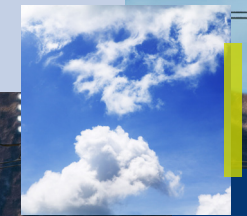
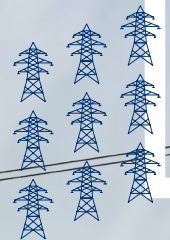
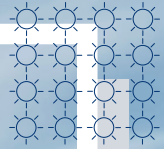


Kintore to Tealing 400kV Overhead Line

Summary Report on Consultation

August 2024



Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Introduction

In March 2024, we held a series of in-person events on the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV overhead line, with consultation on new proposed route options within Sections D, E and F of the overhead line as well as welcoming feedback on a series of 'Refined Routes', approximately 500m wide, within sections A, B, C, E and F.

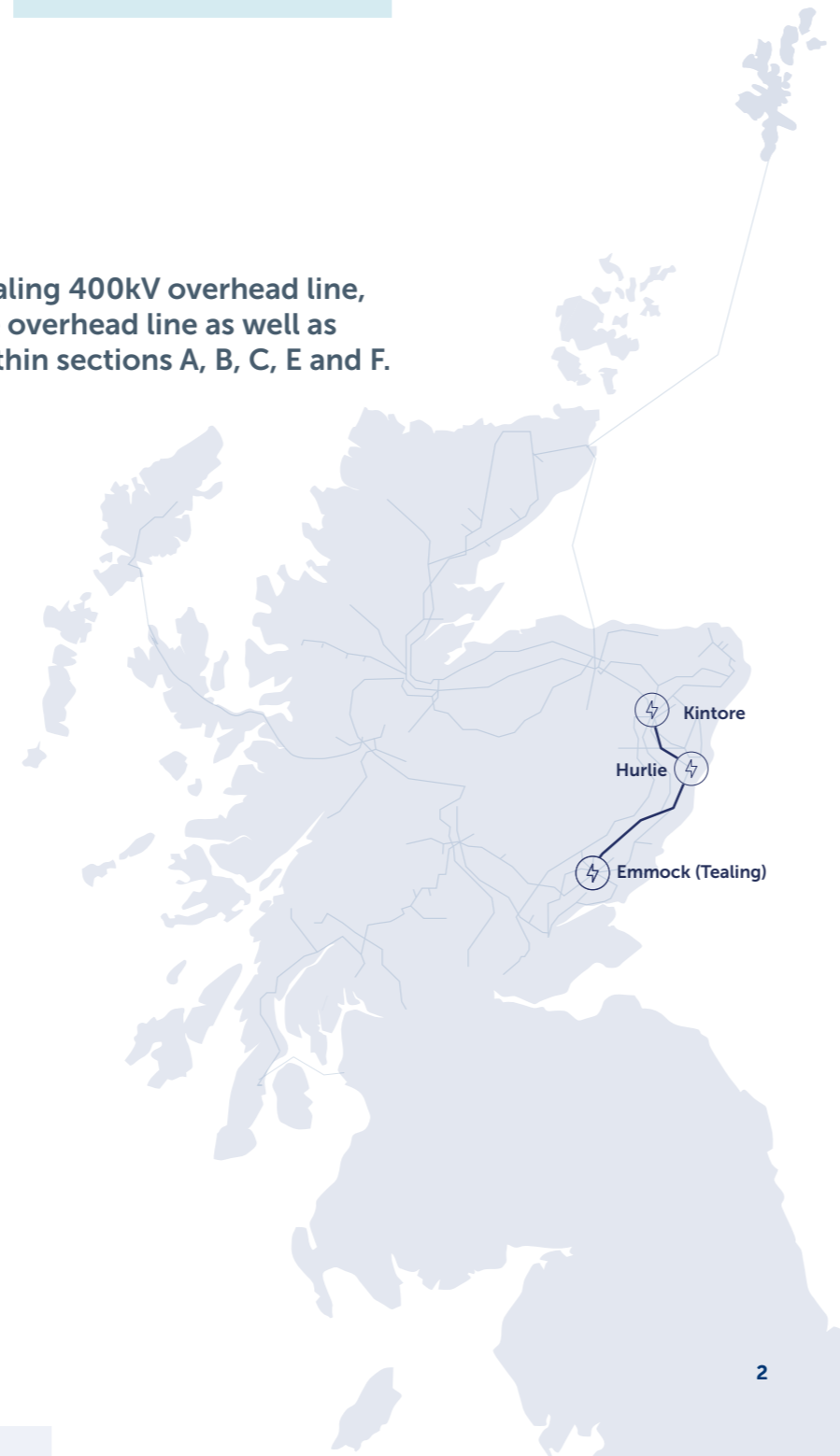
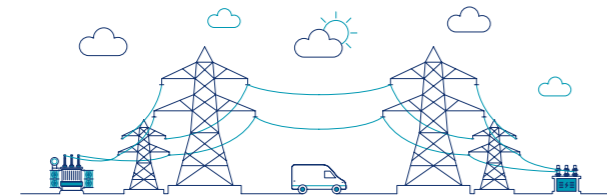
The Refined Routes were presented to update our stakeholders on the progress we had made towards identifying suitable alignment options for the overhead line. It was explained that these routes were still subject to change as our alignment options developed and stakeholder feedback was considered. The sections of the proposed line will run as follows:

- Section A (Tealing to Forfar)
- Section B (Forfar to Brechin)
- Section C (Brechin to Laurencekirk)
- Section D (Laurencekirk to Hurlie Substation)
- Section E (Hurlie Substation to River Dee)
- Section F (River Dee to Kintore)

We hosted public consultation events as well as meetings with a wide range of stakeholders and welcomed feedback via a range of methods including online feedback forms, emails and letters. We have now collated this feedback, our responses and the decisions that we have made into a Report on Consultation which is available on the [project specific webpage](#).

This Summary Report on Consultation highlights the feedback we received in response to our consultation, and how this has influenced our actions and decision-making. We also received feedback covering a number of common themes such as the need for the project, the impact of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and the impact on property prices and private water supplies. Some of these common themes are addressed within the Report on Consultation, but we have also developed a suite of documents which provide detailed information on each of these themes, as well as a set of responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) which can all be viewed [here](#).

This report summarises feedback received from all stakeholders who provided a response during the consultation period. The feedback has been summarised into each route section A to F and the routes being taken forward to alignment are shown on page 23.



