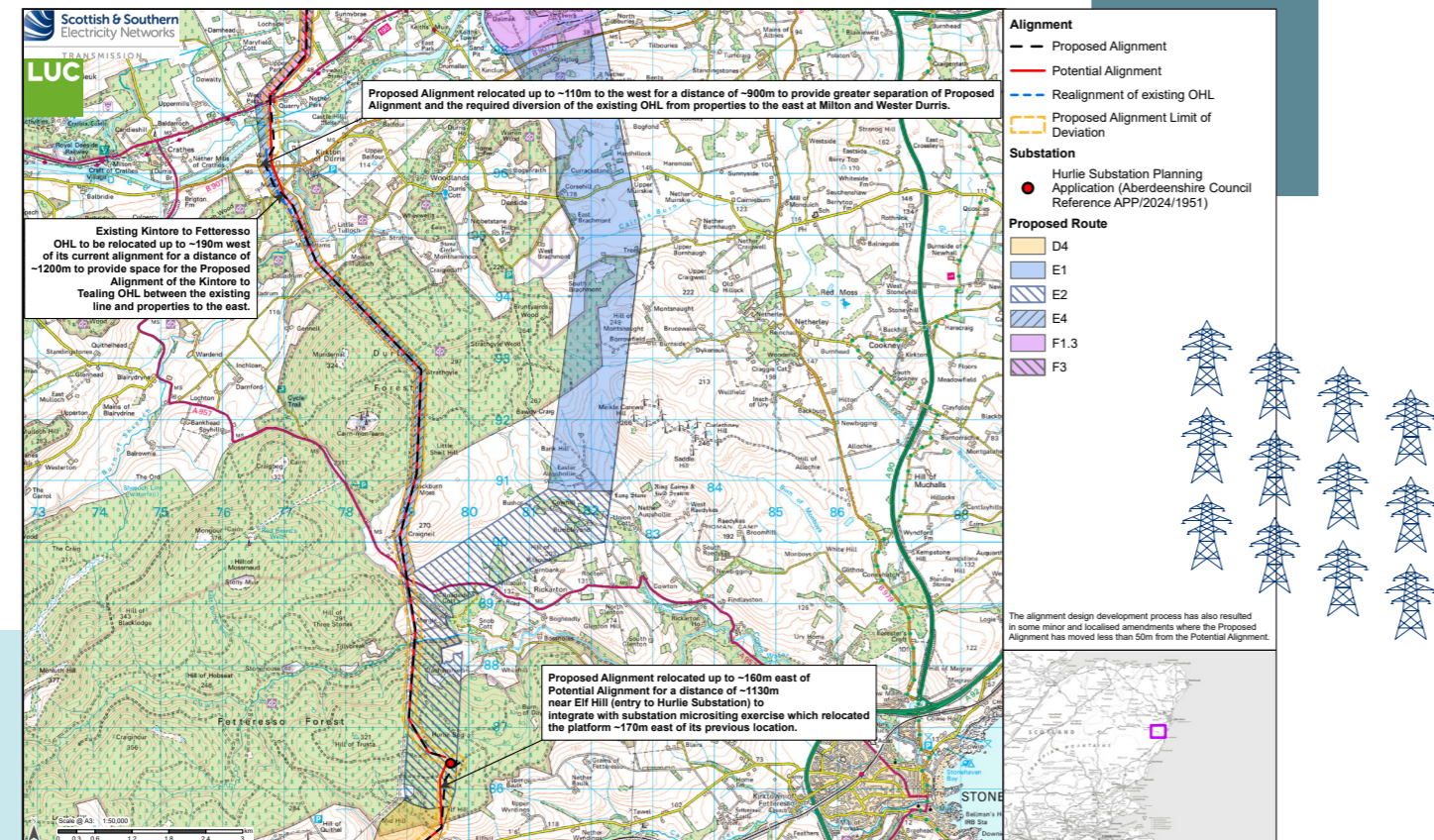
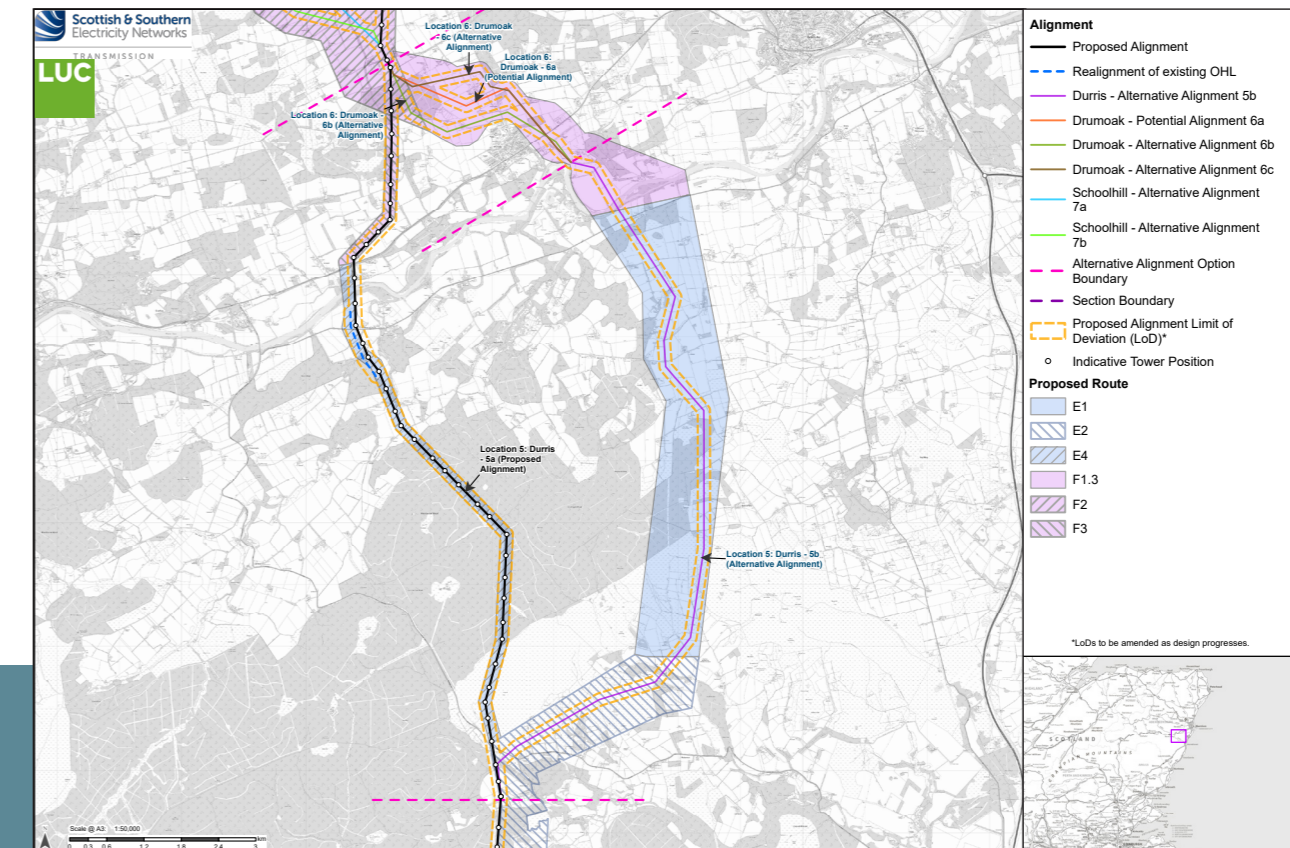


