Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV Overhead Line

Alignment Report on Consultation

January 2025

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1. Introduction

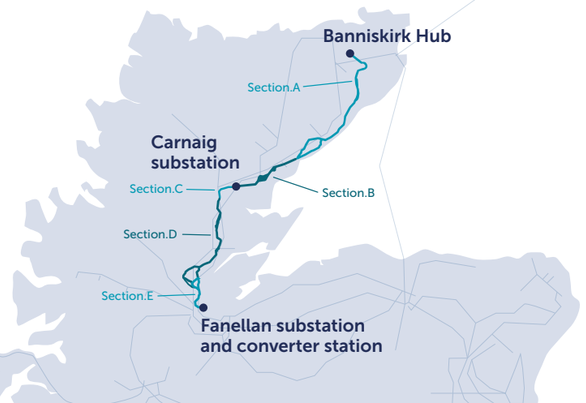
1.1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this Report on Consultation (RoC) is to document the consultation responses received as part of our Refined Route and Alignment Options consultation process for the proposed Spittal – Loch Buidhe- Beauly 400kV Overhead Line (OHL) project (and hereafter also referred to interchangeably as the "Proposed Development"), and where appropriate, show how the alignments that are being taken forward to consent application under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 have been informed by this process.

The consultation rounds that have been undertaken are as follows:

- The first public consultation for the OHL covered the Route Options and was held in February/March 2023. The RoC for that consultation can be found here: **Report on Consultation - SLBB Route Options.**
- This RoC relates to the latest round of public consultation held in June 2024 which sought feedback on Alignment Options proposed. See **Alignment Consultation Document.**
- This RoC also discusses feedback received on the Refined Routes that were presented at the March 2024 consultation and which provided updates to project development. Refined Route maps can be found here: **Refined Route Constraint Maps.**

This RoC details the consultation process undertaken, including details of consultation methods and advertising, those consulted and/or contributing to the process. It also summarises the feedback received, including concerns, questions and areas of support. The report concludes by confirming the key decisions and any resulting adjustments made to the Potential Alignment, which was presented at consultation, confirming the Proposed Alignment to be progressed.



1.2. Project Overview

Based on the requirements outlined in the Electricity System Operator's (ESO) Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design, we have developed proposals to reinforce the onshore corridor between Spittal and Beauly, via Loch Buidhe. To facilitate this, we are proposing to construct a new 400kV overhead line (OHL) between Spittal, in Caithness, Loch Buidhe in Sutherland and Beauly. New 400kV substations and associated infrastructure are also required at these three locations.

The new Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV OHL Connection project requires:

- Construction of approximately 96km of a new 400kV double circuit steel lattice OHL between the proposed 400kV substations at Spittal, to be known as Banniskirk and Loch Buidhe, to be known as Carnaig.
- Construction of approximately 75km of a new 400kV double circuit steel lattice OHL between the proposed substations at Carnaig and Beauly, to be known as Fanellan.
- Construction of temporary and permanent access tracks along the length of the OHL route to facilitate construction and operational activities.
- Rationalisation of existing high voltage and low voltage infrastructure where they will be crossed by the Proposed Development, and around the new and existing substation sites.

This Report on Consultation relates to the consultation completed for the Refined Route and Alignment Options consultation process for the Proposed Development.

Please refer to the following pages on our Projects website for the latest information on the associated substations:

- **Banniskirk Hub (Spittal) 400kV substation and HVDC converter station**
- **Carnaig (Loch Buidhe Area) 400kV substation**
- **Fanellan (Beauly) 400kV substation and converter station**

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1.3. Project Timeline

2022
- Project need and scope confirmed
- Overhead Line (OHL) corridor and route options appraisal started

2023
- Public consultation events – Route Options
- Finalisation of proposed route selection
- Environmental and engineering surveys commence
- OHL alignment selection commences

2024
- Environmental and engineering surveys continue
- Public consultation events – Refined Routes and Alignment Options
- Request for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion
- EIA report preparation

2025
- EIA report preparation ongoing
- Public engagement events – Proposed Alignment
- Section 37 planning application submitted

2026
- Section 37 planning decision expected from Scottish Ministers
- If Section 37 granted, construction commences

2027
- Construction works ongoing

2028
- Construction works ongoing

2029
- Construction works ongoing

2030
- Construction complete
- Commissioning complete

Find out more about our 2030 projects:
www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects

1.4. What we were consulting on

As a stakeholder-led business, we understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process. Relevant and insightful stakeholder feedback collected during consultations is critical to ensuring that our decision making is informed, and stakeholder concerns are taken into consideration at each stage of the project's development.

The Potential Alignment consultation carried out in June 2024 was the first of two pre-application events which are required to be carried out in accordance with Energy Consents Unit (ECU) guidance[1]. During these events we presented options regarding our Potential Alignment for the Proposed Development. The consultation included information regarding technology options, environmental and technical considerations, set out the project development process and explained the factors which were taken into consideration in selecting this Alignment.

The consultation explained how we believe the Potential Alignment, shown in pink in Appendix B, offers the best balance of technical and environmental impact considerations identified through internal assessment and previous public and statutory consultation on route options. This was then subject to further consultation with stakeholders, where local and previously unknown considerations may confirm or alter the initial preference.

Higher resolution versions of the maps shown below can be viewed online on the project's webpage **here.**

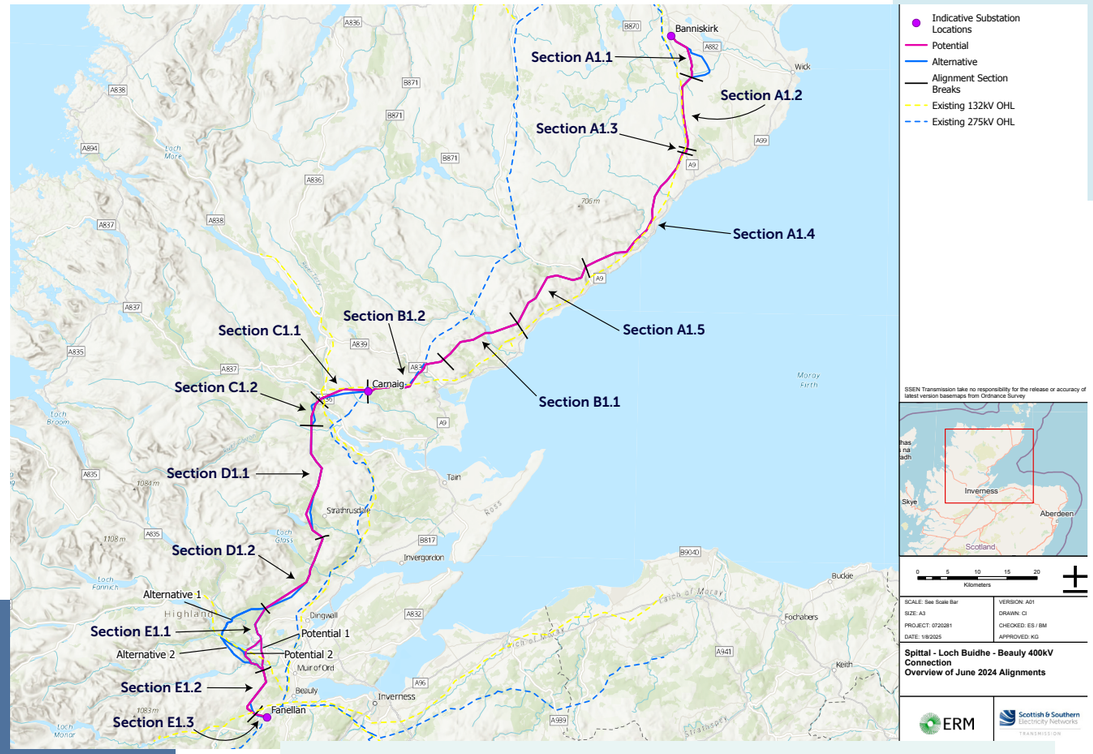

Figure 1: Potential and Alternative Alignment Options presented during consultation

[1] https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-practice-guidance-applications-under-sections-36-37-electricity-act-1989/

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2. The Consultation Process

2.1. Refined Route Update Events

Ahead of our Alignment Options consultation events in June 2024, we hosted a series of update events in March 2024, providing information on further refinements of the Proposed Route options whilst finalising the alignment options.

During this time, we sought the views of communities, landowners and other non-statutory stakeholders. These events were an opportunity to share our work in progress and to present the development of more refined options which had evolved since the earlier consultations.

These update events were a precursor to, but form part of the Alignment Pre-application Consultation process which was formally launched from 27 May 2024. All feedback received through both the Refined Route and Potential Alignment consultation has been covered in the feedback tables of this document.

Following the Route Options consultation, carried out in February / March 2023, we were asked by local residents to consider an alternative Route Option near the settlements of Tarvie, Contin and Strathpeffer. The **Report on Consultation** for the Route Options confirmed that the alternative Route Option would be taken to the Refined Route and Alignment Stages and fully appraised alongside the original options. During the Refined Routes consultation held in March 2024, we were able to present the appraisal for the alternative route to the public and sought feedback.

2.2. Who we consulted with

Our Alignment consultation process sought to capture the views of anyone who had an interest in our proposals, and we invited comments from all interested parties. During our engagements we aimed to ensure that we captured the views of:

- statutory consultees;
- non-statutory consultees;
- community members and local organisations; including local elected members; and
- landowners and occupiers.

2.3. Consultation feedback period

The public consultation period for the Refined Routes was open from **26 February until 28 April 2024,** with the Alignment Options consultation being open from **27 May 2024 until 22 July 2024.**

Statutory consultees were invited to provide feedback on our consultation materials. Where possible, affected landowners were contacted ahead of the consultation period to discuss land related considerations or concerns.

2.4. The advertising process

The consultation events were advertised extensively using the following methods:

- The consultation events were advertised in the following local and regional newspapers:
- Press and Journal on 26 and 29 February, 13 and 19 March (Refined Routes); 24 and 30 May, 5 June (Alignment).
- Caithness Courier on 28 February and 6 March (Refined Routes); 22 and 29 May (Alignment).
- Northern Times on 1 and 8 March (Refined Routes); 24 and 31 May (Alignment).
- Ross-Shire Journal and Inverness Courier on 8 and 15 March (Refined Route); 31 May and 7 June (Alignment).
- Our social media channels and the dedicated project webpage.
- Community Councillors and Local Elected Members were emailed in advance with information they could share within their local area.
- Postcards were sent to **29,073** homes and **1,551** businesses within communities potentially impacted by our proposals. Copies of the postcard invites can be found in Appendix A.
- An email was sent to **945** individuals registered to receive project updates.
- Posters were placed on community notice boards.

2.5. Stakeholder participation

Refined Routes (March 2024)

In March 2024, we launched our Refined Routes consultation for the Proposed Development, providing an update on our route proposals (see Table 1 for details of the consultation events).

Due to feedback received during the earlier Route Option consultation, further consideration and information was provided regarding alternative Route Options near the local settlements of Tarvie, Contin and Strathpeffer. These options were presented for feedback for the first time.

Table 1: Refined Route Events

Date	Event	Attendance
11 March 2024	Ross Institute, Halkirk, KW12 6XZ	**38**
12 March 2024	Spittal Village Hall, Spittal, KW1 5XR	**19**
12 March 2024	Helmsdale Community Centre, Helmsdale, KW8 6JA	**32**
13 March 2024	Dunbeath Community Centre, Dunbeath, KW6 6EF	**45**
14 March 2024	Rogart Village Hall, Rogart, IV28 3XJ	**37**
14 March 2024	Brora Scout and Guide Hall, Brora, KW9 6PD	**69**
18 March 2024	Bonar Bridge Community Hall, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3EA	**66**
19 March 2024	Ardross Community Hall, Ardross, IV17 0XW	**40**
20 March 2024	Contin Village Hall, Contin, IV14 9ES	**32**
20 March 2024	Fairburn Memorial Hall, Marybank, IV6 7UU	**69**
21 March 2024	Garve Village Hall, Garve, IV23 2PR	**4**
21 March 2024	Strathpeffer Pavilion, Strathpeffer, IV14 9DL	**107**
26 March 2024	Kiltarlity Hall, Kiltarlity, IV4 7HH	**159**
28 March 2024	Phipps Hall, Beauly, IV4 7EH	**141**

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Attendance figures reflect the number of people who had registered attendance at a consultation event. For busier events, the number of attendees can often be considerably higher than recorded.

Table 2: Alignment Options Events

Date	Event	Attendance
3 June 2024	Ross Institute, Halkirk, KW12 6XZ	**48**
4 June 2024	Spittal Village Hall, Spittal, KW1 5XR	**14**
4 June 2024	Helmsdale Community Centre, Helmsdale, KW8 6JA	**28**
5 June 2024	Dunbeath Community Centre, Dunbeath, KW6 6EF	**44**
6 June 2024	Rogart Village Hall, Rogart, IV28 3XJ	**35**
6 June 2024	Brora Scout and Guide Hall, Brora, KW9 6PD	**35**
10 June 2024	Bonar Bridge Community Hall, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3EA	**54**
11 June 2024	Ardross Community Hall, Ardross, IV17 0XW	**30**
12 June 2024	Contin Village Hall, Contin, IV14 9ES	**13**
12 June 2024	Fairburn Memorial Hall, Marybank, IV6 7UU	**42**
13 June 2024	Garve Village Hall, Garve, IV23 2PR	**2**
13 June 2024	Strathpeffer Pavilion, Strathpeffer, IV14 9DL	**61**
19 June 2024	Phipps Hall, Beauly, IV4 7EH	**77**
20 June 2024	Kiltarlity Hall, Kiltarlity, IV4 7HH	**69**

Attendance figures reflect the number of people who had registered attendance at a consultation event. For busier events, the number of attendees can often be considerably higher than recorded.

Stakeholder meetings

In the weeks before, during and after the consultation events, various meetings were held with other key stakeholders such as landowners, statutory and non-statutory consultees and councillors to discuss the project proposals. Table 3 provides details of these engagements.

Table 3: Stakeholder Meetings

Date	Meeting Type	Stakeholder group in attendance
7 March 2024	Pre-consultation Teams meeting for Community Councils	10 attendees representing 5 Community Councils
31 May 2024	In person meeting – Let's talk energy summit	Public meeting hosted by Edward Mountain MP with SSEN Transmission representation.
18 June 2024	In person meeting with residents in Culrain in relation to Option C1.	Jamie Stone (candidate for the Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross UK Parliamentary constituency) and staff, as well as local residents and landowner.
16 July 2024	In person cultural heritage workshop in Dornoch	ARCH Highland, Timespan and cultural heritage groups from across the North of Scotland.
10 September 2024	Online statutory consultee pre-application consultation meeting on Microsoft Teams	SEPA
13 September 2024	Online statutory consultee pre-application consultation meeting on Microsoft Teams	The Highland Council
01 October 2024	In person data sharing meeting with local cultural heritage representative ahead of surveys being undertaken in local area	Local cultural heritage representative alongside our environmental consultants from ERM and AOC
08 October 2024	In person meeting with Timespan ahead of cultural heritage surveys being undertaken in local area	Timespan alongside our environmental consultants from ERM and AOC.
Recurring meetings	Online statutory consultee pre-application consultation meeting on Microsoft Teams	Nature Scot
Recurring meetings	Online statutory consultee pre-application consultation meeting on Microsoft Teams	Historic Environment Scotland

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2.6. Feedback volume

Feedback from our stakeholders was welcomed via a range of methods. This included online or hard copy feedback forms, emails or letters, notes from the consultation events or stakeholder meetings or from any relevant telephone conversations.

Responses to public consultation

The combined feedback received from our Refined Routes and Potential Alignment Options consultations:

235 online feedback forms

63 feedback emails

15 mailed feedback forms

3 feedback letters

Refined Route feedback

132 online feedback forms

41 feedback emails

10 mailed feedback forms

3 feedback letters

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Potential Alignment feedback:

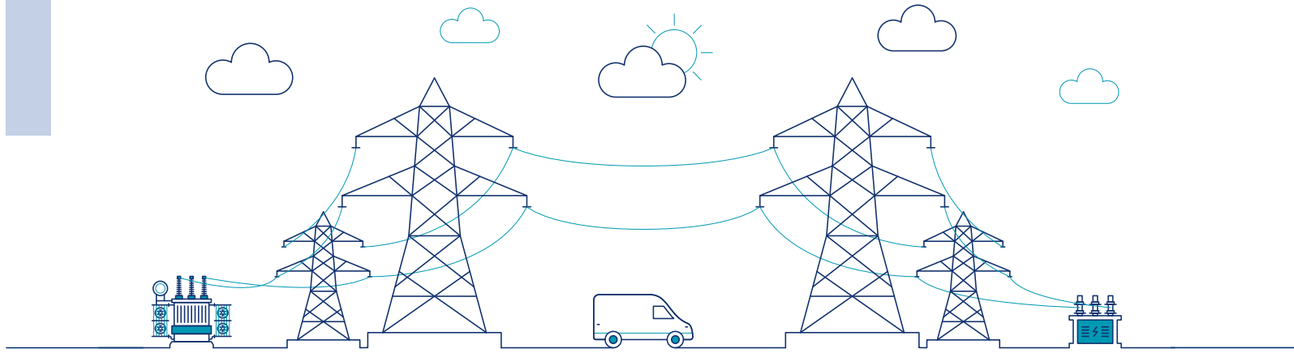
103 online feedback forms

22 feedback emails

5 mailed feedback forms

Responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Statutory bodies of relevance to the project were contacted and requested to provide feedback on the proposals. A summary of feedback received by statutory bodies is included within Section 3.2 Project Specific Feedback of this report.



3. Consultation Feedback and Our Response

3.1. Common Themes

Across our project consultations, we have received feedback relating to a number of common themes which were not specific to just one section of the proposed OHL. Although some of this feedback related to topics which fell outside of the scope of our project specific consultations, we recognise that it is important to address the points that our stakeholders took the time to raise and which we have summarised in this section. In addition, we have also developed a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that can be viewed **here.**

Most of the common themes identified are the same as those received during the Route options consultation stage, however we have updated our responses, where required, to reflect any changes that may have since occurred.

Project Need

The need for these projects has been independently assessed by both the GB Electricity System Operator, National Grid ESO (ESO)[2]; and the GB energy regulator, Ofgem.

Some responses continued to question whether these projects are needed at all. In many cases, those questioning the need have done so as the electricity these projects will transmit from generation sources connecting to them is not all needed in the north of Scotland.

Under our licence, we have a legal obligation to provide connections to electricity generators looking to connect to our network and we do not determine the location of new electricity generation or where electricity is consumed. The location of generation is determined by generators themselves, often underpinned by Government targets and policies and electricity consumption is managed according to demand.

These projects - which are part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission network across Great Britain - are needed to unlock the north of Scotland's vast renewable electricity resources and connect that power to demand centres across the UK.

The renewable electricity these projects will facilitate will play a key role in meeting UK and Scottish Government renewable energy and climate change targets. They will also help secure the country's future energy independence by reducing dependence on imported power from volatile wholesale energy markets.

A link is provided below to a paper that has been prepared to provide more information on the need for these projects, including links to the key source documentation and can be accessed via the link below:

- **Why the Pathway to 2030 projects are required**

Technology Choice

Several respondents continued to question the technology choice, particularly why the infrastructure cannot all be installed subsea or underground, instead of overhead line steel lattice towers.

Due to the significant volume of power we need to connect and transport from generation source to areas of demand the ESO concluded that there is a need for both onshore and offshore network reinforcements.

Our approach to determining how the transmission network is developed is underpinned by our statutory obligations, as set out in the Electricity Act 1989 which requires us to balance technical, cost and environmental considerations and to select a proposed option which is economically viable, technically feasible, minimises impacts on important resources or features of the environment and reduces disturbance to those living in it, working in it, visiting it or using it for recreational purposes. The option must also be capable of being granted consent by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU).

The ESO's and Ofgem's independent assessment of need for this project and our wider Pathway to 2030 programme was also based on the technology choice of an overhead line between Spittal, Loch Buidhe and Beauly.

Underground cabling is highly sensitive to ground conditions and terrain. There can be significant and lasting environmental impacts and future land use constraints associated with undergrounding; together with the technical challenges of operating, maintaining and in the event of a fault, restoring power.

Cost is also an important consideration, with subsea and undergrounding significantly more expensive than overhead lines. As the cost of investing in the electricity transmission network is ultimately recovered from electricity bill payers across GB, cost is one of the key factors in the ESO's and Ofgem's assessment of need, and in Ofgem's future assessment of the costs we are allowed to recover for these projects.

In October 2024, SSEN Transmission hosted a webinar entitled 'Underground, overground or subsea? How decisions are made on where electricity lines go'. This webinar provides detailed information regarding the decision-making process for technology choices and you can watch a recording of this webinar **via this link.**

Please also find additional information regarding alternative technology options via the links below:

- **Why the Pathway to 2030 projects require both onshore and offshore solutions**
- **The challenges with undergrounding at 400kV**
- **Underground Cable - video**

Environmental impacts

We have received feedback highlighting concerns about potential environmental impacts, particularly on local biodiversity.

As one of the greatest risks to our natural environment and biodiversity is climate change, these projects are part of the solution if we are to tackle the climate emergency and deliver net zero emissions in Scotland and across the United Kingdom. However, we do recognise that in delivering these critical projects, there will be unavoidable impacts, and we would like to reassure stakeholders that we take our environmental responsibilities extremely seriously.

To deliver our projects in the most sensitive way possible we ensure environmental factors are considered at every stage in the development of each project, along with technical requirements and economic considerations. We follow the mitigation hierarchy by firstly seeking to avoid sensitive areas wherever possible and secondly, where impacts are likely to occur, we seek to minimise these, provide mitigation and identify opportunities to restore.