Summary of Public Consultation Engagement March 2024



10 Consultation events



1,912 Registered attendees



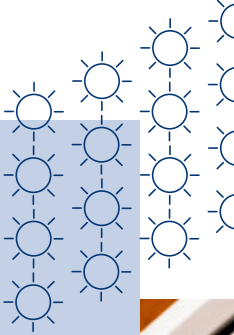
1,610 Pieces of written feedback



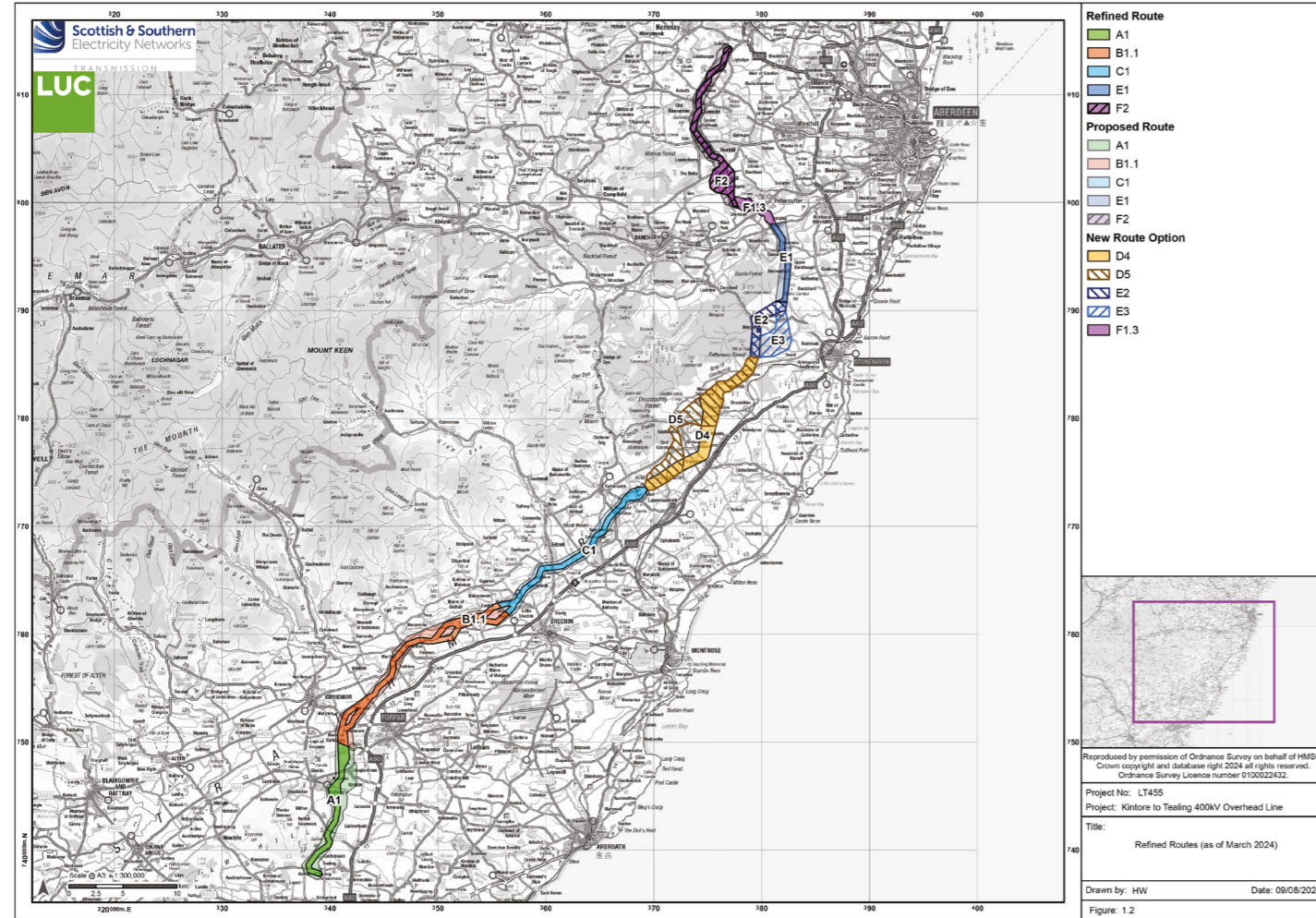
Public engagement events were supplemented by a number of online and in person meetings with a variety of stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, members of the public, Community Councils and elected members.

Useful links

- [Pathway to 2030](#) – Projects delivering a Network for Net Zero
- [Why are the Pathway to 2030 Projects needed?](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on our Pathway to 2030 Projects



What we presented in March 2024



Summary of Project Specific Feedback and Our Decisions



Section A – Tealing to Forfar

What we presented



Feedback received



Response to feedback



Explanation of decision



Section A (Tealing to Forfar)
Refined Route A1.

Within Refined Route A1, concerns were raised by members of the community particularly about the landscape and visual impact of the project including on areas such as the Angus Glens, Glamis and Strathmore.



The design of the project will aim to minimise the prominence and visual impact of the overhead line as far as possible. We aim to achieve this through sitting towers on lower areas of land, avoiding ridges and the tops of hills, using hills as back drops to reduce sky lining where possible and minimising the felling of woodland and trees, which provide some screening.

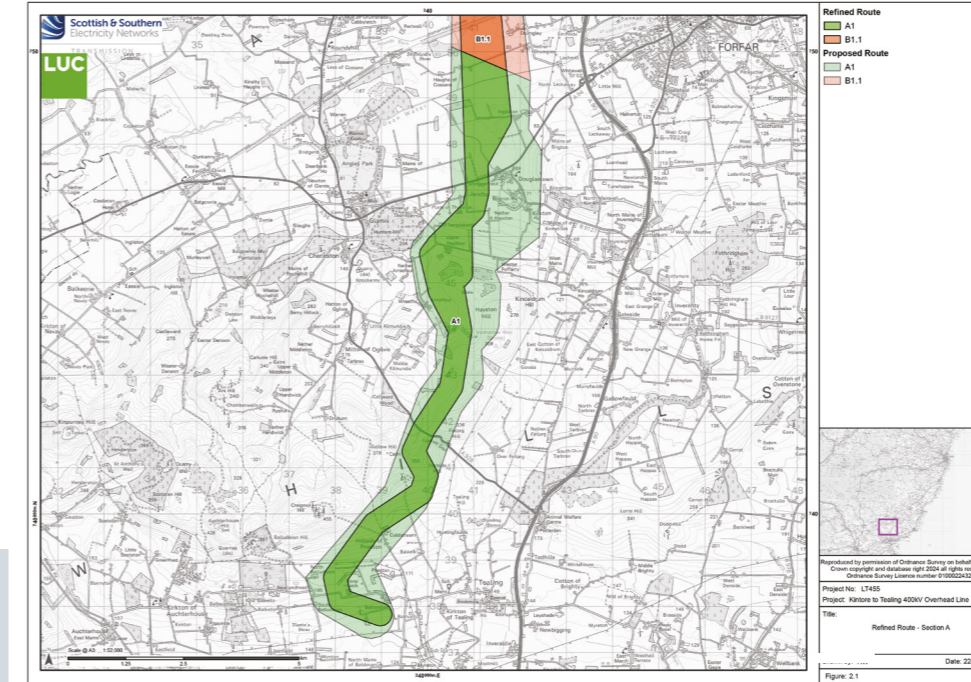
Route A1 has been further refined and will be taken forward to alignment development.

After carefully considering the feedback received, the route option has been refined slightly at the southern end to facilitate an overhead line alignment connection with the proposed Emmock Substation, and at the northern end to avoid areas of key land use and environmental constraint including land at risk of flooding.

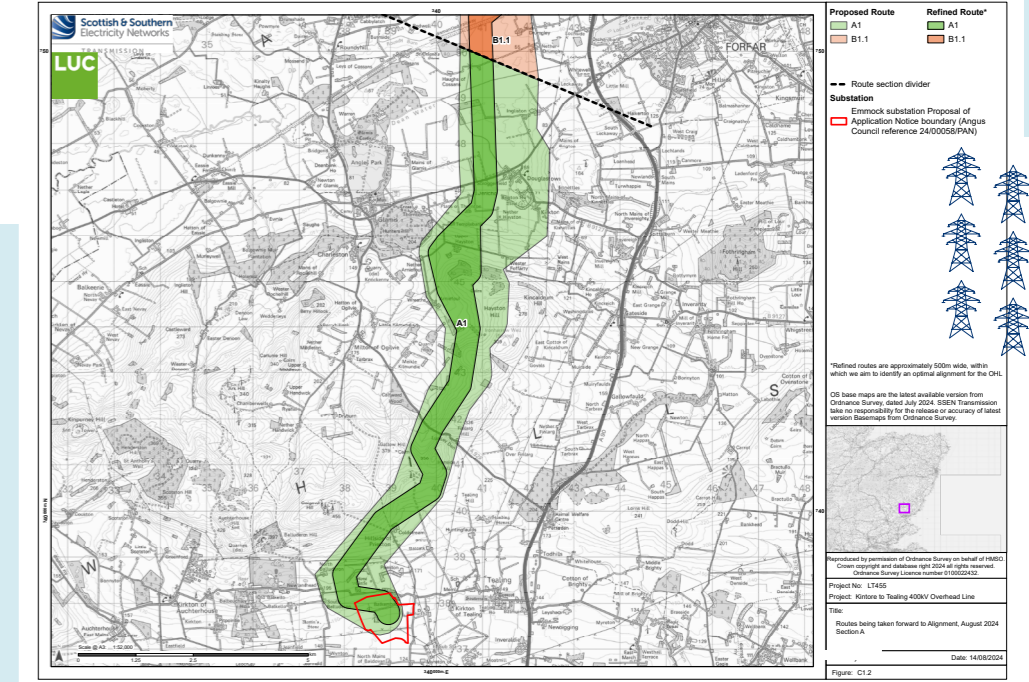
Route A1 has fewer conflicts with key landscape features, avoiding summits of hills and steeper topography, compared with the previously considered Route A1.1, meaning that it will be less visible overall. Route A1 is also considered to be less constrained by properties.

Section A – Tealing to Forfar

Presented in March 2024



To be taken forward to alignment consultation



Section B – Forfar to Brechin

What we presented



Feedback received



Response to feedback



Explanation of decision



Section B (Forfar to Brechin) Refined Route B1.1.