Figure 18 - Proposed Alignment for Location 5: Durris



Alignment Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation

What we proposed at consultation



Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation

Potential Alignment in Section F

- Location: Respondents expressed concerns that the alignments would bring the overhead line closer to their communities, e.g. near Echt, Dunecht, and Drumoak, especially in areas where overhead lines already existed. Particular concern was raised about the proximity of the overhead line to schools and woodland areas regularly used by the schools. Respondents felt that the 170m buffer identified by SSEN Transmission as the separation distance between properties and the overhead line was not being achieved. The visual impact of the overhead line on the wider Aberdeenshire countryside, wildlife and specific areas like Broomfield and Loch of Skene were raised.
- Cultural heritage: HES and ACAS identified the proximity of a number of cultural heritage assets which may be affected e.g. sites at King's Well, and the scheduled monument at Barmekin of Echt hillfort. HES noted particular concerns in relation to the potential for effects on the setting of South Leylodge Steading Stone Circle and provided comments in relation to proximity to designated Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs).
- Water resources and flooding: A number of respondents noted that some areas are very prone to flooding. Tree felling and construction activities were considered by many as likely to make the risk of flooding worse.
- Ecology: Wildlife impacts were central to the feedback in this area, with multiple respondents expressing concern over the potential negative effects on local ecosystems, e.g. peat bogs and ancient woodlands, and protected species. Some specific sites were mentioned by NatureScot such as the Loch of Skene SPA, SSSI and Ramsar site and Old Wood of Drum SSSI.
- Technical issues: Concerns were raised around the security of the overhead line along with the existing two major gas pipelines in this area.
- Community benefits: It was noted that the local school and nursery of Drumoak are looking to improve