In addition, all of our consent applications will be accompanied by detailed environmental assessments which are prepared by external specialists. These assessments will consider impacts on a wide range of environmental topics (many of which have been highlighted in the stakeholder responses to both our routeing and alignment consultations) and identify measures that may be required to mitigate any impacts.

Potential impacts during construction and operation will be assessed in detail as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report stage. Construction impacts on the environment will be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will be prepared and implemented by the Principal Contractor once consent has been granted for the OHL to be built. The CEMP will detail how the Principal Contractor will manage construction in accordance with commitments and mitigation detailed in the EIA Report, statutory consents and authorisations, and industry best practice and guidance. Implementation of the CEMP will be managed on-site by a suitably qualified and experience Environmental Clerk of Works (ECoW), with support from other environmental professionals as required.

We also acknowledge that minimising impacts is not enough on its own, and we have therefore committed to delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all our projects; as well as compensatory planting for any trees felled during the construction phase, where possible with native species. Where our projects are unable to completely avoid irreplaceable habitats (for example peatland or ancient woodland), we have also introduced a commitment to restore more habitat than we affect.

You can find out more about how we are delivering a positive environmental legacy within the below listed documents:

- **Sustainability Strategy – Pathway to 2030**
- **Delivering a positive environmental legacy**

Socio-Economic impact

Several community responses highlighted concerns about the impact on the local community, including visual and tourism impacts. We have also been asked what local benefits these projects will provide.

We acknowledge that there will inevitably be a visual impact on some local communities and are committed to do all that we can to minimise and mitigate this as part of the ongoing development of this project. The environmental assessment that will accompany our consent applications will also consider landscape and visual impacts.

From a tourism perspective, a Recreation and Tourism Assessment will be undertaken and presented in the EIA Report. It will look at changes to the availability, accessibility and amenity of tourist attractions and changes in the availability of tourist accommodation due to the influx of construction workers during the construction of the proposed OHL. This will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to these issues as part of the consenting process.

[2] *The UK's 2023 Energy Act established an independent system planner and operator to help accelerate Great Britain's energy transition; creating the National Energy System Operator (NESO). This body replaces what was formally National Grid ESO.*

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Furthermore, we have developed a **housing strategy** which aims to mitigate against the potential constraints to available tourist accommodation resulting from the construction of this and other transmission projects across the North of Scotland.

These projects will also provide significant benefits to local and national economies. Independent socio- economic analysis undertaken on our Pathway to 2030 projects has estimated that they will collectively support around 20,000 jobs across the UK, around 9,000 of which are expected in Scotland, adding **adding billions of economic value** to the economy.

We also expect these projects to deliver significant local benefits, including direct and indirect job opportunities, alongside supply chain opportunities for local businesses. We will set out more details of these opportunities in due course, including 'Meet the Buyer' events to introduce local businesses to the opportunities presented through our main supply chain partners.

In an industry first, SSEN Transmission has pledged to support the delivery of more than 1,000 new homes across the north of Scotland as it aims to play a role in alleviating the region's housing challenges.

The company is working with councils, registered social landlords and other housing organisations to deliver the new homes as part of our £20bn investment to upgrade the transmission network in the north of Scotland in support of energy security and national net zero ambitions.

Workers' accommodation will be required to deliver the proposed projects, and SSEN Transmission is aiming to create a legacy in the communities that will host its workforce by delivering housing or other infrastructure that will support local need when the projects are completed.

The delivery of this strategy will ensure there is capacity to house workers in the local area and so minimise any negative impacts on availability of accommodation for visitors and thus avoid impacts on the tourism industry. It will also ensure our workers are good neighbours to local communities, actively contributing while they are present and leaving behind benefits once they have left.

In September 2024, we launched our first Community Benefit Fund. The initial Regional Fund of £2 million aims to bring positive benefits and a long-lasting legacy to communities across the north of Scotland. This will fund strategic projects that benefit communities that lie wholly within our network area. Applications for the Regional Fund closed on 22 November 2024 and an update on successful applications will be provided in due course.

In addition, our Local Fund will launch soon and will be dedicated to communities situated close to our infrastructure. The focus for these funds will be developed through discussions with communities, ensuring that local priorities are supported. You can register for updates on our community benefit funding through this **link.**

Links are provided below to papers which provide more information on our approach to community benefits and socio-economic impacts:

- **Delivering legacy benefits through Pathway to 2030 Projects**
- **Working with landowners and occupiers**

Consultation process

We began to develop our Pathway to 2030 projects following the outcome of the ESO's recommendations, confirmation of project need and approval of OFGEM funding. This means, when we consult on projects, we are consulting on the development of the project between its start and end points or at a specific site. We are not consulting on whether the Spittal (Banniskirk) – Loch Buidhe (Carnaig) – Beauly (Fanellan) 400kV project is needed, as these requirements have already been identified at a national level to ensure the security of the transmission network and electricity supply to consumers. We welcome feedback on the development proposals described at our consultation events and are committed to considering this feedback in the design of our projects.

Throughout the consultation process we listen closely to identify any areas of concern and seek local information relevant to the project's design, allowing us to consider next steps required prior to refining proposals. This may involve amending our proposals, considering or investigating alternative routes or sites or looking to adopt a different technology in some areas.

As we set out in the 'Consultation Process' section of this Report on Consultation, we held a number of public consultation events, public meetings and bilateral and group engagements, using a range of methods to promote our consultations to our stakeholders.

We received some feedback from owners of properties in closest proximity to the potential alignments who felt further targeted engagement should have been undertaken with them prior to the events, in the same way in which some landowners had been engaged.

Others stated that they felt their feedback from previous consultations had not been listened to and SSEN Transmission were not engaging meaningfully as the project was still progressing despite feedback received that it was not wanted. The Proposed Development project is part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission network across Great Britain (GB) that is required to help deliver UK and Scottish Government climate change and energy security targets. Further information on why this critical national infrastructure is required can be found under the 'Project Need' section above.

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Landowners were given advance notice of draft alignments to allow our land team to begin discussions with them to help inform the development of alignments that were within their land as they need to be consulted as early as possible, to understand any particular constraints, such as private water supplies, and areas already under grant aided schemes.

In response to feedback from the Route consultations, we ensured consultation materials for our Refined Route and Alignment Options consultations were published in advance of the public events, and we introduced longer feedback periods for the Refined Route and Alignment consultation than the 4-week period we typically adopt. We recognise that there is always room for improvement and as we look forward to the next round of public engagement, we will continue to welcome feedback on how we can further improve how we consult with our stakeholders.

Find out more about our approach to considering feedback:

- **How stakeholder feedback influences our proposals**

Property Specific Feedback

As we have reached the alignment stage of the process and shared indicative tower locations, we have received feedback from landowners or their representatives who have made specific suggestions or requests regarding changes to the alignment which they believe could improve the proposals in relation to their property. These proposals have been considered on a case-by-case basis and progressed directly with these individuals.

Cumulative Impacts

Communities highlighted the potential impact of further renewable developments in the areas as a result of the network upgrades. The concerns about the cumulative impact of both construction and operation as well as the visual impact of infrastructure was also included in feedback.

The Proposed Development will be subject EIA assessment. The EIA Report will include an assessment of cumulative effects for each topic assessed within the report. This will include the effects of the proposed OHL in combination with other currently known SSEN Transmission developments and those proposed by other developers, which are currently within the planning system, so that the full impact of current development in the area can be understood.

Visual Impacts

The potential for landscape and visual impacts as a result of our proposals is considered as part of the Alignment Stage, both in terms of identifying options and appraising them. This is accordance with the Holford Rules[3], which is guidance specific to designing OHLs and seeks to ensure proposed new infrastructure is designed with the best landscape and visual fit, when balanced against other environmental and technical considerations. The EIA Report will include a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which will assess the significance of effects of the proposed OHL and propose mitigation where required.

Electric and Magnetic Fields

Concerns were raised regarding the potential health risks of a 400kV overhead line passing in close proximity to properties and areas of recreational use.

We develop, build, and operate our infrastructure to meet all health and safety legislation and guidance set by relevant bodies such as the UK Government, Scottish Government, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and our regulator, Ofgem – including that associated with Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF). In respect of EMFs, we strictly follow the guidance as set by the UK Government, which in turn is informed by International guidance.

As well as setting exposure limits that protect against known established effects of EMF, the UK Government's guidance also includes precautionary measures to protect against possible effects below the exposure limits that have not been identified by science. In addition to this, the UK Health Security Agency and Department of Health have a remit to review new research in this area and ensure that current guidelines and policies are reflective of that research.

[3] ***https://www.nationalgrid.com/sites/default/files/documents/13795-The%20Holford%20Rules.pdf*** *for details on Holford Rules*

As well as setting exposure limits that protect against known established effects of EMF, the UK Government's guidance also includes precautionary measures to protect against possible effects below the exposure limits that have not been identified by science. In addition to this, the UK Health Security Agency and Department of Health have a remit to review new research in this area and ensure that current guidelines and policies are reflective of that research.

The UK Government has a process in place to ensure any emerging research is considered and that Government policies continue to be appropriate. The UK Government's latest policy on EMF is set out in **National Policy Statement** EN-5, (NPS EN-5)8 which was reissued in November 2023 and came into force on 17 January 2024.

This policy is reflective of the review process and in line with the NPS EN-5. The current UK Government guidance is therefore still considered appropriate by the UK Government and their public health experts. We will comply with the EMF guidance as set out in the NPS EN-5.

There have been over four decades of research looking into whether EMF can cause health effects and there are currently no established effects below the exposure limits. When we design our OHLs, substations and cables we do so to ensure they will not exceed those exposure limits, even when operating at 100% capacity. We will provide information on compliance as part of our consent applications which will be publicly available.

A link is provided below to a leaflet that has been prepared to explain the effects of EMF and the separation distances we apply:

- **EMF Leaflet**

Impacts on Property Valuation

We will look to mitigate impacts on residential properties as far as possible and these impacts will be assessed as part of the EIA Report that will accompany our application for consent. Extensive surveys will be carried out at identified receptors, including selected residential properties so that we are able to model potential impacts on the wider area.

Concerns in relation to impacts on property are being noted by our team, however, as a regulated business, we are obliged to follow a statutory legal framework under the Electricity Act 1989 and Land Compensation Act 1961. If you are entitled to compensation under the legal framework we will assess any claim on a case-by-case basis under the direction of this legal framework. If this is the case, we will recommend that you engage a professional adviser and we generally meet reasonably incurred professional fees in these circumstances. However, for the avoidance of doubt, we should advise that we will not meet fees incurred in objecting to our proposed developments.

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Private Water Supplies

We received some feedback raising concerns about the possible impact on Private Water Supplies (PWS). All PWS located within 250m of the proposed works (where excavations, such as those for tower foundations and some access tracks, are likely to be greater than 1m deep) are identified by the project team during the design and environmental assessment phase. A risk assessment is then undertaken to identify those PWS that have the potential to be affected by the works. Should the results of this assessment indicate a risk to the PWS source or infrastructure, then mitigation will be developed for inclusion in a site specific PWS Protection Plan. This is discussed and agreed with the PWS owner and will be implemented by the contractor. A report on potential PWS impacts and mitigation would also be included in the EIA Report which supports the application for consent. In a small number of cases there may need to a requirement to provide an alternative water supply (on a temporary or permanent basis) in the event of an unforeseen problem with the existing supply. More information is available via the link below:

- **Protecting Private Water Supplies**

3.2. Specific Project Related Feedback

Introduction

We acknowledge the feedback received from communities, statutory consultees and other local groups and key agencies, in relation to community and environmental concerns associated with this proposed development. This section of the report sets out our responses to the questions and themes emerging from the public consultation and the feedback provided by statutory and non-statutory stakeholders.

Feedback was collated and analysed by the project teams, supported by Information Analysts, to produce relevant data and key themes. The feedback was then considered as being either a common theme across the project or related to a specific section of the proposed OHL, with responses prepared accordingly.

The common themes from the feedback have been addressed within section 3.1 above, with the section specific feedback addressed in this section. Consultation responses have been grouped by the main Route sections (A, B, C, D and E as presented in the consultation materials) and then by which consultation it was provided (i.e. Refined Route or Alignment options). Stakeholders have been grouped into the categories outlined in the Table 4 below.

Table 4: Stakeholder Categories

Stakeholder Group	Examples
Statutory Consultees	Historic Environment Scotland (HES), SEPA, NatureScot, Local Authorities
Non-statutory Consultees	RSPB, Scottish Water, Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)
Community members and local organisations	Homeowners, local businesses, Residents Associations, elected members
Landowners & Occupiers	Landowners, crofters, tenant farmers, occupiers of properties
Developers	Renewable energy developers

Section A: Spittal to Brora

This section was split into 5 sub-sections for presentation to the public and statutory authorities. An overview of key considerations, alignment options presented, feedback and options to be taken forward to application stage is provided for each sub-section. A detailed summary of all feedback is presented within this section of the report.

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Section A1.1

Proximity to and interaction with designated sites (Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA/SAC/Ramsar and Shielton Peatlands SSSI) and Class 1 peatland, an Annex 1 habitat and the Flow Country World Heritage Site were noted as key environmental constraints in this section. Other constraints included existing and proposed renewable energy infrastructure, i.e. wind farms.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment A1.1 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment A1.1 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective and has the least engineering constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat and cultural heritage.

HES advised that Potential Alignment A1.1 has a lower level of impact on the settings of local monuments and is unlikely to have significant adverse impacts on the setting of scheduled monuments when compared to Alternative Alignment A1.1.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that compliance with standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project-wide and site-specific environmental management procedures (including SSEN Transmission's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs), Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

The MOD advised that new structures be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Section A1.2

Passing through the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA/SAC/Ramsar, Shielton Peatlands SSSI, the Flow Country World Heritage Site and areas of Class 1 and 2 Peatland were noted as key environmental constraints in this section. As well as the setting of scheduled monuments and proximity to Causeymire - Knockfin Flows Wild Land Area and The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA. The Potential Alignment A1.2 runs parallel to existing overhead line infrastructure and the A9.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented Potential Alignment A1.2 as our only option; this was based on a combination of environmental and technical constraints in the area.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised that Potential Alignment A1.2 has the potential to impact the settings of Achkinloch, chambered cairn 755m SW of, Loch Stemster (SM419) and Achkinloch, stone setting SW of, Loch Stemster (SM420). We are committed to working with HES to microsite the tower positions further to minimise impacts where possible, given there are no other alternative options in this section.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that compliance with standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project-wide and site-specific environmental management procedures (including SSEN Transmission's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs),Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents. NatureScot highlighted that the alignment crosses the SSSI at a narrow point and could be spannable. The tower micro-siting should ensure avoidance of any impacts on the adjacent wetland.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

MOD advised for structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Section A1.3

Proximity to and interaction with designated sites (Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA/SAC/Ramsar, Coire na Beinne Mires SSSI and Causeymire - Knockfin Flows Wild Land Area and The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA and Class 2 peatland, an Annex 1 habitat and the Flow Country World Heritage Site were noted as key environmental constraints in this section. Other constraints include the A9, existing OHL infrastructure, proposed renewable energy infrastructure, i.e. wind farms and potential flood zones.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment A1.3 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment A1.3 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective over Alternative Alignment A1.3.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised that they had no specific comments on this section of the Potential and Alternative Alignments for the overhead line.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this stage but recognise that A1.3 Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that the compliance with the standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project-wide and site-specific environmental management procedures (including SSEN Transmission's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs), Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

MOD advised for structures to be charted on aviation maps and/or construction equipment details as per their requirements.

Section A1.4

Proximity to and interaction with designated sites (Dunbeath Water SSSI, Berriedale Water SSSI, Berriedale and Langwell Waters Special Area of Conservation and Langwell Water SSSI, The Flow Country and Berriedale Coast SLA, Causeymire - Knockfin Flows Wild Land Area) and oversailing and proximity to scheduled monuments e.g. Balcraggie Lodge, settlement 700m N of (SM5230) are some of the constraints noted in this area. As well as Class 1 and 2 areas of peatland and challenging topography.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At the time of consultation in June 2024, we presented Potential Alignment A1.4 as our only option; this was based on a combination of environmental and technical constraints.

HES advised that Potential Alignment A1.4 has the potential to impact a number of scheduled monuments and the settings of local monuments in the area. However HES has noted that given the topography of this section, there is potential opportunity for careful positioning and micrositing of towers to lessen that impact, and that this is encouraged.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NS advised that the compliance with the standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project wide and site-specific environmental management procedures, with reference to SSEN Transmission General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) and Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

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Section A1.5

Proximity to and interaction with Class 1 and 2 Peatland, Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLAs and passing over and through the River Helmsdale and Glen Loth are some of the constraints noted in this area, as well as the potential to affect the setting of scheduled monuments. Additionally, the crossing of a railway line, challenging topography and slopes are noted as constraint and challenges in this section.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented A1.5 Potential Alignment as our only option; this was based on a combination of environmental and technical constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised that Potential Alignment A1.5 has the potential to impact the several scheduled monuments, particularly along the River Helmsdale, SSEN Transmission is committed to working with HES to microsite the tower positions further through detailed design to minimise impacts where possible, given there are no other alternative options in this section.

NatureScotS advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NS advised that the compliance with the standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project wide and site-specific environmental management procedures, with reference to SSEN Transmission General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) and Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

MOD advised for structures to be charted on aviation maps and/or construction equipment details as per their requirements.

Proposed Alignment

The alignment options proposed to be taken forward to application are:

- **Potential Alignment A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4** and **A1.5**

Refined Route

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Native Woodland: A suggestion to avoid native woodland within the area known as Learnaich Hill by passing either above or below the trees	Community members and organisations	The location of Ancient Woodland (AW) and potential impacts from the proposed development was a key consideration during the OHL design development process; as much as possible the options sought to avoid impacting on AW by locating towers and other infrastructure away from known areas of AW. However given the numerous environmental constraints along certain parts of the alignment options, it is possible that some areas of AW may be impacted. Where this occurs, efforts will be made to minimise the extent of impact, and felling will only be undertaken where absolutely essential for the construction and future safe operation of the infrastructure. Any AW felling would be mitigated through a scheme of compensatory planting to be agreed with determining authorities through the Section 37 process. SSEN Transmission's approach with regards to AW as an Irreplaceable Habitat will be met through restoring a greater area of AW than has been lost. This will be in addition to Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and commitments.
Archaeology and History: Concerns around protecting archaeological and historical sites were raised, suggesting realigning the route to avoid historical areas including remains of properties cited as having historical significance by the Berriedale Water.	Community members and organisations	Alongside numerous other environmental constraints, potential impacts on Cultural Heritage assets have been a key consideration during the design development process. The alignment design has sought as much as possible to avoid direct impact on designated assets of national importance such as Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and Listed Structures. We have also considered potential for impact on non-designated assets that are included on the Canmore register and Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), with design seeking to avoid sitting infrastructure immediately adjacent to specific locations recorded as being of historical significance. We have engaged with local and regional heritage groups and societies to understand concerns in relation to local history; where particular concerns have

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
		been raised, these will be taken into account as much as possible during the environmental assessment of options. We are continuing to liaise closely with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in relation to impacts on Cultural Heritage assets at key points along the alignment. This includes sections of the proposed OHL that have been highlighted by local communities as having sensitive Cultural Heritage assets.
Renewable Generator: Section A1.1 we were advised by a developer of a wind farm proposal at Scoping with the Scottish Government. A request to route the power line as far west within the proposed route so as not to impact on the proposed wind farm.	Developers	Development proposed by third parties along the length of the OHL options, for which formal Scoping requests have been published by the Energy Consents Unit (ECU), have had to be taken into consideration during the design process. Appropriate separation distances have been applied to different forms of proposed development to avoid or minimise the potential for impact on infrastructure.