Key concerns included the proximity of this route to a gas pipeline, the impact of flooding in various areas such as at the Noran Water and the potential impact on prime agricultural land, including concerns around biosecurity. There was also concern with the location that the overhead line would cross the River South Esk and the impact that this may have on protected species and fish habitats.

Some responses questioned how property constraints were evaluated and considered that route B1 affected fewer properties. Conversely, some stakeholders felt that route B1.1 would positively take the line further away from houses.

We have reviewed the feedback received and a number of changes to the route have been made as a result.

The impact of the project on agriculture will be avoided where possible through sensitive location of towers and tracks, however it is acknowledged that some sections of the proposed overhead line will unavoidably need to cross sections of prime agricultural land. Liaison with farmers to understand their businesses and how they use their land will continue.

All site staff will be required to follow strict biosecurity measures, including those undertaking pre-construction surveys, enabling and construction works.

We will continue to engage with SEPA during the next stage of design to mitigate concerns regarding flooding.

We are engaging with owners of the gas pipelines, and this will include detailed consideration of potential interactions with their infrastructure and any necessary mitigation. The potential impacts on protected species and fish habitats are noted and are being considered further by specialist teams.

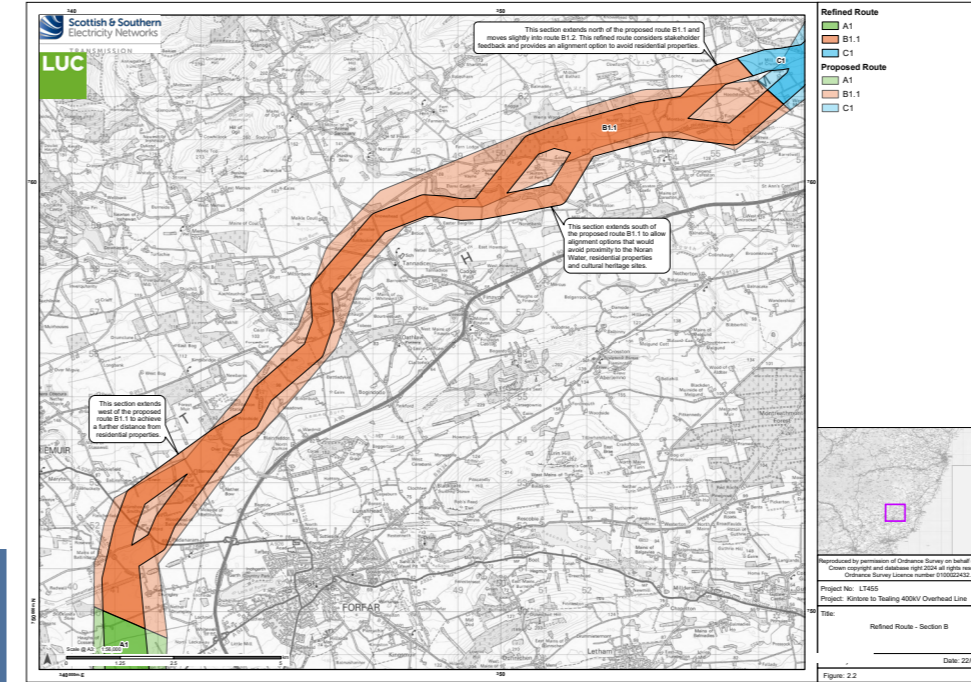
A widened Route B1.1 will be taken forward to alignment consultation.

Following a comprehensive review of feedback from members of the community and landowners as well as further information gathered from field surveys, we intend to widen part of route B1.1 between Tannadice and Careston to provide an opportunity to take the overhead line further away from properties and environmental constraints such as semi-natural woodland, wetland habitats and areas at higher risk of flooding. This option remains the more technically preferable option as it needs the fewest number of angle towers. Angle towers are considered to have a greater visual impact when compared to line towers; they are also more expensive and complex to construct and maintain.

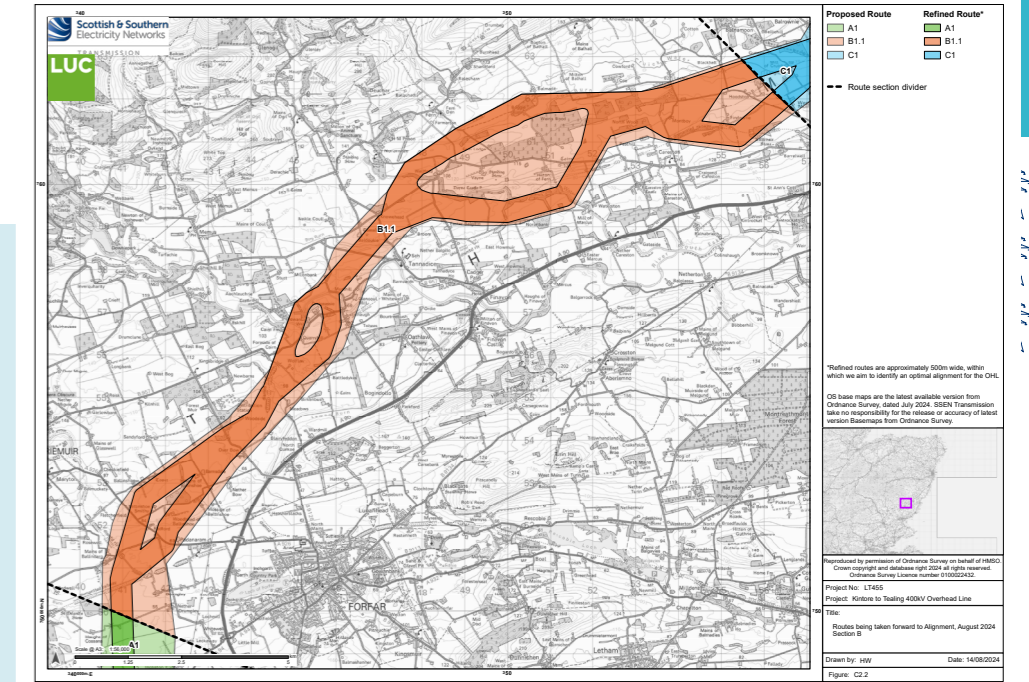
At Justinhaugh, the route has also been widened where the route option crosses the River South Esk to allow more opportunity to consider alignments which avoid sensitive river habitats and woodland and proximity to properties.

Section B – Forfar to Brechin

Presented in March 2024



To be taken forward to alignment consultation



Section C – Brechin to Laurencekirk

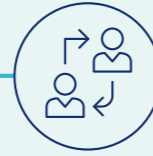
What we presented



Feedback received



Response to feedback



Explanation of decision



Section C (Brechin to Laurencekirk)
Refined Route C1

Stakeholders were concerned about the visual impact and impact to recreational sites caused by the overhead line, as well as flooding concerns north of Inchbare and near Edzell. We also received feedback about the impact this may have on local businesses within the route.

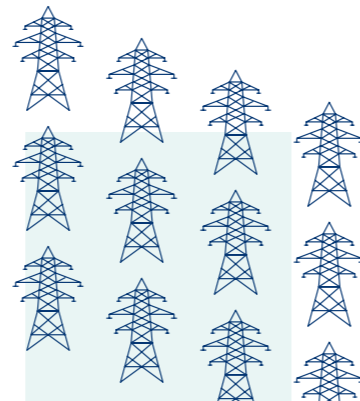
Some responses considered that route C1 would be likely to have less of an effect on sensitive landscape features (including topography and land form) than the other options originally considered.

As part of the ongoing development of this project we will undertake detailed Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and overhead line design which will propose mitigation for identified concerns such as impacts to landscape, visual and recreation, as well as flooding in consultation with SEPA.

We will engage with the owners and operators of local businesses to discuss potential impacts and any mitigation that may be required.

