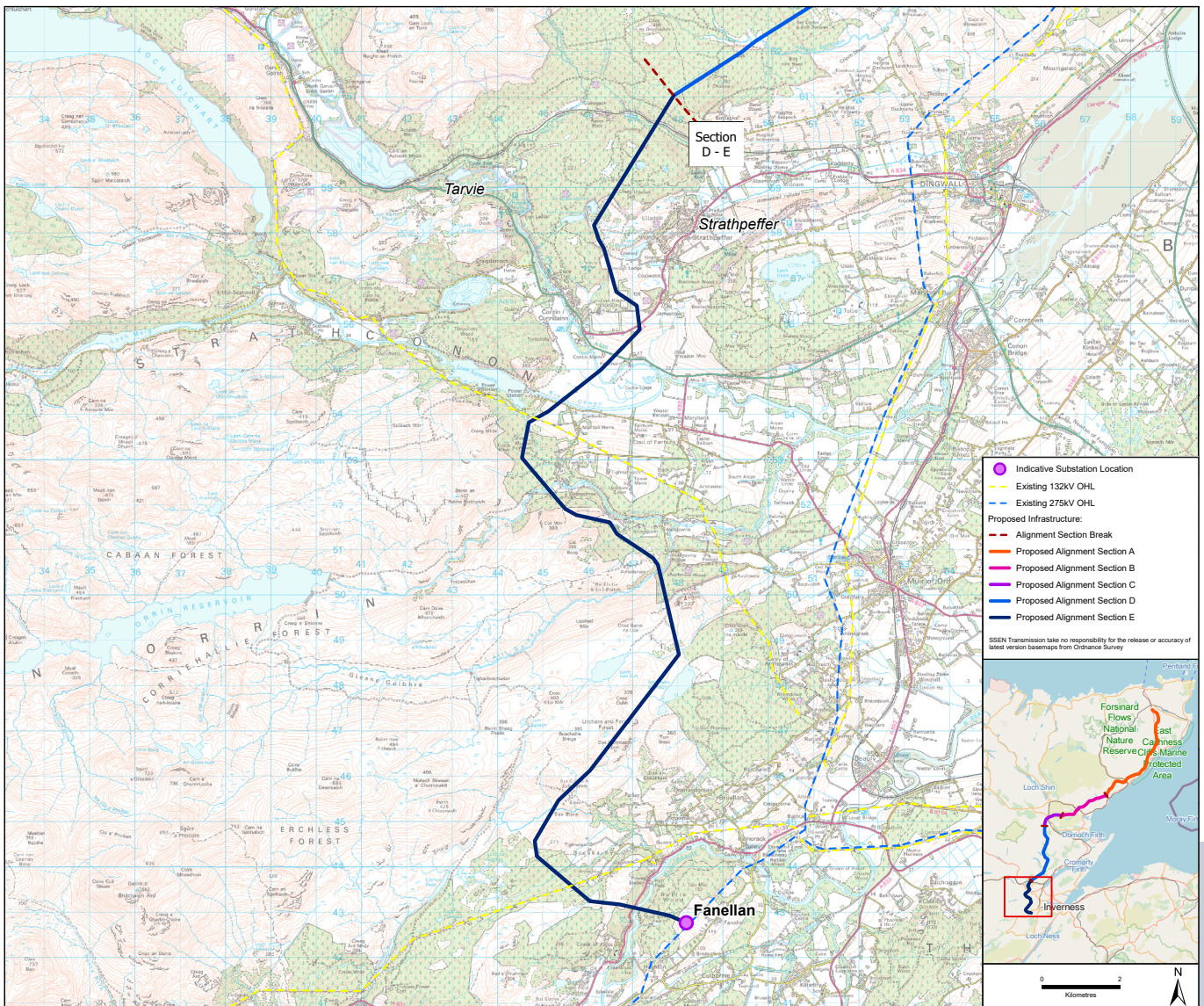


Section E: Near Strathpeffer to Beauly



Alignment Options Considered

In June 2024, we presented our Alignment Options for Section E. This section was split into 3 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (E1.1, E1.2 and E1.3). Within section E1.1, two Potential Alignment and two Alternative Alignment options were presented. Sub-sections E1.2 and E1.3 both presented a Potential Alignment and Alternative Alignment options. 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 visualisation presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, woodland, recreation and tourism, access tracks, private water supplies and proximity of properties.

Response

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

We recognise key environmental considerations in this section include areas of Ancient Woodland, peatland, a Drinking Water Protected Area, the Fairburn Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL), the Grade A-listed Fairburn Tower and Coul House, Schedule Monuments and potential visual impacts to properties and core paths in Beauly and along a section of the A831. The proximity to communities at Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank and Tarvie are also a key consideration.

The key engineering constraints include a number of crossings including rivers, railway and an existing 132kV overhead line. Flood zones, areas of large cross slopes, challenging topography and potential impact on residential properties also limit options in this area.

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 E1.1, E1.2 and E1.3 is preferred over Alternative Alignment E1.1, E1.2 and E1.3 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints.

Following the options assessment and consultation, Potential Alignment E1.1 including the Potential 2 option is now preferred over the Potential 1 option (both options were presented for the purposes of consultation). This decision was based on reducing impacts on properties at Marybank and Fairburn Tower, as well as alleviating engineering constraints.

The Potential Alignment in Section E has been marginally amended in Torrachilty Forest to minimise impact on the tracks which are used for forest operations and public

recreation. It was also adjusted in the Muirton Wood area to increase the proximity to properties and reduce impact on the ancient woodland at the 132kV OHL line crossing.

All Potential Alignment options continued to provide a better balance of requirements than Alternative Alignment E1.1 (with either sub-option 1 or 2), including feedback received from the local communities on both.

The Potential Alignment in all sub-sections (including E1.1 Potential 2) will be taken forward to consent application as Proposed Alignment Section E, as per the map overleaf.