Alignment

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Archaeology: Queries around the significance of the archaeology along Section A continued to be received around Helmsdale	Community members and organisations	Alongside numerous other environmental constraints, potential impacts on Cultural Heritage assets have been a key consideration during the design development process. The alignment design process has, as much as possible, sought to avoid direct impact on designated assets of national importance such as Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and Listed Structures. We have also considered potential for impact on non-designated assets that are included on the Canmore register and Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), with design seeking to avoid sitting infrastructure immediately adjacent to specific locations recorded as being of historical significance. We have engaged with local and regional heritage groups and societies to understand concerns in relation to local history; where particular concerns have been raised, these will be taken into account as much as possible during the environmental assessment of options. We are continuing to liaise closely with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in relation to impacts on Cultural Heritage assets at key points along the alignment. This includes sections of the proposed OHL that have been highlighted by local communities as having sensitive Cultural Heritage assets.
Construction Traffic: Concerns were raised regarding any construction in Gartymore/West Helmsdale resulting in large vehicles navigating narrow, steep, roads with hair pin bend and the difficulties of crossing the River Helmsdale. It was also noted that once on the common grazing's, the ancient peat roads would	Community members and organisations	An assessment of construction related traffic and associated impacts will be undertaken as part of the EIA for the Proposed Development. Haul routes and access points will be carefully selected so as to minimise impacts on the receiving environment, the public road network and communities who may rely on regional connections. Consideration of peat and potential for impact is a key component of the EIA and all efforts will be made to minimise impact on peat deposits. Peat probing and conditions surveys have been undertaken to inform the EIA and the results

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
be modernised with concerns regarding loss of history.		of these surveys will feed into the overall design process, both for tower locations and associated infrastructure and access routes. Where there are impacts on peat, SSEN Transmission will engage with statutory consultees including SEPA, NatureScot and The Highland Council to establish acceptable methodology and working practices and to identify and agree appropriate levels of compensation for peatland restoration.
Flight Paths: A comment highlighted this section is flown regularly by RAF as part of their essential training	Community members and organisations	Consultation was undertaken with the Ministry of Defence where proposed routes are within known training zones or have the potential to impact on flight paths. Consultation with the appropriate aviation authorities will also be undertaken in any instance where there is potential for interaction with civil aviation activity. The MOD has no concerns with the element of the route supplied between Spittal to Beauly, subject to the route and towers being charted on aviation maps. We are currently awaiting a Scoping Opinion which will include any comments raised in relation to aviation authorities.
Ornithology: We were advised protected bird species have been observed fishing on Rangag Loch and asked how this will be mitigated to ensure they avoid the lines when they are lifting off from the loch	Community members and organisations	We recognise the diversity of wildlife in these areas. Bird surveys, including seasonal surveys to monitor and record breeding activity along with flight activity, were recently concluded. An EIA will be undertaken to support the application for consent, including assessment of the impact on ornithology and identifying mitigation as required.
Alternative Route: A comment was received stating there seems no reason why we have an alternative route as it has no advantages over the proposed and is closer to properties	Community members and organisations	The alternative alignment presented in this section was taken from the previous Refined Routes consultation. It was carried forward to show that an option had previously been considered but was no longer the preferable option and has been discounted.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Berriedale Inland Route: Suggestions were received regarding a more inland alignment option in the vicinity of Berriedale in order to increase the distance from residential properties due to concerns that alternatives in this area had not been considered.	Community members and organisations	This proposal was reviewed by the project team and the decision made not to progress an inland overhead line route option such as one proposed by Berriedale residents. This is due to the area being particularly constrained by a number of protected Scheduled Monuments and environmental designations that restrict the pursuit of an overhead line alignment that runs further inland. Additionally, there is significantly more class 1 peatland and deep peat observed in this area, which we seek to avoid as far as practicable. During our initial route consultation an alternative option (A1.6) was included. This route was much further inland and a greater distance from Berriedale, however this was not taken forward to alignment due to passing through the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), River Thurso SAC, Blar nam Faoileag Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Leavad SSSI alongside engineering constraints such as high likelihood of river and road crossings required.
Human Rights: Suggestion that our proposals breaches community members human rights	Community members and organisations	We do not consider that the proposals that we are promoting are in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) provisions. Our proposals are in pursuance of legitimate requirements to ensure energy security and are in accordance with our licence provisions, supported by the extensive consultation which is being carried out with all affected stakeholders. The application for consent for the proposed new OHL, which will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for determination and will be subject to necessary scrutiny and consultation as part of that process.

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) **Halsary Forest:** The impact of the potential alignment on this block is reduced if the suggested alternative alignment is constructed as this misses the north east corner of the block but this alignment would take the OHL across more designated peatland on neighbouring land therefore increasing the OHL's environmental impact. This block is the site of Halsary Wind Farm operated by Scottish Power Renewables which is a significant constraint on the OHL's alignment and has forced the potential line down the block's east side to then cross the block's southern half. A number of renewables schemes export cables do or are planned to cross the site but this additional OHL should not have a significant impact on these. The south east of the site and much of the land east of the site is designated SSSI/SAC/SPA for peatland and in the process of being designated a World Heritage Site. The forest plantation in this site has been felled in recent years and much of the block has been or is planned to be restored as peatland. The main threat to the peatland (whether	Non-statutory Consultees	Impacts to woodland and Forestry have been considered as part of our assessment process. A specific chapter on Forestry will be included within the Environmental Impact Assessment report and compensatory habitat will be proposed to replace any woodland lost. Noted and we confirm the Potential Alignment A1.1 will be taken forward.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
natural or restored) is the construction of the proposed infrastructure which will need to be done with extreme sensitivity to minimise the damage to the peat's structure. The proposals will have significant visual impact from the A9 public road in both directions. Cumulative impact of this line with others already in vicinity and extensive windfarm will be considerable. There is no capacity to screen. We would prefer the new OHL to completely avoid the land FLS is managing but considering the constrained nature of the route alignment in this area there are understood to be very limited alternatives. As this is no longer a productive forest the actual presence of additional electricity infrastructure will have little or no impact on management of the site although it reduces the likelihood of further renewables development being built within this block.		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES) **Section A1.1 – scheduled monuments** Potential Alignment further from SMs than alternative alignment. If potential alignment is selected, then unlikely to raise significant concerns.	Statutory Consultees	In addition to the feedback below, HES requested ongoing consultation and visualisations. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES, including the provision of visualisations. Noted and agreed.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Section A1.2 – scheduled monuments Potential Alignment anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts on SM419 and SM420 which would result in an objection. HES would welcome further consultation. **Section A1.4 – scheduled monuments** Recommend consideration be made to tower positioning to minimise impacts, however, suggest that it may not be possible to do this sufficiently to avoid an objection. Would welcome further consultation and visualisations. **Section A1.4 – Category A listed buildings and GDLs** Happy that Potential Alignment unlikely to significantly affect GDL00150 or LB7936. **Section A1.5 – scheduled monuments** Recommend to consider impacts of OHL on Helmsdale river valley as impacts on certain monuments may result in an objection. Anticipate an objection on impacts on SM1778 due to visual impact, suggest an alternative alignment to minimise impact. **Section A1.5 – Category A listed buildings** Happy that Potential alignment unlikely to significantly affect LB7149.		Further consultation will be arranged with HES for the area around SMs 419 and 420 as this section is highly constrained. We recognise that the distribution of Scheduled Monuments in this area makes it very challenging to find an alignment with no impact. Noted. Alternative alignments are being considered to minimise impact on SMs including SM1778. This is a highly constrained area with technical and environmental challenges including steep slopes. Consultation with HES is ongoing for this section. Noted.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
NatureScot **River Thurso SAC (Atlantic salmon)** Recommend mitigation measures to protect and improve aquatic environment on a catchment level. **Caithness and Sutherland peatlands SAC (peatland)** Alignment options cross within the SAC and there is concern that an HRA would be unable to conclude no adverse risk on site integrity. **Caithness and Sutherland peatlands SPA (breeding birds)** Awaiting detailed survey results before comment. **Dunbeath Water SSSI – upland birch** Alignment A1.4 passes through the SSSI however may be able to avoid felling any woodland. **Dunbeath Water SSSI – quaternary** Alignment A1.4 passes through the SSSI however avoids the areas with greatest geological interest. **Berriedale Water SSSI – upland birch** Alignment A1.4 passes close to the SSSI and would need management to avoid requiring felling. **Langwell Water SSSI – upland birch** Alignment A1.4 passes through the SSSI however	Statutory Consultees	Noted, any mitigation will be identified in the EIA Report. Alternative Alignment A1.1 has been discounted, in part to reduce impacts on peat. We are aware of significant depths of peat in this area. Alignment options and tower positions have been selected to minimise impact on peatland where practicable. Bird surveys have been undertaken and will be shared within the EIA Report. Noted and felling will be minimised where practicable. Noted. Noted and felling will be minimised where practicable. Noted and felling will be minimised where practicable.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
may be able to pass over woodland habitats and not require any felling. **Berriedale and Langwell Waters SAC – Atlantic salmon** Recommend mitigation measures to protect and improve aquatic environment on a catchment level.		Noted, any mitigation will be identified in the EIA Report.

Section B: Brora to Loch Buidhe

This section was split into 2 sub-sections for presentation to the public and statutory authorities. An overview of key considerations, alignment options presented, feedback and options to be taken forward to application stage is provided for each sub-section. A detailed summary of all feedback is presented within this section of the report.

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Section B1.1

Proximity to and interaction with Grade 1a Ancient Woodland, Carrol Rock SSSI, Class 1 and 2 Peatland, Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA and the potential to affect the setting of scheduled monuments are noted as constraint in this area. As well as, crossing of Loch Brora, topography and slopes.

For full information please see **Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.**

At the time of consultation in June 2024, we presented Potential Alignment B1.1 as our only option; this was based on a combination of environmental and technical constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised they are content with the list of assets within their remit identified for assessment within the consultation document and that they have no further specific comments at this stage but would be happy to provide further advice.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that the compliance with the standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project wide and site-specific environmental management procedures, with reference to SSEN Transmission General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) and Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

MOD advised for structures to be charted on aviation maps and/or construction equipment details as per their requirements.

Section B1.2

Proximity to and interaction with Grade 1a Ancient Woodland, Strathfleet SSSI, Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SSSI/SPA, Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA and scheduled monuments are noted as constraints in this area. As well as, crossing of A839, railway and existing overhead line infrastructure, topography and slopes.

For full information please see **Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.**

At the time of consultation in June 2024, we presented Potential Alignment B1.2 as our only option; this was based on a combination of environmental and technical constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised that Potential Alignment B1.2 has the potential to impact on the settings of the local monuments but that given the topography in the area, there is potential opportunity for careful positioning of towers to lessen that impact, and they encourage that this be explored if technically possible. They note that the Potential Alignment B1.2 now avoids Carn Liath, cairn and chambered cairn 1200m WNW of Torboll (SM1772) and instead closely follows the existing 275kV OHL to the west. This represents a significant improvement upon previous route options that converged on top of the scheduled monument.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that the compliance with the standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project wide and site-specific environmental management procedures, with reference to SSEN Transmission General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) and Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents. NS advised that if tower placement within the SSSI can be avoided along this alignment, damage to the geological feature will also be avoided and would therefore be most preferable. They also highlighted that the paralleling of B1.2 with the existing powerlines, may help to reduce the risk of negative impacts overall.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

MOD advised for structures to be charted on aviation maps and/or construction equipment details as per their requirements.

Proposed Alignment

The alignment options proposed to be taken forward to application are:

- **Potential Alignment B1.1** and **Potential Alignment B1.2.**

Refined Route

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Visual and Recreational: impacts at Carrol Rock and Loch Brora were cited during refined route feedback, alongside a request to site much further west up Strath Brora and Strath Fleet or cable under the Loch.	Community members and organisations	Any potential impacts to Carrol Rock and Loch Brora will be minimised where possible through micro siting of crossing towers. Routing the OHL further west would result in more significant and direct impacts on Carol Rock SSSI and would likely involve a direct interface with Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC due to spatial constraints presented by existing infrastructure and residential properties. A route further to the east was consulted on earlier in the development phase (option B3), however due to impacts on ancient woodland, topographical challenges, and potential impacts on the settlements of Backies, Doll, and West Clyne.

Alignment

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Loch Brora and Carrol Rock: Many comments in this area cited the crossing of Loch Brora and the visual effect on the Carrol Rock, citing concerns around landscape impact. Other comments highlight recreational, business and tourism significance, potential to disrupt wildlife and impacts on recreational activities such as swimming, paddling and fishing. Concerns were expressed around impacts on ornithology around Loch Brora, with populations of migratory geese observed on or near the loch annually. Concerns that the proposed infrastructure could cause collision risk. Queries were received regarding construction access to this area given the road constraints for getting to the south side of Loch Brora were also received.	Community members and organisations	Please see response above regarding potential impacts to Carrol Rock and Loch Brora. A series of Vantage Point surveys to monitor bird flight activity have been carried out over a period of 14 months and the results of these surveys have been considered throughout the evolution of the design of the overhead line in this area. The overhead line crossing the Loch will have no impact on leisure activities.
Heritage Groups: continued to raise concerns about the threat they believe the current alignment proposal could pose to the area's nationally and locally significant archaeological landscapes, cultural heritage, intangible heritage, and commemorative battle sites.	Community members and organisations	Alongside numerous other environmental constraints, potential impact on Cultural Heritage assets has been a key consideration during the design development process. As much as possible the alignment design process has sought to avoid direct impact on designated assets of national importance such as Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and Listed Structures. We have also considered potential for impact on non-designated assets that are included on the Canmore register and Highland Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), with design seeking to avoid

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Concerns were raised regarding the approach taken regarding clusters of protected archaeological sites along the Caen River Valley in Kildonan and Glen Loth, archaeological sites not being included in the proposal maps and the current route traversing through the heartland of Highland Clearances commemorative landscapes to which they believe the current route and excavation work will have an irreversible impact. Alternative routes have been suggested which they believe would be less impactful and they state that decisions made during the development stages do not reflect the feedback provided to date. They stress the unprecedented nature of this development on the area's heritage and the importance of mitigation.		sitting infrastructure immediately adjacent to specific locations recorded as being of historical significance. We have engaged with local and regional heritage groups and societies to understand concerns in relation to local history; where particular concerns have been raised, these will be taken into account as much as possible during the environmental assessment of options. We are continuing to liaise closely with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in relation to impacts on Cultural Heritage assets at key points along the alignment. This includes sections of the proposed OHL that have been highlighted by local communities as having sensitive Cultural Heritage assets.
Environmental Designations: A comment raised concerns about the impact of both Section B1.1 and B1.2 physically and visually on SSSIs, SLAs, world heritage sites, peatland, ancient woodland, protected bird, animal and insect species, protected plant species, protected habitat, farming, tourism and fishing. Another noted they were advised that the B1.1 option couldn't go further west as	Community members and organisations	We recognise that this section of the route is heavily constrained by the presence of designated areas and assets, sensitive habitats, protected species and active land uses. The route options have sought to strike a balance between technical constraints such as altitude and slope gradients and minimising the footprint of the proposed infrastructure within these areas. Our application for consent will be accompanied with an EIA Report which will describe the routeing process and considerations along with the design work to minimise impacts through routeing and an assessment of the proposed alignment on all of the topics outlined in the feedback. Mitigation measures will also be proposed to

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
it would go through Flow Country Candidate World Heritage Site, but Section B1.2 goes through this land classification and ancient woodland.		reduce impacts to acceptable levels, where they cannot be avoided. The options of B1.1 and B1.2 have sought to minimise the incursion of infrastructure within Class 1 peatland, ancient woodland and designated areas, whilst following formal feedback from statutory consultees on keeping the proposed new OHL close to our existing infrastructure as it approaches a key connection point at Loch Buidhe.
Routeing near 275kV line: A comment stated that repeated attempts to ask for relocation of the line to parallel the existing 275kV line out of Gordon Bush have not been fully explored	Community members and organisations	The route proposed in the feedback was considered early on in the design process and discounted on the grounds that it was less feasible than other options when considering altitude, terrain and slope gradient, the presence of significant areas of Class 1 & 2 peatland and required separation distances from existing assets. These constraints would be difficult to overcome when compared to the preferred option.
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) **Achormlarie Forest:** The potential alignment runs parallel to an existing 132 kV OHL that runs parallel to an existing 275 kV OHL; the potential alignment will mean there are 3 OHLs running parallel along this block's northern boundary. The proposed alignment will involve felling along this block's northern edge. The plans for a new substation south of the existing Loch Buidhe substation are likely to mean the alignments (both potential and alternative) west of the current forest road that travels south f rom the existing substation will not be part of the NFL.	Non-statutory Consultees	Impacts to woodland and Forestry have been considered as part of our assessment process. A specific chapter on Forestry will be included within the Environmental Impact Assessment report and compensatory habitat will be proposed to replace any woodland lost. Noted and appropriate management felling will be agreed with FLS.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
The potential alignment will result in the loss of commercial crop trees and the exposure of a 'brown edge' which will be very vulnerable to windblow. If this alignment is followed appropriate management felling is required to ensure crop stability and also that any felling coupes comply with published landscape guidelines and associated good practice. The potential alignment through block is in the Strath Fleet Moors SSSI/ SPA, of which the main feature of interest is qualifying bird species. Although we would prefer the new OHL to completely avoid the NFL the presence of the existing OHL's and substation and the potential new substation will result in a relatively small increased burden on the management of the NFL.		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES) **Section B1.2 – scheduled monuments** Suggest positioning of towers to minimise impact on SM1861 and SM1862. Happy with change to Potential Alignment avoiding SM1772.	Statutory Consultees	In addition to the feedback below, HES requested ongoing consultation and visualisations. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES, including the provision of visualisations. Tower positions will be sited to reduce impacts on SM1861 and SM1862 where practicable. Noted re SM1772.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
NatureScot **Strathfleet SSSI – Moine geological interest** Concern on tower placement within SSSI – recommend avoiding area entirely or micrositing to avoid obstructing rock outcrops. **Strathfleet SSSI – upland oak woodland** Alignment B1.2 crosses the SSSI at some distance from the woodland however consider potential impact of access tracks. **Strathfleet SSSI – vascular plants** Recommend avoiding damage to rock outcrops and to be identified through survey work. **Strath Carnaig and Strathfleet Moors SSSI/SPA – Qualifying species** Awaiting detailed survey results before comment. Suggest B1.2 may reduce risk of negative impacts. **River Evelix SAC – Qualifying species** Alignments B1.2 and C1.1 are within the catchment of this river but not close to SAC – suggest standard mitigation measures applied.	Statutory Consultees	This area is heavily constrained and it has not been feasible to find an improved alternative alignment avoiding the SSSI. Towers will be micrositied to avoid rock outcrops where practicable. Suggested mitigation measures are noted and will be considered. Noted, this has and will continue to be a consideration. Noted. Bird surveys have been undertaken and will be shared within the EIA Report. B1.2 is the Proposed Alignment. Noted, any mitigation will be identified in the EIA Report.

Section C: Loch Buidhe to Dounie

This section was split into 2 sub-sections for presentation to the public and statutory authorities. An overview of key considerations, alignment options presented, feedback and options to be taken forward to application stage is provided for each sub-section. A detailed summary of all feedback is presented within this section of the report.

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Section C1.1

Proximity to local dispersed properties were noted as constraint in this section. Other key environmental constraints included several natural heritage designations such as the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA and SSSI, the River Oykel SAC and Kyle of Sutherland Marshes SSSI. There is also a number of scheduled monuments, areas of peatland and close proximity of the Battle of Carbisdale Registered Battlefield within this section. Engineering constraints in the area included crossing of Kyle of Sutherland, existing 275kV and 132kV overhead line infrastructure, A836 road crossing, and a railway crossing, terrain and Balblair Windfarm Development.

For full information please see **Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.**

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment C1.1 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment C1.1 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective and has the least engineering constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, impact on tourism, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised that both options have similar levels of impact on the settings of the local monuments, and despite the proximity these are monument types, the 400kV OHL is unlikely to have significant adverse impacts on the setting of these scheduled monuments.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that compliance with standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project-wide and site-specific environmental management procedures (including SSEN Transmission's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs), Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents. NatureScot highlighted that the alignment crosses the SSSI at a narrow point and could be spannable. The tower micro-siting should ensure avoidance of any negative implication for adjacent wetland.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

The MOD advised for new structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Section C1.2

Key environmental constraints in this section included the Battle of Carbisdale Registered Battlefield, areas of ancient woodlands and small areas of peatland. There is also proximity to River Oykel Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Kyle of Sutherland Marshes SSSI. The key engineering constraint in the area included steep climb from Invershin up onto the Carbisdale hillside.

For full information please see **Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.**

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment C1.2 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that although Potential Alignment C1.2 is marginally more environmentally constrained, these constraints are manageable. Potential Alignment C1.2 is the least constrained and preferred option from an engineering perspective.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, impact on tourism, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and flood risk.

HES advised that both options skirt around the outside edge of the Battlefield of Carbisdale and the which is on the inventory of historic battlefields however there is a preference for the Potential Alignment C1.2 as it is positioned slightly lower in the landscape.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this stage but recognise that Potential Alignment C1.2 has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that compliance with the standard mitigation measures during the construction work, including compliance with both project-wide and site-specific environmental management procedures (including SSEN Transmission's General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs), Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)) should ensure that the aquatic environment is protected against pollution, excessive sediment run off and accidents.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

The MOD advised for new structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Proposed Alignment

The alignment options proposed to be taken forward to application are:

- **Potential Alignment C1.1** and **Potential Alignment C1.2**.

Refined Route

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Designated areas and visual impacts: Feedback received highlighted concerns that the preferred route crosses a flood plain, SSSI - Kyle of Sutherland Marshes, jeopardises ancient woodland and disrupts the views from recreational areas and local landmarks was received during the refined route stage	Community members and organisations	We recognise that Carbisdale contains ancient woodland of native origin and long-established woodland of plantation origin. An alignment was developed to avoid impact to the ancient woodland of native origin as far as practicable. Compensatory habitat will be proposed to replace any woodland lost. The EIA Report will include an assessment of the SSSI at this location; any potential significant impacts will be subject to mitigation set out within the assessment.

Alignment

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Proximity to property: The alignment at C1 is in close proximity to a property. The preferred alignment at the crossing of the Kyle should be further south a few hundred meters and closer to Carbisdale Castle.	Community members and organisations	There are dispersed properties adjacent to the Potential Alignment and the closest property within section C is within c. 250m of the alignment centreline. The alignment has been selected on balance considering the environment and engineering constraints in this area. Some of the challenges navigating the alignment in this area include crossing Kyle of Sutherland River and associated flood plain, Kyle of Sutherland Marshes SSSI, cultural heritage assets and designations.
The Kyle of Sutherland: In the area of Inverhouse and Inveran, the variety of animal species many of which are protected by law were highlighted alongside that the Kyle of Sutherland water is a well-used fly fishing point at Inverhouse. A strategic concern regarding low flying RAF aircrafts at this point of the Kyle was also included.	Community members and organisations	We recognise the diversity of wildlife across the length of our proposals. Protected species and bird surveys, including seasonal surveys to monitor and record breeding activity and flight activity were undertaken. European and protected species are known to occur in the area and number of targets species have been recorded. An EIA Report is currently being prepared which will include an assessment of the impact on wildlife and identifying mitigation in advance of the submission of a future application to Scottish Ministers. MOD are a statutory consultee and have been consulted on our proposals to date through the EIA scoping process and Alignment consultation.
Carbisdale Woodland: Comments described Carbisdale woodland and the loch as an area of outstanding natural beauty which forms a material part of the site of the battle of Carbisdale. They furthered that the area is used extensively for walking, cycling, horse riding, swimming and canoeing. Another response fears C1.2 will impact access to Carbisdale	Community members and organisations	We recognise the cultural heritage importance of the Battlefield of Carbisdale. We have taken consideration the boundaries of the battlefield as recorded on HES's battlefield inventory. Consultation with HES is ongoing and the potential for direct and setting impacts will be fully assessed and the results presented in the EIA Report. A Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment will be conducted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, including a Construction Traffic Management Plan. This will be conducted by Traffic and Transport specialists.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Loch the pathway across Montrose Bridge through to the Carbisdale Battlefield Information Panel and that the impact of a tower positioned on the high slope on Lamentation Hill will have an adverse visual impact.		An Outdoor Access Plan will be produced identifying current access routes to recreational areas and will include appropriate measures to ensure public rights of access are maintained during construction.
Painted towers at the Kyle of Sutherland crossing: A local resident has asked for the towers in proximity to the Kyle of Sutherland crossing to be painted green to reduce visual impact.	Community members and organisations	The EIA Report will include a LVIA which will set out the potential impact of the proposed development in the wider landscape. This assessment will include consideration of tower heights and appearance.
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) **Inversnin Forest:** This block is crossed by both the potential and an alternative alignment. The potential alignment cuts across the middle of the block while the alternative alignment crosses the southern end of the block. There is also an existing 132 kV OHL that crosses the north end of the block. Our preference would be for the new OHL to run parallel to the existing 132 kV but we have been assured that this is not technically feasible. Both the potential and alternative alignment will result in the of a significant amount of commercial timber be lost either to the alignment corridor or to necessary management	Non-statutory Consultees	Impacts to woodland and Forestry have been considered as part of our assessment process. A specific chapter on Forestry will be included within the Environmental Impact Assessment report and compensatory habitat will be proposed to replace any woodland lost. We note the comments made regarding both forestry blocks and habitat compensation will be agreed with FLS.