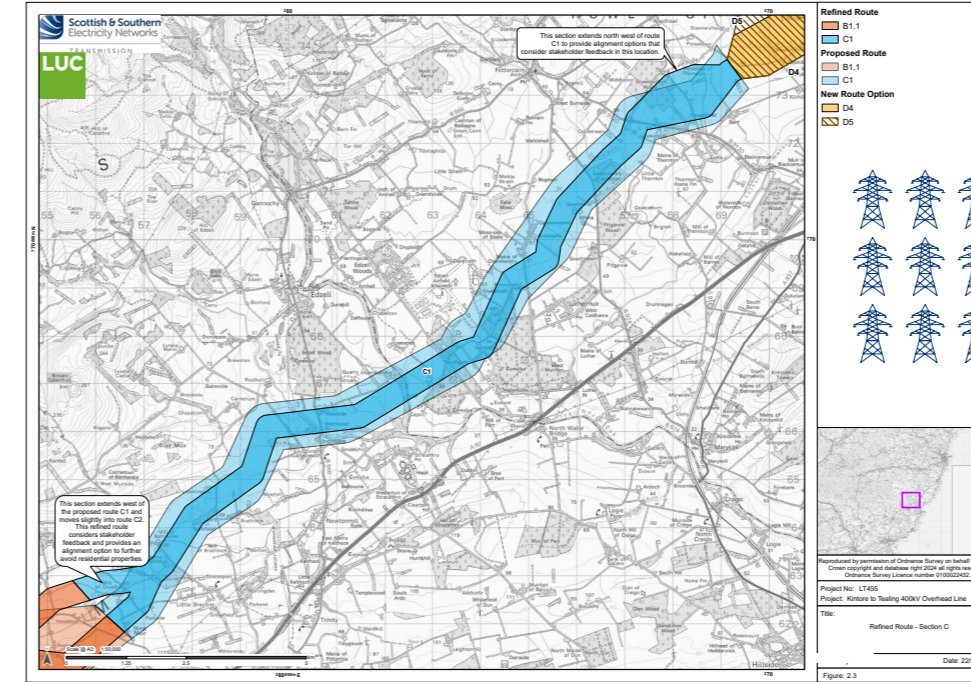
Route C1 has been further refined and will be taken forward to alignment consultation.

The route option has been refined slightly at the northern end to avoid key constraints including residential properties and designated woodland.

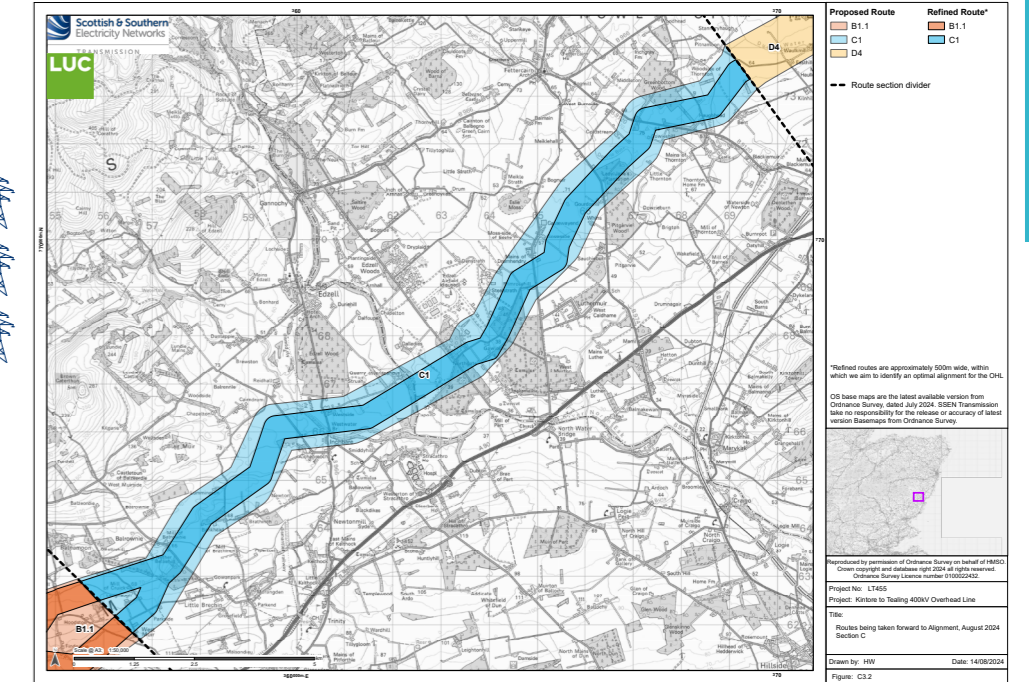


Section C – Brechin to Laurencekirk

Presented in March 2024



To be taken forward to alignment consultation

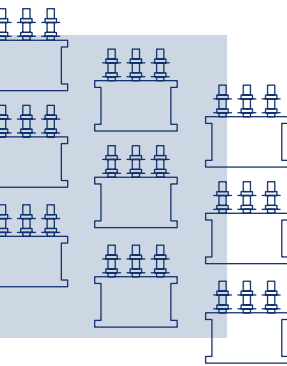


Section D – Laurencekirk to Hurlie Substation

What we presented



New route options in section D (Route D4 and D5), with D4 being the preferred route option.



Feedback received



For both Route D4 and D5, stakeholders raised concerns in relation to the cumulative impact of infrastructure projects including those not delivered by SSEN Transmission within the vicinity of Fetteresso Forest as well as the impact to ancient woodland and various designated areas such as Montrose Basin Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Fowlsheugh Special Protection Area (SPA).

A number of potentially impacted designated monuments, listed buildings and Garden and Designed Landscapes such as Droop Hill, Glenbervie House and Drumtochty Castle were identified during the consultation however none of these are likely to raise issues of the national interest.

SEPA flagged that there is a risk of erosion and riverbank instability at the River Bervie and advised that further studies are undertaken to ensure long term viability of any infrastructure.

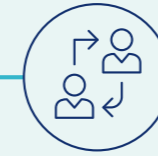
D4

Members of the local community raised concerns about the landscape and visual impact, particularly on rural residential areas. Historic Environment Scotland were satisfied that the preferred option is unlikely to raise issues of national interest in regards to cultural heritage designations such as scheduled monuments and listed buildings. SEPA advised that careful consideration should be taken when locating infrastructure due to future flooding concerns. They also advised that the proposed route option passes through the 1km search area for Radioactive substances (RAF Fordoun) which may contain contaminated land.

D5

Members of the local community raised concerns that route option D5 passes too close to both Auchenblae and Auchenblae Conservation Area as well as The Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area (SLA), and that it may also have an impact on equestrian businesses. However, some other local community members highlighted that this option would have less of an impact on people. Route option D5 passes closer to the upland areas than Route D4 and is therefore likely to be more visually intrusive on a larger number of people. SEPA advised that this route option would likely be less impacted by flooding than route option D4.

Response to feedback



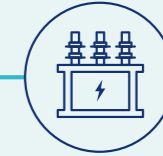
The cumulative impact in areas such as Fetteresso Forest will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and the findings presented in the EIA Report which will be submitted with the Section 37 application to the Scottish Government.

We will continue to engage with SEPA during the next stage of design to mitigate concerns regarding flooding.

The design of the project will aim to minimise the prominence and visual impact of the overhead line as far as possible. We aim to achieve this through sitting towers on lower areas of land, avoiding ridges and the tops of hills, using hills as back drops to reduce sky lining where possible and minimising the felling of woodland and trees, which provide some screening.

To further develop our overhead line proposals, we will undertake an in-depth EIA which will set out mitigation for identified concerns such as risk of erosion, recreational and visual impacts. Further information on this is included in the full Report on Consultation.

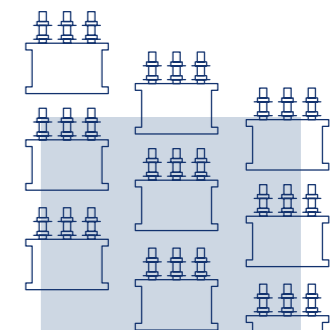
Explanation of decision



Having reviewed consultation feedback for this route section, route D4 will be taken forward to alignment consultation.

