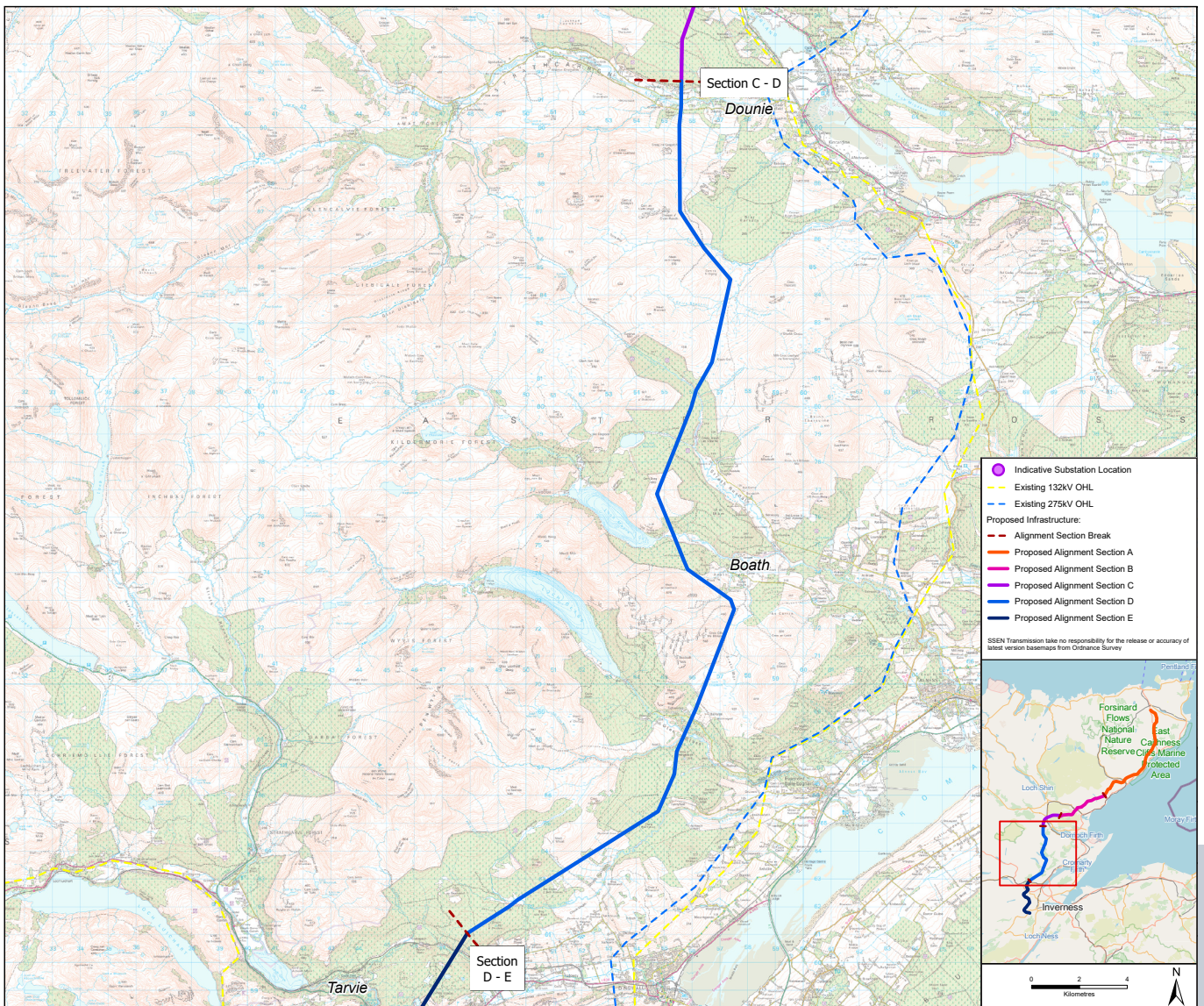


Section D: Dounie to Near Strathpeffer



Alignment Options Considered

In June 2024, we presented our Alignment Options for Section D. This section was split into 2 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (D1.1 and D1.2). Within both sections, a Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment option were presented. The Potential Alignment options in these sections had been selected as on balance they are the least constrained option.

The Potential Alignment has now been subject to further review following consultation, to ensure feedback has been considered fully and changes made where required.

Feedback

Concerns were received from the local community regarding visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and private water supplies.

Response

From our studies and based on feedback, the Potential Alignment continues to provide the best balance between environmental protection and engineering requirements for construction and operation.

We recognise key environmental considerations in this section include potential for the alignment to be visible from residential properties in and around Dounie and Strath Rusdale, Ancient Woodland, peatland, a Drinking Water Protected Area, Schedule Monuments, proximity to the Rhiddoroch – Beinn Dearg – Ben Wyvis Wild Land Area and the Allt nan Caorach SSSI.

The key engineering constraints in the area include peat, steep slopes and complexity of the construction due to the Cairns designations to the scheduled monument located at the Heights of Brae and areas of non-designated and unrecorded heritage assets.

A full suite of ecology, landscape and cultural heritage surveys and assessments is being undertaken and will be provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) accompanying the s37 consent application.

Construction Access Strategy

We have now determined our proposed access routes for each tower location and established which of these are planned to be upgrades to existing access tracks or new temporary or permanent access tracks. In general, proposed construction site access would make use of existing forest and estate tracks as far as practicable, upgraded as required.

Maps showing our proposed access routes are available from ssen-transmission.co.uk/SLBB

For further details on the consultation process and feedback received you can download our [Alignment Report on Consultation and Summary Report on Consultation](https://ssen-transmission.co.uk/SLBB) from our website: ssen-transmission.co.uk/SLBB

Conclusion

Potential Alignment D1.1 and D1.2 is preferred over Alternative Alignment D1.1 and D1.2 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints. Changes to the Refined Route and Alignment Options D1.1 were made in this area based on feedback received during the Route Options consultation and implemented in the Potential Alignment. The Potential Alignment D1.2 option was suggested in community feedback during public information events in March 2024. Following investigation by the project Design Development team, this option was presented during the consultation events in June as an opportunity to minimise impact on cultural heritage assets in this area. The Potential Alignment in this section was also slightly amended to minimise impacts on the watercourses in the area.

The Potential Alignment in all sub sections will be taken forward to consent application as Proposed Alignment Section D, as per the map overleaf.