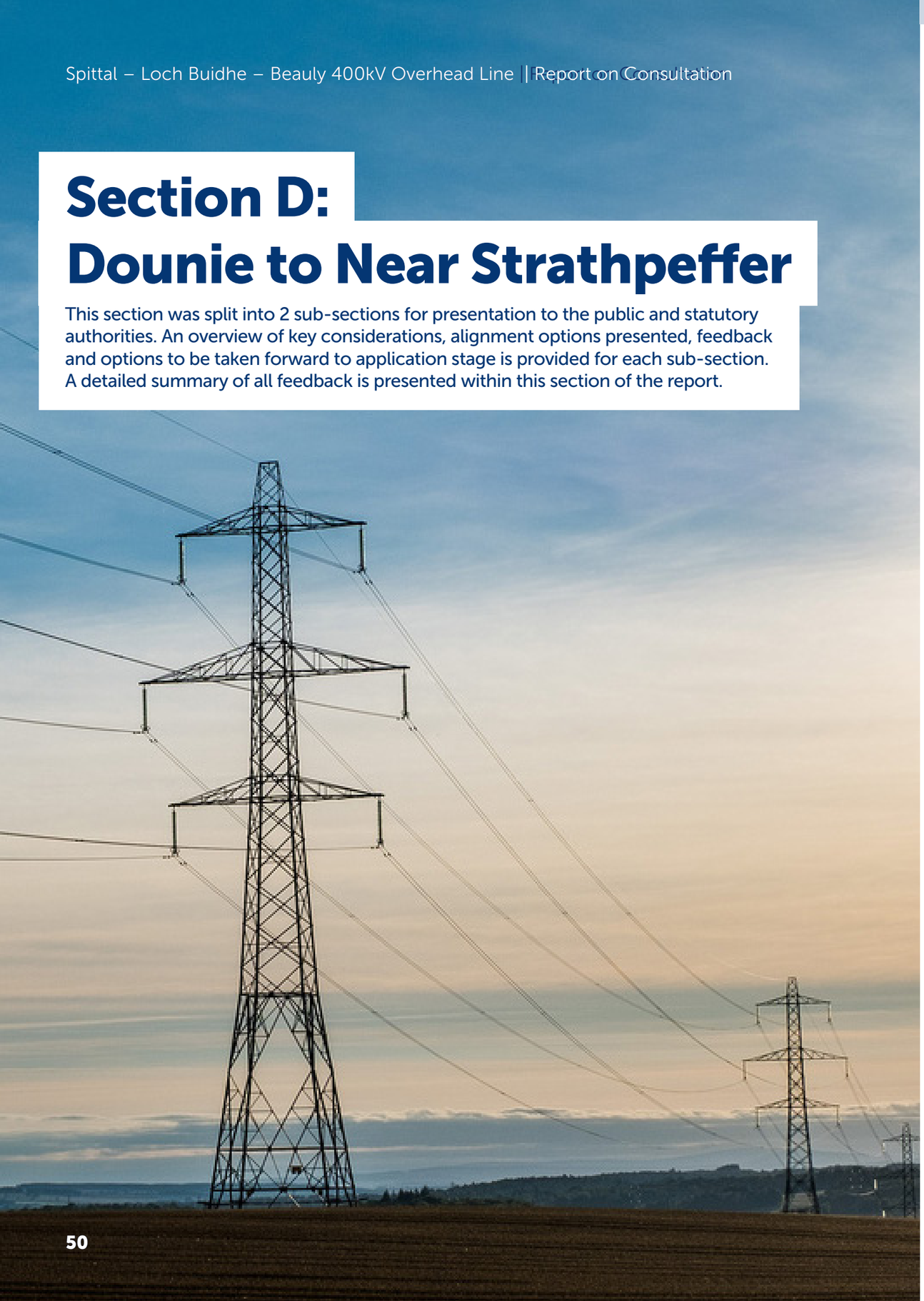
Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
felling required to maintain a stable crop. The potential route may result in the loss of less crop but would involve the disturbing an area of class 1 restored peat bog. The alternative alignment is considered that if may fit better in the landscape. **Invercharron Forest:** This block is crossed by both potential and alternative alignments. This is a highly productive block with a significant amount of mature coupes that will be very susceptible to windblow if the canopy structure is changed by the installation of sterilised tree free corridors to facilitate the OHL. Both the potential and alternative alignment will result in the loss of a significant amount of commercial timber to the alignment corridor or to necessary management felling required to maintain a stable crop. The potential route may result in the loss of less crop as it appears fractionally shorter but is considered more damaging to the landscape and views into the block from across The Kyle of Sutherland. Although we have no promoted recreational facilities in this block, the valley of Culrain Burn is well used by the local population to walk up to the loch; the potential alignment would have a significant impact on the		

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
appearance of Culrain Burn and its surroundings. The potential alignment's line into Strathcarron, straight down the hill is considered very bad from a landscape perspective. On balance the alternative alignment is considered that if may fit better in the landscape and so is preferred from a landscape perspective. The alternative alignment crosses the block's main haul road multiple times and will prevent timber stacking along this road unless specific timber stacking / loading bays were constructed off the road and away from the powerline. The alternative route also crosses very close to former Scottish Water infrastructure that has been converted into a private holiday home.		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES) **Section C1.1 and C1.2 – scheduled monuments** Suggest minimal impact on nearby SMs, however suggest mitigation to avoid impacts on BTL19. Preference for Potential alignment as lower in landscape. **Section C1.1 and C1.2 – Category A listed buildings** Impacts on LB279, Shin Viaduct, are not likely to raise issues in the national interest.	Statutory Consultees	In addition to the feedback below, HES requested ongoing consultation and visualisations. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES, including the provision of visualisations. Noted and mitigation to reduce the impact on BTL19 is being considered. The Potential Alignment has been selected in this section. Noted and agreed.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
NatureScot **River Evelix SAC – Qualifying species** Alignments B1.2 and C1.1 are within the catchment of this river but not close to SAC – suggest standard mitigation measures applied. **River Oykel SAC – Qualifying species** Alignments C1.1 and C1.2 are within the catchment of this river and close to SAC – suggest standard mitigation measures applied. **Kyle of Sutherland Marshes SSSI – Floodplain fen, wet woodland and vascular plant assemblage** Suggest to consider effects of nearby towers even if not directly in SSSI due to potential hydrological connectivity of wetland.	Statutory Consultees	Noted, any mitigation will be identified in the EIA Report. Noted, any mitigation will be identified in the EIA Report. Noted, this will be considered in the EIA Report.

Section D: Dounie to Near Strathpeffer

This section was split into 2 sub-sections for presentation to the public and statutory authorities. An overview of key considerations, alignment options presented, feedback and options to be taken forward to application stage is provided for each sub-section. A detailed summary of all feedback is presented within this section of the report.



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Section D1.1

Potential for the alignments to be visible from the residential property in and around Dounie and Strathrusdale was noted as a constraint in this section. Further key environmental constraints in this section included Ancient Woodland, Peatland and a Drinking Water Protected Area. There are scheduled monuments in the area and close proximity of the Rhiddoroch - Beinn Dearg - Ben Wyvis Wild Land Area. Engineering constraints included peat and steep slopes.

For full information please see **Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.**

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment D1.1 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment D1.1 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective and also has the least engineering constraints when compared to Alternative Alignment D1.1.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and private water supplies. Changes to the Refined Route and Alignment Options were made in this area based on feedback received during the Route Options consultation and implemented in the Potential Alignment.

HES have no further specific comment however they are content with the list of assets within our remit identified for assessment within the consultation document.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot advised that they are unable to provide any definite view at this stage but highlighted that Novar SPA is approximately 2km from the alignments and highlighted the opportunity for delivery of some positive habitat management for the species in the area around the SPA.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

MOD advised for structures to be charted on aviation maps and/or construction equipment details as per their requirements.

Section D1.2

Constraints in this section included Ancient Woodland, Peatland, schedule monuments and drinking protection area. There are schedule monuments in the area and both alignments crosses the Allt nan Caorach SSSI. Engineering constraints in the area included complexity of the construction due the Cairns designations to the scheduled monument located new the Heights of Brae and areas of non- designated and unrecorded heritage assets.

For full information please see **Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.**

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment D1.2 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment D1.2 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective and has the least engineering constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, access tracks and private water supplies. 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.

HES advised that Potential Alignment D1.2 has much less of an impact on Strath Sgitheath and Firth View settlement, it was not possible to establish at this stage the impact on the Balnacrae monument setting.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot highlighted SSSI and sub-alphine dry heath in the area.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

The MOD advised for new structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Proposed Alignment

The alignment options proposed to be taken forward to application are:

- **Potential Alignment D1.1** and **Potential Alignment D1.2**.

Alignment

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Effectiveness of 3D Model: The feedback highlighted the effectiveness of 3D mapping visualisation used during the Ardross consultation event, noting its utility in demonstrating the visual impact of the proposed projects. Stakeholders appreciated the clarity provided by these tools in understanding the potential changes to their environment.	Community members and local organisations	We appreciate the feedback regarding the effectiveness of the 3D model and intend to continue using this visualisation tool at future engagement events.
Alternative route option: During the Route Option consultation, feedback suggested that the route would be less visually impactful further west with an example alternative option provided for consideration. Feedback acknowledged that this was taken into consideration but that the Proposed Development should be located further west of Potential Alignment option.	Community members and organisations	Changes to the Refined Route and Alignment Options were made in this area based on feedback received during the Route Options consultation in 2023. A number of environmental and engineering constraints were considered; these included ancient woodland, protected species in the area, landscape and ecological designations, and impacts on habitat and peatlands. From a technical perspective, we took account of water courses, terrain and topography, flood risk zones and sought to minimise the number of angle towers to be installed in the landscape, in order to minimise visual landscape and maintain compliance with the Holford Rules.
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) **Ardross and Kildermorie Forest**: This block is crossed by both the potential and an alternative alignment. This is a highly productive block with a significant amount of mature coupes that will be very susceptible to windblow	Non-statutory Consultees	Impacts to woodland and Forestry have been considered as part of our assessment process. A specific assessment of impact on Forestry will be included within the Environmental Impact Assessment report and compensatory habitat will be proposed to replace any woodland lost. Noted and appropriate management felling and habitat compensation will be agreed with FLS.

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
if the canopy structure is changed by the installation of sterilised tree free corridors to facilitate the OHL. Both potential and alternative alignments will result in the loss of a significant amount of productive crop to either the alignment corridor of the associated management felling to a wind firm edge. The alternative alignment is considered less detrimental from a landscape perspective.		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES) **Section D1.2 – scheduled monuments** Both Potential and Alternative Alignment options impact SMs. Suggest consideration of tower positions to absorb visual impacts within topography.	Statutory Consultees	In addition to the feedback below, HES requested ongoing consultation and visualisations. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES, including the provision of visualisations. Tower positions will be sited to reduce impacts on SMs where practicable.
NatureScot **Allt nan Caorach SSSI – Upland birch woodland** Crossing of SSSI could be spannable however recommend determining any impact to woodland should felling be required. Note that it would be a benefit to SSSI to remove any non-native conifers. **Allt nan Caorach SSSI – sub-alpine dry heath** Open habitats away	Statutory Consultees	Noted, and felling of native conifers will be minimised where practicable. Noted

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
from alignment so not anticipated to be affected. **Novar SPA – Qualifying species** Awaiting detailed survey results before comment. Suggest some options for positive habitat management for capercaillie in the area around the SPA.		Bird surveys have been undertaken and the assessment of potential impacts will be presented within the EIA Report.

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Section E: near Strathpeffer to Beauly

This section was split into 3 sub-sections for presentation to the public and statutory authorities. An overview of key considerations, alignment options presented, feedback and options to be taken forward to application stage is provided for each sub-section. A detailed summary of all feedback is presented within this section of the report.

Section E1.1

Constraints in the area include areas of Ancient Woodland, a Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA), the Fairburn Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL) and the Grade A-listed Fairburn Tower and Coul House. Proximity to communities at Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank and Tarvie are also a key consideration. Engineering constraints in the area included significant number of crossings including 2 river crossings, a railway crossing and an existing 132kV overhead line crossing, flood zones, areas of large cross slopes and potential impact on residential properties.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 4 alignment options, with Potential Alignment 1 and Potential Alignment 2 as the options we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that these alignments are the least constrained options from an environmental perspective and has the least engineering constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage, woodland, recreation and tourism, access tracks, private water supplies and close proximity of properties. The Alternative Alignment 1 and Alternative Alignment 2 were suggested in feedback from the Strathpeffer community in 2023 and following the assessment, these options were presented during the consultation events in March and June 2024.

HES advised that that Alternative Alignment 2 would have the least impacts on the heritage assets in the area however recognise that there are other constraints relating to the Alternative Alignments. HES do not advise of a preference between Potential Alignment 1 and Potential Alignment 2 although identify that Potential Alignment 2 appears likely to have slightly less of an impact than Potential Alignment 1, especially on the setting of Fairburn Tower. However, it may have more of a potential impact on the Garden Designated Landscape. HES noted the potential impact of the 132kV OHL crossing arrangements on the ancient woodland.

During the refined route consultation, NatureScot advised that Potential Alignment 1 and Potential Alignment 2 would be preferred to Alternative Alignment 1 and Alternative Alignment 2 as they are further removed from Wild Land and designated sites (SPA) and have no anticipated landscape issues of national interest. NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains. The MOD advised for new structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Section E1.2

Constraints in this section included Ancient Woodland, Peatland and schedule monuments and potential view impacts to properties and core paths in Beauly and along section of the A831. Engineering constraints in the area included the crossing of the existing Beauly – Deanie 132 Overhead Line and challenging topography.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment E1.2 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment E1.2 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective and has the least engineering constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, cultural heritage and access tracks.

HES advised that the Potential Alignment E1.2 would be likely to have impacts on Dun Fhamhair, fort (SM5212), Dun A Chliabhain, fort (SM2424), Dun Garbhlaich, fort, Kilmorack (SM2422) and Dun Mor, fort (SM4979). HES supports Potential Alignment E1.2 as it will likely have less of an impact on the setting of the monuments than Alternative Alignment E1.2 as it will be less visible in inward views of Dun Mor.

NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

The MOD advised for new structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

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Section E1.3

Constraints in this section included Ancient Woodland, Dun Fionn prehistoric fort, potential view impacts to properties and core paths in Beauly and along section of the A831. Engineering constraints in the area included the crossing of the A831 and the River Beauly.

For full information please see
Consultation Document – Alignment Selection.

At consultation in June 2024, we presented 2 alignment options, with Potential Alignment E1.3 as the option we deemed best on balance; this was based on our assessment that Potential Alignment E1.3 is the least constrained option from an environmental perspective and has the least engineering constraints.

Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on visualisations presented during the consultation, visual amenity, wildlife and habitat, woodland, cultural heritage and access tracks.

HES have not provided commentary regarding the E1.3 Alignment options. NatureScot advised that they do not intend to provide further landscape and visual commentary at this alignment stage but recognise that the Potential Alignment has addressed much of their previous feedback. NatureScot highlighted that there is sensitive raptor activity near to the OHL terminus at Fanellan. Any works proposed within agreed disturbance distances of nest sites will need to be conducted in a manner which prevents disturbance or damage. NatureScot advised that careful consideration would have to be given to the noise considering the topography of the gorge.

Neither THC nor SEPA gave detailed commentary on alignment proposals, principles of development noted the constraints regarding to watercourse crossings, potential impacts on water features and flood plains.

The MOD advised for new structures to be charted on aviation maps and construction equipment detailed as per their requirements.

Proposed Alignment

The alignment options proposed to be taken forward to application are:

- **Potential Alignment E1.1 including the Potential 2 option, Potential Alignment E1.2** and **Potential Alignment E1.3.**

Refined Route

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
RAG table: Frustration was expressed regarding Options 1&2 with the RAG table presented at the Refined Route events. It was felt the scoring should have focussed on the 'human impact' and that community-oriented categories regarding the likes of recreational use should have been included. It was also felt that cost factored too highly in the ratings.	Community members and local organisations	Each topic area within the environmental, technical and cost categories is considered in terms of the potential for the route option to be constrained, and a Red/ Amber/Green (RAG) rating applied as appropriate. A comparative appraisal is then completed where the RAG ratings for each topic and option are considered in terms of the ability to reduced impacts to levels which may be acceptable to the consenting process. Further description of our process can be found within our **FAQs.** The RAG tables presented at the Refined Route stage recognised cultural and landscape designations, along with proximity to settlements and recreation, and technical constraints. All Options were assessed to the same standard with the same considerations applied to each criteria. Cost criteria form a small part when compared with environmental and engineering and, on balance with the key constraints identified, we confirm our position that Options 1 and 2 were preferred. The key constraints are summarised in the Refined Route Events booklet uploaded to our website on 1 March 2024, with the full RAG assessments and narrative included in the Routeing Consultation Report Addendum document that was uploaded in April 2024.
Impact to recreational areas: This was cited by most respondents in the vicinity of Strathpeffer in objection to primarily Option 1 but also 2, who highlighted the natural beauty and heavily utilised recreational areas, particularly for fishing and walking. They raised concerns regarding the visual impact in relation to views enjoyed during	Community members and local organisations	We recognise the importance of the area around Loch Kinellan and Torrachilty Forest for local fishing, walking and cycling activities and have sought to route the OHL as sensitively as possible, using the terrain and woodland to screen views of the line from Loch Kinellan and to minimise impacts on paths and key routes. The route options appraisal considered these alongside other key environmental and engineering criteria. The EIA Report accompanying the consent application will include Landscape, Visual Amenity and Recreation assessments and

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
recreational activities and impact this could have on residents and tourists.		will include mitigation to reduce any potential significant effects. An Outdoor Access Plan will be produced and implemented to ensure rights of access are maintained during construction and operation.
Scheduled Monuments: Potential impacts to archaeological sites and scheduled monuments, the Fairburn Special Garden Landscape area, Fairburn Tower and Coul House were raised in feedback	Community members and local organisations	We have considered potential impacts on the Fairburn GDL, the A listed Fairburn tower and Coul House. The works were undertaken to identify an acceptable design solution in this area informed by a detailed desk-based analysis and site walkover survey including setting assessment. Consultation is ongoing with HES and we are liaising with local archaeology groups to reduce any impacts by careful design and micro-siting of towers. An EIA Report is currently being prepared and will include a cultural heritage assessment which will identify any required mitigation.
Ornithology and Habitats: Concerns disturbance in the form of built infrastructure near Loch Kinellan will severely impact Slavonian Grebes. Otters residing on the riverbank by Option 2 were also referenced. Concerns regarding Option 3 of interrupting the habitat of deer and birds close to the riverbank. Sightings of red squirrel activity and presence of water birds in Option 3 were also referenced.	Community members and local organisations	We recognise the diversity of wildlife in this area. Protected species and bird surveys, including seasonal surveys to monitor and record breeding activity and flight activity were undertaken along the full OHL route. European and protected species are known to occur in this area. An EIA Report is currently being prepared and will include ecological and habitat (including protected species) assessments which will identify any potential significant impacts and required mitigation.
Development of routes: Concerns that the alternative routes occurred after discussion with a small group of people and considering the time it took to determine the	Community members and local organisations	The alternative Refined Routes were assessed and presented during the March 2024 events, following the further investigations the alignments were presented during the June events. The assessments presented were subject to consultation with stakeholders, where local and previously unknown

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
original proposed routes, concerns of how quickly the proposed alternative came to light and if wildlife implications etc had been properly considered.		considerations might confirm or alter the initial preference. It is now concluded that alternative options are not the preferred alignment in this section.