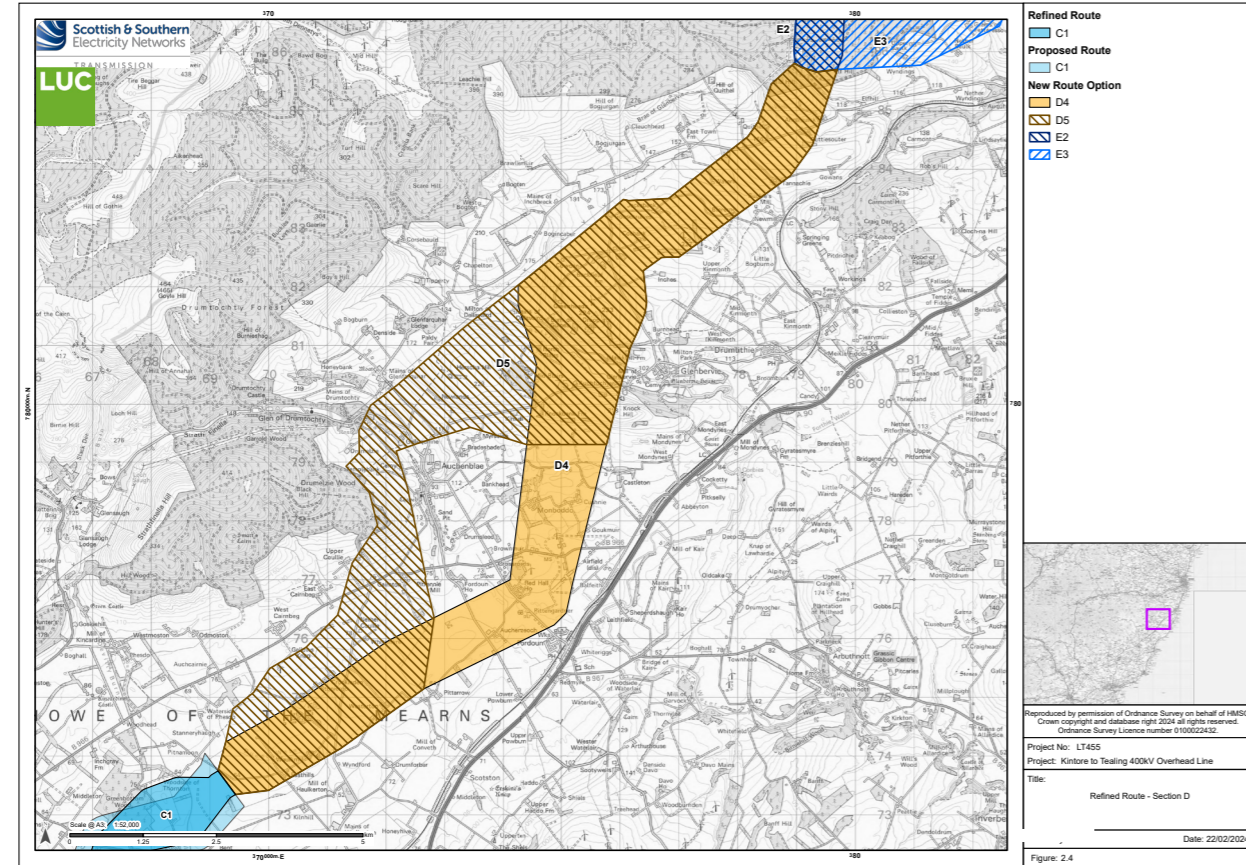
Although it was considered that Route Option D5 could maintain a larger distance from some residential properties and avoid potentially contaminated land at the Former RAF Fordoun site, it also encounters much steeper terrain which will increase the visual impact of the line and may compromise the conservation status of a number of designated sites, including the special qualities of the Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the setting of the Auchenblae Conservation Area through which part of the route option passes.

The technical constraints identified with Route Option D4 can be mitigated through the alignment process and will avoid proximity to property where possible. We are aiming to achieve, as far as possible, a minimum distance of 170m between any residential property and the overhead line. Route Option D4 is also likely to be the lower cost option although this was not a key driver for its selection.

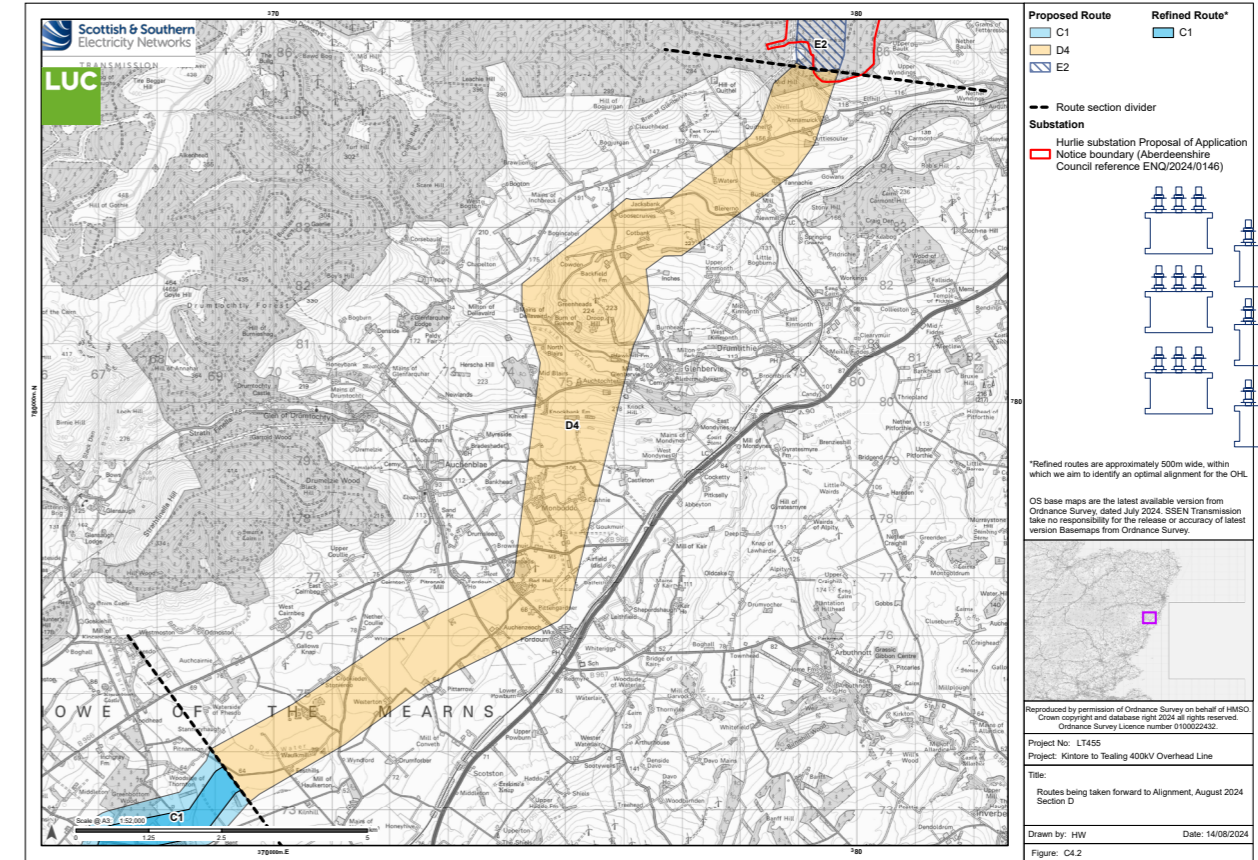


Section D – Laurencekirk to Hurlie Substation

Presented in March 2024



To be taken forward to alignment consultation



Section E – Hurlie Substation to River Dee

What we presented



New route options (Route E2 and E3) in the southern section of Route E, both of which connect into Refined Route E1 which we also welcomed feedback on.

Refined Route Option E1

Some stakeholders raised concerns in regard to the impact on prime agricultural land and that this route contains areas of ancient woodland.

A range of other issues including landscape impacts, potential effects on natural and cultural heritage sites such as Fowlsheugh Special Protection Area (SPA) and Clochanshiels Cairns and recreational users of the River Dee were also raised in stakeholder feedback.

E2 and E3

Stakeholders raised concerns in relation to the impact that both route option E2 and E3 would have on the recreational use of Fetteresso Forest. A range of other issues relating to land use and environmental impacts were also identified for both options. Historic Environment Scotland advised that both routes may have an impact on scheduled monuments such as Clochanshiels and Glenton Hill but neither appear to cause issues of a national interest. NatureScot also advised that both E2 and E3 were in proximity to Fowlsheugh Special Protection Area (SPA) and Loch of Lumgair Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

E2

Some members of the local community felt that Route Option E2 was in a less densely populated area and positively routes the line away from prime agricultural land. A community council raised that it would be prudent to keep the new line close to the existing transmission line in the area, to make use of existing access tracks. SEPA advised that route option E2 has the potential to have a higher impact on carbon rich soils however this impact could be reduced by careful siting of infrastructure. NatureScot and a local community council also highlighted that this route option passes through a narrow strip of ancient woodland.

E3

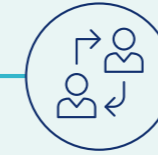
A local community council felt that this route option could limit the potential development of Stonehaven, particularly cumulatively with existing gas and oil pipeline corridors. They also raised that this route option passes over areas used for recreation, such as Hill of Swanley, and would be highly visible from Stonehaven which could have an impact on tourism. Historic Environment Scotland advised that this option is close to Fetteresso Castle Doocot and the impact would need to be assessed should this route be taken forward. SEPA flagged that there is a risk of erosion and instability of the river bank along the Cowie Water and advised that further studies are undertaken to ensure long term viability of any infrastructure.

Feedback received



Section E – Hurlie Substation to River Dee

Response to feedback



In the coming months, we will undertake a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which will consider key impacts of the proposal and potential mitigation for concerns raised including (but not limited to) recreational impacts, ancient woodlands, carbon rich soils and visual impact.

We understand the concerns raised by our stakeholders in relation to prime agricultural land, and we can confirm that the Refined Route E1 is not expected to pass through any land of this type.

All site staff will be required to follow strict biosecurity measures, including those undertaking pre-construction surveys, enabling and construction works.

Explanation of decision



We will take forward two route options to the next round of consultation:

- Refined Route Option E1 combined with Route Option E2.
- Route Option E4 combined with part of Route Option E2.

Refined Route Option E1

An alignment will be developed within the proposed route E1 that will consider the consultation feedback received on the refined route, however no changes have been proposed as the feedback received, and our subsequent review within this section, did not identify any further constraints which would alter the outcome of our assessments.

E2 and E3

Although route option E2 is located on slightly higher ground and requires the line to cross a small strip of ancient woodland, sensitive overhead line alignment design can mitigate this. Route option E3 was considered to be more constrained due to the potential impact it would have on the commercial viability of nearby forestry operations. Route Option E3 would also require the line to cross a number of minor roads and a higher number of angle towers would be required. Angle towers are considered to have a greater visual impact when compared to line towers, they are also more expensive and complex to construct and maintain.

Route option E2 also enables the use of the existing operational corridor of a nearby overhead line through Fetteresso Forest.

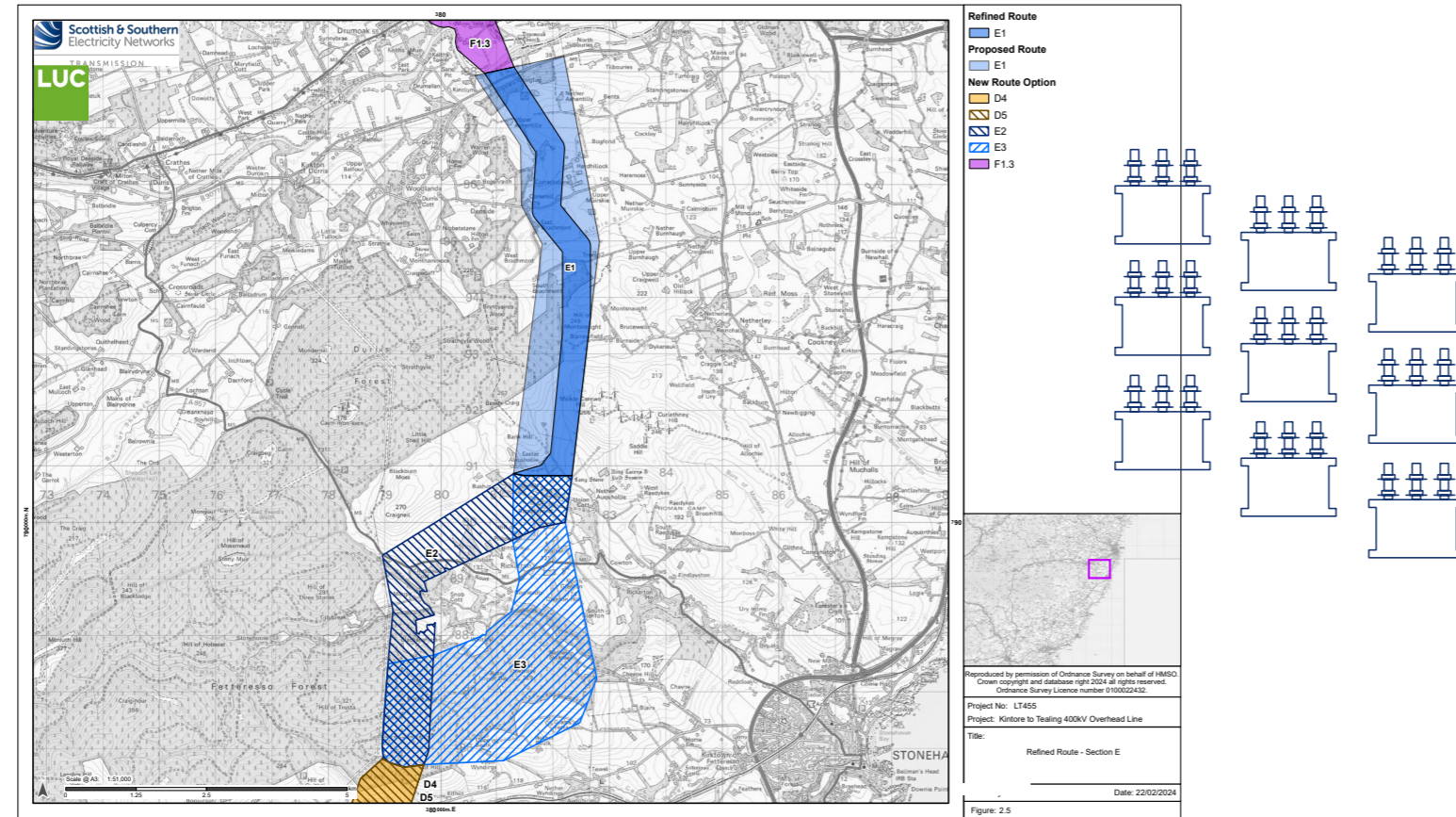
Route Option E4

Due to the distance between Refined Route E1 and the new option Route F3 in the southern part of Section F, we needed to identify another route option which would connect to Route F3 and provide an alternative crossing of the River Dee. Route E4 is close to and follows the existing overhead line through commercial forestry, which may allow use of existing access tracks and the opportunity to follow the existing overhead line operational corridor. Please see Section F for further details.

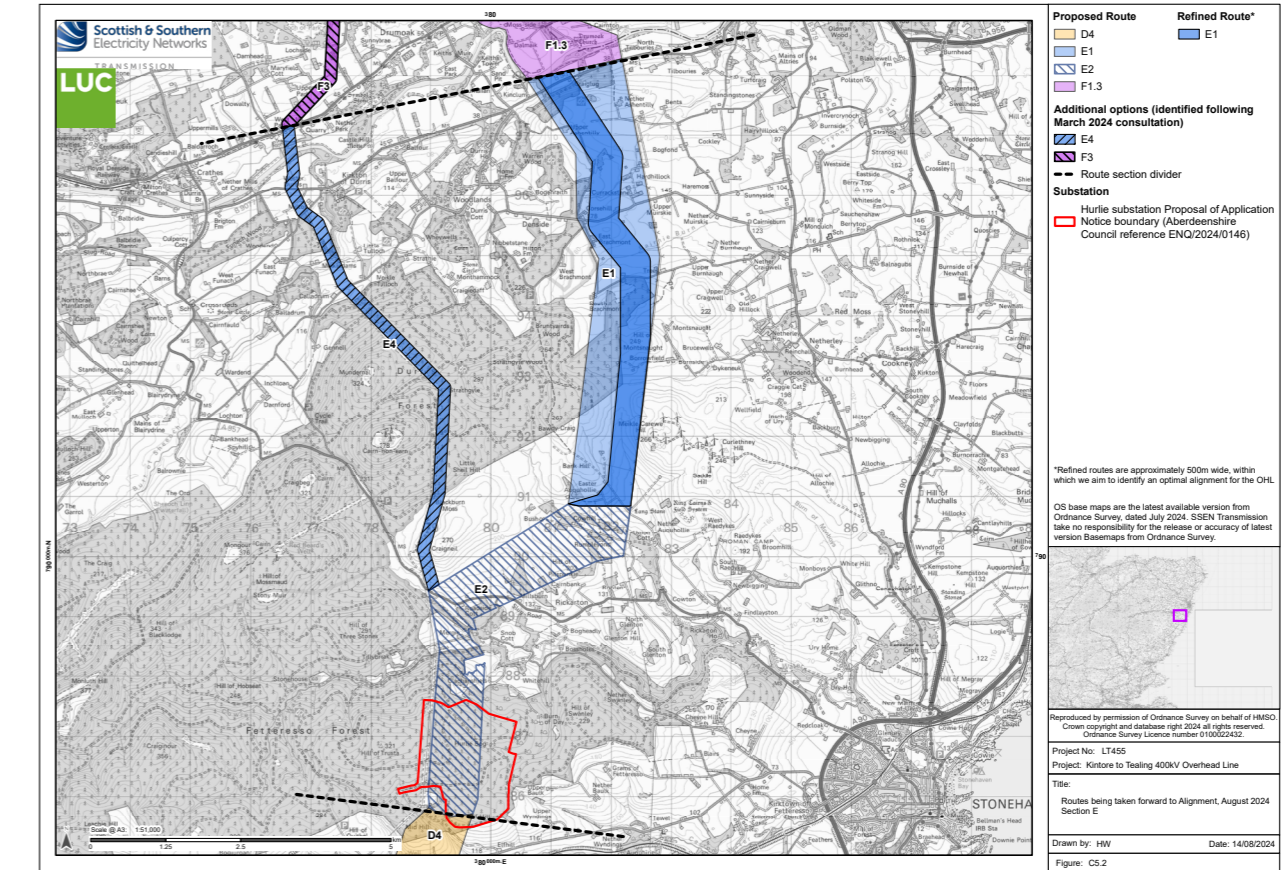
Each of these options will be evaluated in line with our Routing Procedure and the findings will be presented as part of the proposed alignment consultation in Autumn 2024.