Feedback received



Response to feedback



- Location: We have aimed to route the overhead line a target distance of 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible, taking account of other land uses. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR, it will set out the measures to avoid, reduce and minimise landscape or visual impacts where possible. The assessment will consider the project along with existing overhead lines that already exist.
- Cultural heritage: Impacts to cultural heritage designations and interests will be assessed and reported in the EIAR, including any mitigation measures required. We will discuss particular concerns, e.g. effects on the setting of South Leylodge Steading Stone Circle and GDL with HES and include these in the EIAR.
- Water resources and flooding: We are liaising with SEPA and will undertake a full water resources and flood risk assessment which will be reported in the EIAR along with mitigation measures. Tree removal will be minimised and watercourses will be protected during construction.
- Ecology: Wherever possible, the alignment has avoided designated sites (such as SPA) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between the project and designated sites to reduce impacts. The overhead line alignment and access track designs have been developed to avoid and reduce impacts on habitats and species as far as possible. A full ecological assessment will be undertaken and reported in the EIAR setting out any relevant mitigation. This will include impacts on aquatic species and habitats, and birds.
- Technical issues: We are working closely with the owners of the gas pipelines to understand potential interactions with the project and any required mitigation.
- Community benefits: We appreciate all suggestions for community benefits and will ensure to consider these as we develop our community benefit proposals.

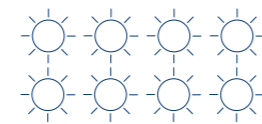
Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for Section F a small change has been made to the Potential Alignment in one location as described below. No other significant changes to the Potential Alignment are proposed.

At Schoolhill the alignment has been refined to avoid multiple crossings of a gas pipeline and to optimise the position of towers in relation to a flood plain.

In Section F we will take the Potential Alignment forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 19: Proposed Alignment - Section F.**



Alignment Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation

What we proposed at consultation



Location 6: North of Drumoak

Potential Alignments 6a and Alternative Alignments 6b and 6c

Feedback received



The majority of respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 6a**. Key points raised were:

- Some respondents noted that Alternative Alignment 6b would adversely affect Drumoak School and community and Potential Alignment 6a would be preferable. Alternative Alignment 6b was considered to be too close to many properties.
- Potential Alignment 6a was preferred by some on health, landscape and visual, and other environmental grounds.

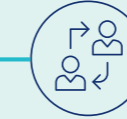
Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 6b**. Key points raised were:

- Concerns were raised by the National Trust Scotland over the setting impact to Drum Castle and Drum Wood, preferring Alternative Alignment 6b. HES also indicated this preference in relation to potential effects on the setting of Drum Castle GDL.
- From a farming perspective it was felt that Alternative Alignment 6b would have the least impact on farmland and some local businesses.

Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 6c**. Key points raised were:

- Potential Alignment 6c was preferred by some on health, landscape and visual and environmental grounds.

Response to feedback



It is recognised that a range of responses was received with some respondents expressing a preference for Alternative Alignments 6b and 6c.

In response to the points raised it is recognised that there is a similar level of environmental constraint for all of the alternatives appraised. Proximity to the settlement of Drumoak is a key issue and the Potential Alignment 6a was considered to offer the greatest opportunity to maintain separation from the overhead line alignment in this respect. The constraints from designated cultural heritage sites in proximity to the alternative alignments was also finely balanced and further discussion would be required with statutory consultees to identify opportunities for mitigation.

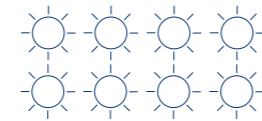
However, since we propose to take forward the Potential Alignment 5a in Section E (see above), none of the Location 6 alternative alignments will be considered further. This is because the Potential Alignment 6a and the Alternative Alignments 6b and 6c formed sub-options connected to, and part of, Alternative Alignment 5b.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee views, it is considered that the Potential Alignment 6a remains least constrained overall.

However, since the alternatives in this location formed part of Alternative Alignment 5b which is not being taken forward to form part of the Proposed Alignment, none of the alternative alignments will be taken forward in this location.



Alignment Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation

What we proposed at consultation



Location 7: Schoolhill

Potential Alignment 7a and Alternative Alignments 7b and 7c

Feedback received



Some respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 7a**. Key points raised were:

- There was a preference for Potential Alignment 7a as Alternative Alignment 7b was considered too close to residential properties including some that are not shown on the mapping.
- Concerns were raised by HES and ACAS regarding the potential to impact cultural heritage features including Tillyorn Moated Homestead, citing a preference for Potential Alignment 7a or Alternative Alignment 7c.
- Some felt there were fewer health risks associated with Potential Alignment 7a compared to Alternative Alignments 7b and 7c.

Some preferred **Alternative Alignment 7b**. Key point raised was:

- It was noted that wild geese are in constant flight near Potential Alignment 7a and the alternative alignments were preferred on these grounds.

The majority preferred **Alternative Alignment 7c**. Key points raised were:

- Alternative Alignment 7c would reduce visual and noise impacts and it is the straighter alignment.
- Alternative Alignment 7c was considered to be furthest away from houses.
- There was a preference for Alternative Alignment 7c in relation to flooding, land use and opportunity for compensatory tree planting.
- Alternative Alignment 7c was preferred to safeguard the local bird populations notably geese.
- Some respondents felt there were fewer health risks associated with Alternative Alignment 7c due to the multiple power lines in Alternative Alignment 7b.
- Concerns were raised regarding the potential to impact cultural heritage assets including Tillyorn Moated Homestead, stating a preference for Potential Alignment 7a or Alternative Alignment 7c to reduce potential setting impact.

Response to feedback



It is recognised that some respondents to the consultation expressed a preference for Potential Alignment 7a and Alternative Alignment 7b but with a clear preference from respondents for Alternative Alignment 7c.

Drawing on further site survey findings for these alternatives and post-consultation design development, the environmental and technical issues previously associated with some of the towers for Alternative Alignment 7c have been reduced as we have been able to move some of the tower locations.

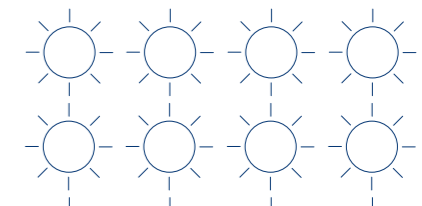
On balance, taking account of these design amendments and the site surveys, Alternative Alignment 7c is now considered to have fewer technical constraints than the previous Potential Alignment 7a, particularly in relation to flood risk avoidance and reduced interaction with a high pressure gas pipeline. It also provides greater separation from a number of residential properties near Quiddies Mill and Milton of Cullerlie, and it is considered to have a similar level of environmental and cost constraints.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee views, and following further survey and design development, it is considered that the Alternative Alignment 7c is now the least constrained alternative in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

In this location we will take **Alternative Alignment 7c** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 20: Proposed Alignment for Location 7: Schoolhill**.



Alignment Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation

What we proposed at consultation



Location 8: Echt

Potential Alignment 8a and Alternative Alignments 8b and 8c

Feedback received



Some respondents preferred **Potential Alignment 8a**. Key points raised were:

- Alternative Alignment 8b would be unacceptable to some Echt residents as it passes too close to Echt village, the primary school and playing fields, and the 170m separation distance could not be achieved, core paths and planning application site boundaries are also being crossed. There was a preference expressed for either Potential Alignment 8a or Alternative Alignment 8c.
- Potential Alignment 8a would ensure the route does not encroach on the Dunecht House GDL.
- It was considered by some that Potential Alignment 8a and Alternative Alignment 8c would benefit from greater visual screening from the existing trees which would mitigate the impact to the village of Echt.
- Concerns were raised by ACAS and HES regarding the potential to impact cultural heritage features including East Finnelly Cairn, with a preference for Potential Alignment 8a or 8b.

A minority preferred **Alternative Alignment 8b**. Key points raised were:

- Concerns were raised by ACAS and HES regarding the potential to impact cultural heritage features including East Finnelly Cairn, citing a preference for Potential Alignment 8a or 8b.

Response to feedback



It is recognised that some respondents to the consultation expressed a preference for Alternative Alignments 8b and 8c.

We have reviewed the findings of the environmental, technical and cost appraisals which were presented in the Consultation Document in light of the feedback received. In response to the main points raised:

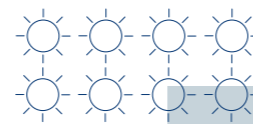
- Proximity to property is considered to be similar for all three alternative alignments; however, Alternative Alignment 8b would be located in relatively close proximity to a large number of properties and a school in the settlement of Echt.
- The overhead line for Potential Alignment 8a will be developed to maintain a target separation distance of at least 170m or more from residential properties and to maintain a minimum distance of 100m where possible, taking account of other land uses.
- Alternative Alignment 8b is less constrained in relation to landscape effects than the Potential Alignment 8a or Alternative Alignment 8c as it follows generally lower lying ground with lower loss of mature woodland.

Explanation of decision



Having reviewed the consultation feedback for this alignment location, including statutory consultee views, it is considered that Potential Alignment 8a remains least constrained overall in relation to the environmental and technical criteria appraised.

In this location we will take **Potential Alignment 8a** forward for the Environmental Impact Assessment and detailed design as our Proposed Alignment, as shown in **Figure 21: Proposed Alignment for Location 8: Echt**.



Alignment Section F: North of the River Dee to Kintore Substation

What we proposed at consultation



Feedback received (continued)



The majority preferred **Alternative Alignment 8c**. Key points raised were:

- Concerns were raised about Alternative Alignment 8b near Echt, and a preference for Alternative Alignment 8c as it would minimise visual impacts and avoid areas with planning permission.
- Some respondents suggested Alternative Alignment 8c was the least disruptive alternative.
- Feedback indicated that Alternative Alignment 8b would be unacceptable to some Echt residents, with a preference for Potential Alignment 8a or Alternative Alignment 8c.
- It was felt that Alternative Alignment 8c would avoid the fields that support large bird populations.
- Alternative Alignment 8c would keep the overhead line as far from the school, village and fields used by the community as possible.
- Alternative Alignment 8c was considered by some as the least impactful to the community and recreational space.

Response to feedback (continued)



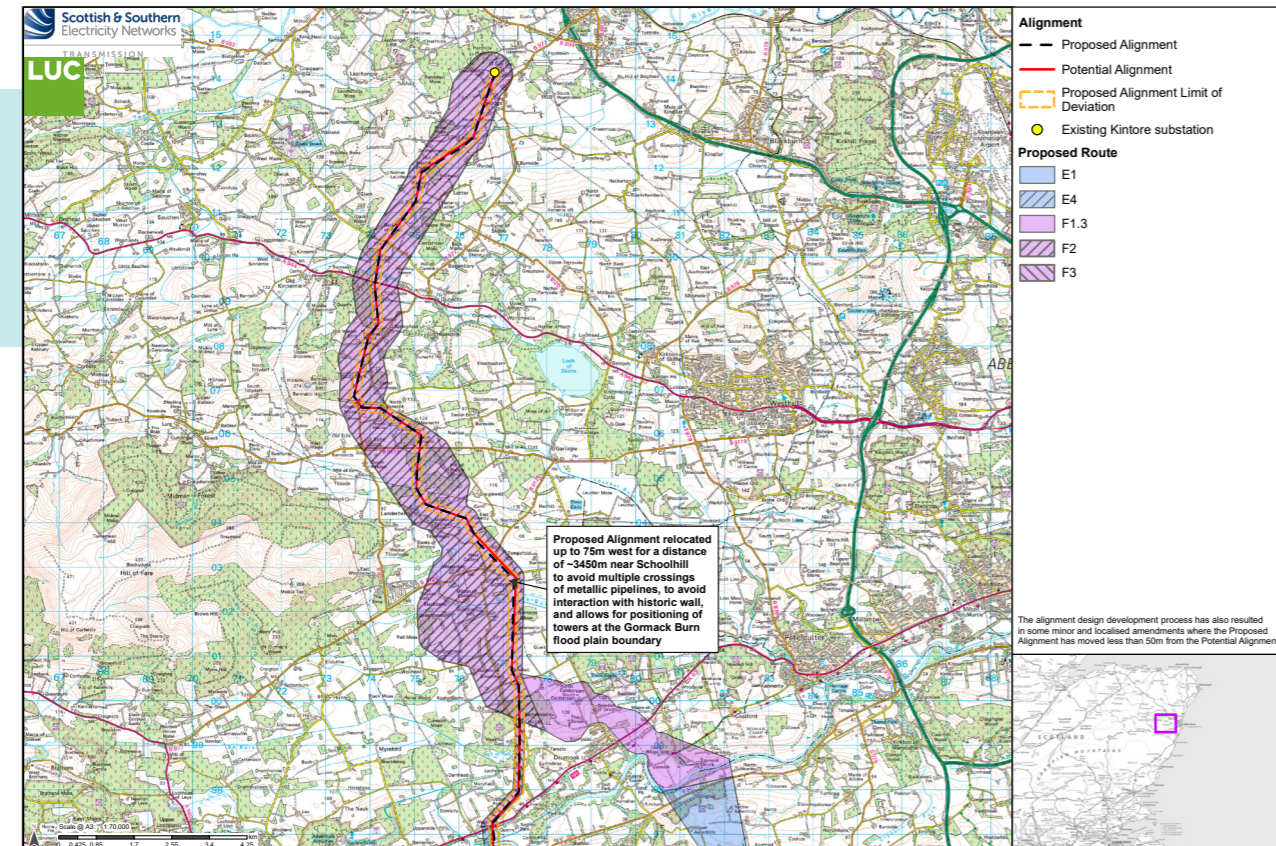
- All of the alternatives have potential for adverse effects on visual amenity. The Potential Alignment 8a and Alternative Alignment 8c may compromise visual amenity experienced from the wider landscape where the overhead line crosses an area of elevated landform. In comparison, Alternative Alignment 8b would compromise visual amenity experienced by a large number of people at the settlement of Echt as the overhead line would lie within close proximity to this settlement.
- All of the alternatives pass within close proximity to the southwestern edge of Dunecht House GDL. However, there is considered to be flexibility to position the alignments to avoid any direct impact on the designated area and there is not considered to be a material difference in cultural heritage constraints.
- All alternatives would require some felling of woodland, with Alternative Alignment 8b slightly less constrained than the Potential Alignment 8a and Alternative Alignment 8c in relation to habitat loss.

Explanation of decision



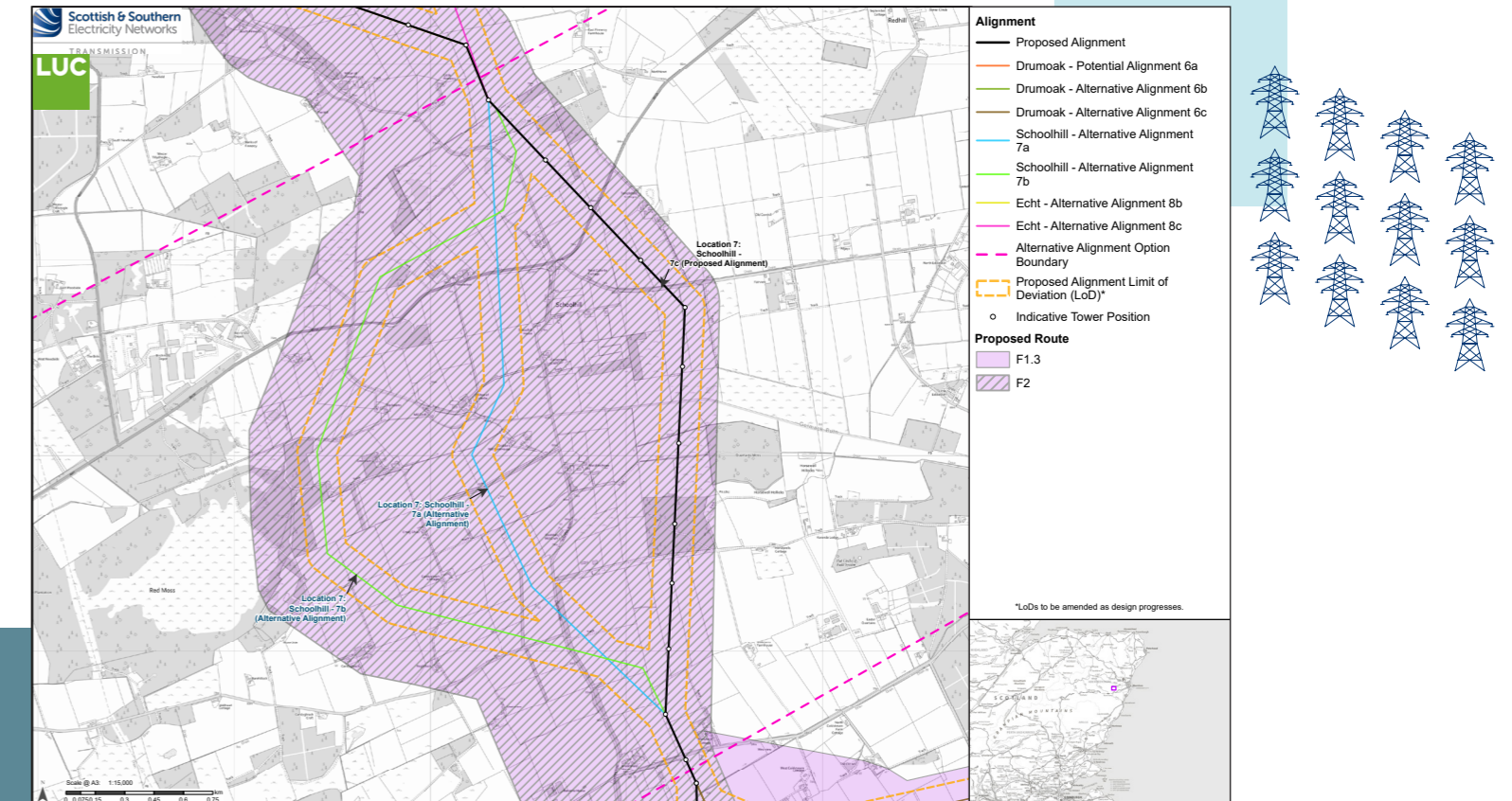
Alignment Section F: What we are taking forward

Figure 19 - Proposed Alignment: Section F



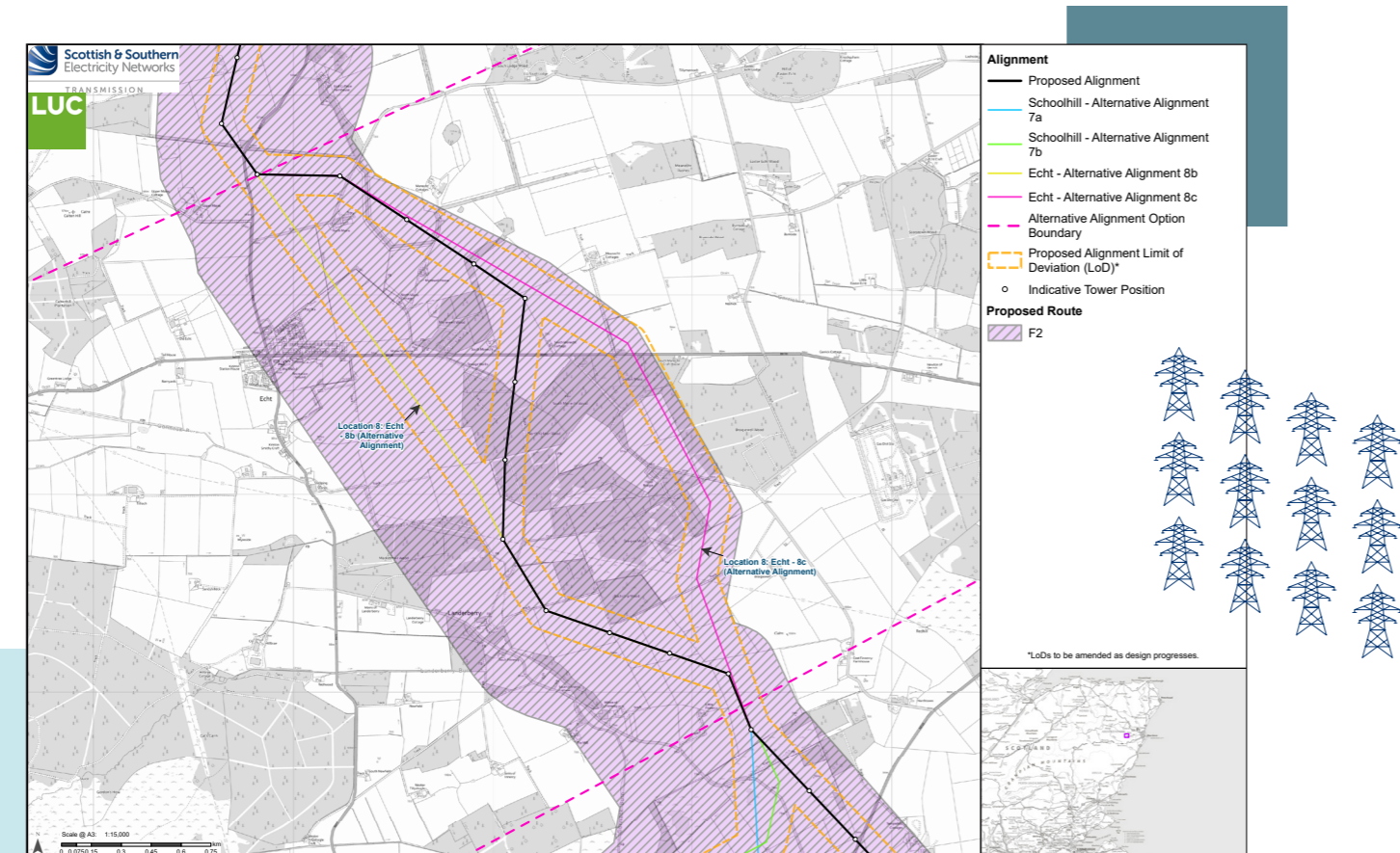
Alignment Section F: What we are taking forward

Figure 20 - Proposed Alignment for Location 7: Schoolhill



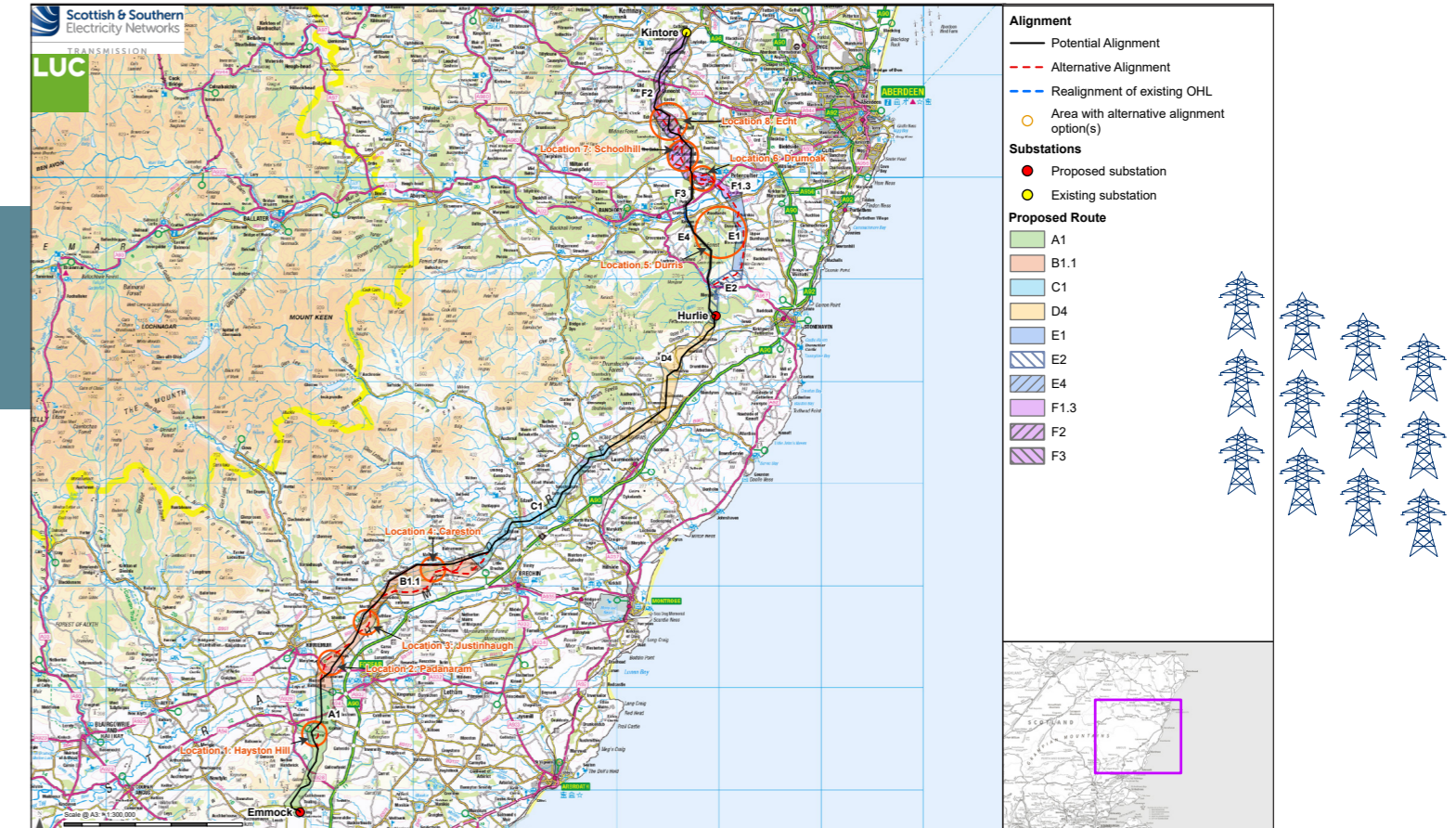
Alignment Section F: What we are taking forward

Figure 21 - Proposed Alignment for Location 8: Echt



Overview figure of what we are taking forward

Figure 22 - Proposed Alignment Overview



Next Steps

Engagement with communities and other stakeholders is essential in planning the delivery of this critical national infrastructure. Following the publication of the Report on Consultation, we, alongside our specialist consultants and contractors, will further develop the design to finalise the Proposed Alignment and tower positions. We will continue to consult with local communities and stakeholders in early 2025, where we will present the Proposed Alignment alongside indicative locations for access tracks which we plan to take forward to the Section 37 consent application that will be submitted to the Energy Consents Unit in 2025.