Alignment

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Weighting of community comments: A comment was received regarding the weighting of assessments perceived not to have taken account of the views of local experts in the many relevant fields and a perception that computers/ AI carry more weight than local knowledge and experience. It was felt the preferred route does not take into account the views of the people who live in the are who have proposed an alternative route that effects fewer residents and tourists.	Community members and local organisations	Potential route and alignment proposals are initially identified and assessed by members of the project team including professional engineers and specialist environmental consultants using a standardised methodology developed by SSEN Transmission and which mirrors those used by other Transmission Owners. These proposals are then subject to detailed consultation, with members of the community, who frequently share insightful local knowledge regarding the likes of habitats, archaeology, planned development, local land use and more, and also with statutory and non-statutory consultees such as Nature Scot, Scottish Water, Historic Environment Scotland, SEPA and Local Authorities. The Alternative Routes put forward in this section by members of the community were subject to the same thorough assessment alongside public and statutory consultation. More detail regarding the assessment can be accessed within our Alignment Consultation Document published on our website in May 2024.
Routeing: A comment received suggested that alignments that do not pass so close to villages or bisecting well used core paths should be considered.	Community members and local organisations	Proximity to villages and core paths are considered as constraints during the identification and assessment of options for routes and alignments. These factors are considered alongside a range of other environmental and technical engineering criteria. The likelihood of significant impacts on all factors together with the ability to mitigate them through careful routeing or other mitigation is identified and the options are compared against each other to find the best overall balance.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Private Water Supplies (PWS): Around Scatwell, it was highlighted that the private water supply to all Scatwell Little Scatwell and Comrie comes from supplies within the proposed area.	Community members and local organisations	We note the information provided in the feedback and will include an assessment of PWS within the EIA Report. You can find out more about how we protect Private Water Supplies within the Common Themes section of this report.
Ornithology: A comment stated that the current overhead line has been subject to several bird strikes over the last few years with one outage over 12 hrs due to access difficulties as the fields flood. The field hosts many visiting birds over the winter months which can fly up and short out the line. A grid reference to the area in question was provided. Local and existing knowledge bases should be drawn upon as bird surveys are limited. Various protected bird species habitats could be damaged through citing of overhead lines. Pylons crossing straths which serve as seasonal migration and daily foraging routes are highly undesirable: they create a 'fence' that birds have to cross seasonally or daily, with a high likelihood of collisions. Marking cables is also undesirable from a human visual aesthetic point of view.	Community members and local organisations	A full suite of summer breeding and wintering bird surveys has been undertaken to support the route development and will be reported in the EIA Report accompanying the s37 application. Vantage Point survey record the number, heights and direction of bird flights which are then modelled and assessed against the proposed tower and line heights to assess the likelihood of bird collision. Where alignment design changes are unable to reduce the risk of bird collision to a level acceptable to stakeholders such as NatureScot, RSPB and Raptor Study Groups, then mitigation will be included in the EIA Report, which may take the form of line marking. The potential for additional visual impacts of these will be included in the Landscape & Visual assessment.
Loch Nam Bonnach was cited as a very important to the local communities, home to a vast variety of wildlife-some of which is	Community members and local organisations	We note the information provided in the feedback and the EIA Report accompanying the s37 application will include a full assessment of terrestrial ecology, habitats, peatland and ornithology impacts. Our

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
on the red list. It also is an area of upland peat bog-an increasingly scarce habitat. Concerns were raised that building a route along this shore would cause a huge amount of damage to the wildlife, and the local community.		routeing and alignment design work is undertaken in collaboration with our specialist environmental consultants and seeks to minimise potential significant impacts to an acceptable level. The EIA assessments will be scrutinised by the relevant statutory stakeholders who will make a judgment on whether the proposed OHL development would have an acceptable or unacceptable levels of impact on wildlife.
Strathconon Glen and Conon Valley were highlighted by many, as a concern regarding visual impacts, with a comment received that Conon Valley should enjoy recognition as an important landscape.	Community members and local organisations	We understand the concerns and views expressed in the feedback and accept that people have strong attachments to the landscape in which they live. For the purposes of our routeing studies we are guided by landscape and ecological designations in the first instance, with further recognition and assessment of undesignated landscapes given in the Landscape & Visual Impact assessment which will be included in the EIA Report.
Coul Estate: A comment stated the designed landscape of the former Coul Estate has been completely ignored because it is not in the official inventory.	Community members and local organisations	We have considered the Coul Estate complex including the A-listed house and the surrounding woodland and policies. An EIA is currently being prepared and will include a cultural heritage assessment which will identify any required mitigation.
Ruttle Wood: Comments received included querying the cutting down of woodland in Ruttle Wood, believing that moving the line just means the same amount of wood cut down. Concerns also included two towers placed within the wood, used by locals for walking, wild swimming and other recreational activities. The presence of protected bird species was noted.	Community members and local organisations	We note the information provided in feedback both at and after the events. A full suite of ecology, habitat and ornithology surveys have been undertaken to inform specialist impacts assessments which will be included in the EIA Report. There will also be a recreation assessment undertaken, taking cognisance of locals' use of the woodland and lochan for walking and swimming. The OHL towers will be positioned so they do not impact on the lochan and construction works will be planned to minimise disruption to walking paths and access. An Outdoor Access Plan will be produced identifying current access routes to recreational areas and will include appropriate measures to ensure public rights of access are maintained during construction.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Archaeology: It was suggested that near Beauly, in terms of the Urchany archaeology, shifting the pylon line 500m to the northwest would avoid most of the features as the area of land between Breakachy and Strathpeffer has a considerable number of archaeological features on it.	Community members and local organisations	Cultural heritage assessment is informed by a detailed desk-based analysis and site walkover survey including setting assessment. Consultation is ongoing with HES and liaison with local archaeology groups was undertaken and will be maintained as the project progresses. The potential for direct and setting impacts on heritage assets will be fully assessed as part of the EIA and the results will be presented in the EIA Report.
Tourism: Responses received cited perceived effects on tourism where tourists will pass through on NC500 route with a question received regarding how we will ensure the area remains desirable to not only visit but to work and live.	Community members and local organisations	We recognise the importance of tourism to the local area. A socio-economic assessment will be undertaken for the project and will be included as part of the Section 37 application. A Visual Amenity assessment will be undertaken looking at potential effects on road users and will be included in the EIA Report.
Loch Kinellan: Concerns were received regarding the route(s) through Kinellen, particularly Loch Kinellan due to it being a local recreational area with a beautiful and varied landscape. The highly valued walking and cycling trails were referenced, including the Strathpuffer 24-hour bike race. Selecting one of the Alternative routes would mitigate this. Comments also referenced three breeding pairs of Slavonian Grebes.	Community members and local organisations	We recognise the importance of the area around Loch Kinellan and Torrachilty Forest for fishing, walking and cycling and have sought to route the line as sensitively as possible, using the terrain and woodland to screen views of the line from Loch Kinellan. The route options appraisal considered these alongside other key environmental and engineering criteria. The EIA Report accompanying the consent application will include Landscape, Visual Amenity and Recreation assessments and will include mitigation to reduce any potential significant effects. SSEN Transmission is aware of the annual Strathpuffer mountain bike event at Contin Woods and has engaged with the event organisers to discuss potential impacts of the construction works and mitigation that can be applied to enable the event to proceed unhindered. This discussion will be ongoing as the project progresses.

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Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Aultgowrie: Feedback was received in relation to the impact of Potential Alignment 1 on ancient woodland in the area. Potential alignment 2 would provide a more preferential Alignment Option as it would skirt around the woodland.	Community members and local organisations	We appreciate the level of feedback provided during our consultation events. We are now in a position to confirm that Potential Alignment 2 will be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment.
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) **Torrachilty and Achilty Woodlands:** This block is crossed by both the potential and an alternative alignment. This is a highly productive block with a significant amount of mature coupes that will be very susceptible to windblow if the canopy structure is changed by the installation of sterilised tree free corridor to facilitate the OHL. The alternative alignment would result in the loss of significantly more productive woodland than the potential alignment. The alternative alignment potentially isolates a strip of productive crop between the existing railway and the powerline making harvesting more challenging. This block is an important recreation resource with a number of promoted facilities which receive many thousands of visitors each year and we are keen not to damage visitor	Statutory Consultees	Impacts to woodland and Forestry have been considered as part of our assessment process. A specific chapter on Forestry will be included within the Environmental Impact Assessment report and compensatory habitat will be proposed to replace any woodland lost. Noted, appropriate management felling and habitat compensation will be agreed with FLS.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
offering within this block. The proposed alternative route may be more visible to some extent from all the facilities in this block than the potential alignment. While the potential alignment is within 300 m of the promoted visitor zone of the facility at Contin, the alignment is just off the NFL. Both the potential and alternative alignments will result in the loss of commercial crop trees and the exposure of a 'brown edge' which will be very vulnerable to windblow. If either of these alignments is followed appropriate management felling is required to ensure crop stability and also that any felling coupes comply with published landscape guidelines and associated good practice. **Muir of Ord Woodlands:** Only Achmore Wood in this block is impacted the proposed OHL. The potential alignment (there is no alternative alignment at this point) will isolate the western end of this wood making it very challenging to manage this area. The potential alignment will result in the loss of commercial crop trees and the exposure of a 'brown edge' which will be very vulnerable to windblow. If this alignment		

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
is followed SSEN-T would need to agree appropriate management felling to ensure crop stability and also that any felling coupes comply with published landscape guidelines and associated good practice.		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES) **Section E1.1 – Category A listed buildings and GDLs** Alternative Alignment 2 would have the least impact on Category A listed buildings and the GDL. Potential Alignment 2 appears to have slightly less of an impact than Potential Alignment 1, especially on the setting of Fairburn Tower. It many have more of a potential impact on the GDL. Recommend visualisations, micro-siting, considering woodland management and consideration of the potential for undergrounding of the existing OHL within the GDL. Would welcome sight of visualisations for LB1769 and can provide mitigation advice. **Section E1.2 – scheduled monuments** May result in an objection due to Potential Alignment passing upslope of SM5212, SM2424, SM2422 and SM4979. The Alternative Alignment is likely to have less of an impact.	Statutory Consultees	In addition to the feedback below, HES requested ongoing consultation and visualisations. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES, including the provision of visualisations. Alternative Alignment 2 has been discounted due to engineering and environmental reasons, for further information please see **Alignment Consultation Document.** Noted and agreed that of the potential alignments, Potential Alignment 2 is preferred. The Potential Alignment has been selected as it would reduce the visual impact to local residents. Tower positions will be sited along the Potential alignment to reduce impacts on SMs where practicable. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
NatureScot **Glen Affric and Strathconon SPA – Qualifying species** Awaiting detailed survey results before comment. **Lower River Conon SSSI – Open water transition fen, wet woodland and saltmarsh** No particular concerns with alignment however have construction concerns and re knock on effects on SSSI. **Conon Islands SAC – Alder woodland on floodplains** No particular concerns with alignment however have construction concerns and knock on effects on SAC. **Inner Moray Firth SPA – Qualifying species** Awaiting detailed survey results before comment, however suggest for works to be conducted outwith the breeding season (start of April to end of August) to prevent disturbance. **Freshwater pearl mussels** Note population present in River Conon. **Wider countryside birds** Note presence of other species' nesting in Aigas Gorge which could be affected by works.	Statutory Consultees	Bird surveys have been undertaken and will be shared within the EIA Report. Noted, construction mitigation will be presented in the EIA Report Noted, construction mitigation will be presented in the EIA Report Bird surveys have been undertaken and will be shared within the EIA Report. This mitigation will be considered as required and presented in the EIA Report. Noted. The assessment of potential impacts will be presented in the EIA Report. Noted. The assessment of potential impacts will be presented in the EIA Report.

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4. Summary of Key Decisions

This section sets out the key decisions that we have made following the analysis and review of consultation feedback and provide. It outlines where decisions have been made on the alignment options presented, including the reasons behind those decisions.

The stakeholder engagement and public consultation has allowed us to gather feedback on the Potential Alignment to help inform subsequent stages of the assessment process. After the consultation period closed, we analysed the feedback received and checked that all relevant consultation feedback and other information about the constraints along each option was fully considered before making these decisions.

The information presented confirms which Alignment Options comprise the Proposed Alignment to be taken forward for application the Scottish Ministers for consent under s37 of the Electricity Act 1989. will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers reflecting that Proposed Alignment.

The Proposed Alignment is detailed in Appendix C.

4.1. Northern Section (Spittal – Loch Buidhe)

SECTION A: SPITTAL TO BRORA

Section A was split into 5 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4 and A1.5).

The summaries included in Section 3 of this Report confirm which Alignment Option for each sub-section is proposed to be taken forward to consent application. These are hereafter referred to as **Proposed Alignment Section A** and comprise:

- **Potential Alignment A1.1**
- **Potential Alignment A1.2**
- **Potential Alignment A1.3**
- **Potential Alignment A1.4**
- **Potential Alignment A1.5**

For sub-sections A1.1 and A1.3 where an Alternative alignment option was presented and, following careful consideration, the feedback received did not materially change the outcome of our assessment and so our initial preference remains.

For sub-sections A1.2, A1.4 and A1.5, only one alignment option was identified as being viable due to the presence and complexity of environmental and engineering constraints.

SECTION B: BRORA TO LOCH BUIDHE

Section B was split into 2 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (B1.1, B1.2).

The summaries included in Section 3 of this Report detail the Alignment for each sub-section proposed to be taken forward to consent application. These are hereafter referred to as **Proposed Alignment Section B** and comprise:

- **Potential Alignment B1.1**
- **Potential Alignment B1.2**

For sub-sections B1.1 and B1.2 only one alignment option was identified as being viable due to the presence and complexity of environmental and engineering constraints.

4.2. Southern Section (Loch Buidhe – Beauly)

SECTION C: LOCH BUIDHE TO DOUNIE

Section C was split into 2 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (C1.1 and C1.2).

The summaries included in Section 3 of this Report confirm which Alignment Option for each sub-section is proposed to be taken forward to consent application. These are hereafter referred to as **Proposed Alignment Section C** and comprise:

- **Potential Alignment C1.1**
- **Potential Alignment C1.2**

For sub-sections C1.1 and C1.2, an Alternative alignment option was presented and following careful consideration, the feedback received did not materially change the outcome of our assessment and so our initial preference remains.

Potential Alignment C1.1 is preferred over Alternative Alignment C1.1 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints. Based on the feedback received in June, Potential Alignment C1.1 has been moved slightly north to minimise impacts on the watercourses in the area between the proposed Carnaig Substation and Invershin Forest.

Although Potential Alignment C1.2 is marginally more environmentally constrained, these constraints are manageable. Potential Alignment C1.2 is the least constrained and preferred from an engineering perspective. Potential Alignment C1.2 has been moved slightly southeast due to the topography of the area.

SECTION D: DOUNIE TO NEAR STRATHPEFFER

Section D was split into 2 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (D1.1 and D1.2).

The summaries included in Section 3 of this Report confirm which Alignment Option for each sub-section is proposed to be taken forward to consent application. These are hereafter referred to as **Proposed Alignment Section D** and comprise:

- **Potential Alignment D1.1**
- **Potential Alignment D1.2**

For sub-sections D1.1 and D1.2, an Alternative Alignment Option was presented and, following careful consideration, the feedback received did not materially change the outcome of our assessment and so our initial preference remains.

Potential Alignment D1.1 is preferred over Alternative Alignment D1.1 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints. Changes to the Refined Route and Alignment Options were made in this area based on feedback received during the Route Options consultation and implemented in the Potential Alignment. Based on the feedback received in June, Potential Alignment D1.1 was slightly moved to the west between River Carron and Creagan a' Choin Ruaidh hill and along the Allt Coire a' Chaorainn Mor watercourse to minimise impacts on the watercourse in the area.

Potential Alignment D1.2 is preferred over Alternative Alignment D1.2 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints. Based on the feedback received in June, the Potential Alignment D1.2 was slightly amended to minimise impacts on the watercourses in the area.

SECTION E: NEAR STRATHPEFFER TO BEAULY

Section E was split into 3 sub-sections for the purpose of alignment development and consultation (E1.1, E1.2, E1.3).

The summaries included in Section 3 of this Report confirm which Alignment Option for each sub-section is proposed to be taken forward to consent application. These are hereafter referred to as **Proposed Alignment Section E** and comprise:

- **Potential Alignment E1.1 (including the Potential 2 Option)**
- **Potential Alignment E1.2**
- **Potential Alignment E1.3**

For sub-sections E1.1, E1.2 and E1.3, an Alternative alignment option was presented and, following careful consideration, the feedback received did not materially change the outcome of our assessment and so our initial preference remains.

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

Potential Alignment E1.1 has been marginally amended in Torrachilty Forest to minimise impact on the tracks which are used for forest operations and public recreation. Potential Alignment E1.1 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.

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Potential Alignment E1.2 is preferred over Alternative Alignment E1.2 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints. Based on the feedback received, the Potential Alignment E1.2 was adjusted to avoid impacts on the schedule monuments northeast of the Breakachy Hill and to minimise impacts on watercourses south of Breakachy Hill.

Potential Alignment E1.3 is preferred over Alternative Alignment E1.3 when considering both environmental and engineering constraints.

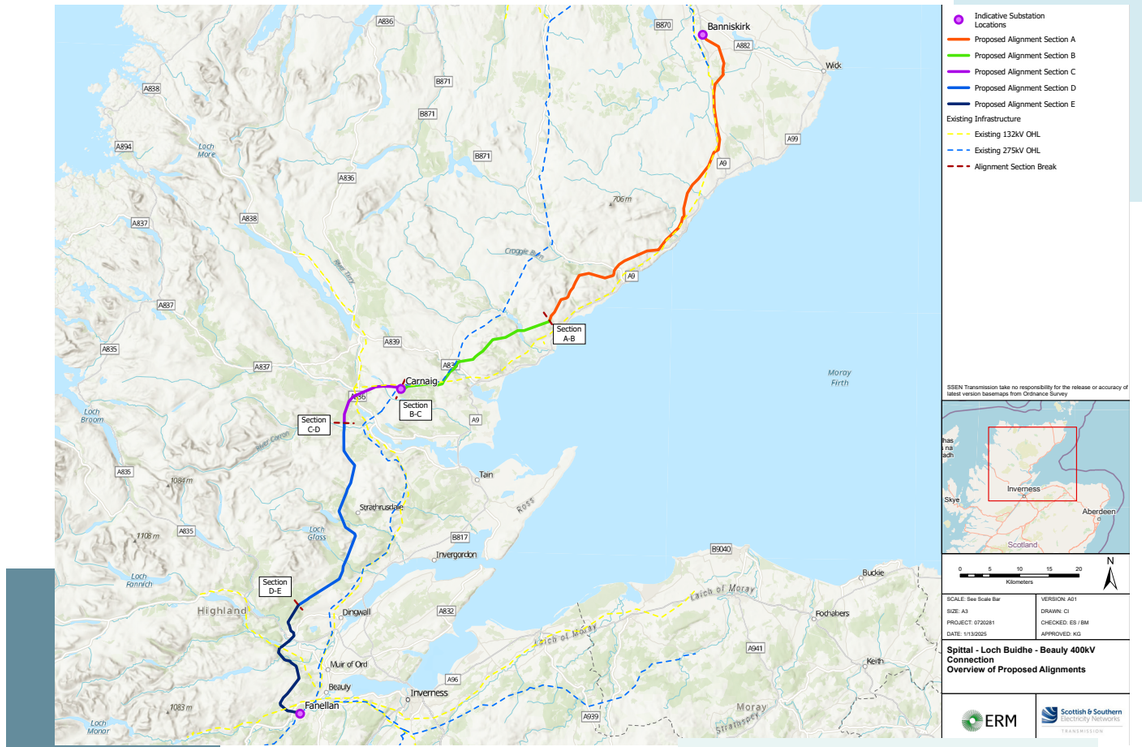

Figure 2: Overview of Proposed Alignments

5. Next Steps

5.1. Ongoing Engagement

The period of consultation described in this report is part of an ongoing engagement process that spans the full development cycle for the project, where feedback is sought at different stages and engagement with stakeholders is continuous as we refine our proposals.

Early Engagement	Ongoing Detailed Engagement	Advanced Engagement	Ongoing Engagement
Project webpage live	Analysis of feedback received from consultation	Pre-consultation engagement	Pre-submission information sharing event
Early meetings offered to elected members	Proactive and responsive stakeholder follow up meetings	Further project consultation	Targeted engagement with those most affected
Early discussion with statutory consultees	Engage community working groups	Analysis of feedback received from consultation	Working group meetings
Initial Project Consultation	Publish FAQs, project updates and next steps	Follow up meetings	Ongoing project updates
	Publish a Report On Consultation	Publish FAQs, project updates and next steps	Post consent and construction
	Engage on the report on consultation e.g. Webinar	Publish a Report On Consultation	
		Engage on the report on consultation e.g. Webinar	

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Since the consultation events in June, Ground Investigation Works (GI Works) commenced in August in some areas of the northern sections of the proposed development. Further information on the GI Works can be found on our **project website** under 'project updates'.

In October, a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion was made to The Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU), with an EIA Scoping Report provided to support this request. The request for a Scoping Opinion is made to identify the scope of impacts to be addressed and the method of assessment to be applied in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report which is prepared and submitted with the Section 37 application for consent. You can read our Scoping Report together with supporting Appendices **here.**

In early 2025, we will hold our next round of public engagement events where we will present our Proposed Alignment alongside providing an update on our indicative locations for access tracks. The Proposed Alignments are the alignment options that we will look to take forward to the consent application that will be submitted to the ECU.

5.2. Feedback

If you have any further views at this stage, then please get in touch with the Community Liaison Manager at **slbb@sse.com**

Community Liaison Manager

Martin Godwin,
SSEN Transmission,
10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN

Further information about the project is also available on the project website:
Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV Connection

6. Glossary

Term	Definition
Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation	An AIS substation is constructed with switchgear which relies on open air components, which can require large clearance areas for operation and safety, which takes up a larger area of land than Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS).
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line OHL, along with location of key angle structures.
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland	Defined in National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 as *"land that has maintained continuous woodland habitat since at least 1750"*.
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	AWI is a provisional guide to the location of Ancient Woodland. It contains three main categories of woodland, all of which are likely to be of value for their biodiversity and cultural value. These include Ancient Woodland, Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO), and other woodlands.
Area of Search (Study Area)	A broad geographical area within which possible sites might be capable of identification within approximately 5km of the required connectivity point; usually determined by geographical features such as coastlines or hill/mountain ranges, or designation boundaries, such as National Park boundaries.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was pre-development. It focuses on the change in the biodiversity value of a site, comparing the pre and post construction biodiversity values to ensure a positive impact overall.
Conductor	A metallic wire strung from support structure to support structure, to carry electric current.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.