Section E – Hurlie Substation to River Dee

Presented in March 2024



To be taken forward to alignment consultation



Section F – River Dee to Kintore

Section F – River Dee to Kintore

What we presented



At the previous round of consultation, a new route option (Route F1.3) was introduced in the southern part of Section F, and in combination with Refined Route Option F2, was presented as the preferred route.

Feedback received



F2 – Refined Route Feedback

Members of the local community and community council stated that the route would pass too close to the villages of Echt and Dunecht as well as other properties in the area. Concerns were also raised about the visual impact of the project and the impact that this would have on areas used for recreation such as Barmekin Hill and walking routes in the Dunecht area.

NatureScot advised that this route contains areas of woodland in the Ancient Woodland inventory.

F1.3

Local residents were concerned that Route Option F1.3 was too close in proximity to Drumoak and would affect a greater number of homes, families and individuals than the previously proposed routes.

SEPA advised that careful consideration would be required for this route option given its proximity to the River Dee and the risk of erosion, river bank instability and flooding.

The National Trust for Scotland preferred this route as it would have less of an impact on Drum Castle compared to the previously presented route.

NatureScot advised that this option was further away than the previously proposed route option F1 from a number of ecological designations such as the Loch of Skene SPA. They also mentioned the presence of nationally important peatland.

Response to feedback



In response to consultation feedback, we revisited our route option selection to determine if further constraints had been identified that would alter the outcome of our assessments. As such, we considered if a new route option could be identified within a widened search area to address the concerns raised in Section F1.3.

Any change to the southern part of Section F would necessitate an alternative crossing of the River Dee, which would affect Section E route options. Therefore, we considered if a new route option could be found in both the southern part of Section F and in Section E.

We will continue to engage with SEPA during the next stage of design to mitigate concerns regarding erosion and flooding.

In the coming months, we will undertake a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which will consider any impact and potential mitigation for concerns raised including (but not limited to) peatland, ancient woodland, designated sites and visual impact.

Explanation of decision



We will take forward two route options to the next round of consultation alongside a newly refined route F2:

- Route Option F1.3
- Route Option F3

Refined Route F2

The Refined Route Option F2 has been widened to the east of the settlement of Echt which provides an opportunity to develop an overhead line alignment with greater separation from the village compared with the original boundary of Refined Route Option F2.

F1.3

This Route Option is considered to have fewer environmental and land use constraints than the previously preferred option (Route Option F1).

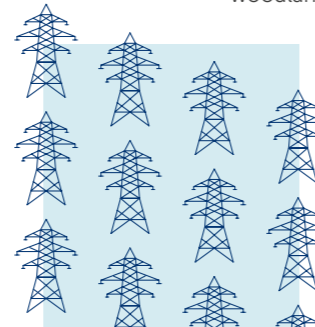
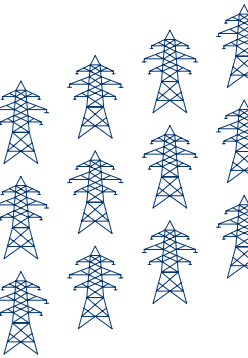
The crossing of the River Dee avoids passing listed buildings, scheduled monuments and properties and spans a narrower section of the flood risk associated with the River Dee. The river crossing also avoids passing through designated areas such as the Loch of Park SSSI, avoids listed buildings and scheduled monuments and properties. It would also help to avoid the setting of Drum Castle and sensitive woodland areas. This route option also avoids areas important for protected birds and areas of recreation and would result in fewer technical constraints meaning fewer angle towers. Angle towers are considered to have a greater visual impact when compared to line towers, they are also more expensive and complex to construct and maintain.

Route Option F3

In response to stakeholder feedback, and our subsequent route option review, a new route to the west of Drumoak has been identified and will be taken forward to the alignment stage for appraisal. This option would provide the potential for an overhead line connection from the River Dee near West Park to link with Route Option F2 to the north west of Drumoak.

To provide a connection option from option F3 into Section E (Hurlie Substation to River Dee), option E4 has also been identified. More information can be found in Section E of this Summary, or in the full Report on Consultation.

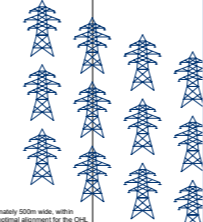
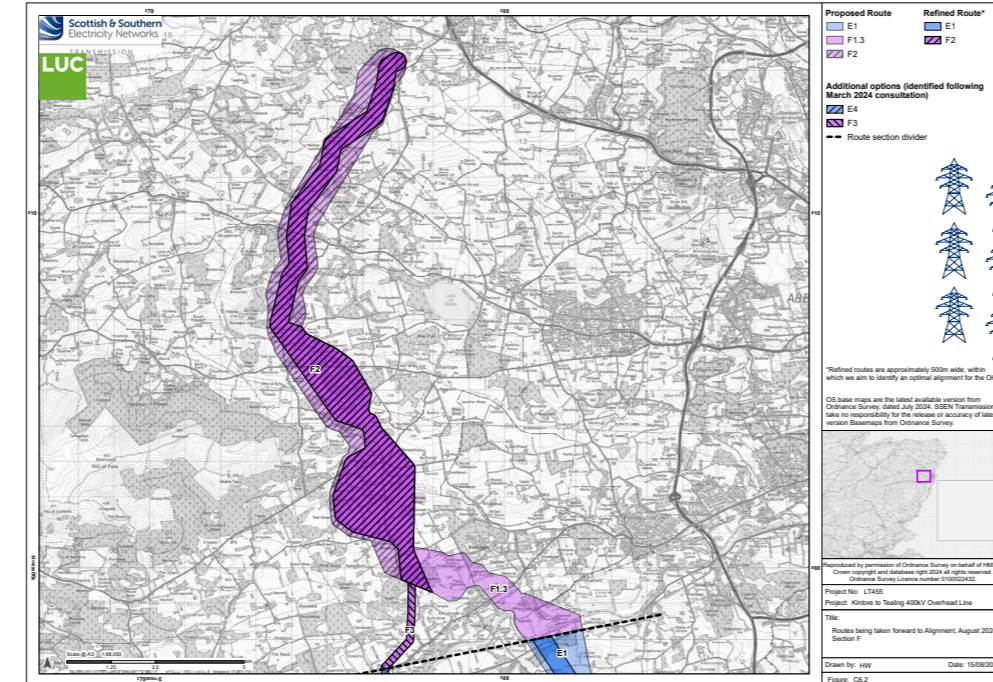
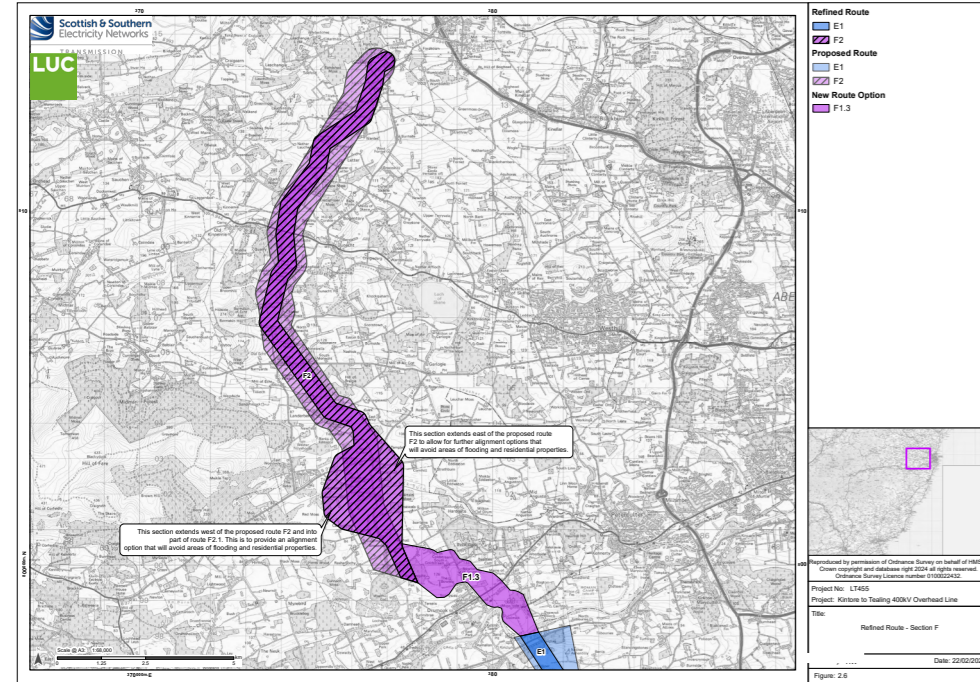
The appraisal of these alignment options will be compared to the other potential alignments within the respective route option areas and presented as part of the proposed alignment consultation in Autumn 2024.



Section F – River Dee to Kintore

Presented in March 2024

To be taken forward to alignment consultation



Summary of Proposed Route Options being taken forward to Alignment

A single option is being taken forward to alignment development in each Section A to D:

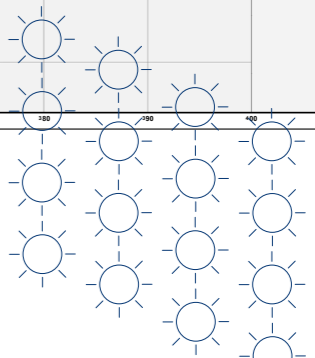
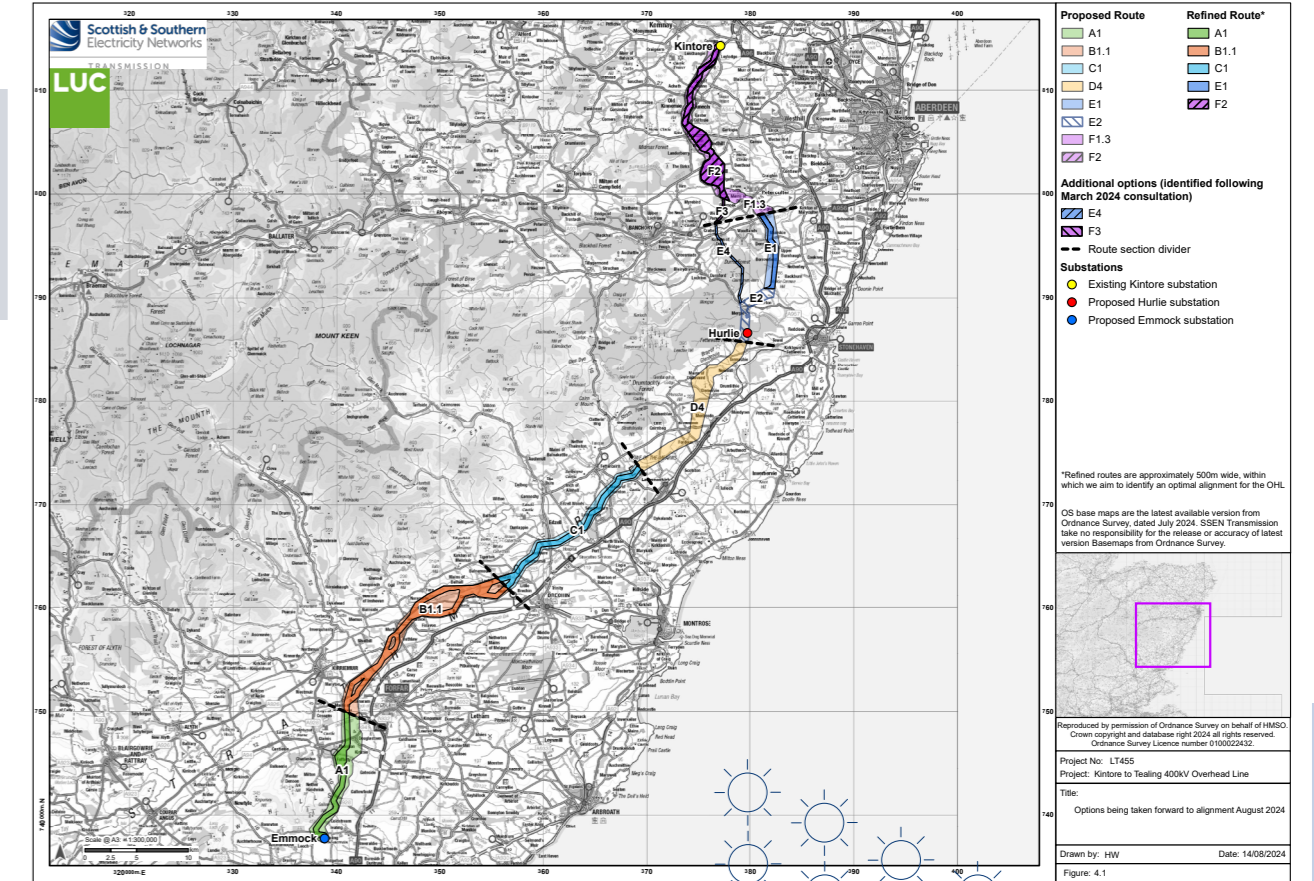
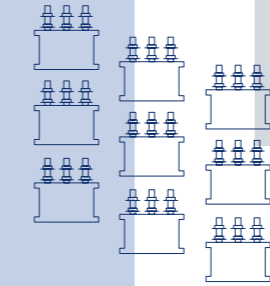
- A1
- B1.1
- C1
- D4

Two options are being taken forward to alignment development in Section E:

- E2 and E1
- E2 and E4

Two options are being taken forward to alignment development in Section F:

- F1.3 and F2
- F3 and F2



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 find an acceptable alignment through the proposed route sections. We will continue to consult with local communities and stakeholders in September and October 2024, where we will present and seek feedback on specific alignment options within the proposed route options presented alongside environmental, technical and cost appraisals.



Key considerations

Details and layout of these will be used to inform the appraisal and subsequent identified mitigation measures to be submitted as part of the consent application.

Protected species

Natural habitats within and adjacent to the Errochy GSP site have the potential to support protected and/or scarce species such as red squirrels, otter, beaver, pine marten, water vole, bats, reptiles, breeding birds and amphibians. As such, protected species surveys and breeding bird surveys are underway and any potential impacts on flora or fauna will be assessed and mitigated where required.

Landscape and visual amenity

A landscape and visual amenity appraisal will be undertaken of the site and surroundings to identify the key considerations for the proposals. At a local scale, this will include the trees and woodland surrounding the site, their contribution to the landscape character, and opportunities they create for natural screening of the proposals. Retention of trees and woodland will be a key priority with potential to plant more trees to strengthen screening and enhance landscape value and visual amenity.

Noise

As part of site selection appraisals, a review of potentially noise sensitive receptors will be undertaken, including consideration of existing noise levels from the existing plant already in operation at Errochy GSP.

At a wider scale, this also has the potential to support the special qualities of the Loch Tummel National Scenic Area, and character of the lower upland glen landscape.

The visual amenity of local residents, road users and holiday makers around the site and Loch Tummel will also be an important factor in the location and design of the site.

Hydrology

The Errochy GSP is situated within the River Tay catchment. The River Tay is a designated SAC for salmon and trout.

Habitats

The existing Errochy GSP is located adjacent to the River Tummel. It is not located within any designated sites for nature conservation although three SACs are adjacent to the site.