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Term	Definition
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
Double circuit	A double circuit transmission line comprises of two independent circuits each made up of three sets of conductors (cables).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
Engagement	The establishment of effective relationships with individuals or groups.
Electricity System Operator (ESO)	National Grid is the Electricity System Operator (ESO) for Great Britain. The ESO balances electricity supply and demand to ensure the electricity supply.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes lists those gardens or designed landscapes which are considered by a panel of experts to be of national importance.
Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation	A GIS substation is constructed with switchgear with gaseous reliant components which allows operation and safety clearances to be reduced compared to an AIS substation.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Holford Rules (as modified)	Principles developed by the late Lord Holford in 1959 which continue to be employed as the basis for routeing high voltage overhead lines and include additional notes on the siting of substations.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in a landscape that differentiate the area from another.

Term	Definition
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
National Scenic Area (NSA)	A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value.
Offshore Integrated Link	Offshore cable connection between the onshore network and offshore network being developed as part of the Coordinated Offshore Network. This is being developed as a result of the Holistic Network Design (HND) publication in summer of 2022 produced by National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to facilitate greater co- ordination and efficiency for offshore windfarms. In the autumn of 2022 Ofgem published their Asset Classification findings which in turn meant SSENT were tasked with delivering large parts of the Coordinated Offshore Network.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or wooden poles.
Planning Application	Used in this context to describe an application for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from intentional planting.
Potential Alignment	The alignment option outcome of our initial appraisal, before consultation, of environmental, technical, and cost constraints. It is the alignment we consider is the best balance of the constraints identified subject to further review after consultation to ensure feedback is considered fully before a Proposed Alignment is identified and taken forward to detailed design and section 37 consent application.
Proposed Alignment	The alignment option identified and taken forward to detailed design and section 37 consent application following consultation.

Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV Overhead Line | Report on Consultation

Term	Definition
Proposed Development	The option which SSEN Transmission believes offers the best balance of technical and environmental impact considerations identified through initial assessment. This is then subject to consultation with stakeholders, where local and previously unknown considerations may confirm or alter the initial preference. Once confirmed, this becomes the Proposed Option to take forward to the next stage of project development.
RAG Rating	A Red, Amber, Green rating provided to allow for a comparison between different options being appraised.
Red Line Boundary (RLB)	This area should include all land necessary to carry out the Proposed Development.
Riparian Woodland	Natural home for plants and animals occurring in a thin strip of land bordering a stream or river.
Route	A linear area of approximately 1km width (although this may be narrower/wider in specific locations in response to identified pinch points/constraints), which provides a continuous connection between defined connection points.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.
Section 37 Application	An application for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop an overhead electricity line.
Semi-natural Woodland	Woodland that does not obviously originate from planting. The distribution of species will generally reflect the variations in the site and the soil. Planted trees must account for less than 30% of the canopy composition.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Designated area of national importance for natural heritage. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.

Term	Definition
Span	The section of overhead line between two structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by The Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive74/409/EEC) to protect important bird habitats. Implemented under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SHE Transmission works.
Study Area	The area within which the corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
Substation	A node on the network to allow safe control of the electricity network. This could include convergence of multiple circuits, transformation of voltage or other functions to maintain and operate the electricity network.
Substation Site Area	Site area identified as necessary to deliver all the substation infrastructure requirements e.g. platform, access tracks, temporary construction area, drainage including SUDS, landscaping.
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)	Drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses.
Terminal Structure	A structure (tower or pole) required where the line terminates either at a substation or at the beginning and end of an underground cable section.
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in the Great Britain.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)	The UK BAP was published in 1994 after the Convention on Biological Diversity. It summarised the most threatened species and habitats in the UK and gave detailed plans for their recovery.

Term	Definition
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between a landowner, upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed, and SHE Transmission.
Wild Land Area (WLA)	Those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland.
Works	Constructing new transmission infrastructure such as substations, overhead lines, underground cables; major refurbishment of these; the dismantling and removal of any parts of the system; and associated works, which may include formation of access tracks, bridge and road improvements, tree cutting, drainage etc

7. Appendices

Appendix A - Postcard Invites

Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly

400kV Overhead Line Project
Public Events

SSEN Transmission are hosting a series of public information events across the project route from 11 March to 28 March 2024.

To support the growth in renewable developments across the north of Scotland, investment in our network infrastructure is needed to connect this power and transport it to areas of demand. This includes a new 400kV overhead line between Spittal and Beauly, connecting in to a new substation near Loch Buidhe.

Since our last consultation in Feb/March 2023, we have narrowed down our proposals and we invite all interested parties to attend our drop-in exhibitions to discuss our plans with the project team and share your views. An alternative route has been presented in section D/E and we are seeking feedback on this alternative route option.

More information overleaf.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Community Liaison Manager:

Martin Godwin
10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN
Tel: +44 7467 399 592
Email: slbb@sse.com

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
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Find out more and register for project updates, visit the project website by scanning the QR code, or use the following URL: **https://bit.ly/3SwFirL**

@ssentransmission @SSETransmission

The events will be held at the following locations:

Substation PAN Consulation Event
Monday 11 March, 2–7pm
Ross Institute,
Halkirk, KW12 6XZ

Tuesday 12 March, 10–12pm
Spittal Village Hall,
Spittal, KW1 5XR

Tuesday 12 March, 3–7pm
Helmsdale Community Centre,
Helmsdale, KW8 6JA

Wednesday 13 March, 2–7pm
Dunbeath Community Centre,
Dunbeath, KW6 6EF

Thursday 14 March, 11–2pm
Rogart Village Hall,
Rogart, IV28 3XJ

Thursday 14 March, 4–7pm
Brora Scout and Guide Hall,
Brora, KW9 6PD

Substation PAN Consulation Event
Monday 18 March, 3.30–8.30pm
Bonar Bridge Community Hall,
Bonar Bridge, IV24 3EA

Tuesday 19 March, 2–7pm
Ardross Community Hall,
Ardross, IV17 0XW

Wednesday 20 March, 10–1pm
Contin Village Hall,
Contin, IV14 9ES

Wednesday 20 March, 3–7pm
Fairburn Memorial Hall,
Marybank, IV6 7UU

Thursday 21 March, 10–1pm
Garve Village Hall,
Garve, IV23 2PR

Thursday 21 March, 3–7pm
Strathpeffer Pavilion,
Strathpeffer, IV14 9DL

Substation PAC Consulation Event
Tuesday 26 March, 12.30–3.30pm & 6–8pm
Kiltarlity Hall,
Kiltarlity, IV4 7HH

Substation PAC Consulation Event
Thursday 28 March, 2–7pm
Phipps Hall,
Beauly, IV4 7EH

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Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV Overhead Line | Report on Consultation

Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
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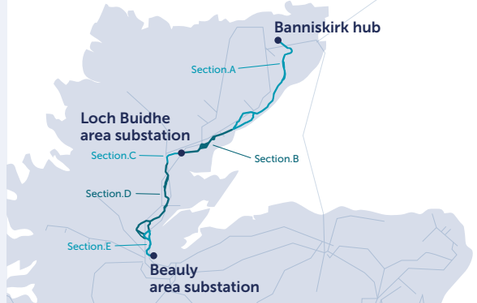
400kV overhead line alignment consultation events

We are hosting a series of public events across the project route from 3 June to 20 June 2024. These events form part of the pre-application consultation process for the consent application that will be submitted under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.



To support the growth in renewable developments across the north of Scotland, investment in our network infrastructure is needed to connect this power and transport it to areas of demand. This includes a new 400kV overhead line between Spittal and Beauly connecting into new substations near Spittal (Banniskirk Hub), Loch Buidhe (Carnaig) and Beauly (Fanellan).

We will be sharing our potential alignment for the overhead line, with alternative alignment options in some locations, presented through maps and visualisations.

Interested parties can attend our drop-in events to discuss our plans with the project team and share views. Feedback can be provided through printed forms available at the events, the online form available from the project webpage or in email to the Community Liaison Manager. The feedback period will be open until 15 July 2024.

Any comments made to us as the Applicant are not representations to Scottish Ministers as the decision makers. There will be opportunity to make formal representations to Scottish Ministers via the Energy Consents Unit following the submission of the section 37 application.

More information overleaf.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Community Liaison Manager:

Martin Godwin
10 Henderson Road, Inverness, IV1 1SN
Tel: +44 7467 399 592
Email: slbb@sse.com

@ssentransmission @SSETransmission

The events will be held at the following locations:

Substation PAC Consulation Event
Monday 3 June, 2–7pm
Ross Institute,
Halkirk, KW12 6XZ

Tuesday 4 June, 10–12pm
Spittal Village Hall,
Spittal, KW1 5XR

Tuesday 4 June, 3–7pm
Helmsdale Community Centre,
Helmsdale, KW8 6JA

Wednesday 5 June, 3–7pm
Dunbeath Community Centre,
Dunbeath, KW6 6EF

Thursday 6 June, 11–2pm
Rogart Village Hall,
Rogart, IV28 3XJ

Thursday 6 June, 4–7pm
Brora Scout and Guide Hall,
Brora, KW9 6PD

Substation PAC Consulation Event
Monday 10 June, 3.30–8.30pm
Bonar Bridge Community Hall,
Bonar Bridge, IV24 3EA

Tuesday 11 June, 3–7pm
Ardross Community Hall,
Ardross, IV17 0XW

Wednesday 12 June, 10–1pm
Contin Village Hall,
Contin, IV14 9ES

Wednesday 12 June, 3–7pm
Fairburn Memorial Hall,
Marybank, IV6 7UU

Thursday 13 June, 10–1pm
Garve Village Hall,
Garve, IV23 2PR

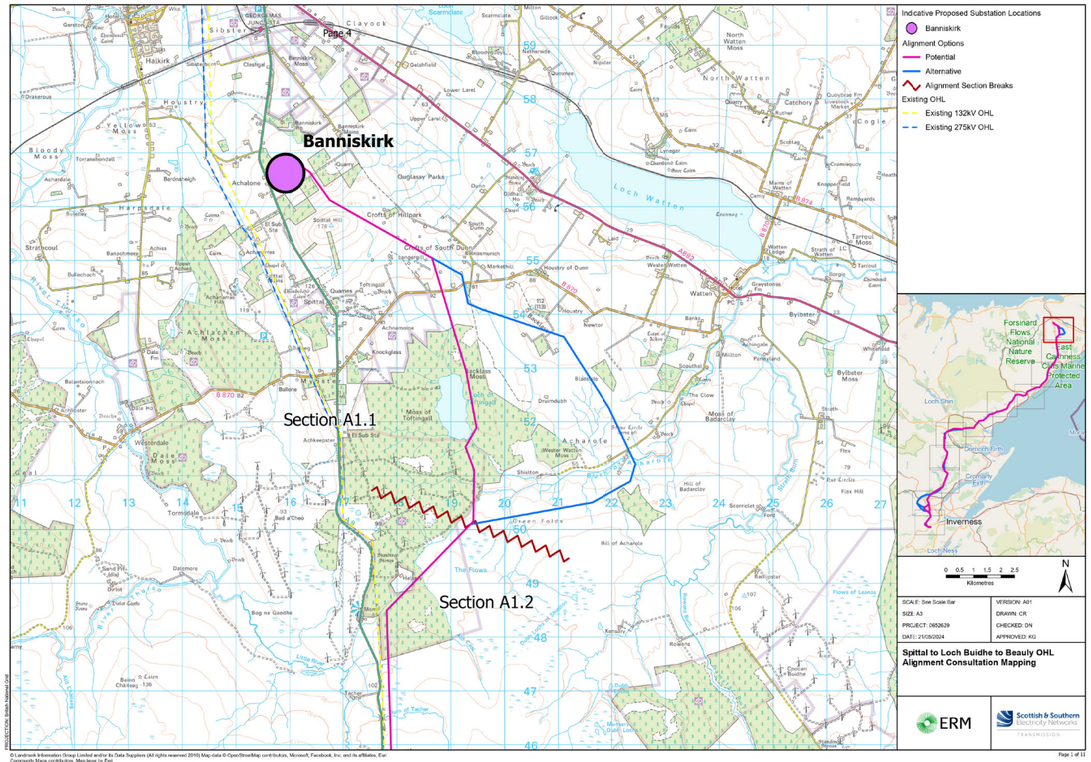
Thursday 13 June, 3–7pm
Strathpeffer Pavilion,
Strathpeffer, IV14 9DL

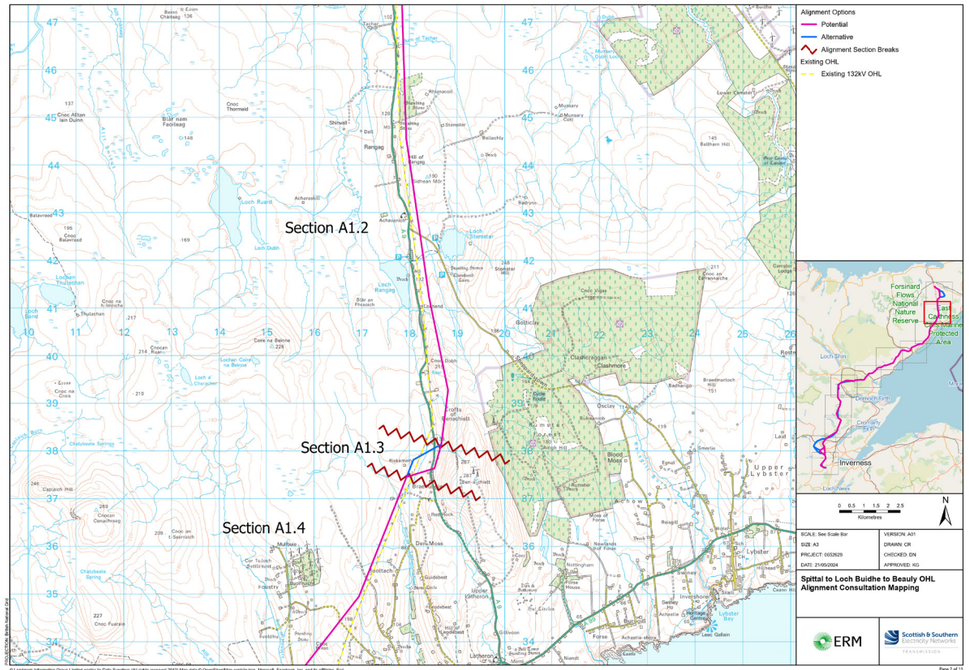
Substation PAC Consulation Event
Wednesday 19 June, 2–7pm
Phipps Hall,
Beauly, IV4 7EH

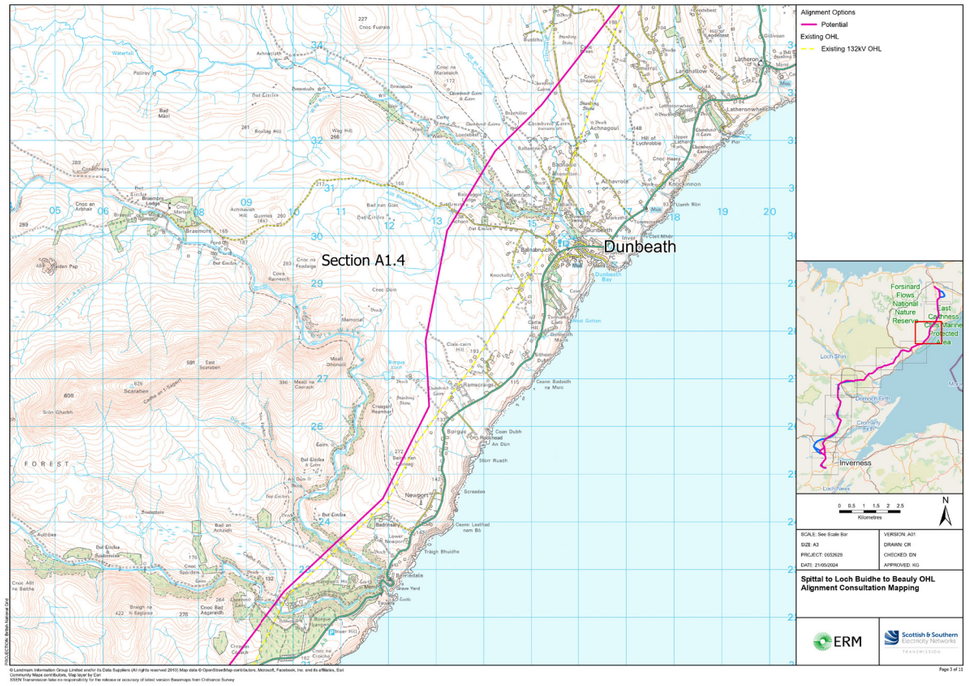
Substation PAC Consulation Event
Thursday 20 June, 2–7pm
Kiltarlity Hall,
Kiltarlity, IV4 7HH

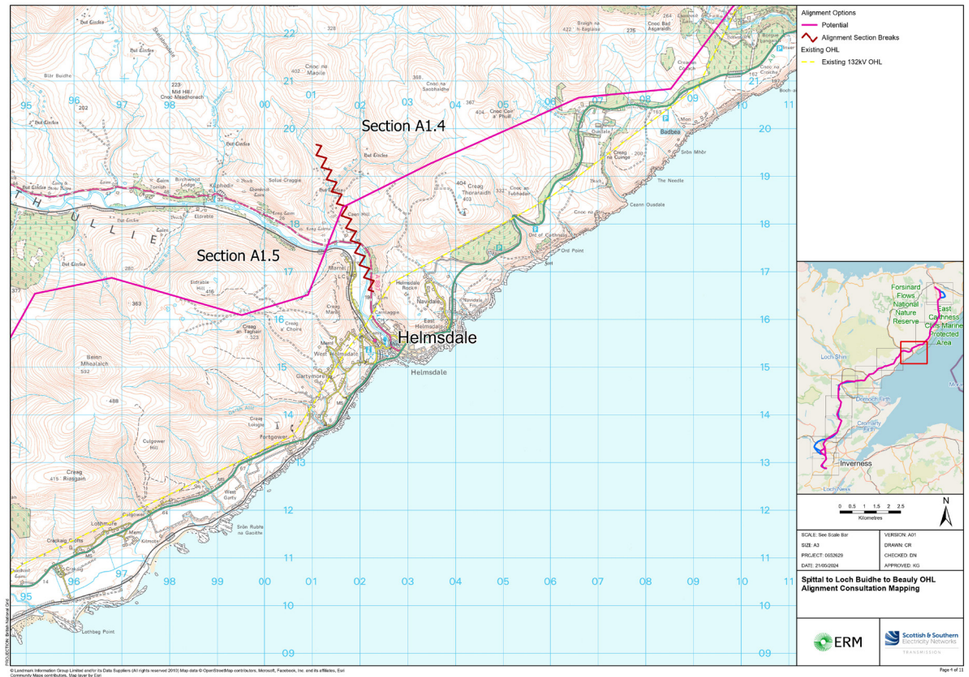
Find out more and register for project updates, visit the project website by scanning the QR code, or use the following URL: **ssen-transmission.co.uk/slbb**

Appendix B - Potential and Alternative Alignment presented during Alignment Options consultation





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Potential
Alignment Section Breaks
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Inverness
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
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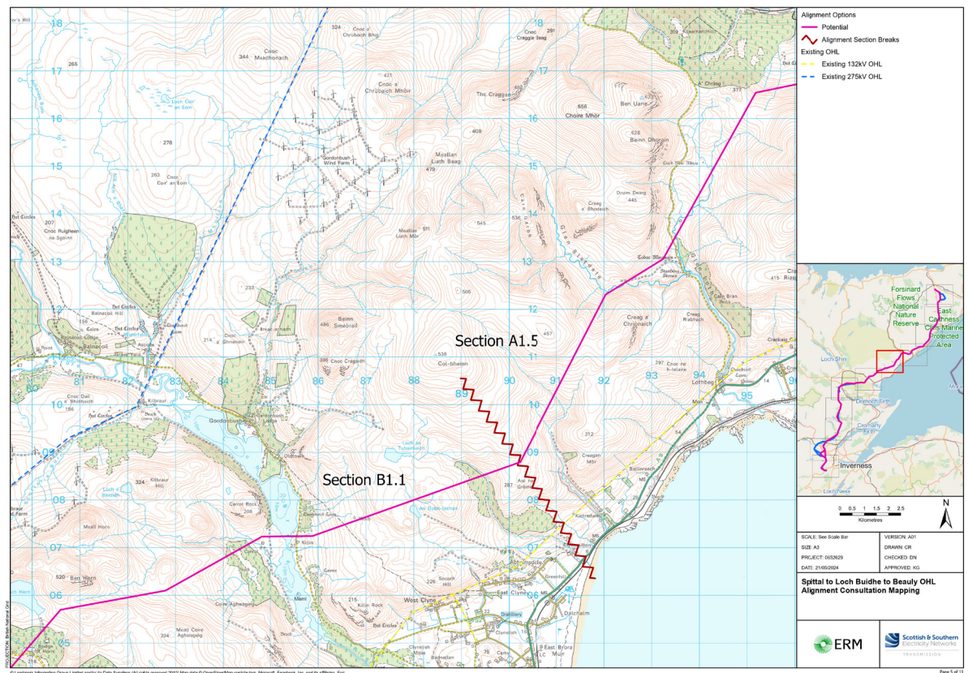
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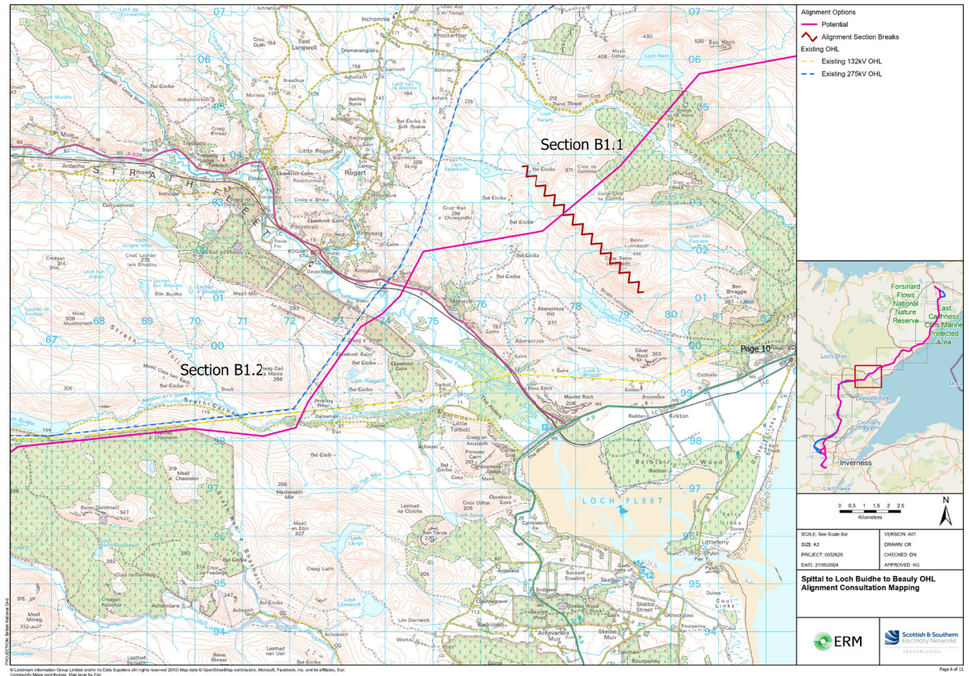
Inverness
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION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Existing 275kV OHL
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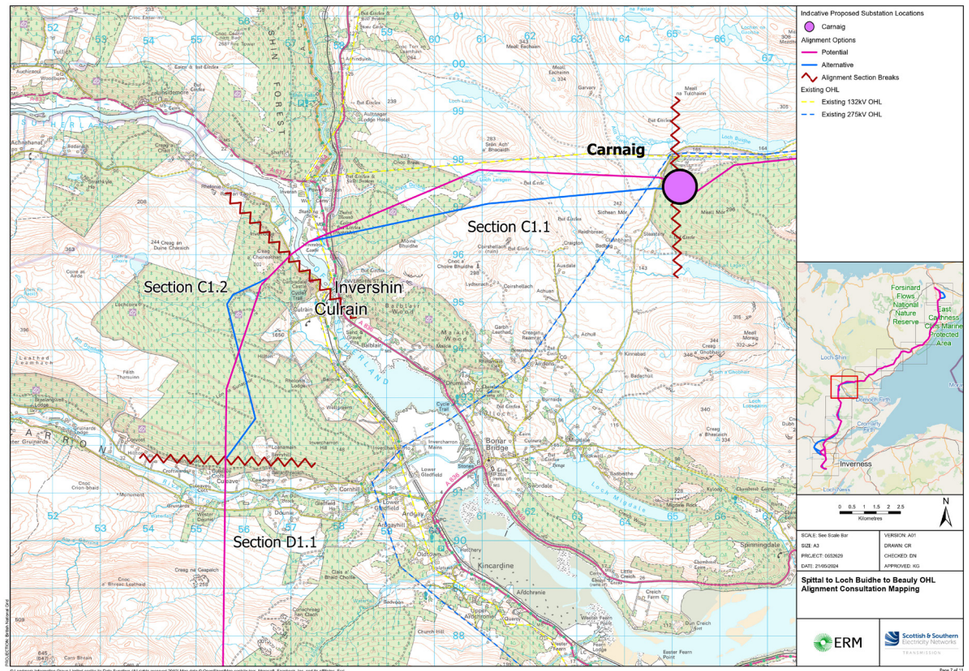
East Caithness Cliffs Marine Protected Area
Inverness
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION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Section C1.1
Section C1.2
Inversnin
Culrain
Section D1.1
Indicative Proposed Substation Locations
Carnaig
Alignment Options
Potential
Alternative
Alignment Section Breaks
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Existing 132kV OHL
Existing 275kV OHL
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Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
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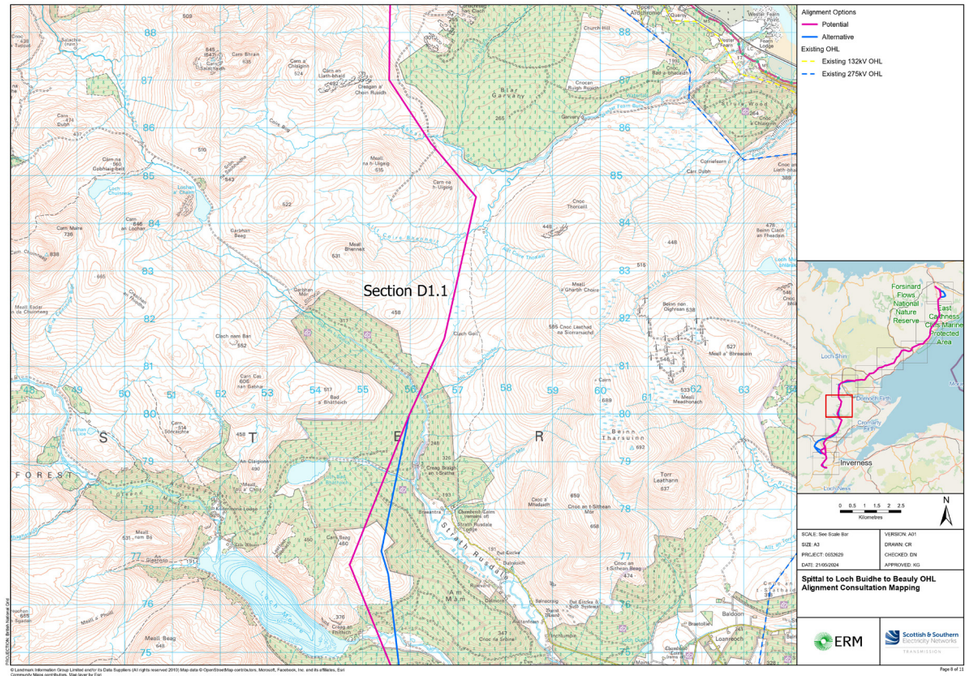
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION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Alternative
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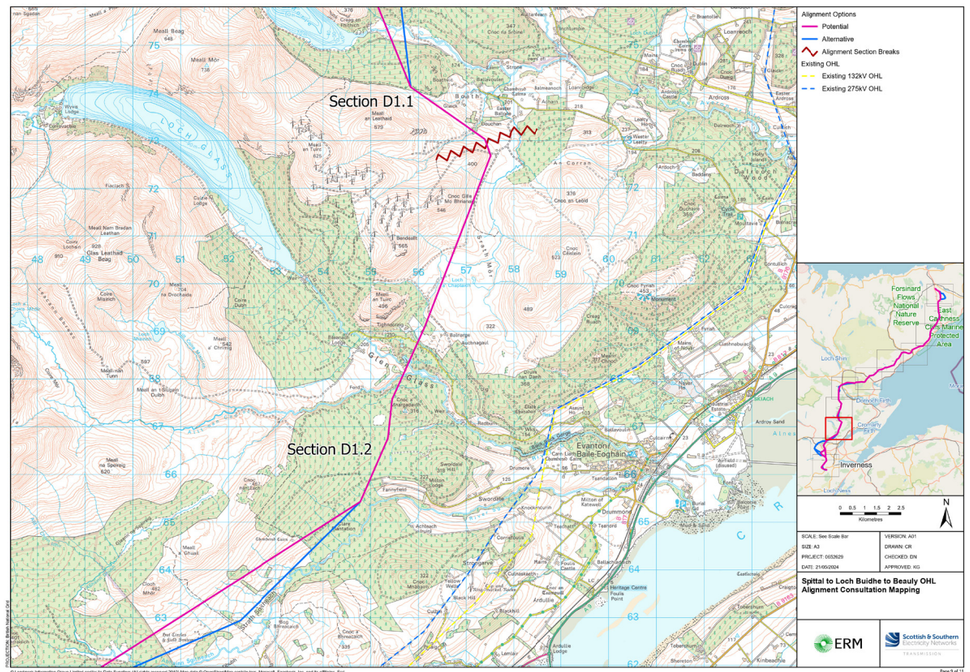
Inverness
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks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Alternative
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Existing 275kV OHL
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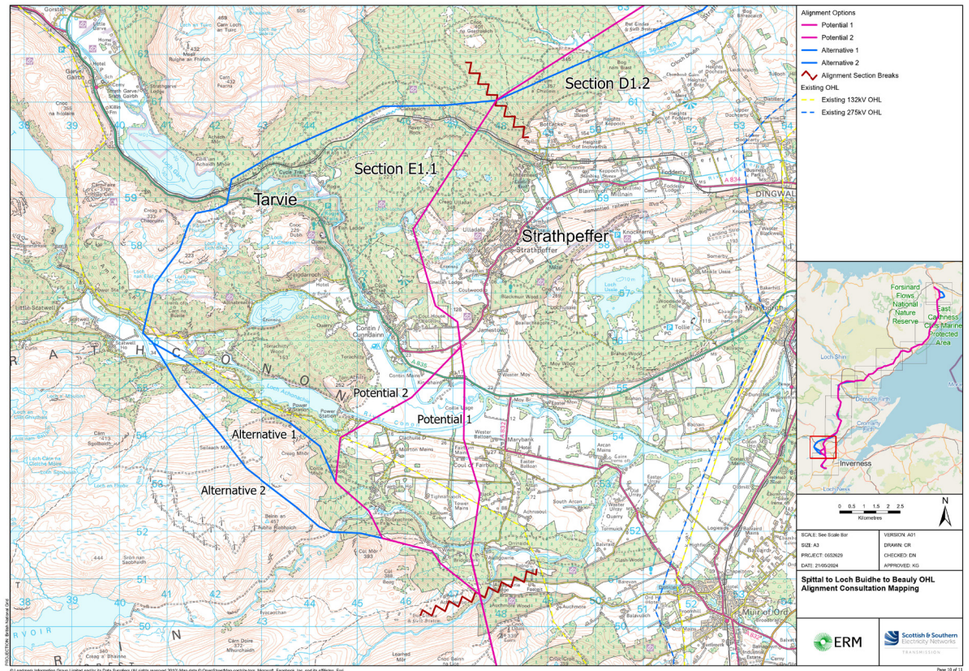
East Caithness Cliffs Marine Protected Area
Inverness
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks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Alternative 2
Alignment Options
Potential 1
Potential 2
Alternative 1
Alternative 2
Alignment Section Breaks
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Existing 132kV OHL
Existing 275kV OHL
Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve
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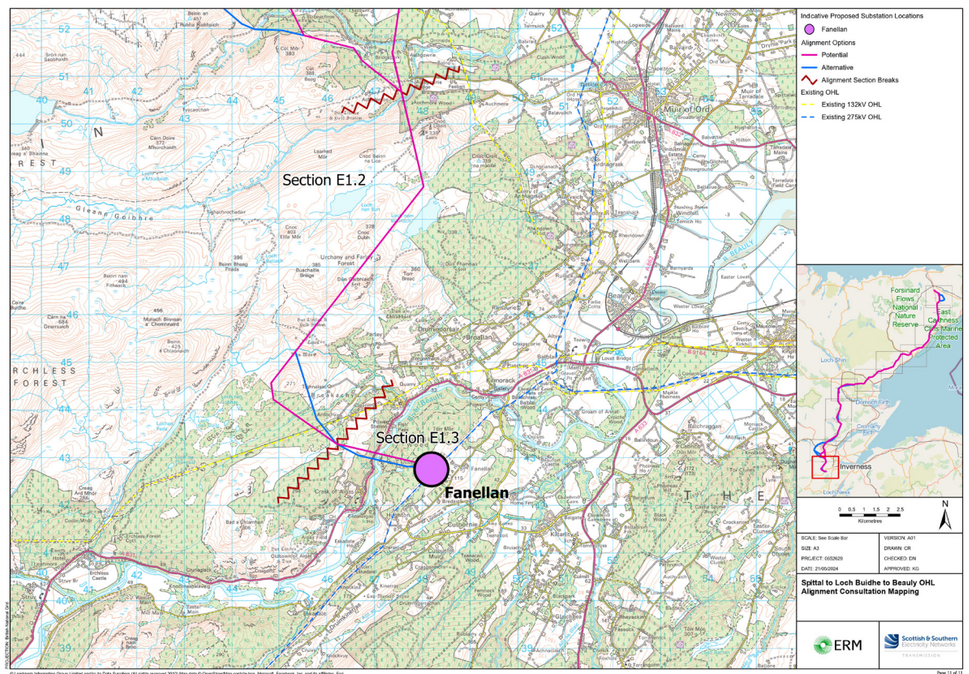
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks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Indicative Proposed Substation Locations
Fanellan
Alignment Options
Potential
Alternative
Alignment Section Breaks
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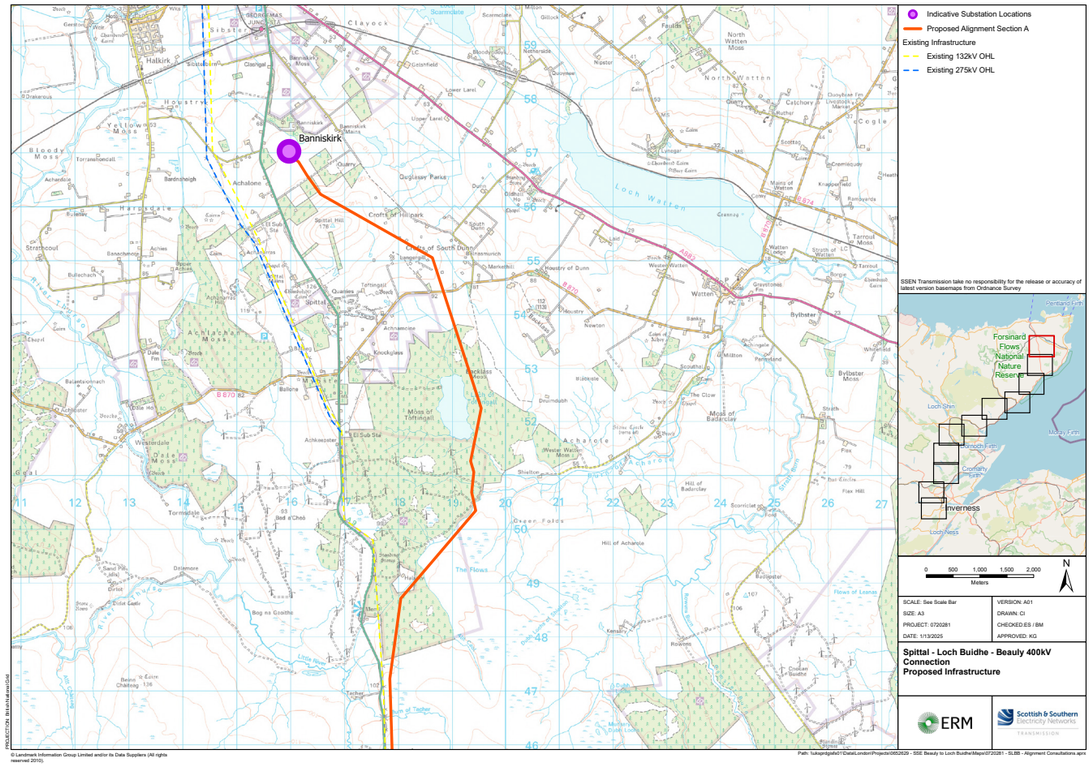
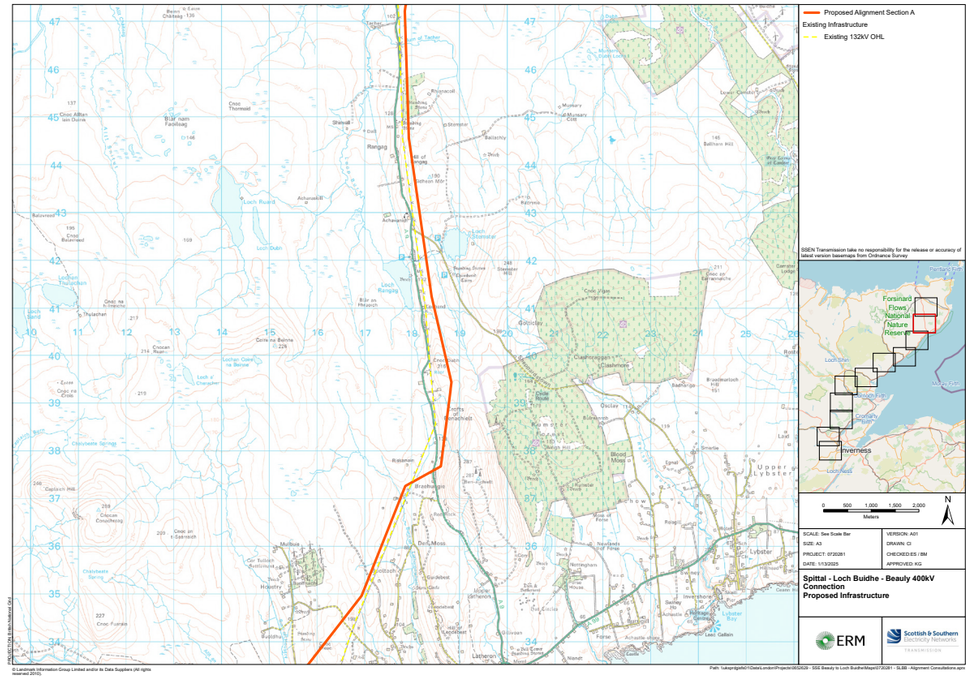
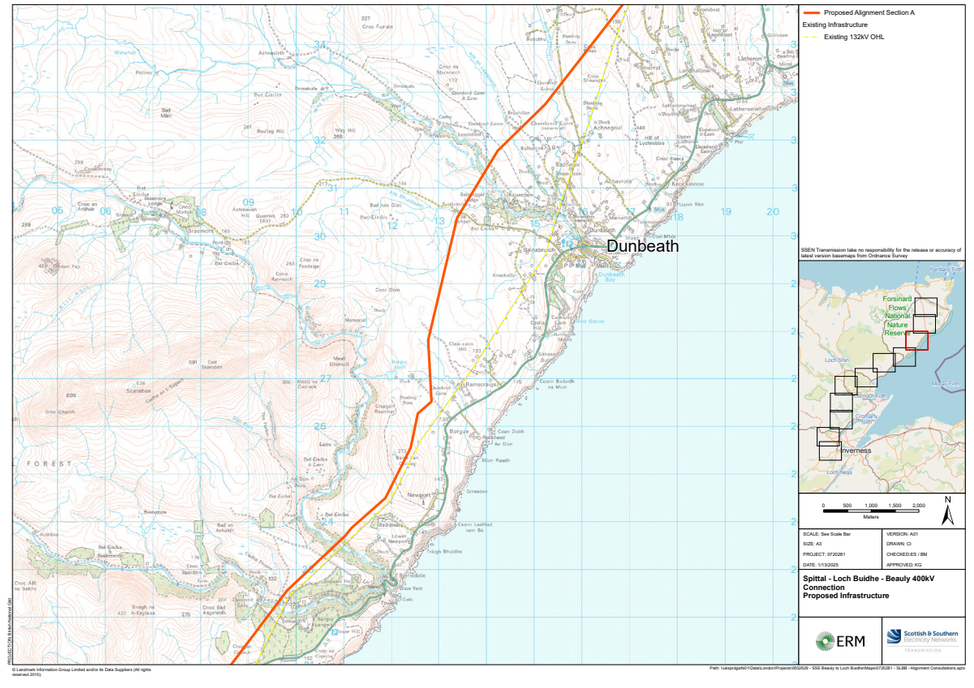
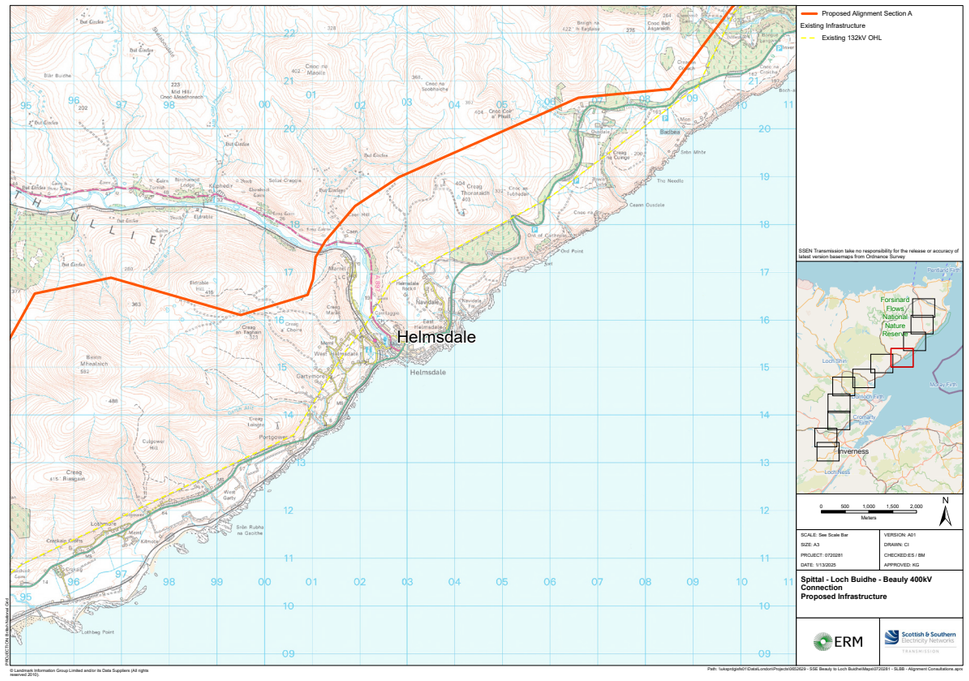
Existing 132kV OHL
Existing 275kV OHL
Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve
East Caithness Cliffs Marine Protected Area
Inverness
Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly OHL
Alignment Consultation Mapping
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

Appendix C – Proposed Alignment





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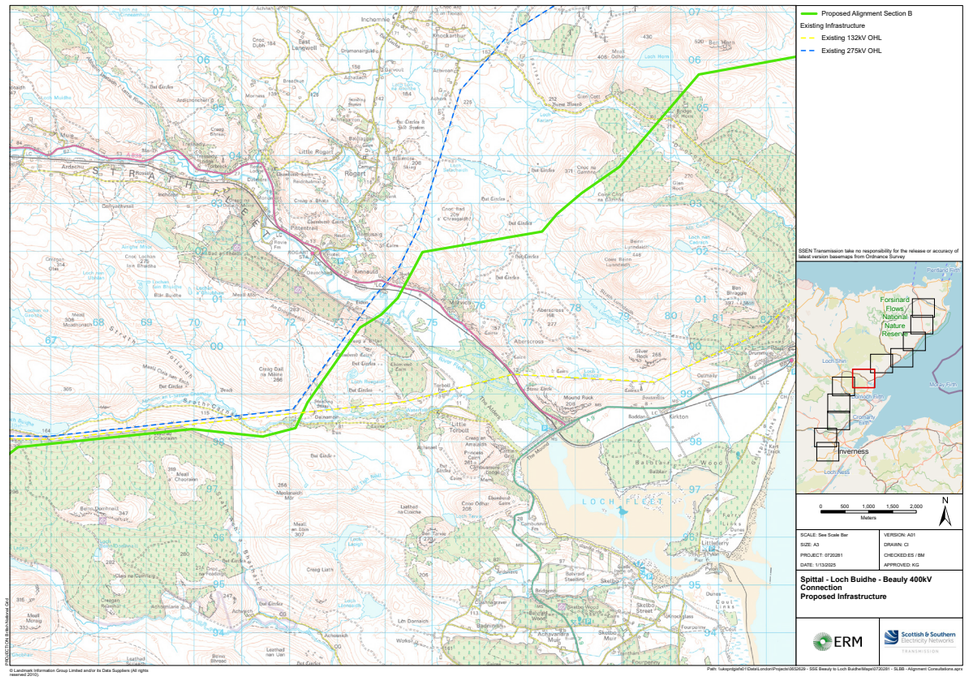
Inverness
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400kV Connection
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks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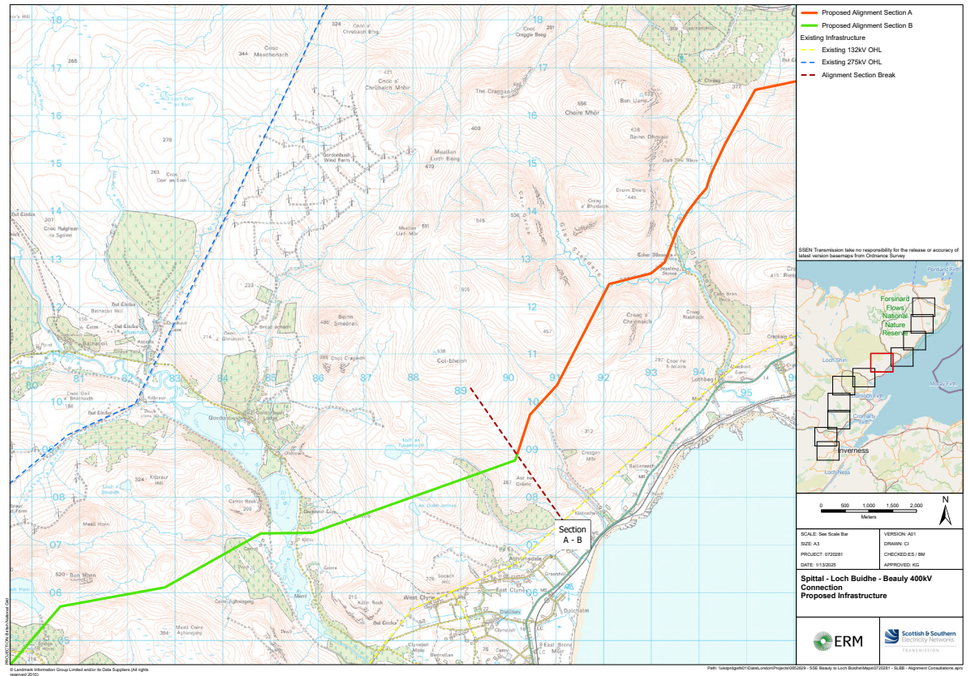
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks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Proposed Alignment Section B
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Existing 275kV OHL
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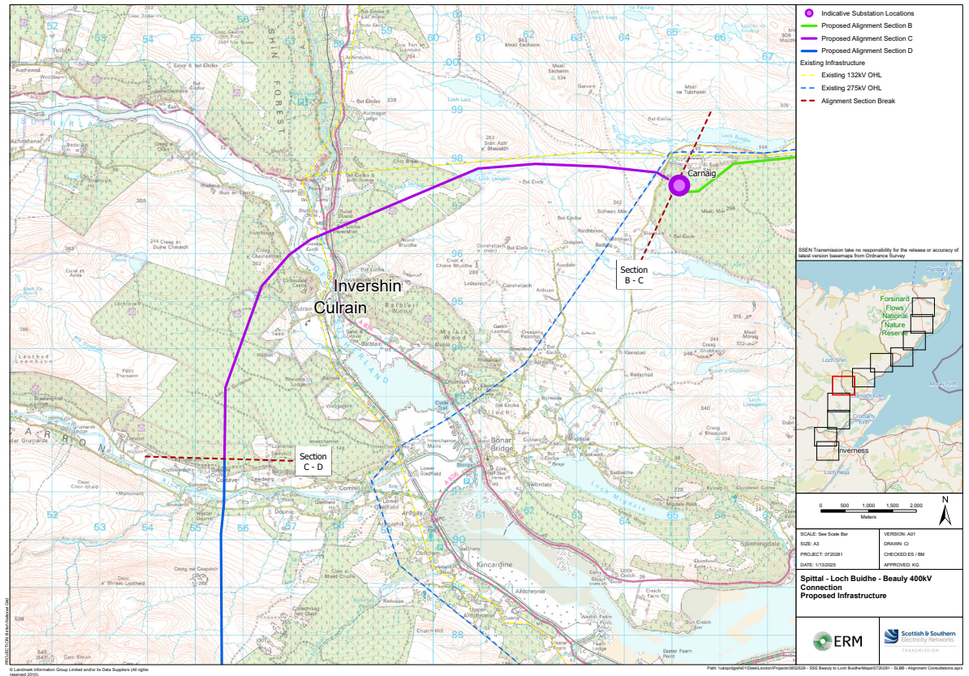
Section A - B
Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve
Inverness
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400kV Connection
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks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Proposed Alignment Section B
Proposed Alignment Section C
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Carnaig
Inversnin
Culrain
Section B - C
Section C - D
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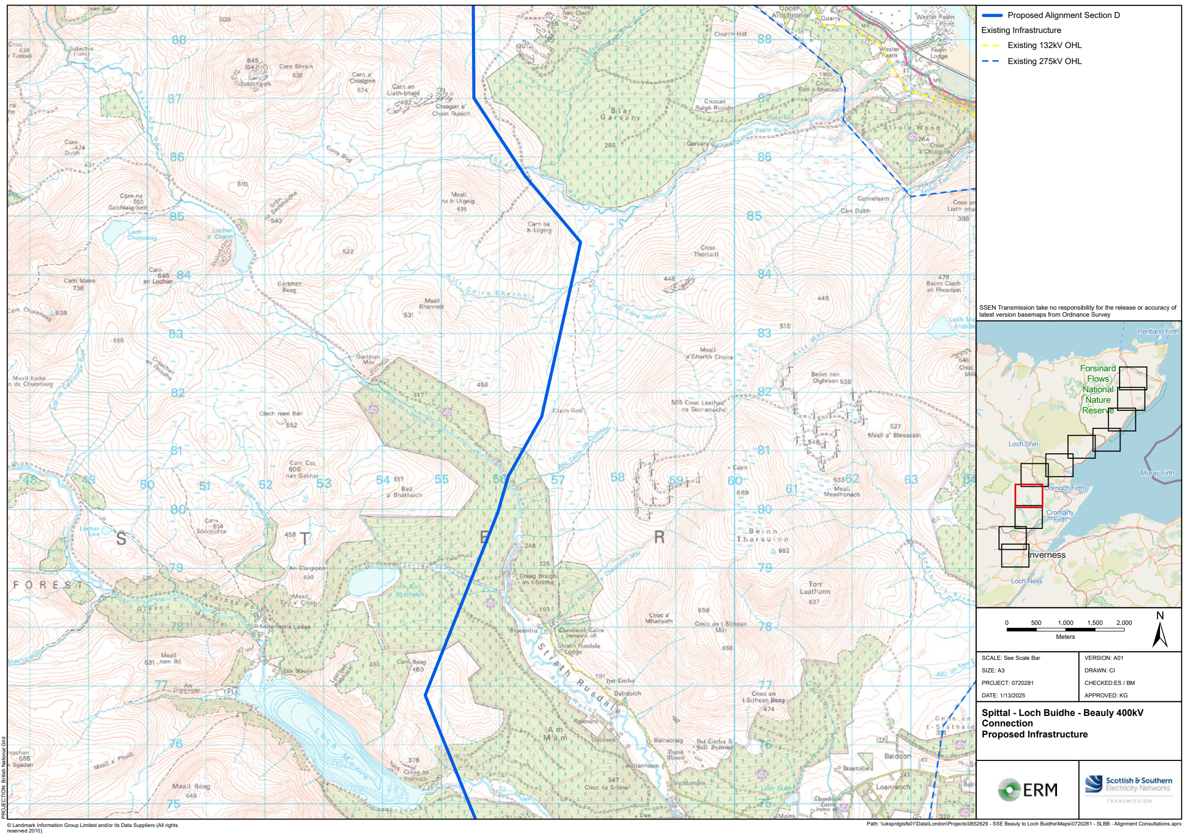
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks



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Inverness
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Meters
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SCALE: See Scale Bar
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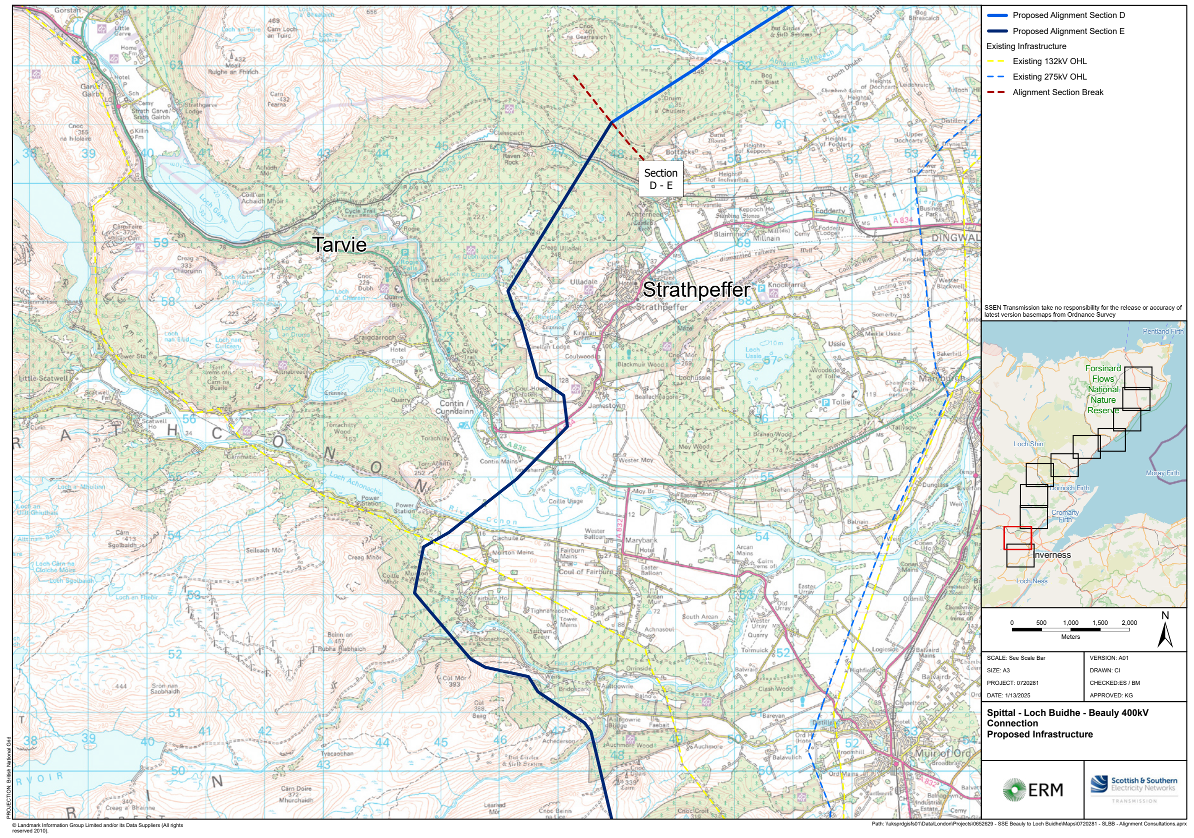
DATE: 1/13/2025
VERSION: A01
DRAWN: CI
CHECKED:ES / BM
APPROVED: KG
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400kV Connection
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION



Proposed Alignment Section D
Proposed Alignment Section E
Existing Infrastructure
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Existing 275kV OHL
Alignment Section Break
Section D - E
Tarvie
Strathpeffer
SSEN Transmission take no responsibility for the release or accuracy of latest version basemaps from Ordnance Survey
Pentland Firth
Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve
Loch Shin
Dornoch Firth
Cromarty Firth
Moray Firth
Inverness
Loch Ness
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Meters
N
SCALE: See Scale Bar
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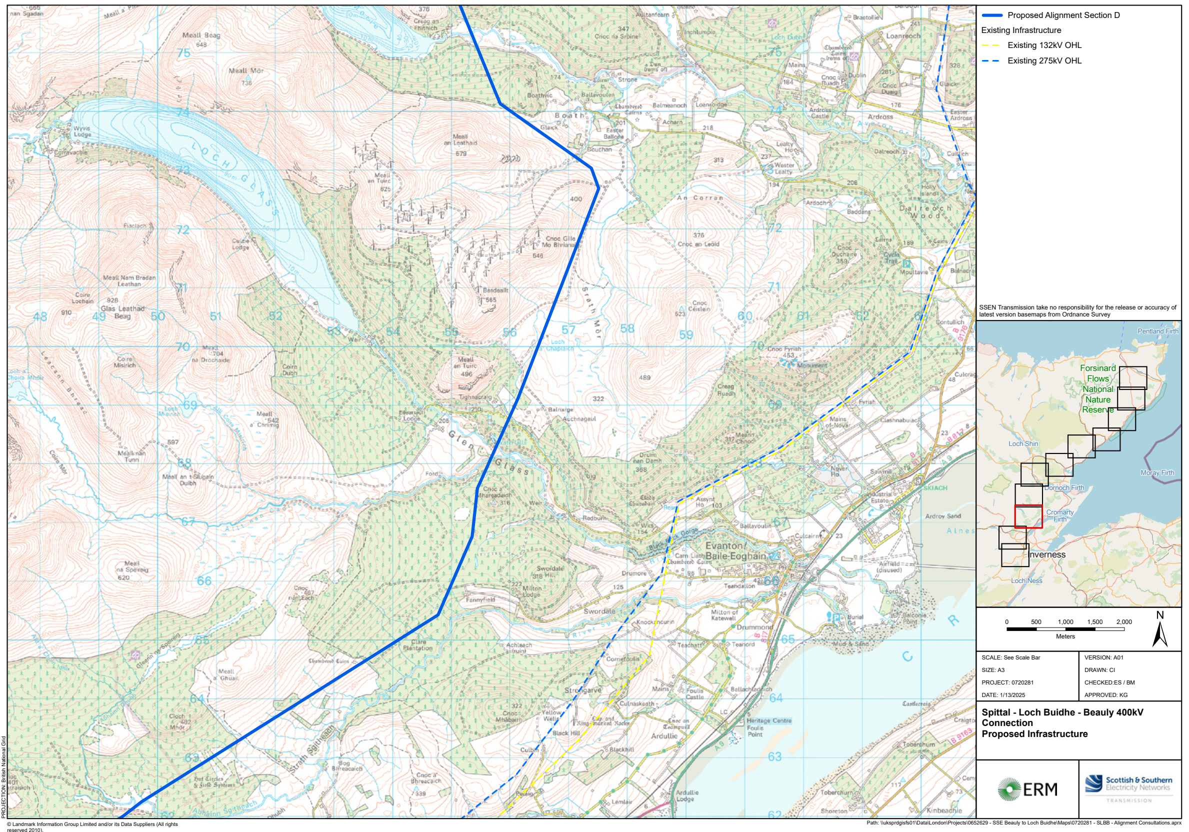
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400kV Connection
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION



Proposed Alignment Section D
Existing Infrastructure
Existing 132kV OHL
Existing 275kV OHL
SSEN Transmission take no responsibility for the release or accuracy of latest version basemaps from Ordnance Survey
Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve
Inverness
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000
Meters
N
SCALE: See Scale Bar
SIZE: A3
PROJECT: 0720281
DATE: 1/13/2025
VERSION: A01
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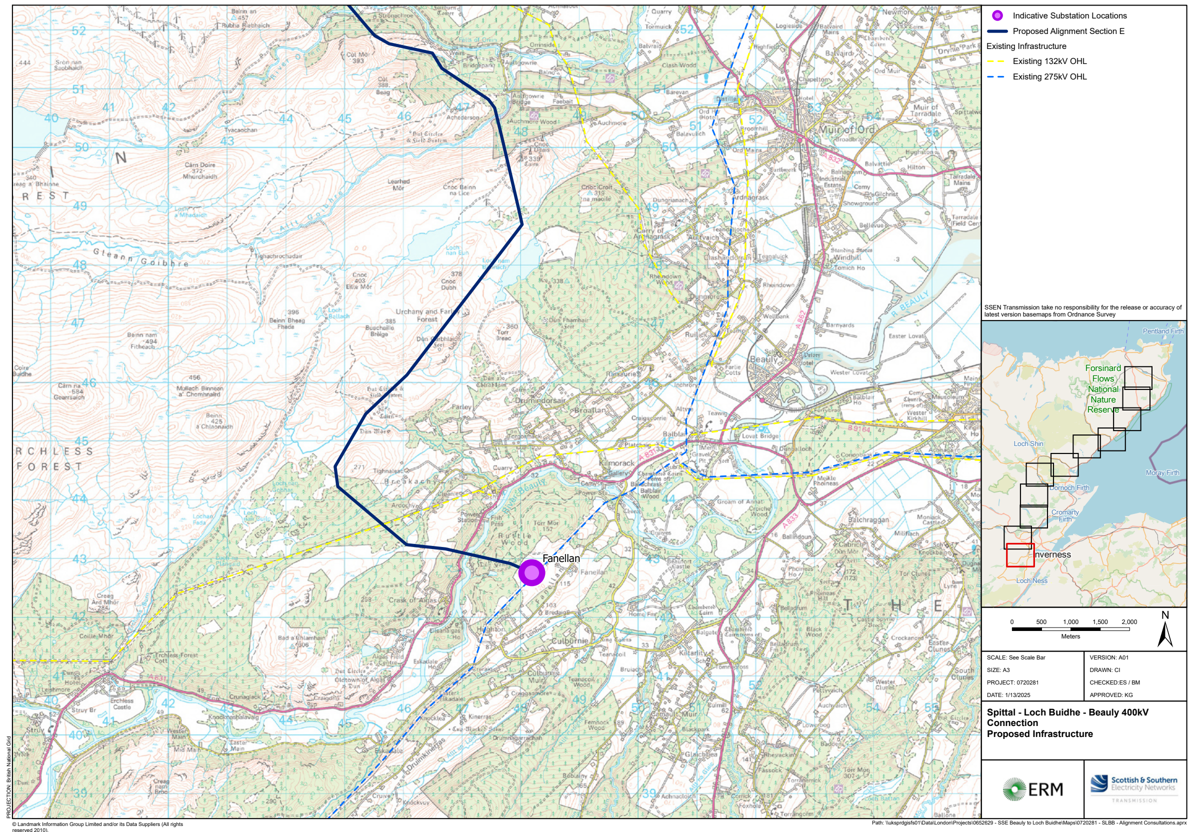
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400kV Connection
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks



Indicative Substation Locations
Proposed Alignment Section E
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Existing 132kV OHL
Existing 275kV OHL
Fanellan
SSEN Transmission take no responsibility for the release or accuracy of latest version basemaps from Ordnance Survey
Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve
Inverness
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000
Meters
N
SCALE: See Scale Bar
SIZE: A3
PROJECT: 0720281
DATE: 1/13/2025
VERSION: A01
DRAWN: CI
CHECKED:ES / BM
APPROVED: KG
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400kV Connection
Proposed Infrastructure
ERM
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks