

Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV Overhead Line

Summary Report on Consultation

January 2025



Introduction

In February and March 2024, we held a series of in-person information events for the proposed Beaulay to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV Overhead Line (OHL), presenting 'Refined Routes' to update our stakeholders on the progress we had made since the earlier Routing Stage consultations in 2023. These events were then followed in May and June 2024 with consultation events on the alignment. At the latter events we presented information on how we had considered a number of alternative options for the alignment and had assessed each option against a series of criteria relating to engineering, environmental and cost considerations. The conclusion of these assessments resulted in our choosing one of the alignment options as a Potential Alignment, which we concluded best balanced these considerations. The consultation events allowed stakeholders and communities to view the alignment options and Potential Alignment and to provide further feedback. This feedback was then considered as part of the process which has led to the Proposed Alignment which will be taken forward to the detailed design stage.

In response to stakeholder feedback from earlier consultation events asking for more detailed maps for each area, ahead of our Alignment Consultation events we split the previous 11 Routeing Stage sections into 29 Alignment Stage sections. The corresponding sections are as follows:

Location	Routeing Stage	Alignment Stage
Fanellan substation to south of Beaulay	Section 1	Sections 1 and 2
South of Beaulay to south of Inverness	Section 2 (and Node 1)	Sections 3 to 6
A9 and River Nairn crossing	Section 3	Section 7
South of Culloden to Ferness	Section 4	Sections 8 to 11
Ferness to South of Forres	Section 5	Section 12
South of Forres to Kellas	Section 6	Sections 13 and 14
Kellas to Teindland	Section 7	Sections 15 and 16
Teindland to Keith	Section 8	Sections 17 and 18
Keith to south of Turriff	Section 9 (and Node 2 and Node 3)	Sections 19 to 24
South of Turriff to New Deer	Section 10	Section 25
New Deer to Peterhead	Section 11 (and Node 4)	Sections 26 to 29

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

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

Summary of Public Consultation Engagement

17

Refined Route consultation events

15

Alignment consultation events

2209

Registered attendees

297

Pieces of written feedback

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

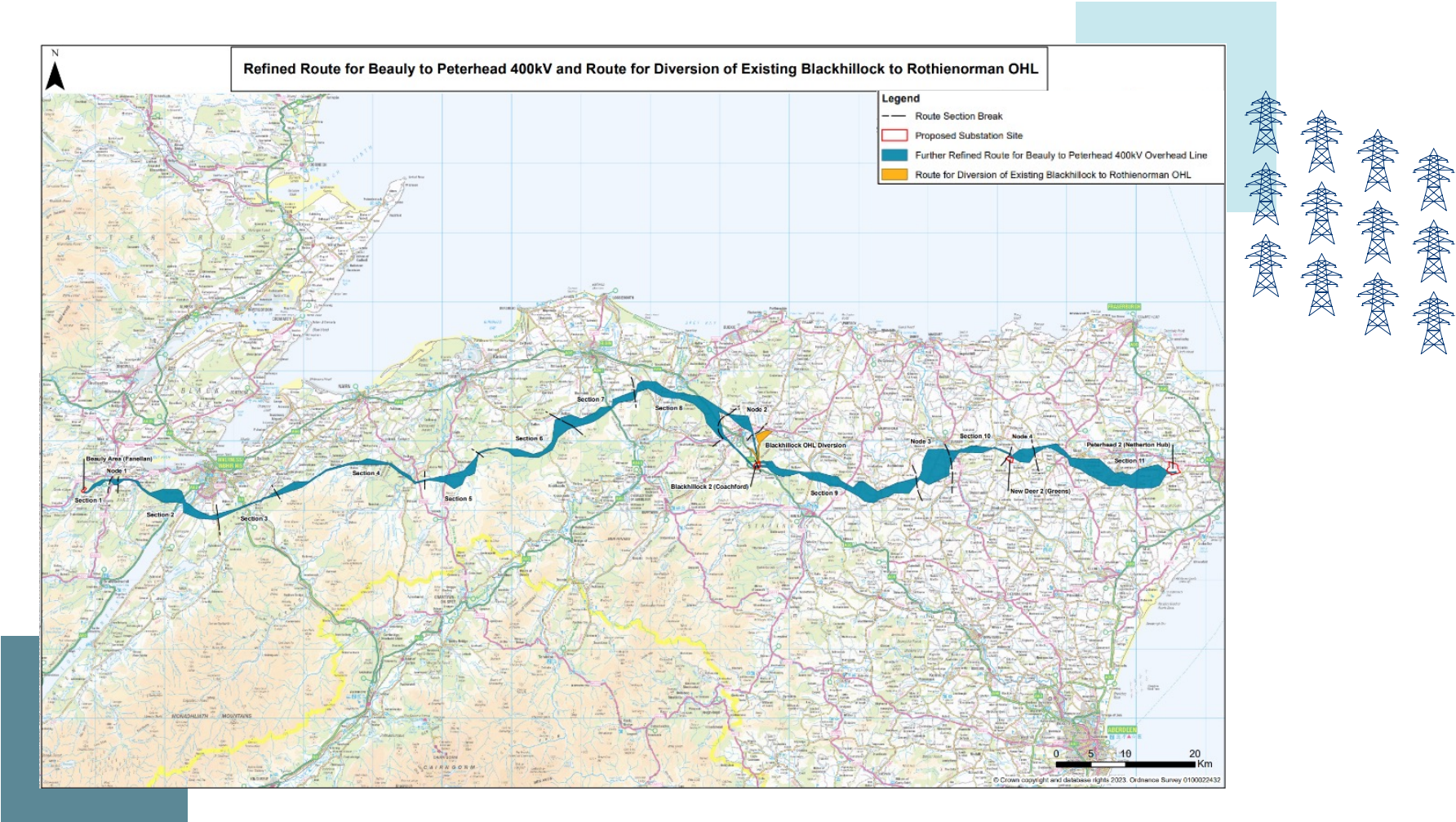
Useful links

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



What we presented in February/March 2024

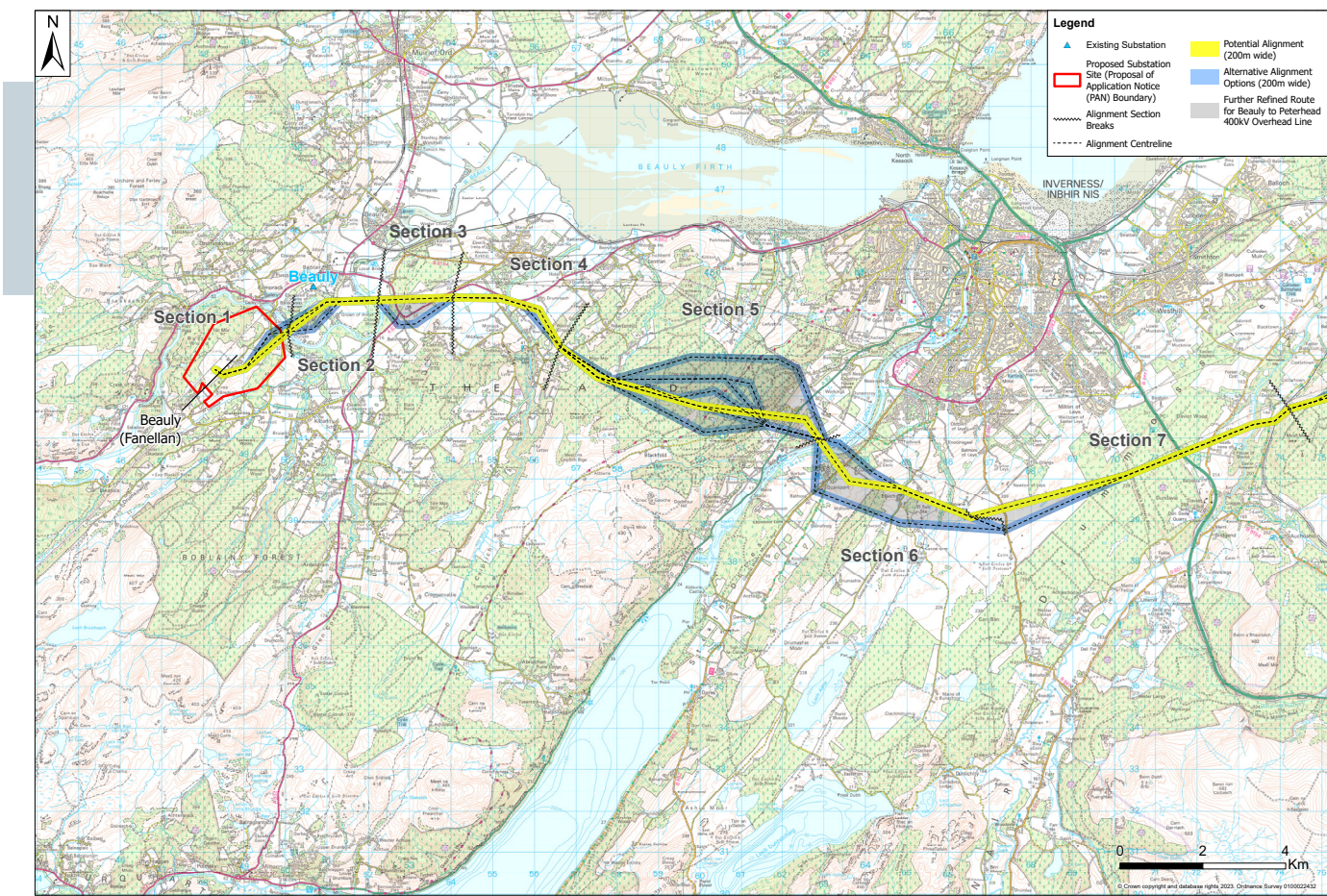
The ‘Refined Route’ events in February and March 2024 presented an interim update on progress made since the Routeing Stage consultations in 2023.



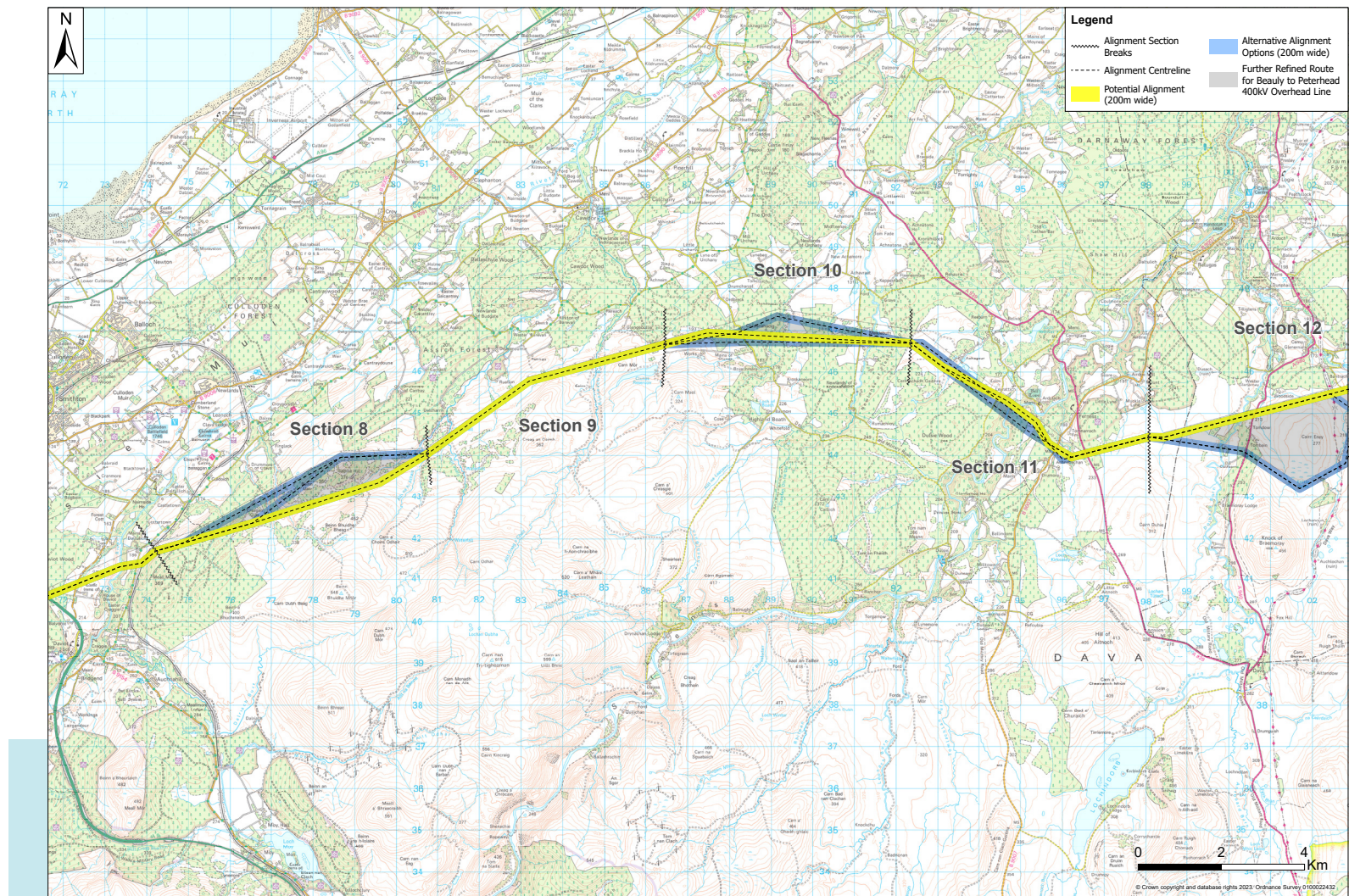
What we presented in May/June 2024

Fanellan (Beaulieu) to River Nairn Crossing

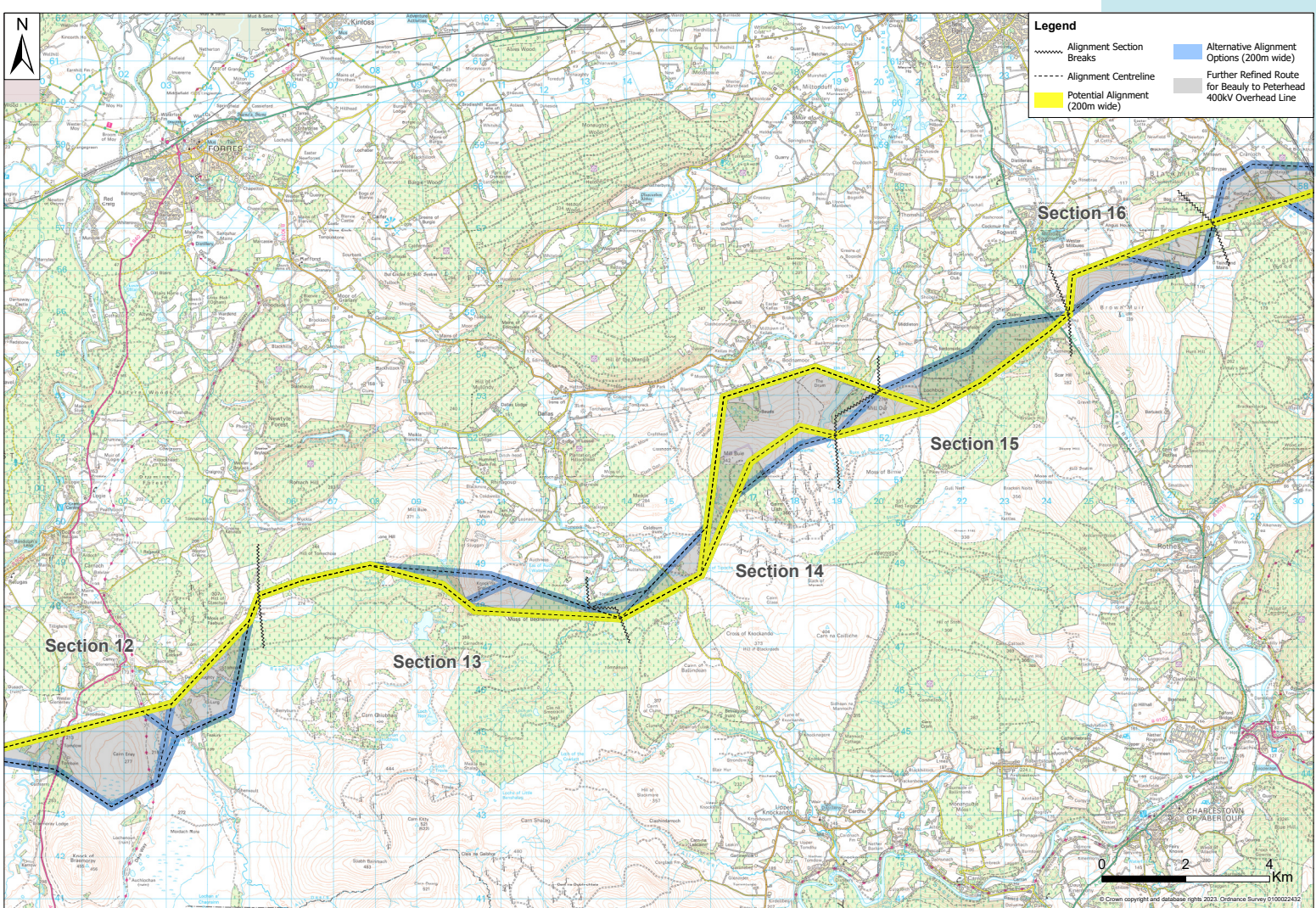
The Alignment Stage consultation events in May and June 2024 showed the Potential Alignment (yellow) and Alternative Alignment Options also considered (blue).



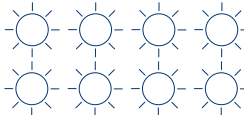
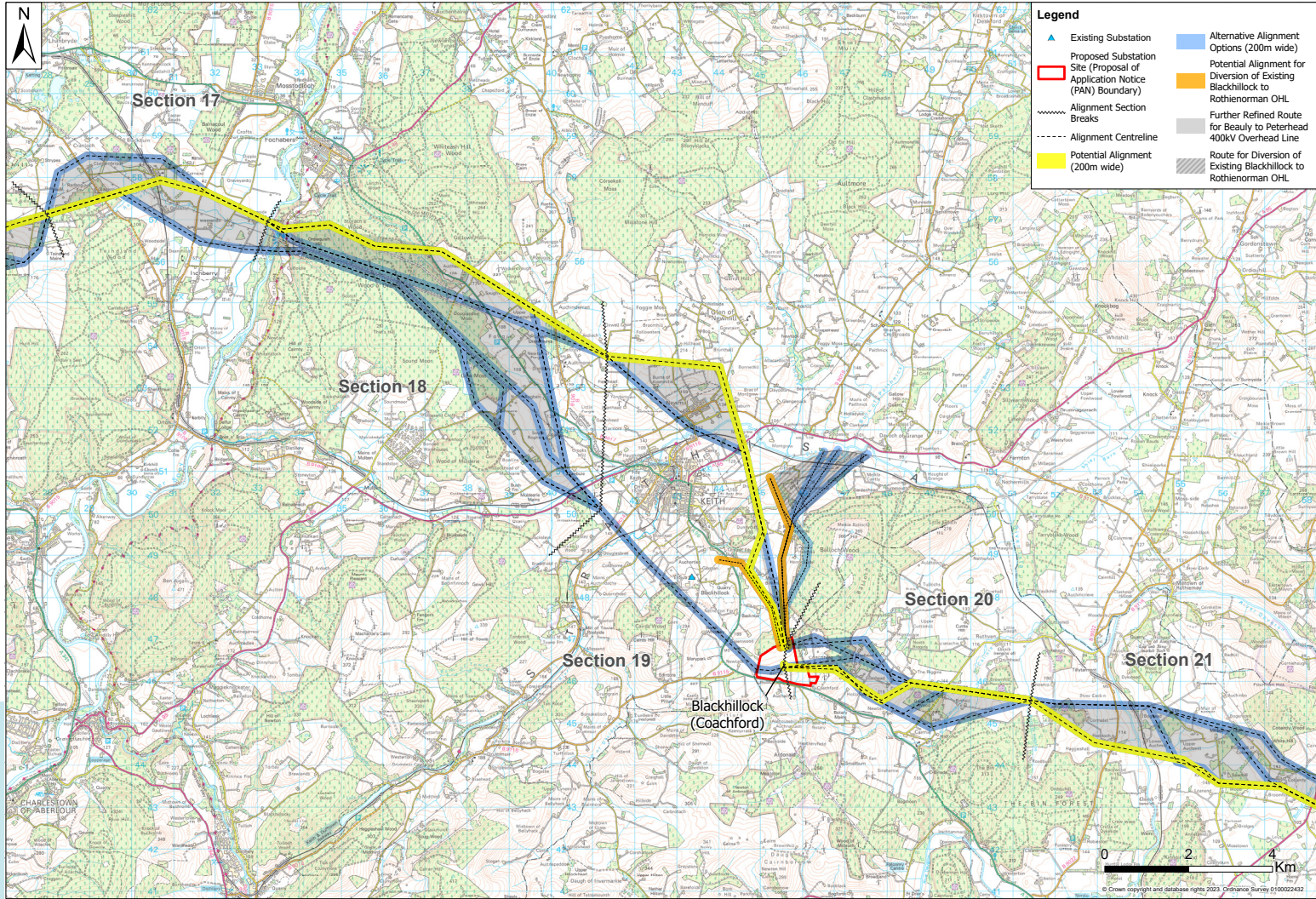
South of Culloden to South of Forres



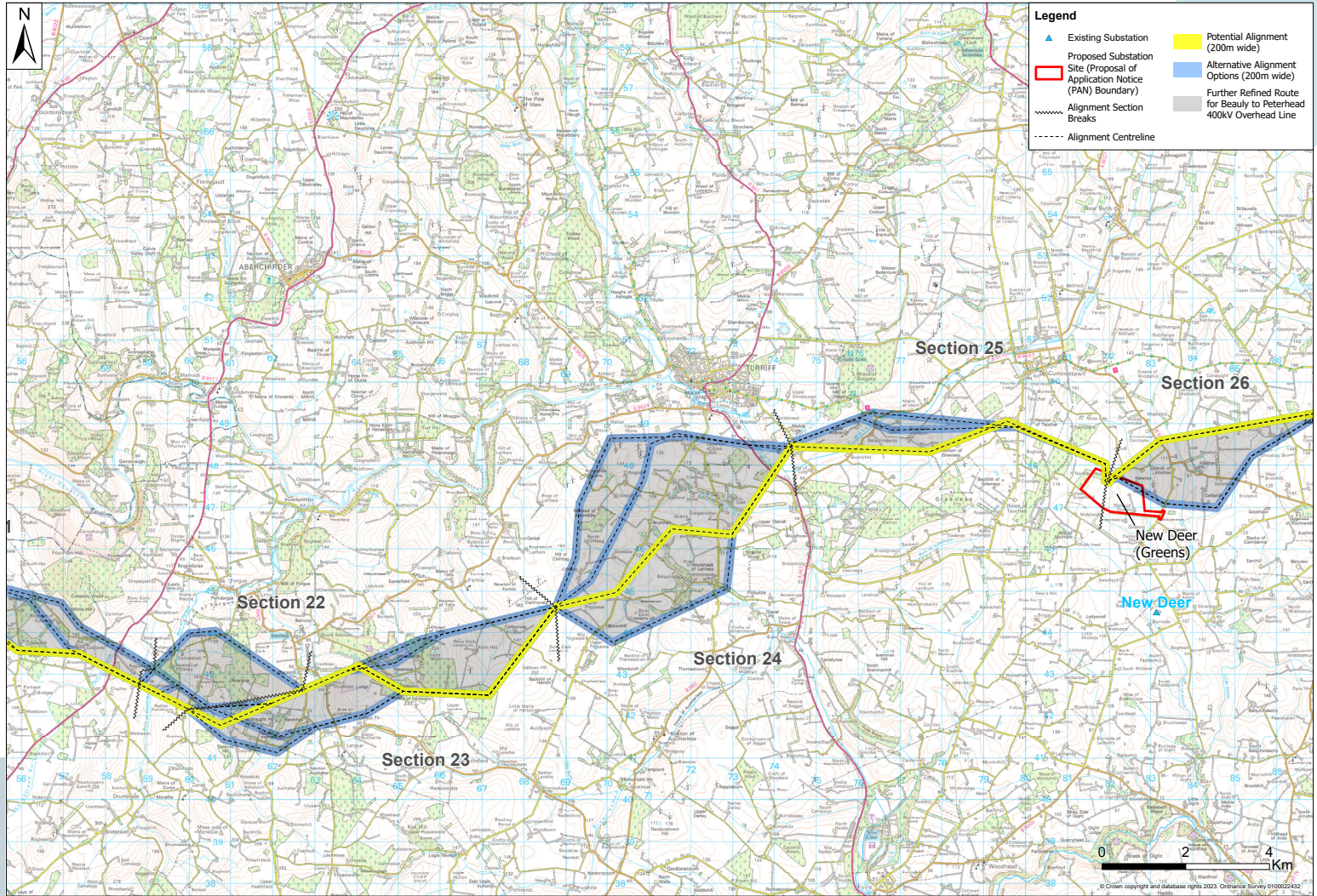
South of Forres to Teindland

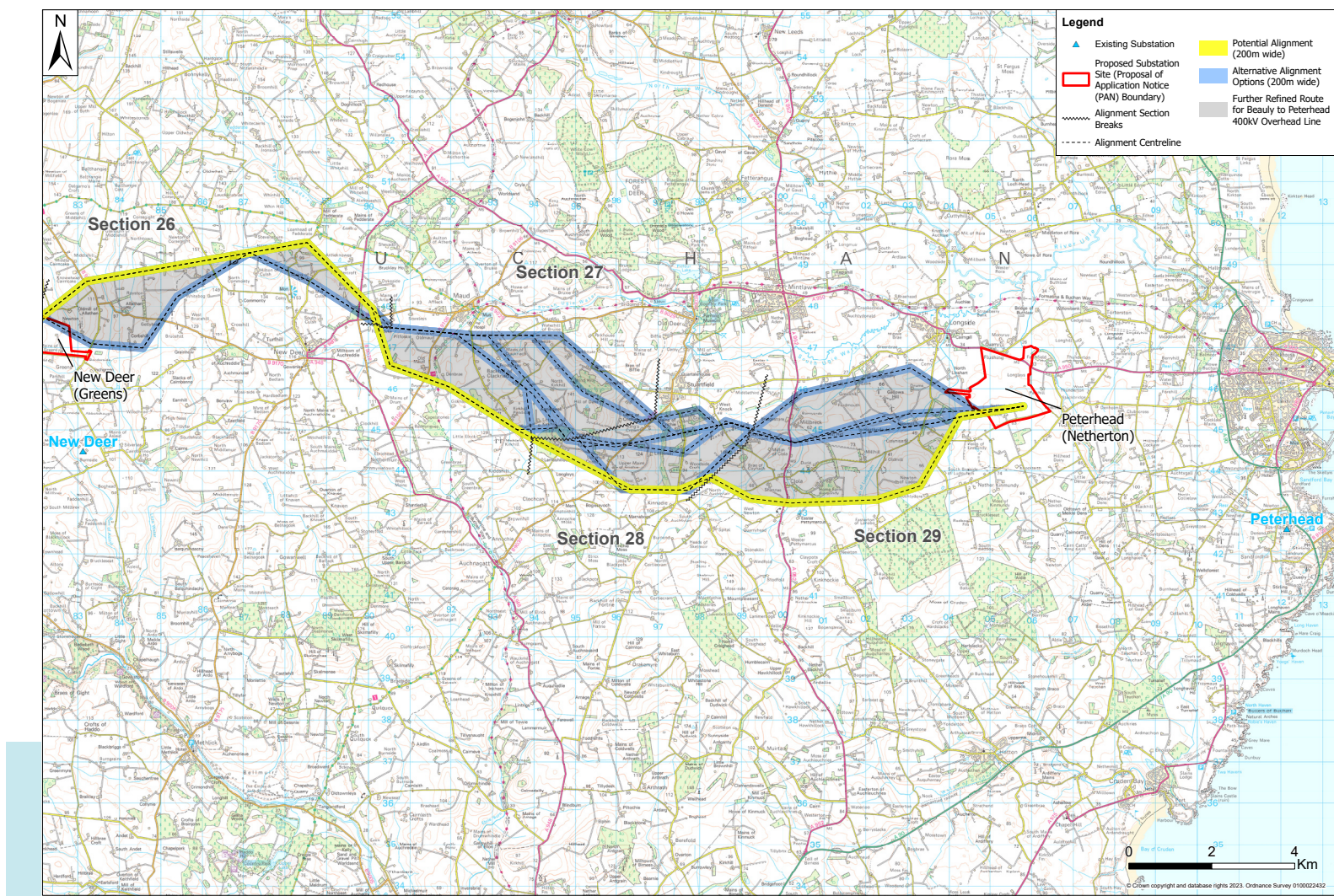


Teindland to A97 at Combardy



A97 at Combardy to New Deer





Summary of Feedback and Our Decisions



Route Section 1 (Alignment Sections 1 and 2):

Fanellan substation to south of Beauly

What we presented



Alignment Section 1 (Fanellan substation to River Beauly at Cruives): Potential Alignment 1C

Alignment Section 2 (River Beauly at Cruives to River Beauly at Croiche Wood): Potential Alignment 2B

Feedback received



Within Alignment Sections 1 and 2 concerns were raised about construction traffic disturbance in the Beauly area, potential for land damage during construction, and potential impacts to protected birds and other species in woodland areas.

Feedback from statutory consultees included concerns relating to potential impacts on the landscape and in particular the Designed Landscape at Beaufort Castle, as well as possible visual impacts historic buildings and monuments in this section.

A request was received to keep the alignment close to field boundaries to minimise sterilisation of arable land.

A suggestion was made for consideration of an alternative alignment to follow the route of the existing Beauly to Denny 400kV OHL to the south of Beauly substation, and also to follow the existing OHLs to the east of Beauly substation, which could reduce the environmental impact and overall length of the route.

Response to feedback



As part of the ongoing development of this project we will undertake a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which will assess the potential impact to identified concerns such as landscape and visual, ecology, ornithology, cultural heritage assets and traffic. The assessment on traffic impacts will consider construction traffic effects in combination with other proposed developments in the local area.

To aid fuller consideration of the visual impacts of the Proposed Development on heritage assets, photomontage visualisations will be prepared as part of the EIA where appropriate.

In relation to potential for land damage, we will endeavour to return any land and access tracks to the same or better condition as before and landowners will be compensated for any losses sustained on a case-by-case basis.

We will also continue to engage with statutory consultees throughout the design evolution process, where specific concerns have been raised.

Following further assessment, the Proposed Alignment has been refined slightly in Section 1 to keep closer to field boundaries.

Consideration was given to the suggestion to follow the existing Beauly to Denny 400kV OHL. However, it is restricted to the south by a number of residential properties, which means there is not enough space for a second OHL to follow the same route without passing in close proximity of several residential properties. For this reason it has not been possible to identify an alternative alignment following the suggested route within Alignment Section 1.

However, in Section 2 the Potential Alignment runs parallel immediately to the south of the existing OHLs heading east from Beauly substation. The existing 132kV OHL will be removed following completion of the Proposed Development, and we will align the new 400kV OHL as close to the existing OHLs as possible, whilst maintaining operational safety clearance distances. Following further review, we have been able to slightly refine the Potential Alignment in Section 2 to bring it even closer to the existing OHLs.

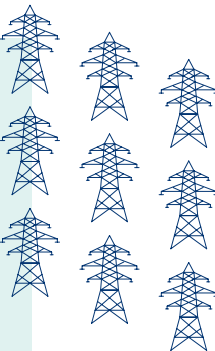
Explanation of decision



Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 1 and 2 and this will now be taken forward to the next stage as our Proposed Alignment.

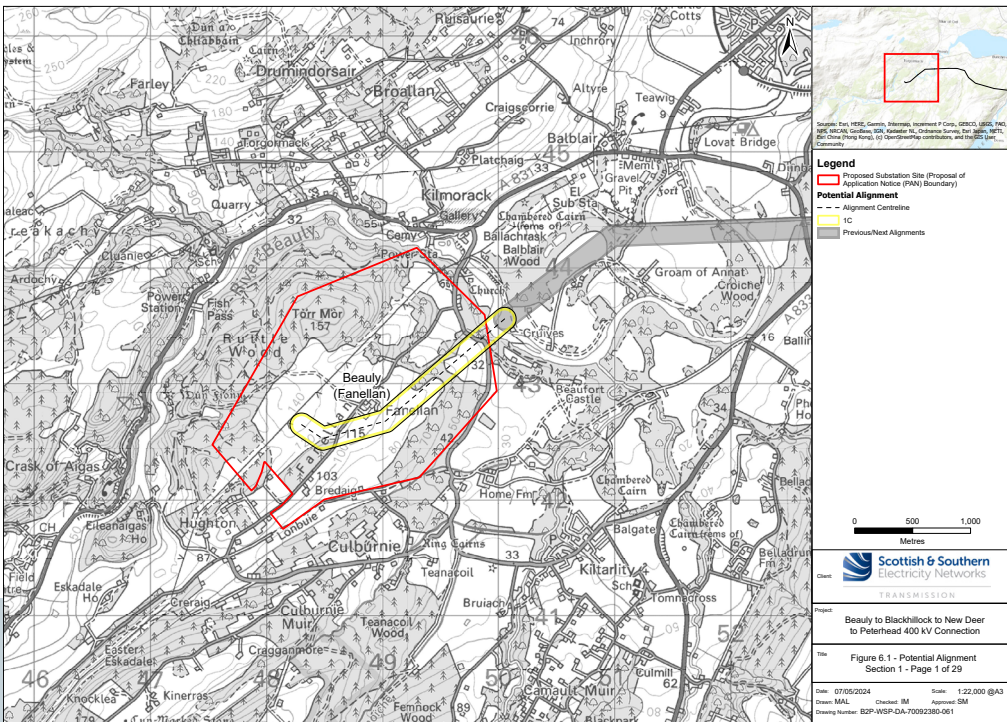
Potential Alignment 1C has been refined at the southern end to reduce the impact on farm land. This change also sits at a lower elevation in the landscape, thus reducing landscape and visual effects.

Potential Alignment 2B has been refined slightly at its eastern end to be as close to the existing OHLs as possible.

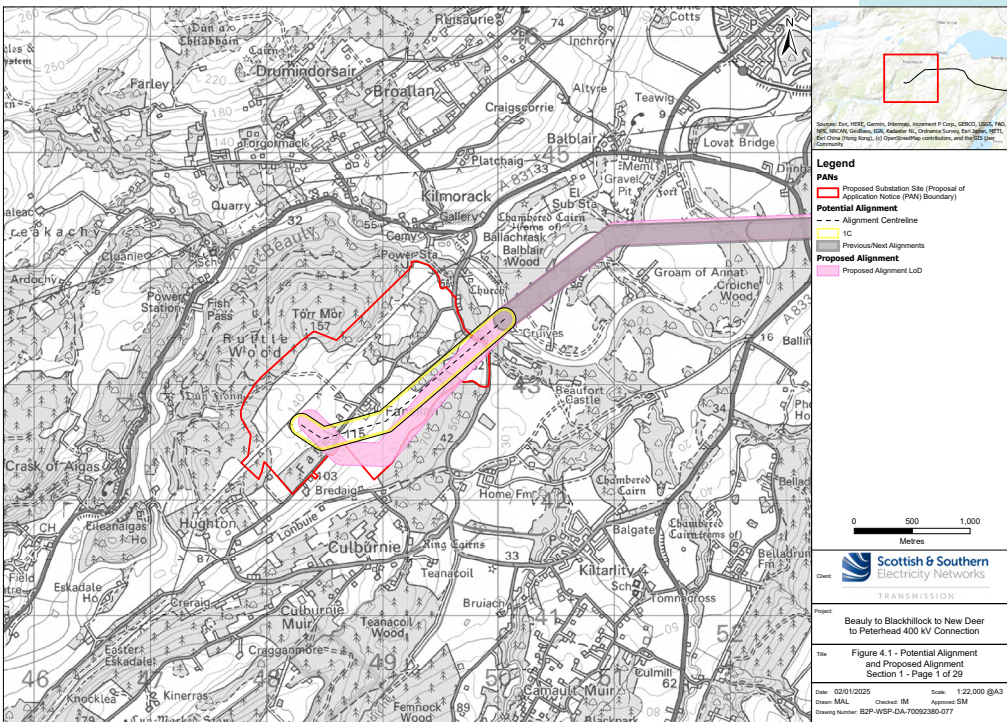


Alignment Section 1: Fanellan substation to River Beauly at Cruives

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

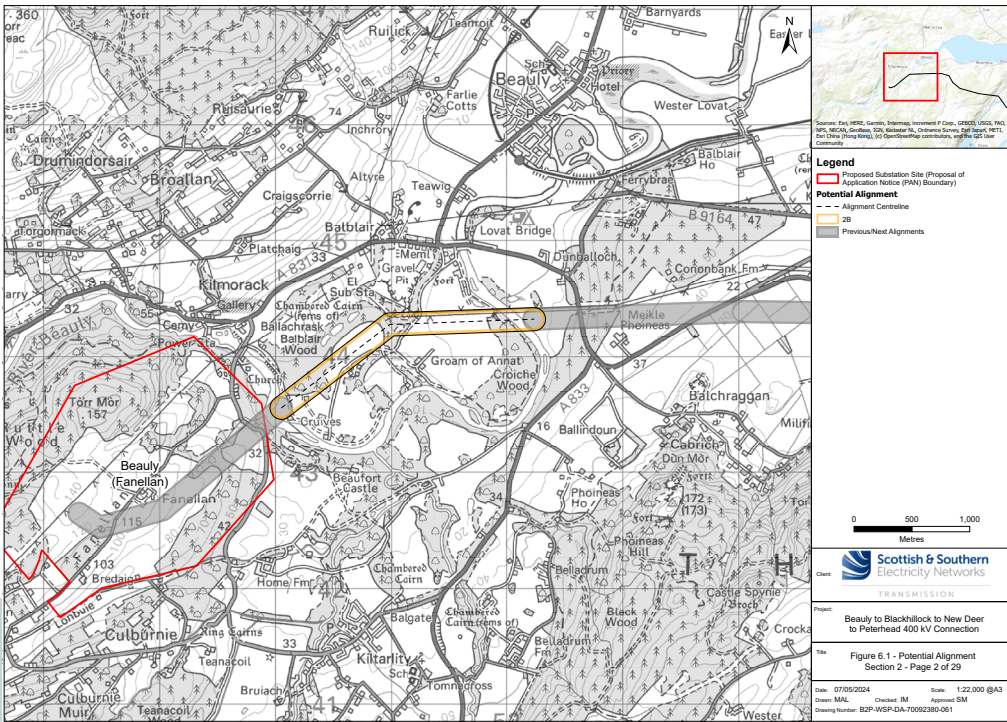


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

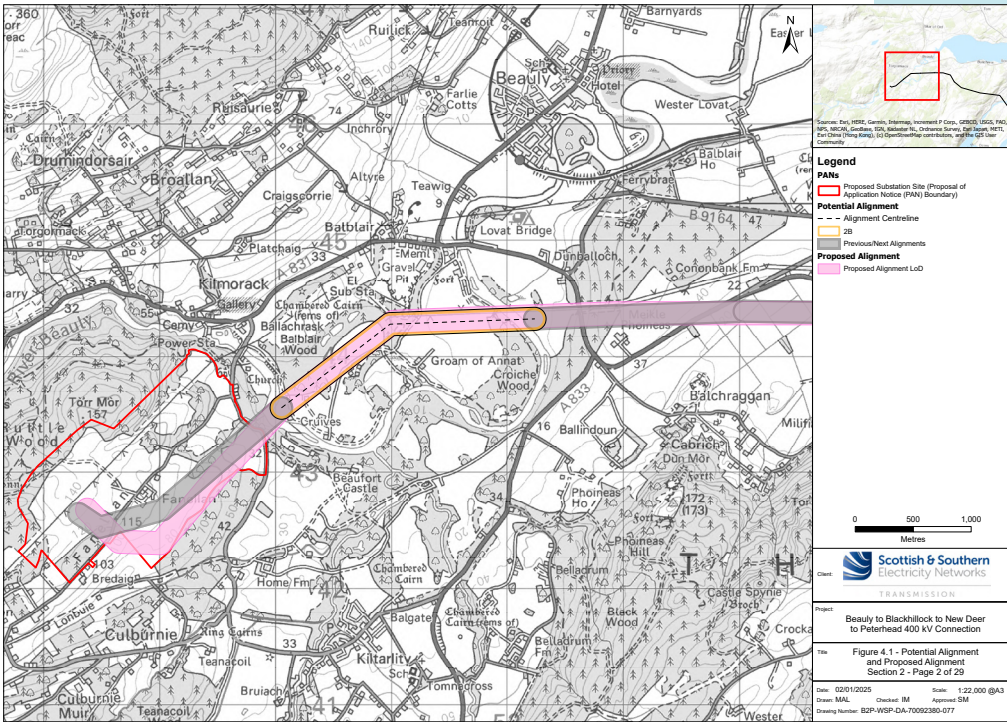


Alignment Section 2: River Beauly at Cruives to River Beauly at Croiche Wood

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

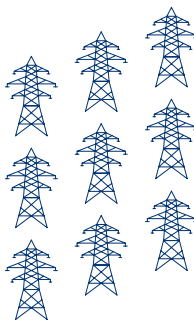






Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 2 and Node 1 (Alignment Sections 3 to 6):

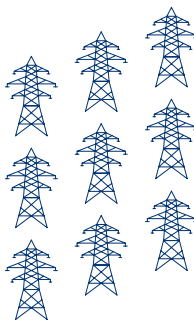
South of Beaully to south of Inverness







What we presented	Feedback received	Response to feedback	Explanation of decision
<div></div> <div><p>Alignment Section 3 (River Beaully at Croiche Wood to Cononbank): Potential Alignment 3A</p><p>Alignment Section 4 (Cononbank to Reelig): Potential Alignment 4A</p><p>Alignment Section 5 (Reelig to Caledonian Canal): Potential Alignment 5E</p><p>Alignment Section 6 (Caledonian Canal to Black Wood of Leys): Potential Alignment 6B</p></div>	<div></div> <div><p>Within Alignment Sections 3 to 6 concerns were raised in relation to visual impacts, in particular along the A862 at Easter Moniack, at the A82 and Caledonian Canal crossing point, and in the Scaniport area.</p><p>Concerns were also raised about proximity to residential properties, potential impacts to the recently restored Cononbank wetland area, impacts to emergency services telecommunications links and potential impacts to Cullaird and Torbreck Woods which are popular recreation areas.</p><p>Feedback from statutory consultees included concerns related to potential impacts to Torvean Landforms Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), potential visual impacts associated with tree loss across the Aird, visual impacts at key roadside locations and visual impacts to users of the Caledonian Canal. Historic Environment Scotland noted a number of heritage designations such as Aldourie Castle and Torbreck stone circle which would require further consideration as part of the cultural heritage assessment.</p><p>Requests were received for minor changes to the Potential Alignment to minimise impacts on existing land use such as agricultural and arable land.</p></div>	<div></div> <div><p>Recognising that new infrastructure can be concerning to those residents and communities closest to it and being aware of concerns raised, the Proposed Development has been routed to keep as much distance from residential properties as possible. In addition, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will include detailed assessments of potential impacts to residential properties and identify mitigation measures where required.</p><p>In response to the consultation feedback, in Sections 3 and 4 we have slightly refined the Potential Alignment to allow tower placement that avoids impacts to the most sensitive habitats within the Cononbank wetland area. We have also adjusted the alignment in Section 5 to avoid impacts to the identified emergency telecommunications links and increase separation from residential properties.</p><p>In Section 4 the alignment at Easter Moniack has been considered further and has been moved slightly south and more distant from the A862 to help reduce visual impacts to road users. The increased distance from the road will allow for the mature trees along the roadside to be retained, which will help to screen views of the Proposed Development from the road. At other key road and river crossing locations we are aiming to position the towers as sensitively as possible within the Proposed Alignment to reduce landscape and visual impacts.</p><p>In Sections 5 and 6, due to the presence of other sensitive receptors in the area, it is not possible to entirely avoid the Torvean Landforms SSSI. We are working closely with NatureScot to position towers in locations with the least impact on the landform features of the SSSI and to identify construction methods that will minimise disturbance.</p></div>	<div></div> <div><p>Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some small changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 3, 4 and 5, as described below. No changes have been made to the Potential Alignment in Section 6. The Proposed Alignment as shown will be taken forward for EIA and detailed design.</p><p>Potential Alignment 3A has been refined slightly at its western end to be as close to the existing OHLs as possible.</p><p>Potential Alignment 4A has been refined slightly to reduce impacts to Cononbank wetland, to increase separation from the A862 at Easter Moniack and to accommodate landowner requests to reduce impacts to existing land use.</p></div>

Route Section 2 and Node 1 (Alignment Sections 3 to 6):

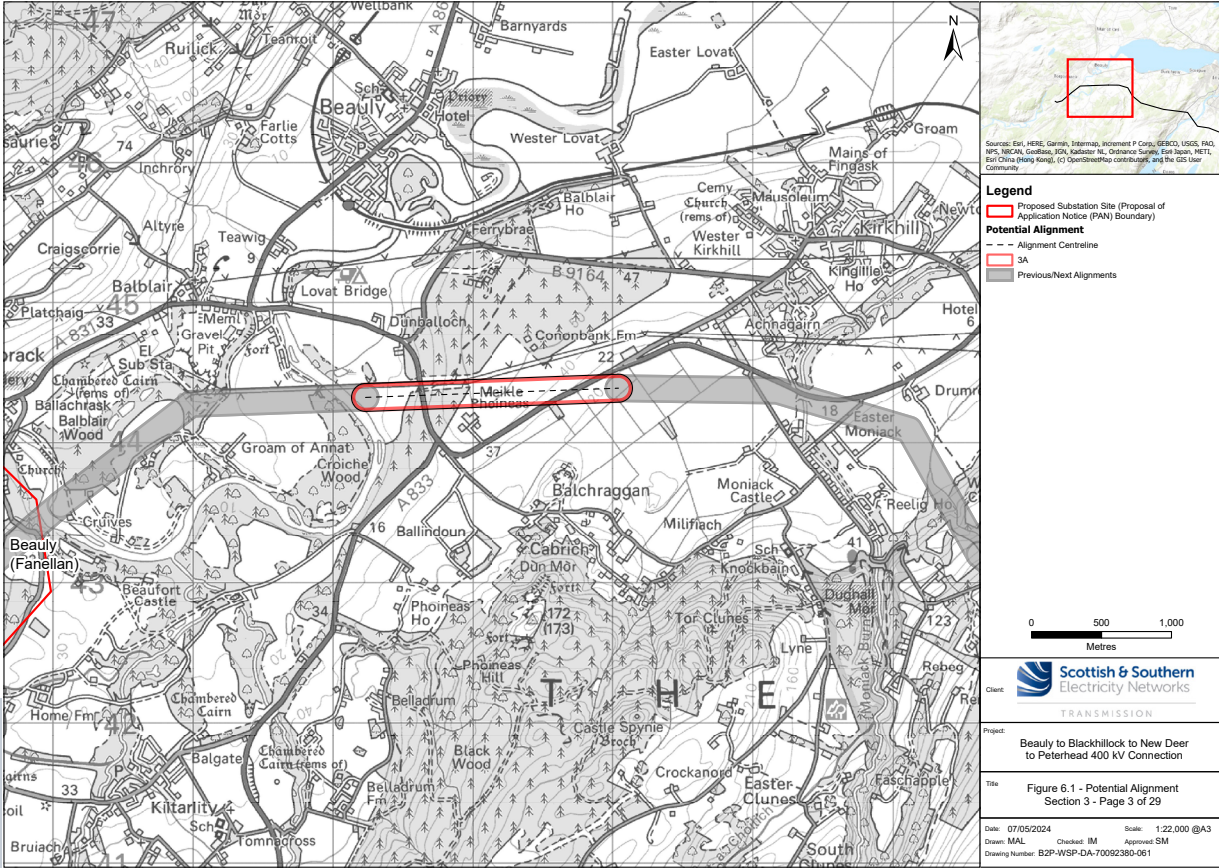
South of Beaulay to south of Inverness (continued)



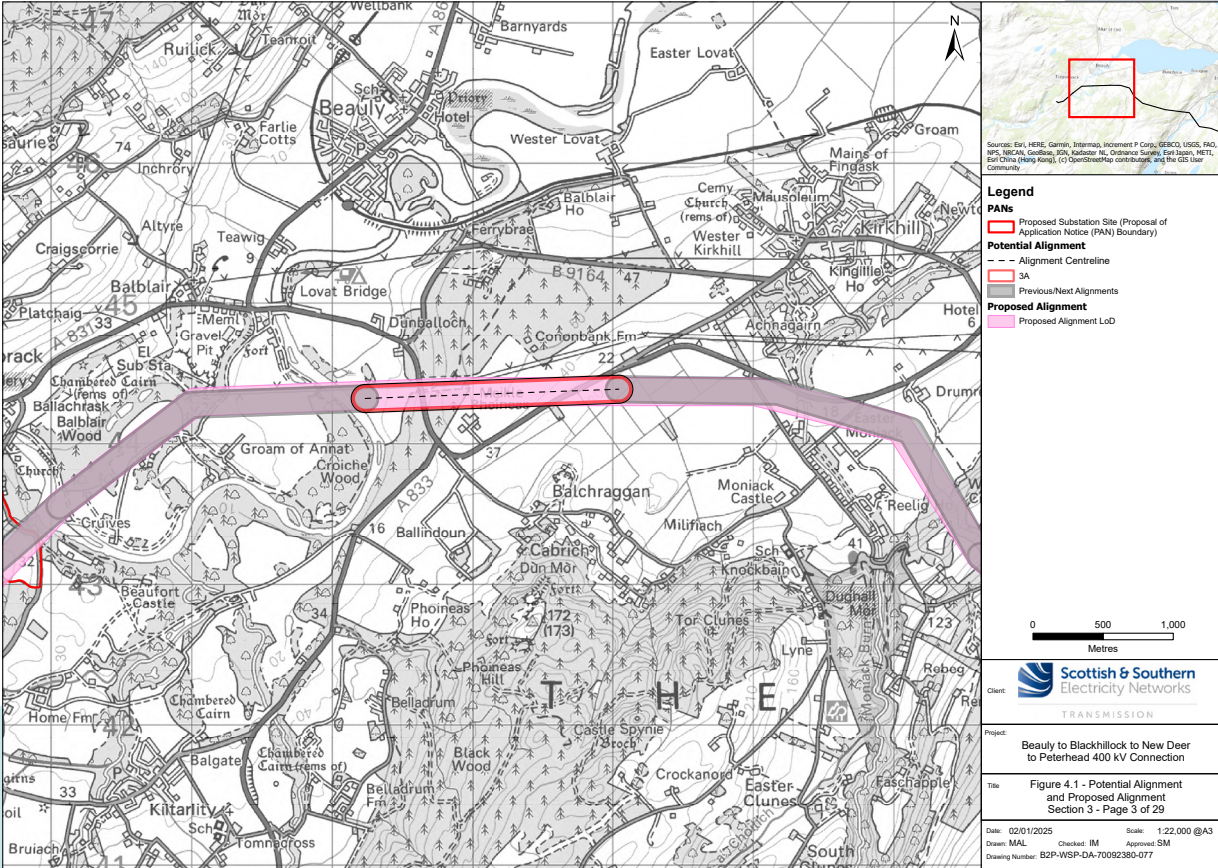
What we presented	Feedback received	Response to feedback (continued)	Explanation of decision (continued)
<div></div> <p>See page 16.</p>	<div></div> <p>See page 16.</p>	<div></div> <p>In Section 6 we have carefully reviewed feedback received regarding potential visual impacts to properties in the Scaniport area, including some requests to reconsider a more northerly alignment. Whilst the alternative alignment would have potential visual benefits to properties in this area, it would impact ancient woodland and veteran broadleaved trees which would be difficult to avoid. Feedback was also received from a number of respondents about the importance of Cullaird Woods for recreational activities walking and mountain biking, with concerns raised that the alternative more northerly alignment would result in loss of this woodland. The Potential Alignment 6B also allows for a straight crossing of the River Ness and Caledonian Canal, whereas the alternative northly alignment would require an angle crossing tower which is not preferred from an engineering perspective and would be more visually prominent. On balance therefore, Potential Alignment 6B is to be taken forward for the reasons outlined above.</p> <p>Further assessment on the noted heritage designations and assets including accompanying visualisations (as appropriate) will be provided as part of the cultural heritage assessment presented within the EIA Report.</p> <p>More generally, where it has been possible, the alignment has been refined to accommodate requests to minimise impacts on agricultural and arable land and other existing land uses.</p>	<div></div> <p>Potential Alignment 5E has been refined at Mam Mor to avoid impacts to emergency telecommunications links and increase separation from residential properties. Potential Alignment 5E has also been refined at its eastern end to reduce impacts to Torvean Landforms SSSI.</p> <p>No changes have been made to Potential Alignment 6B and this will be taken forward to the next stage as our Proposed Alignment.</p>

Alignment Section 3: River Beauly at Croiche Wood to Cononbank

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

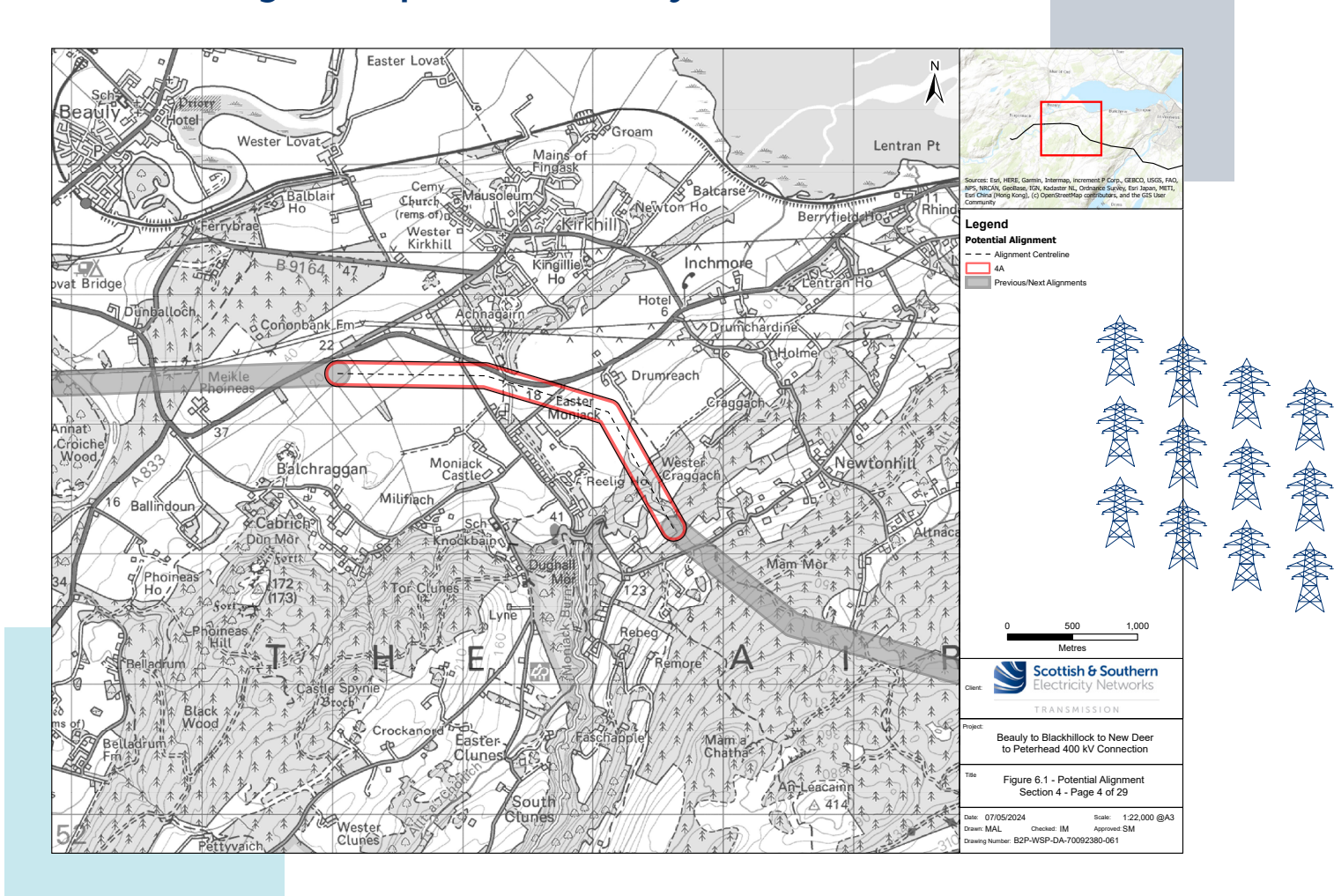


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

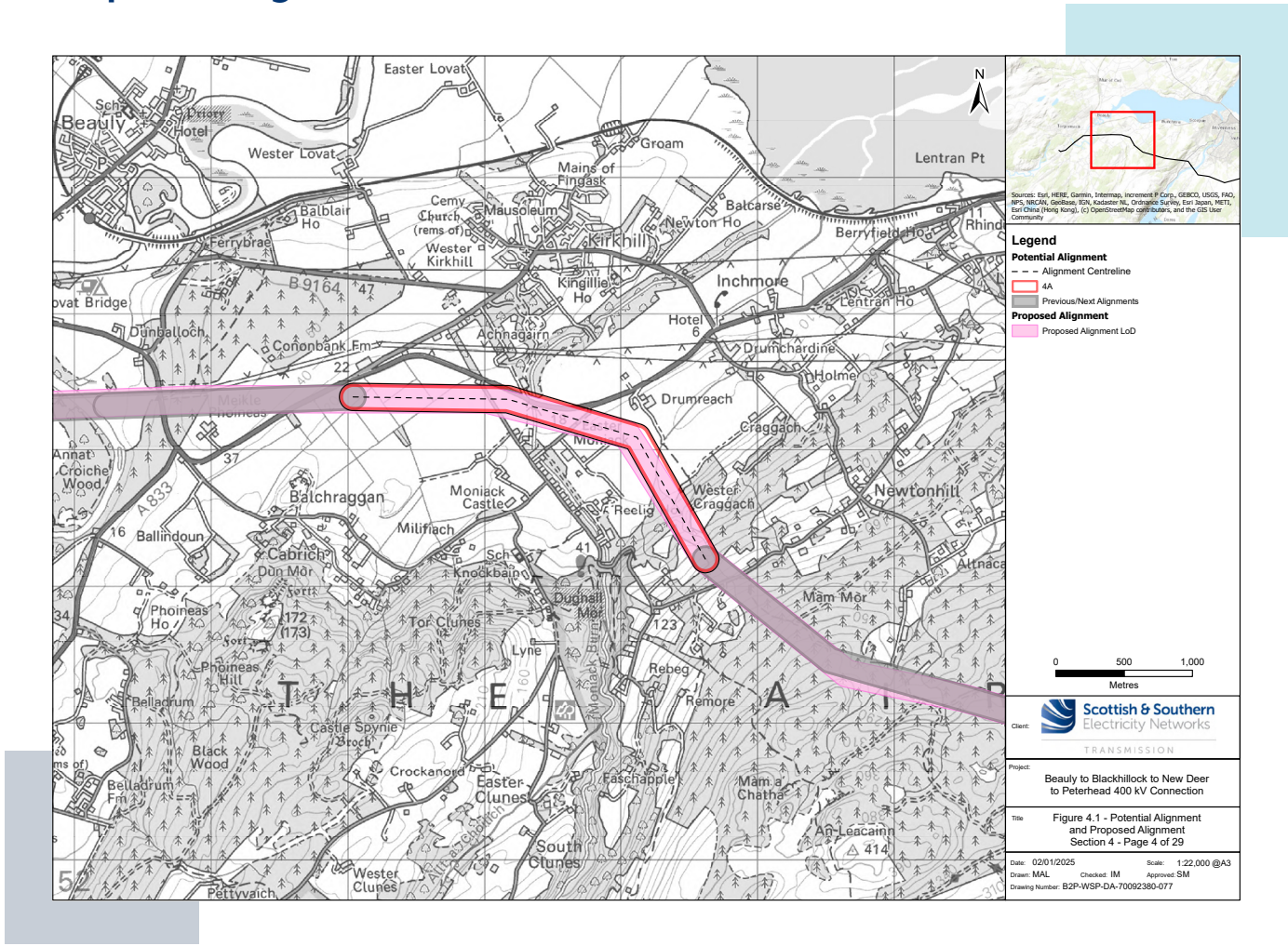


Alignment Section 4: Cononbank to Reelig

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

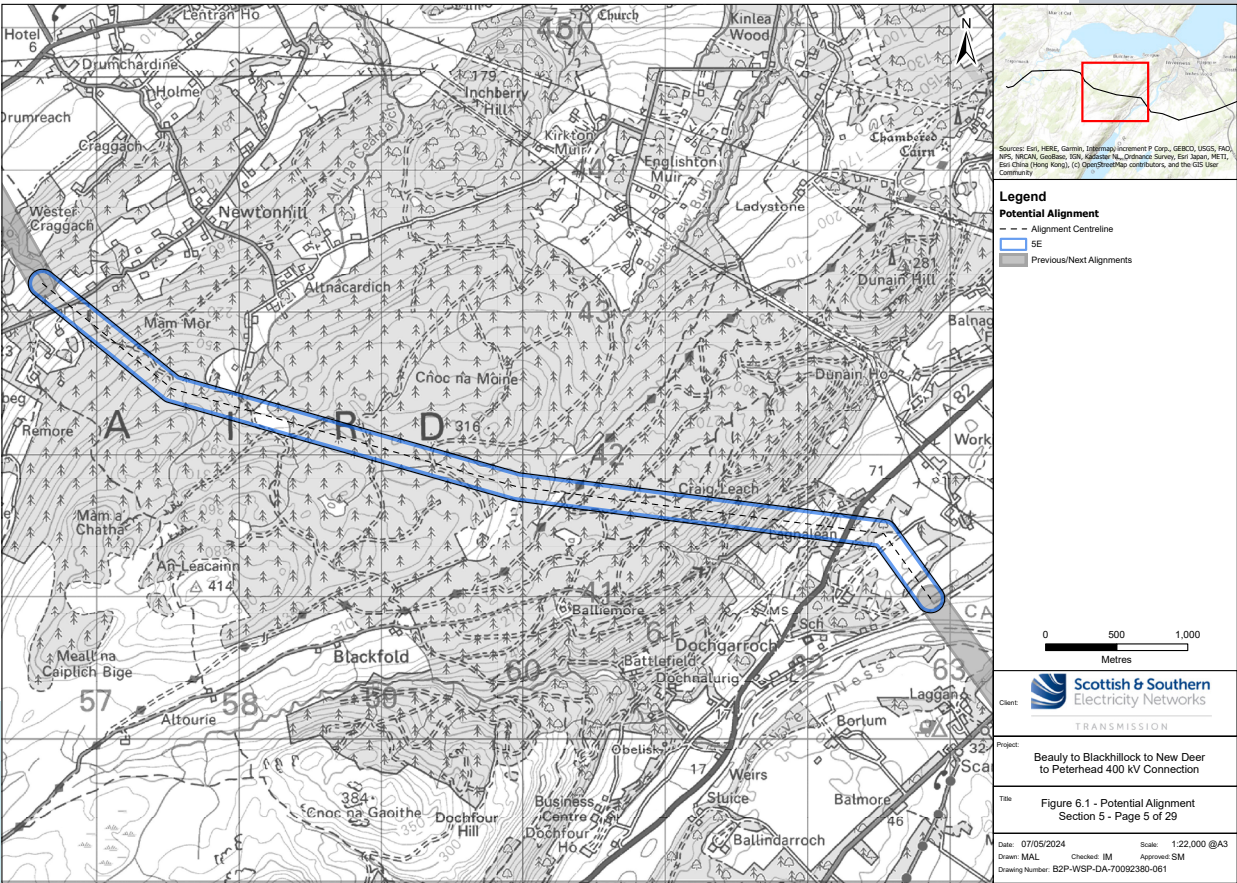


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

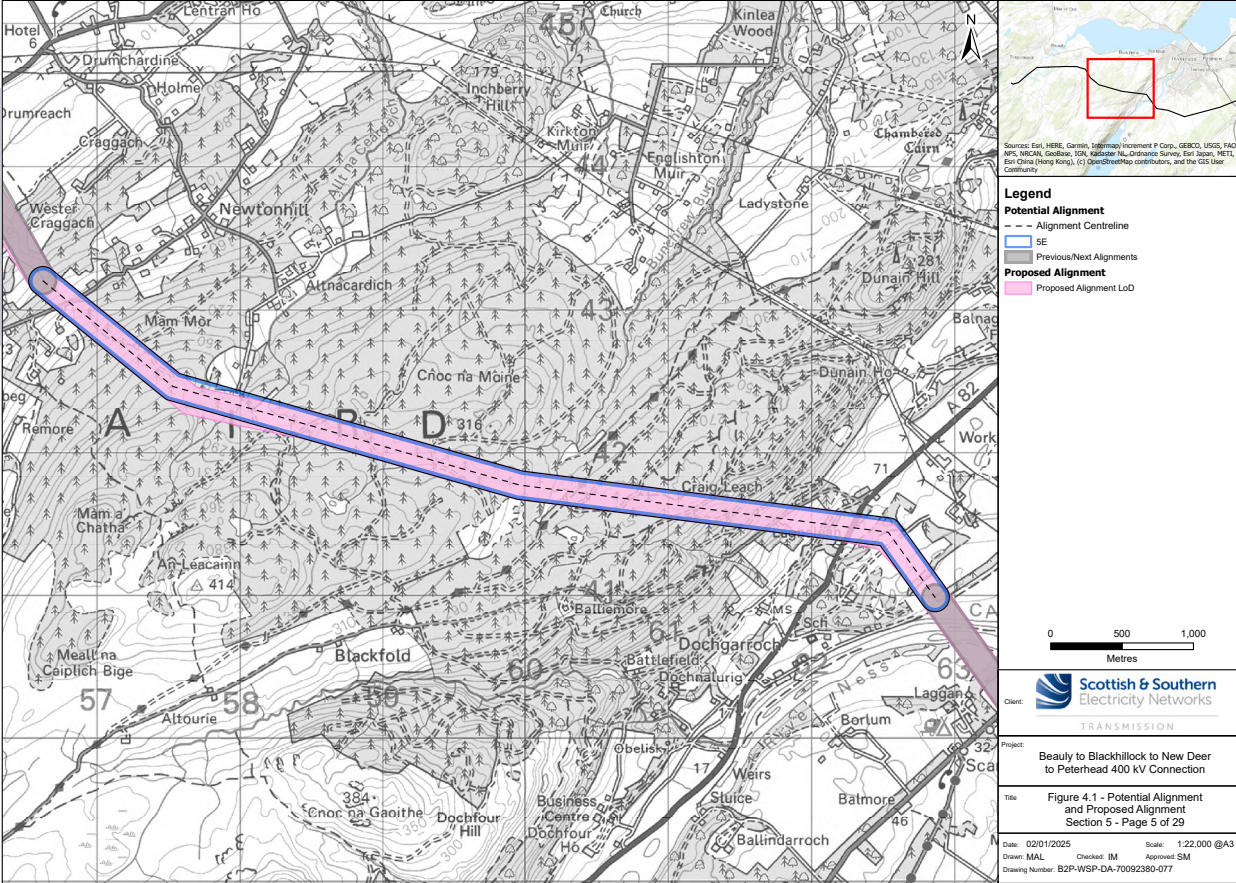


Alignment Section 5: Reelig to Caledonian Canal

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

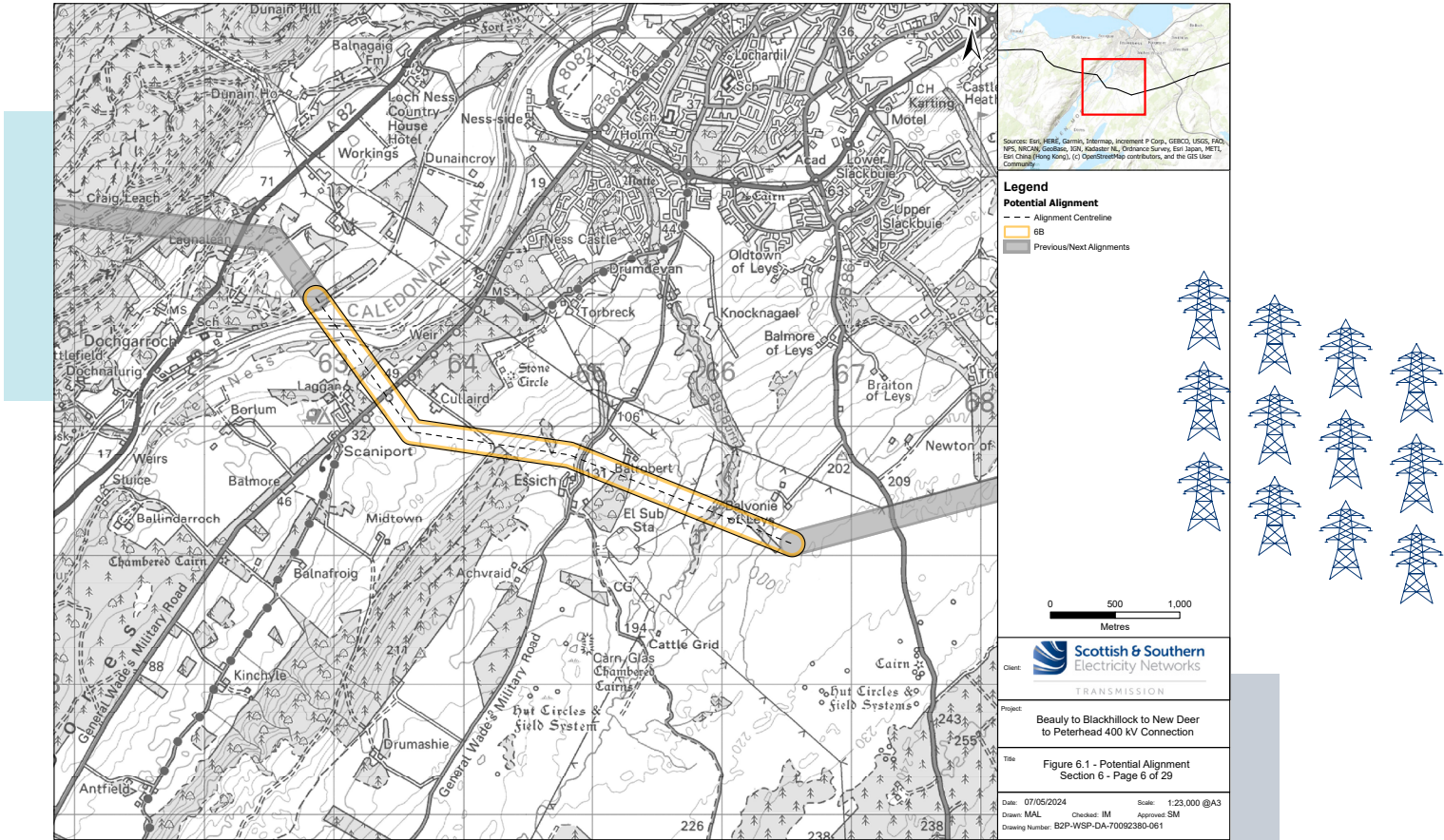


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

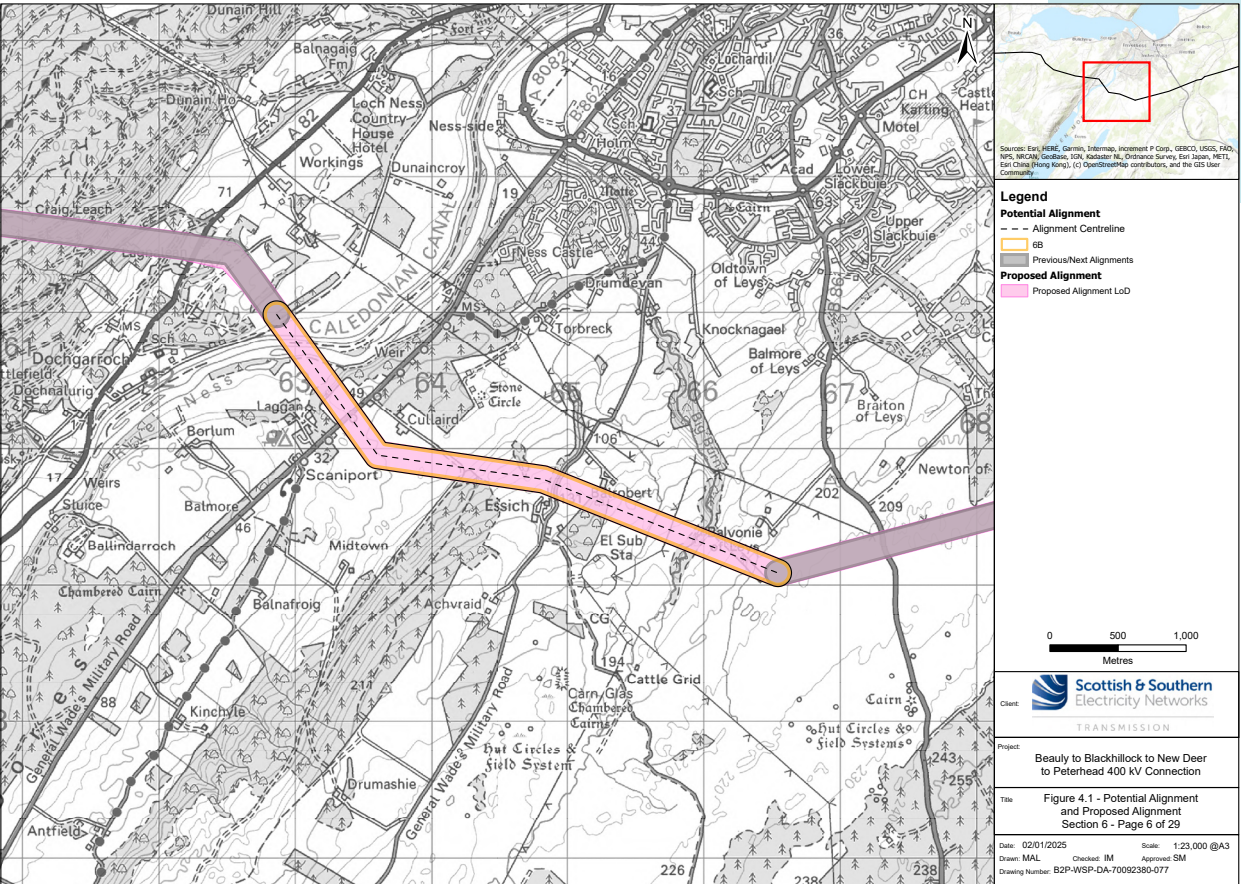


Alignment Section 6: Caledonian Canal to Black Wood of Leys

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024



Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 3 (Alignment Section 7): A9 and River Nairn crossing

What we presented

Feedback received

Response to feedback

Explanation of decision



Alignment Section 7
(Black Wood of Leys to
Meall Mor): Potential
Alignment 7A



Within Alignment Section 7 concerns were raised about potential visual impacts of towers positioned in the vicinity of the A9 crossing point, potential impacts to the setting of Scheduled Monuments (including Daviot Cottage, Mains of Daviot Farm, ring cairn and stone circle and Daviot Castle), and potential impacts to Culloden Battlefield.



Potential for impacts on Culloden Battlefield is one of the primary concerns for us in developing an appropriate OHL alignment in this section. Therefore, the Proposed Alignment has been selected to minimise the impacts on the Culloden Battlefield site by running the new OHL in parallel to an existing OHL, with the new towers sitting behind the existing ones.

We will carefully consider tower positioning at the A9 crossing point at the design stage to minimise visual impacts to road users.

In the vicinity of the ring cairn and stone circle at Mains of Daviot, the alignment has been moved slightly further south to avoid the need to fell a small copse of trees to the east of the Scheduled Monument, in order to maintain some screening and break up the views at this location. The option of undergrounding a short section of the existing 275kV OHL is being considered by the design team to reduce the cumulative impacts to the ring cairn and stone circle.



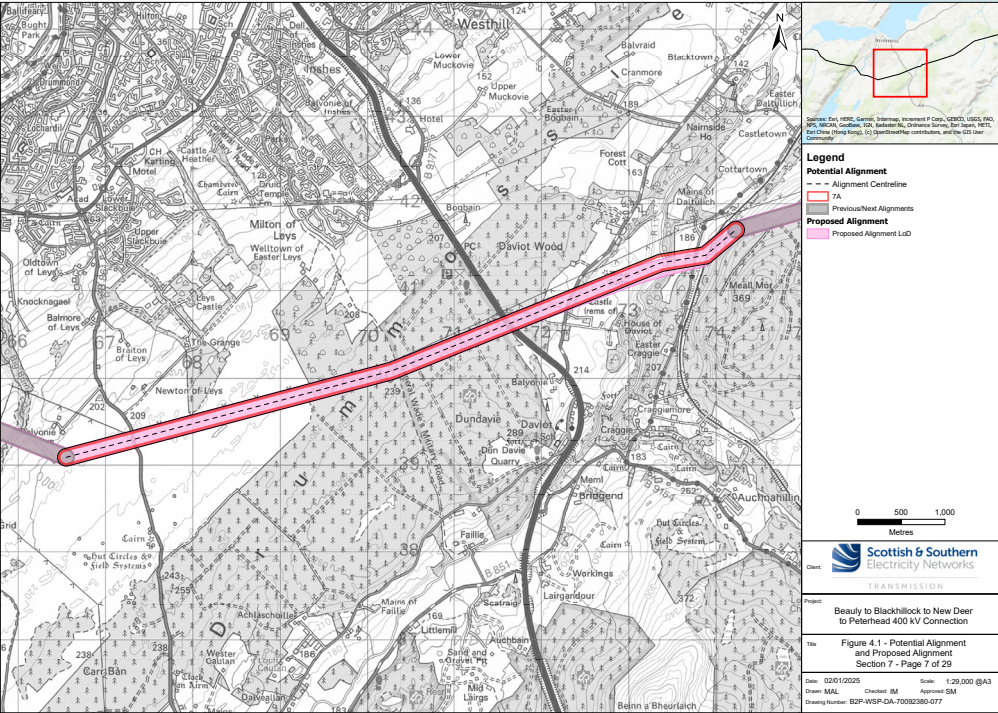
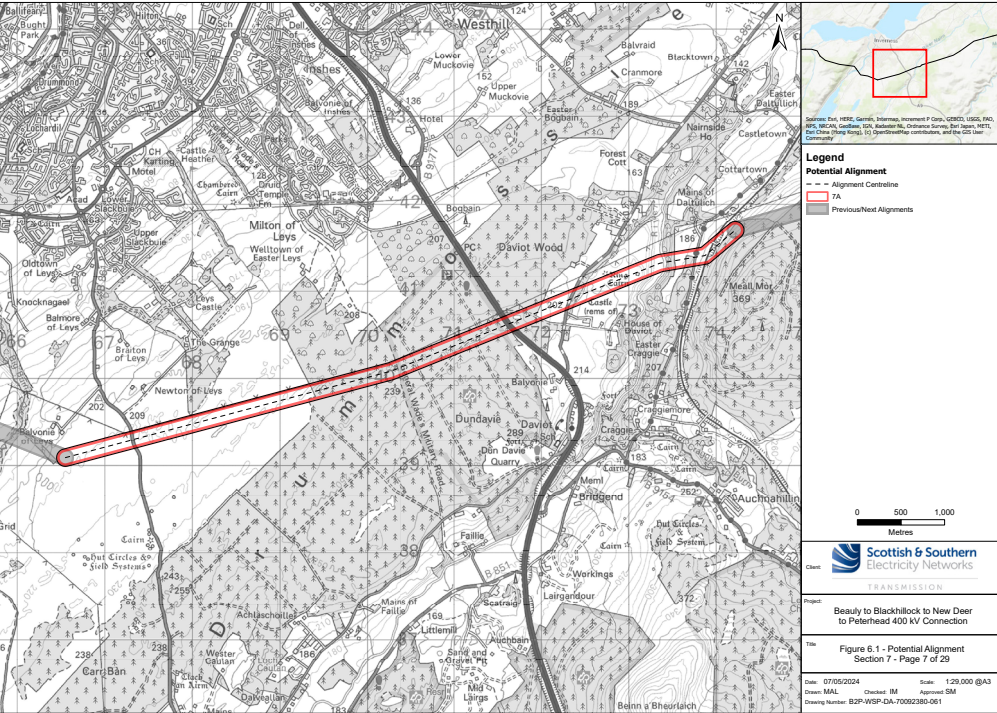
Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some small changes to the Potential Alignment in Section 7, as described below. The Proposed Alignment as shown will be taken forward for EIA and detailed design.

Potential Alignment 7A has been refined slightly at its eastern end to reduce impacts to the ring cairn and stone circle Scheduled Monument.

Alignment Section 7: Black Wood of Leys to Meall Mor

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 4 (Alignment Sections 8 to 11): South of Culloden to Ferness

What we presented



Alignment Section 8 (Meall Mor to Dalcharn): Potential Alignment 8C

Alignment Section 9 (Dalcharn to Clunas Reservoir): Potential Alignment 9A

Alignment Section 10 (Clunas Reservoir to Newlands of Fleenas Wood): Potential Alignment 10B

Alignment Section 11 (Newlands of Fleenas Wood to Cairn Duhie): Potential Alignment 11C

Feedback received



Concerns were raised about potential impacts to Culloden Battlefield, Culloden Muir Conservation Area, Clava Cairns Scheduled Monument and Dalroy and Clava Landforms SSSI, all in Alignment Section 8.

In Sections 8 and 9, requests were received to make some minor changes to the Potential Alignment to reduce impacts on estate activities and native woodland.

In Sections 10 and 11, concerns were raised about potential impacts to the capercaillie population of Darnaway and Lethan Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) due to potential for woodland habitat losses.

Concern was raised about cumulative visual impacts to the cliff walk near Ardclach Bell Tower, with a request for the more southern alignment option (11C) to be reconsidered.

A request was made to move an angle tower in Alignment Section 11 to increase the distance from residential properties.

Response to feedback



In Alignment Section 8 Culloden Battlefield, Culloden Muir Conservation Area and Clava Cairns Scheduled Monument were identified as cultural heritage constraints during the early stages of the route optioneering process, and the Proposed Alignment does not pass through any of these designated areas. The EIA Report will include a detailed cultural heritage assessment that will identify potential effects and their impact on heritage sites and assets, including those around Culloden.

The Proposed Alignment is located approximately 1km from Dalroy and Clava Landforms SSSI and no impacts are anticipated to this site.

We are continuing to engage with NatureScot and RSPB throughout the EIA and design evolution process to identify mitigation measures to protect capercaillie populations.

We recognise the concerns raised about potential cumulative impacts of OHL infrastructure at Ardclach Bell Tower. From a wider landscape and visual perspective, and in terms of minimising heritage impacts on the Ardclach Bell Tower, keeping the two OHLs close together at the crossing of the River Findhorn was considered to be the least impactful option, reducing forestry loss and containing infrastructure within a smaller area.

Feedback was able to be accommodated to increase the distance from two properties in Section 11. The Proposed Alignment is equidistant between two properties.

Explanation of decision



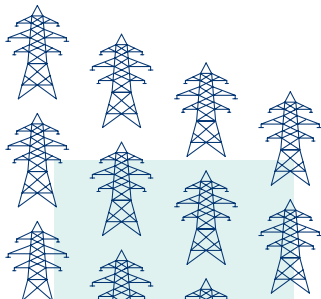
Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 8, 9, 10 and 11, as described below. The Proposed Alignment as shown will be taken forward to the next stage.

The Proposed Alignment has been moved slightly north from the Potential Alignment (8C) to reduce impacts to existing estate activities. The Proposed Alignment sits on slightly lower ground, reducing the potential landscape and visual effects further, and also avoids some areas of deeper peat identified through peat probing surveys in this area.

Potential Alignment 9A has been refined slightly at its western end to reduce impacts to veteran broadleaved trees identified through surveys in this area. Potential Alignment 9A has also been widened slightly near Rehiran, to enable micro-siting of tower positions to avoid native woodland once we have completed further peat surveys in this area.

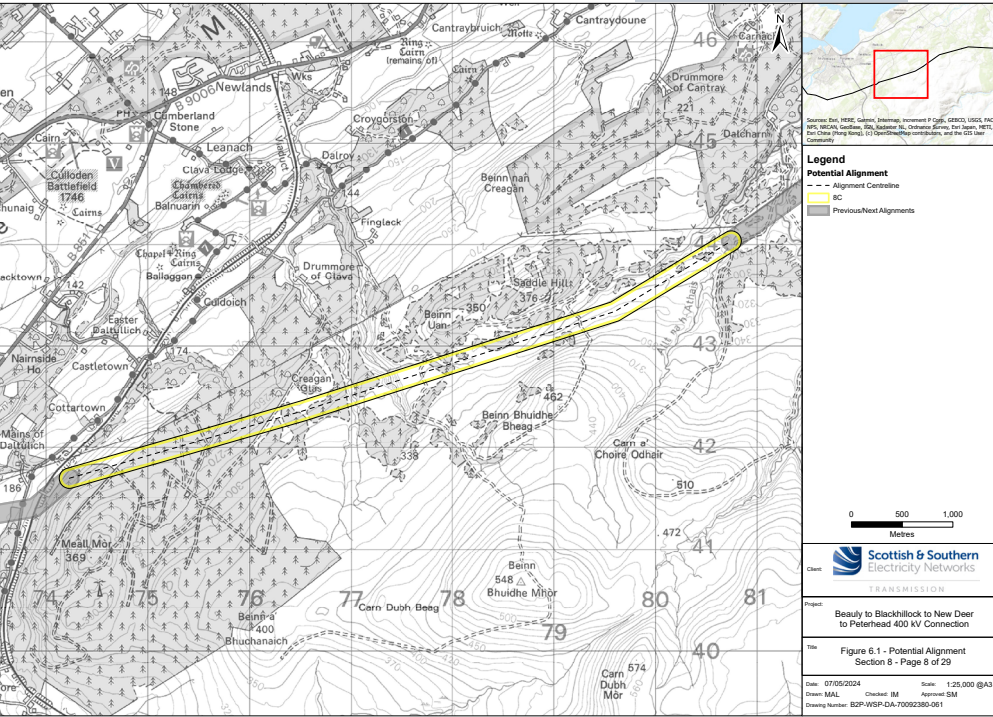
Potential Alignment 10B has been refined at its eastern end due to a slight change in an angle tower position following engineering surveys, to increase the distance from a nearby watercourse.

Potential Alignment 11C has been slightly refined to the east of the River Findhorn to increase separation distance from residential properties.

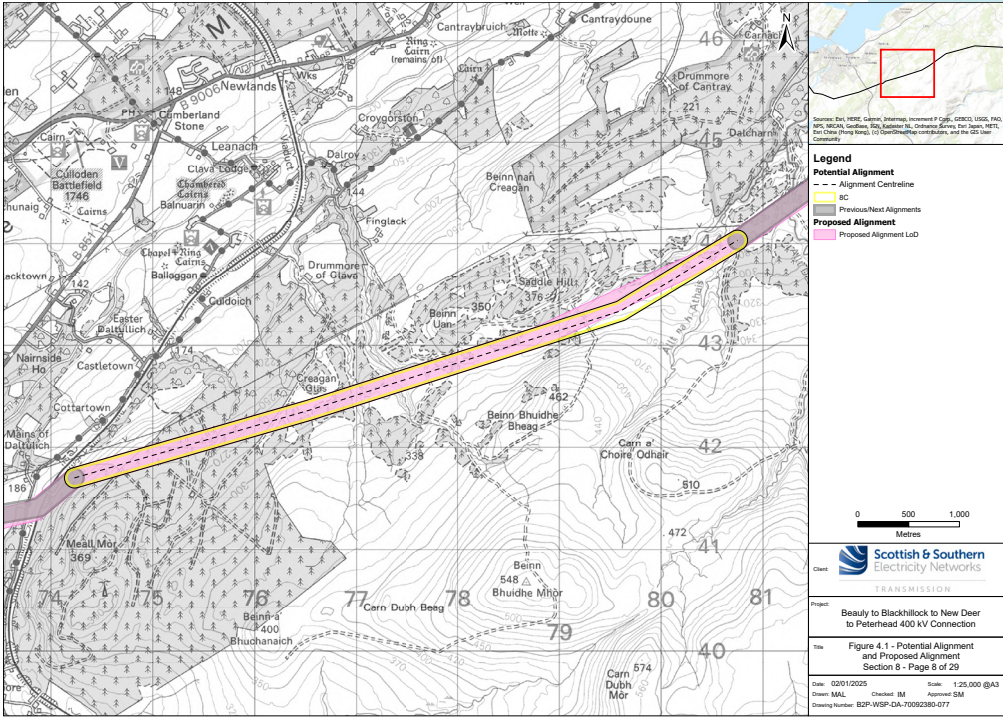


Alignment Section 8: Meall Mor to Dalcharn

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

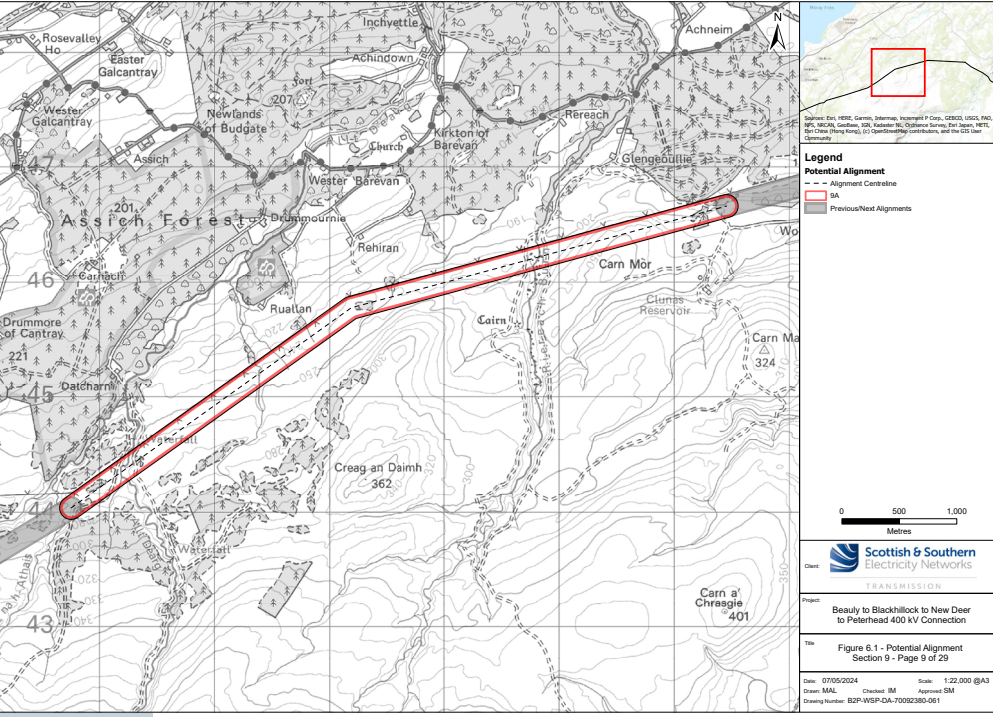


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

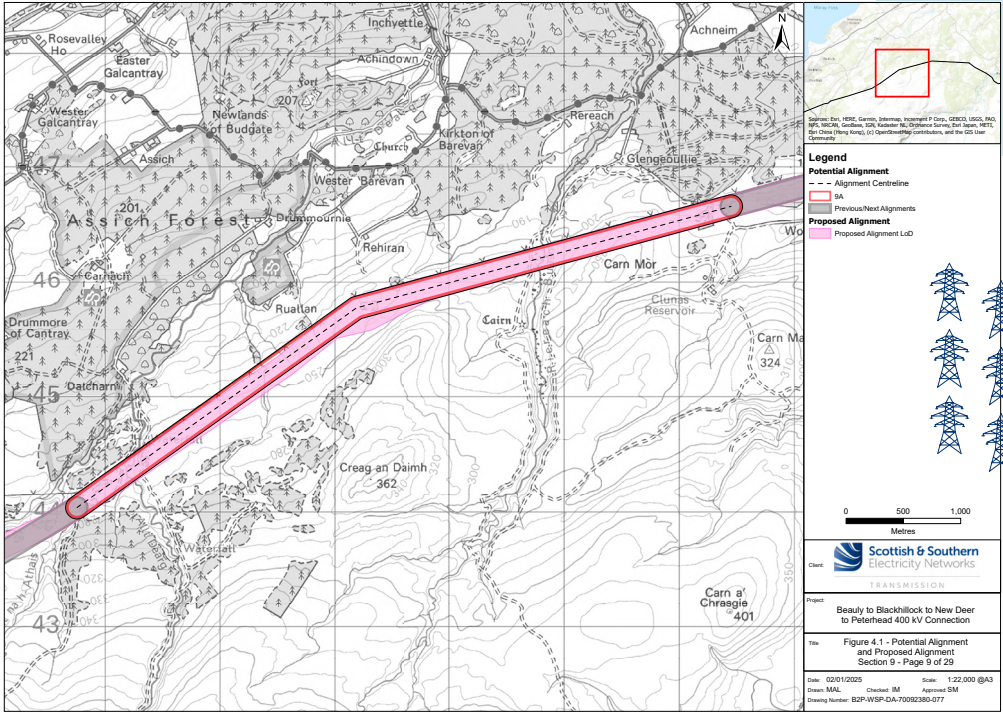


Alignment Section 9: Dalcharn to Clunas Reservoir

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

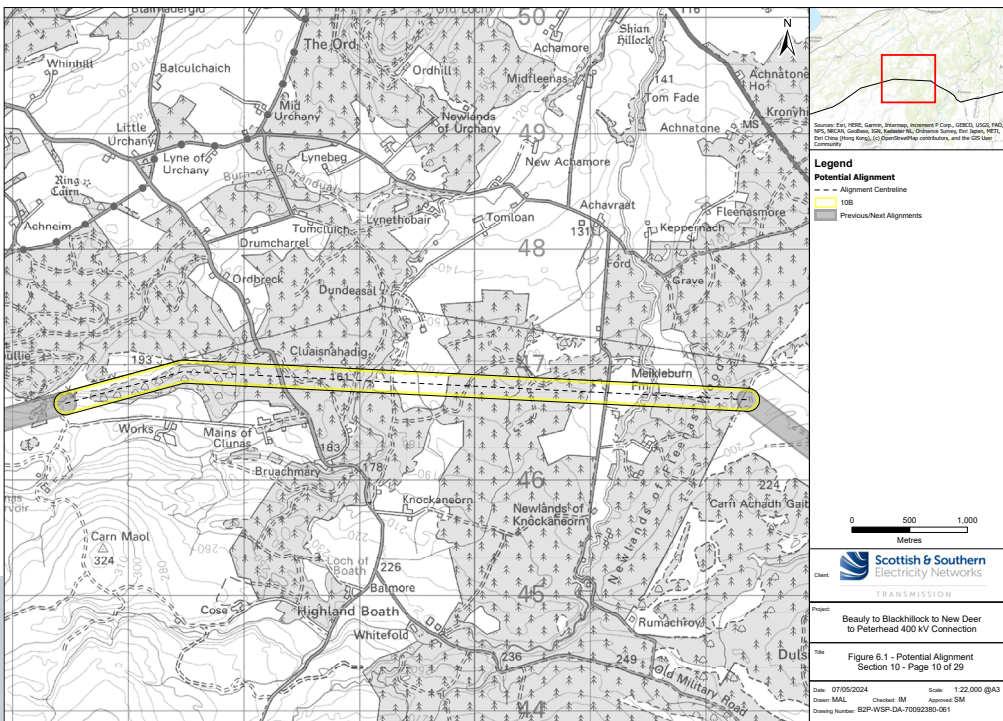


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

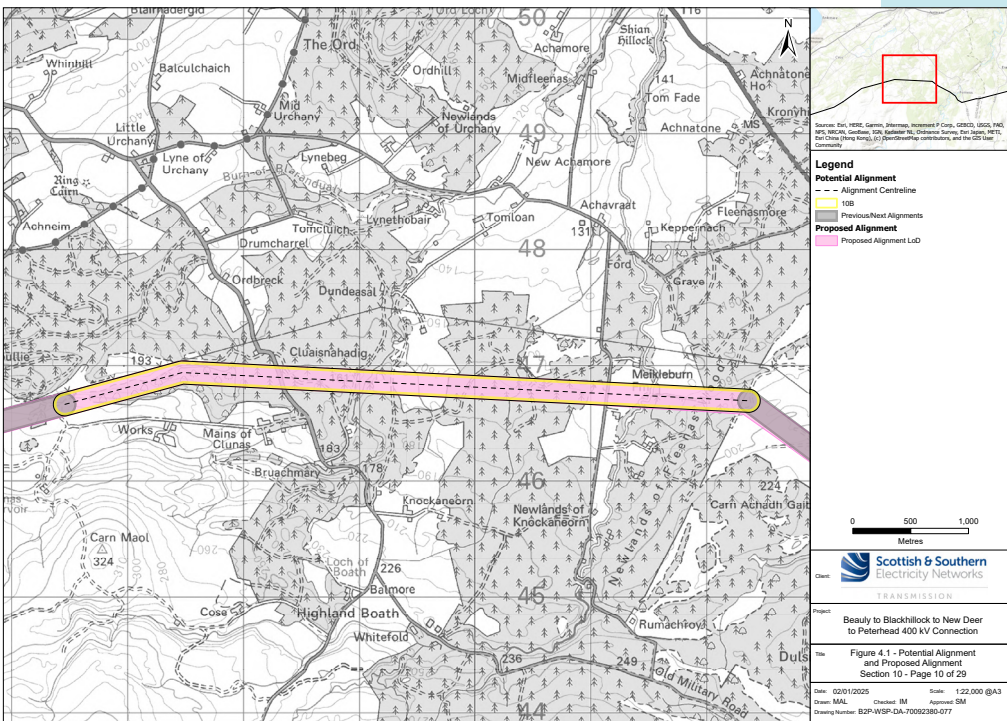


Alignment Section 10: Clunas Reservoir to Newlands of Fleenas Wood

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

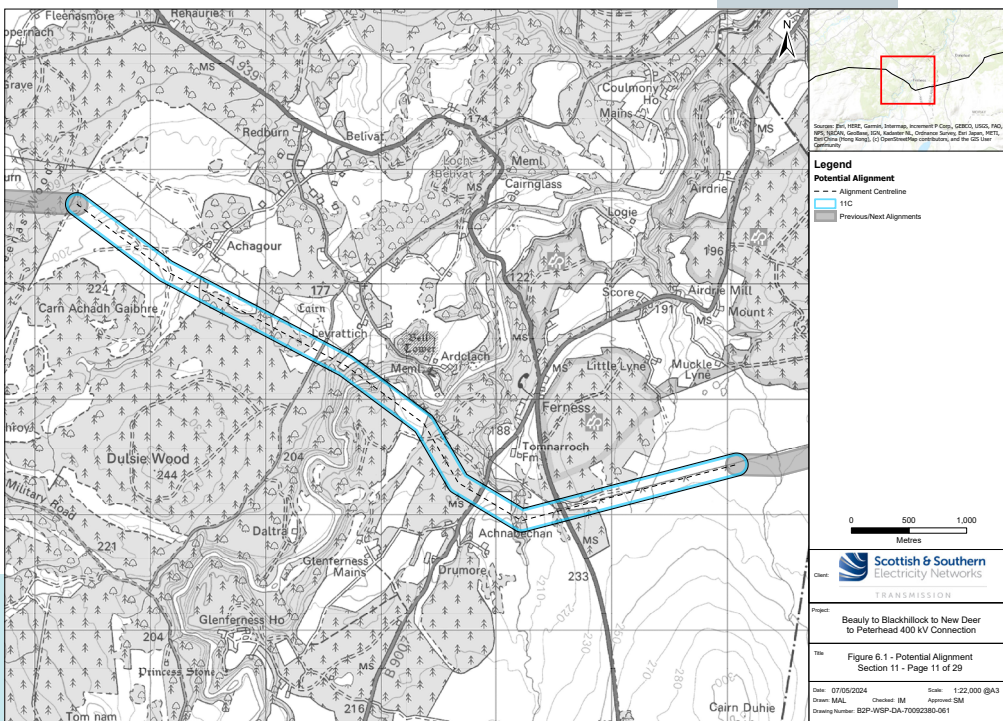


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

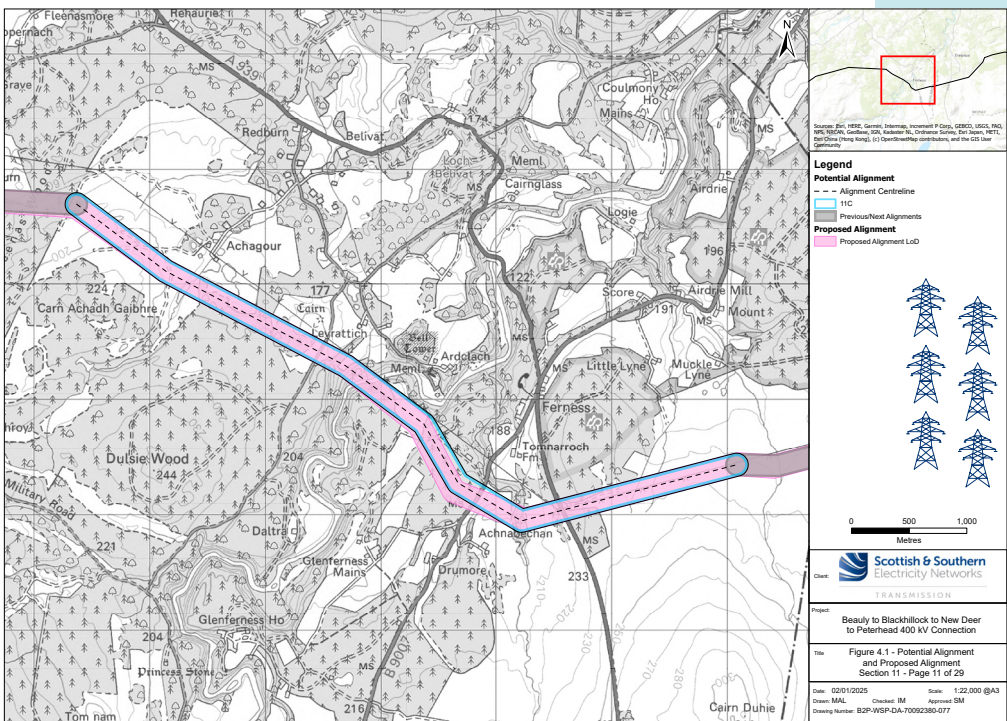


Alignment Section 11: Newlands of Fleenas Wood to Cairn Duhie

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024



Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 5 (Alignment Section 12): Ferness to south of Forres

What we presented

Feedback received

Response to feedback

Explanation of decision



Alignment Section 12
(Cairn Duhie to Johnstrie):
Potential Alignment 12A

Within Alignment Section 12 concerns were raised about potential impacts to historical sites, such as Dunphail House and Castle.

Support was received from a member of the public for the Potential Alignment 12A in preference over the alternative alignment options, as it closely follows the existing OHL and minimises impacts to the environment, historical sites and residential areas.

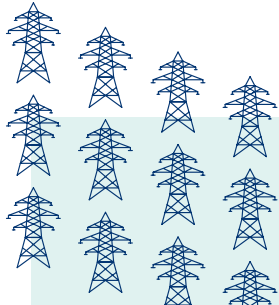
Historic Environment Scotland recommended the preparation of visualisations to further inform the assessment of cultural heritage designations and assets within Alignment Section 12.

The potential for impacts on Dunphail House and Castle have been considered throughout the routing and design process. The Proposed Alignment has been selected and designed to minimise the impacts on the house, with the result that there is limited to no visibility of the towers from the house.

Further assessment on the noted heritage designations and assets including accompanying visualisations (as appropriate) will be provided as part of the cultural heritage assessment presented within the EIA Report.

The Potential Alignment 12A will be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment for detailed design.

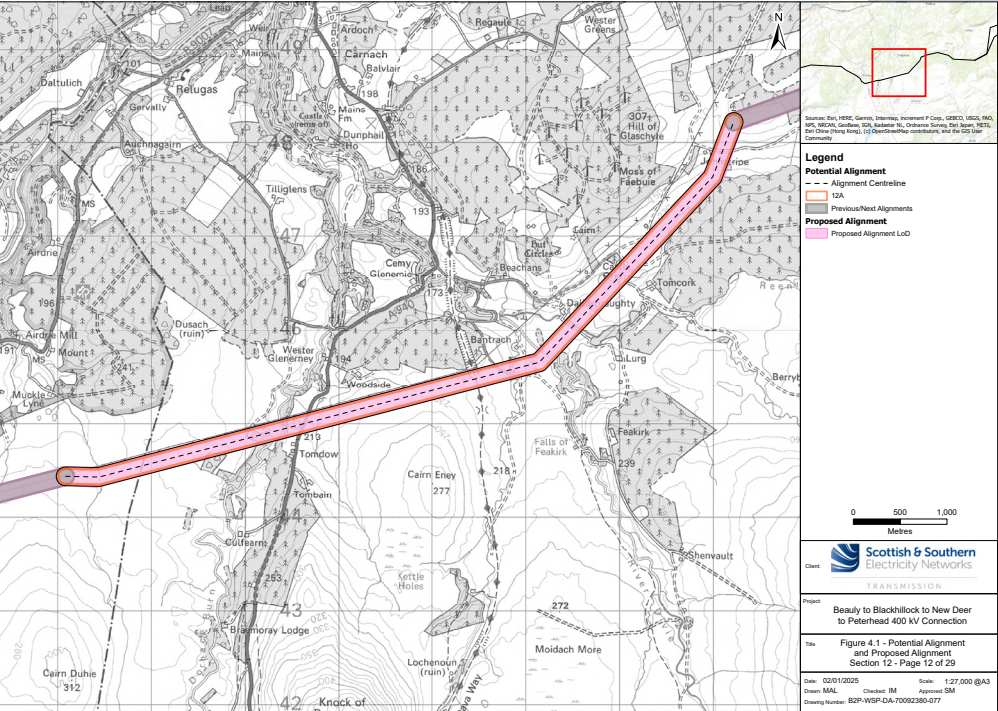
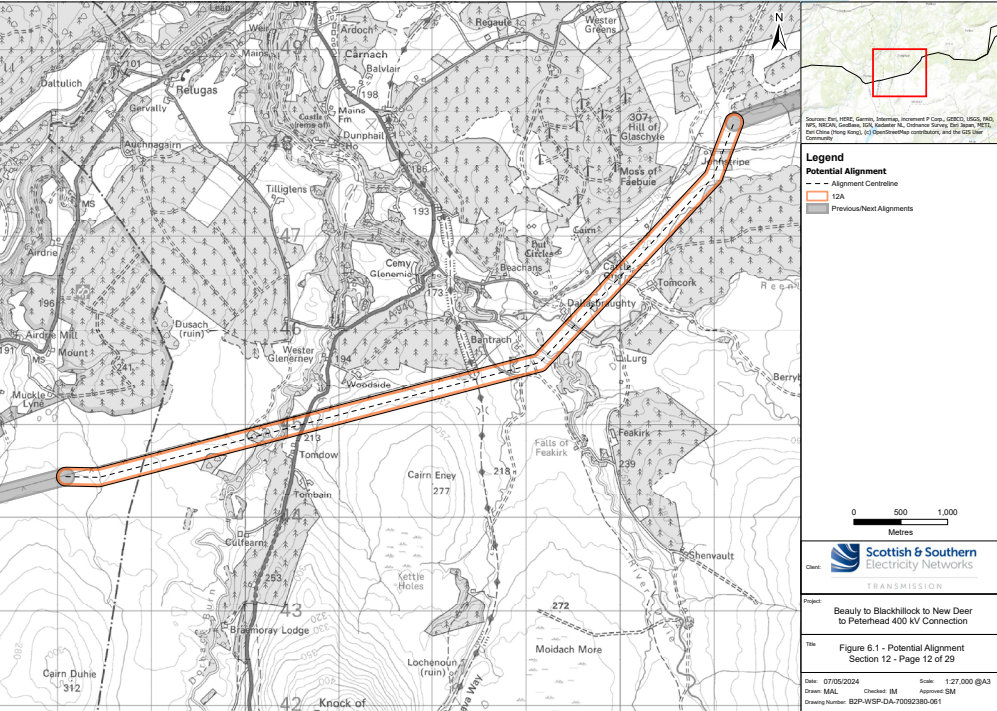
No changes have been made to Potential Alignment 12A and this will be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment, as it is the least constrained option from both an environmental and engineering perspective and is also the lowest capital cost option.



Alignment Section 12: Cairn Duhie to Johnstrie

Potential Alignment presented in May/June

Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 6 (Alignment Sections 13 and 14): South of Forres to Kellas

What we presented



Feedback received



Response to feedback



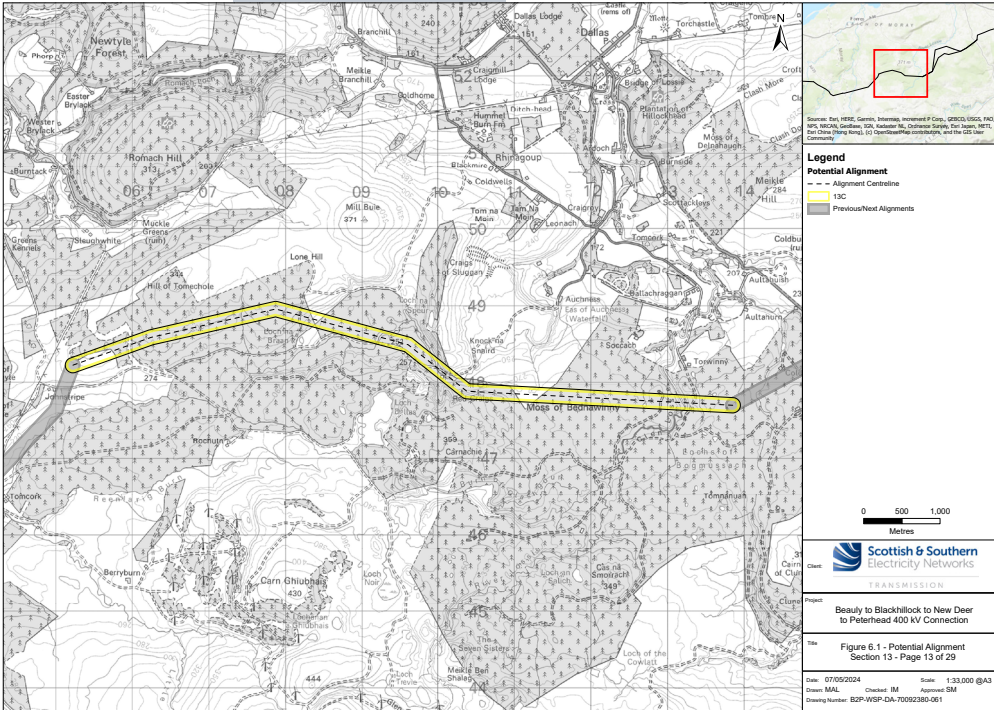
Explanation of decision



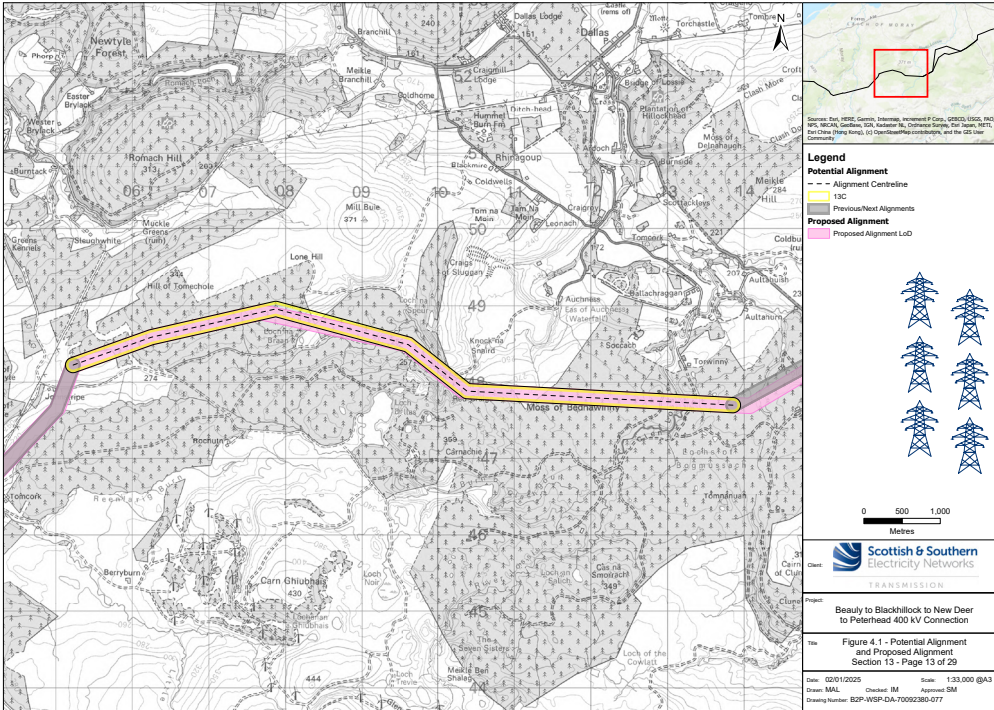
<p>Alignment Section 13 (Johnstripe to Moss of Bednawinny): Potential Alignment 13C</p> <p>Alignment Section 14 (Moss of Bednawinny to Glenlatterach Reservoir): Potential Alignment 14D or 14C</p>	<p>In Section 13 a request was received to move the Potential Alignment to avoid impacting future development potential in this area.</p> <p>In Section 14 concern was raised about the proximity of the Potential Alignment to existing wind farms as this could constrain future wind farm development. A number of requests were received to refine the alignment in Section 14 relating to protecting trees, avoiding wind farm access tracks and to avoid impacts on emergency telecoms links.</p> <p>NatureScot highlighted the presence of Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI within Alignment 14C.</p> <p>There was some confusion over the two alternative routes being proposed in Section 14, due to the planning application for Kellas Drum Wind Farm.</p> <p>In Section 14 (and Section 15) concerns were raised by Scottish Water about potential impacts on Glenlatterach reservoir, which supplies Glenlatterach Water Treatment Works.</p>	<p>Where possible we have refined the Proposed Alignment to accommodate requests within feedback.</p> <p>In Section 14 the Proposed Alignment takes account of existing wind farm turbine positions to ensure required clearance distances are maintained, as well as proposed wind farm developments currently within the consenting process. The Proposed Alignment does not impact the native tree belt.</p> <p>We have taken on board comments from NatureScot and can confirm that it will be possible to span the Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI without impacting on the SSSI and avoiding tree removal in this area.</p> <p>The application for Kellas Wind Farm is currently being considered by the Scottish Government. In order to progress with the alignment design, two options are being proposed which take account of the current application; one which will be taken forward if consent is granted for the wind farm and an alternative which will be progressed if consent is not granted.</p> <p>The Glenlatterach reservoir drinking water protection area will be taken into account during tower and access track design. Where necessary, additional mitigation will be agreed with Scottish Water to minimise potential impacts.</p>	<p>Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 13 and 14, as described below which will be taken forward to the next stage as the Proposed Alignment.</p> <p>Potential Alignment 13C has been refined slightly to the south of Mill Buie to reduce impacts to future development potential.</p> <p>Either Potential Alignment 14C or 14D will be progressed, depending on the outcome of the consent application for the Kellas Wind Farm. Both have been refined at the western end to increase separation from a residential property, reduce impacts to native woodland, avoid impacting on emergency telecommunications links and avoid crossing a wind farm access route.</p>
---	--	---	--

Alignment Section 13: Johnstripe to Moss of Bednawinny

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

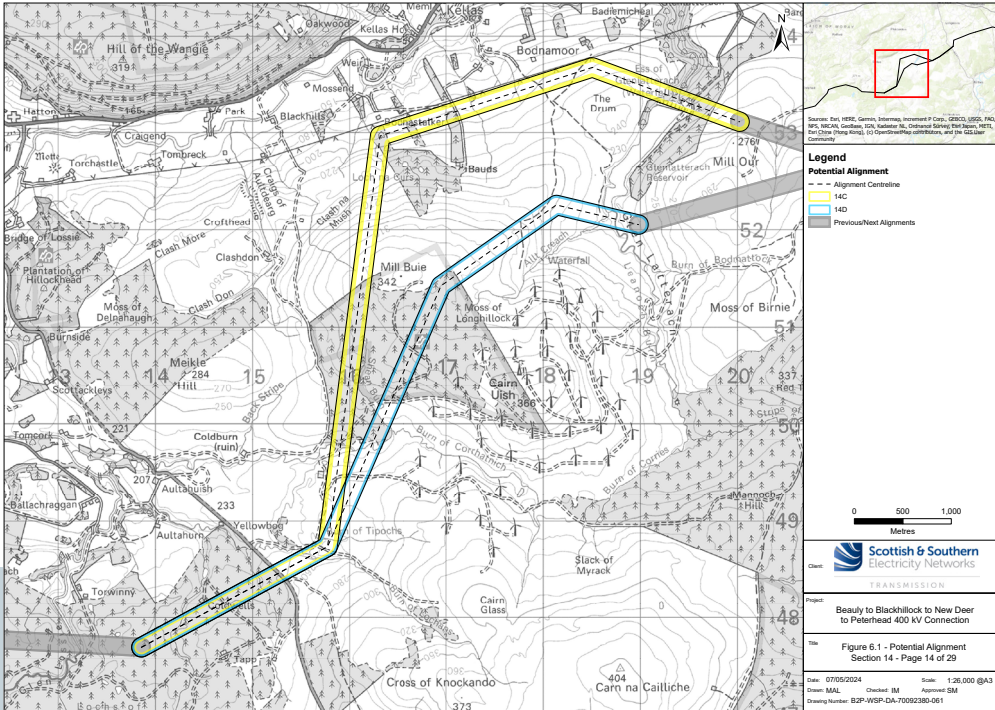


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

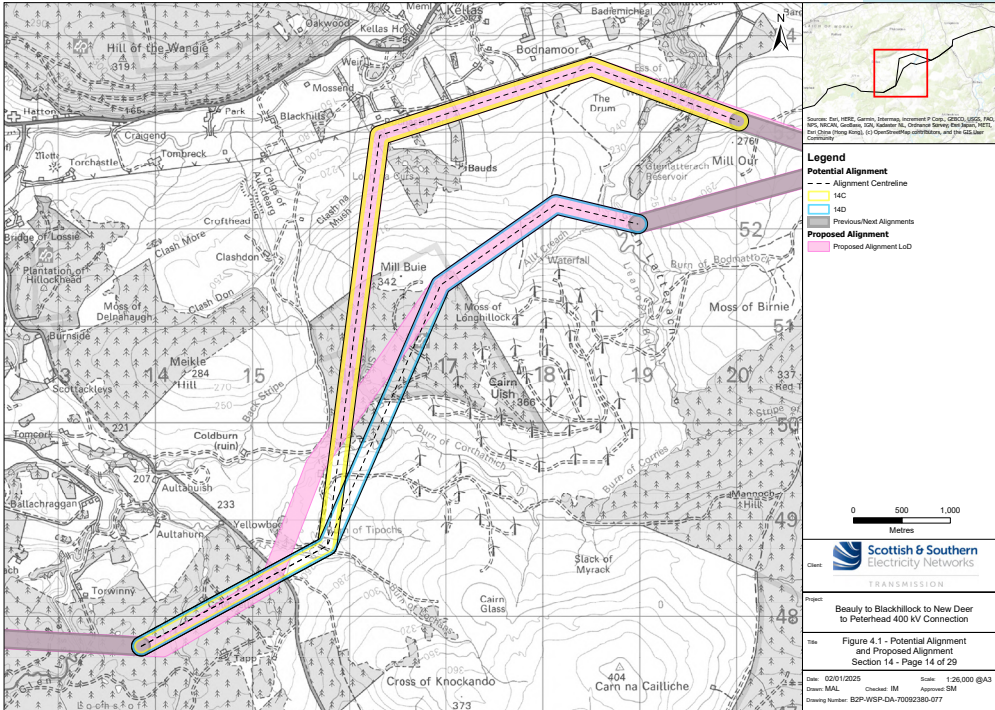


Alignment Section 14: Moss of Bednawinny to Glenlatterach Reservoir

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024



Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 7 (Alignment Sections 15 and 16): Kellas to Teindland

What we presented



Alignment Section 15 (Glenlatterach Reservoir to Glen of Rothes): Potential Alignment 15B or 15C

Alignment Section 16 (Glen of Rothes to Teindland): Potential Alignment 16A

Feedback received



In Section 15 concerns were raised about potential impacts to public walking routes and the Highland Gliding Club.

Scottish Water raised concerns about potential impacts on Glenlatterach reservoir, which supplies Glenlatterach Water Treatment Works.

In Section 16 Moray Council highlighted that the Potential Alignment is near to Blackhills House Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL) and NatureScot noted Coleburn Pastures SSSI is close to the Potential Alignment and will require careful consideration.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) requested visualisations of Blackhills House and Bogton Stone Circle to be included as part of the cultural heritage assessment.

Response to feedback



As part of the ongoing evolution of the Proposed Development we will undertake a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and finalise tower positions which will take account of identified concerns such as impacts to recreation and tourism, landscape and visual impact as well as consideration of cultural heritage and environmental sensitivities. Visualisations will accompany the application for consent.

Consultation with Scottish Water and NatureScot is ongoing to agree mitigations to minimise potential impacts to Glenlatterach reservoir and Coleburn Pastures SSSI.

Discussions have been ongoing with the Highland Gliding Club and it is understood that the club would be impacted by the Proposed Alignment however due to surrounding residential and topographical constraints any movement of the alignment in this area is very constrained. Further discussions will continue to take place through the detailed design stage.

Explanation of decision



Following further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 15 and 16, as described below and this will be taken forward to the next stage as the Proposed Alignment.

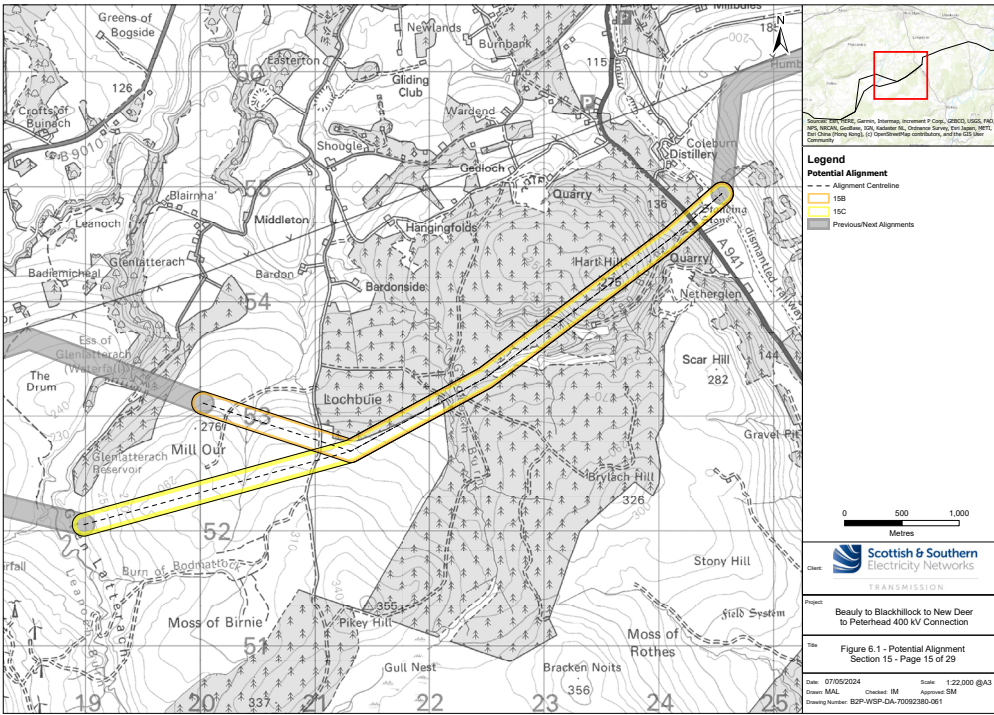
Potential Alignments 15B and 16A have been refined slightly due to minor changes to angle tower positions following engineering surveys.

No changes have been made to Potential Alignment 15C as any movement of the alignment in this area is very constrained due to surrounding residential and topographical constraints.

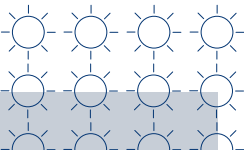
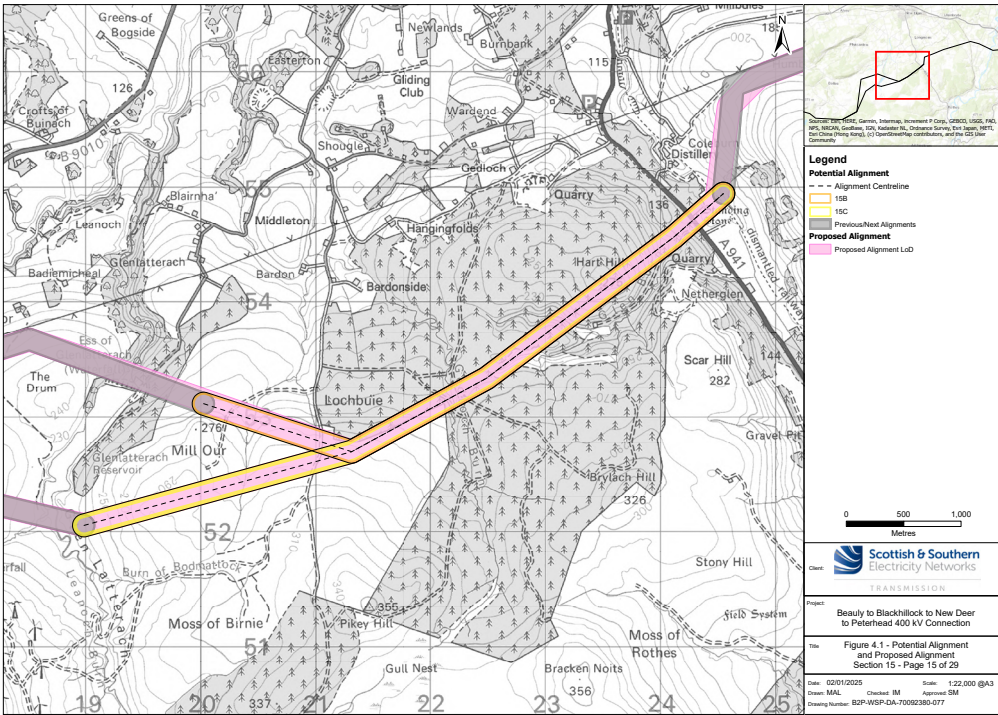
Either 15B or 15C will be progressed, depending on the outcome of the consent application for the Kellas Wind Farm.

Alignment Section 15: Glenlatterach Reservoir to Glen of Rothes

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

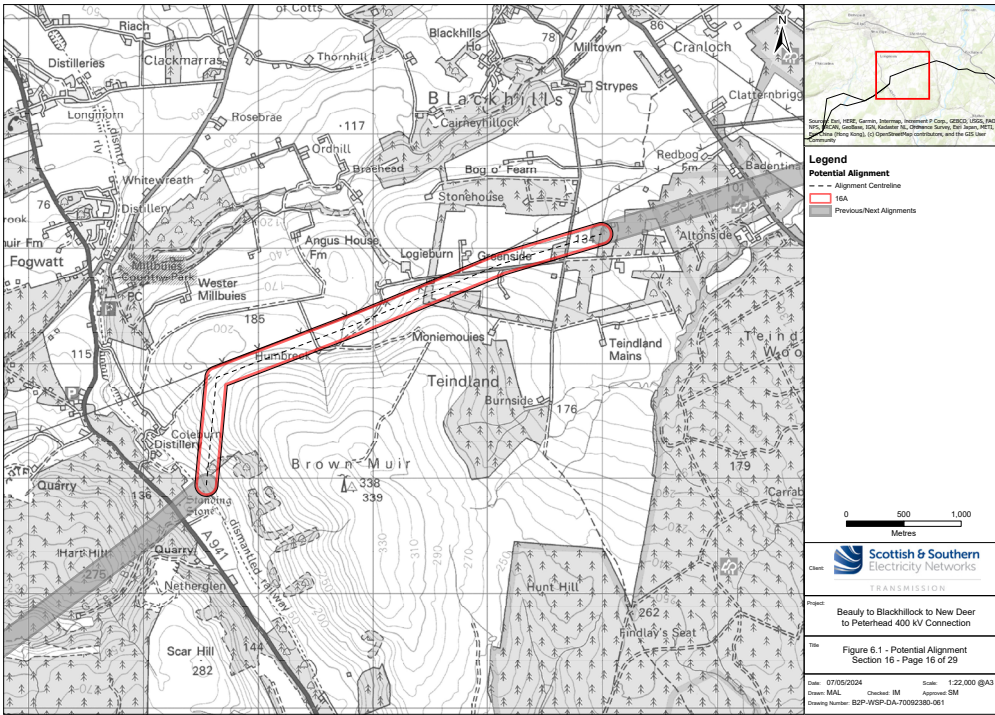


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

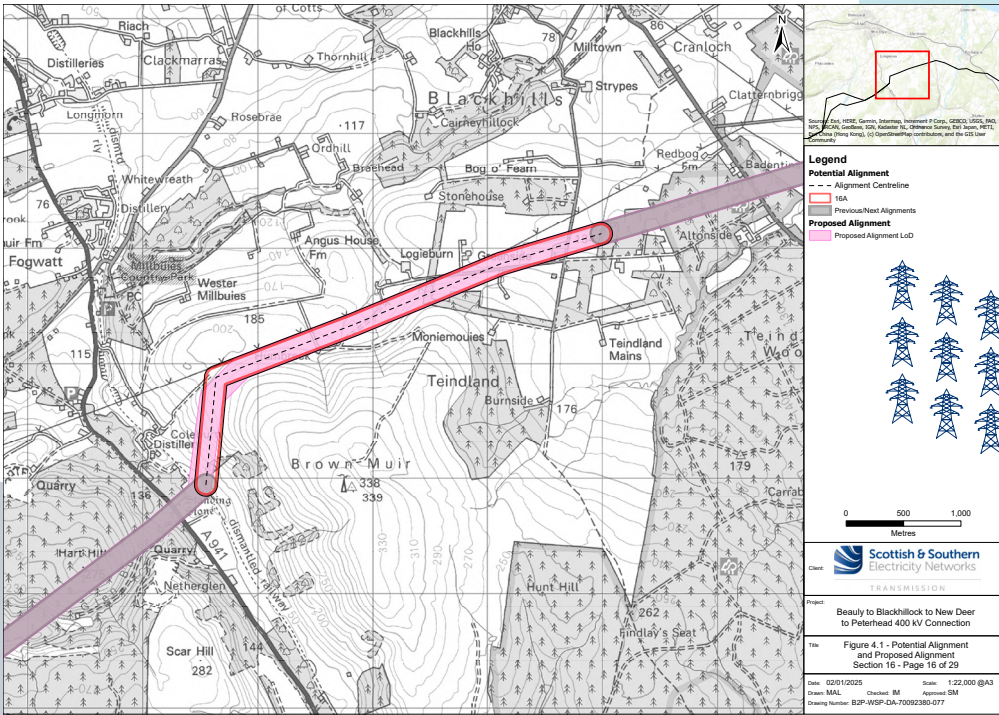


Alignment Section 16: Glen of Rothes to Teindland

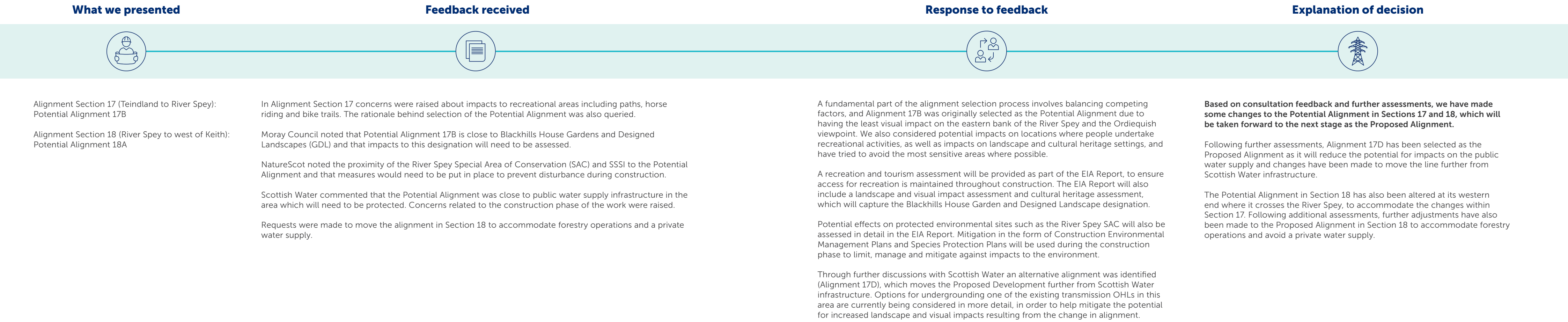
Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024



Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

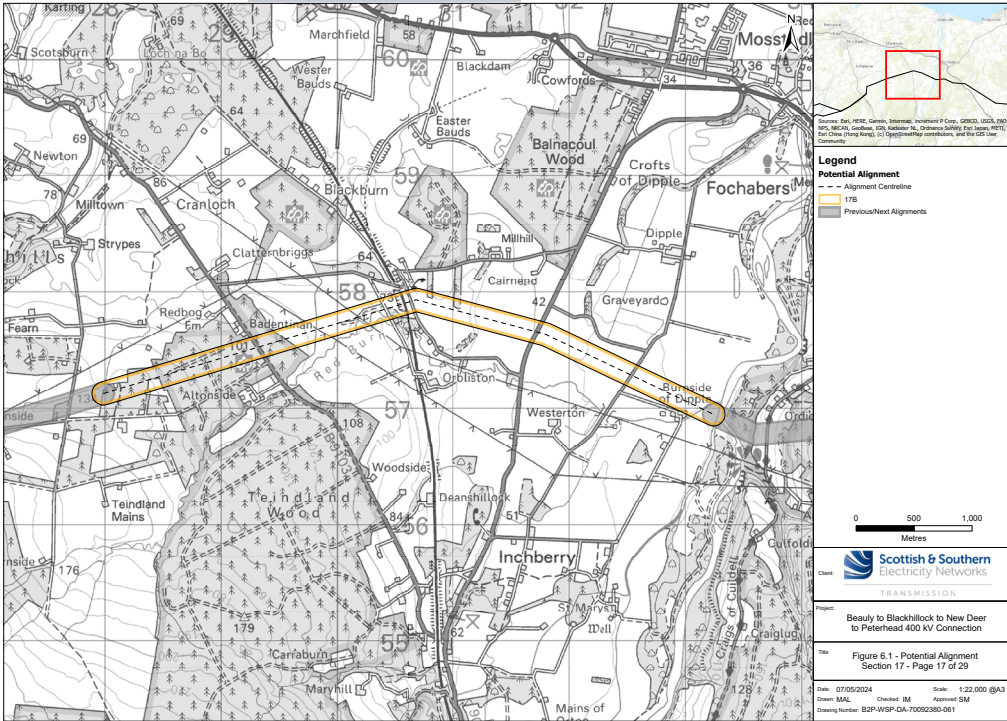


Route Section 8 (Alignment Sections 17 and 18): Teindland to Keith

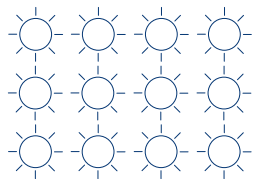
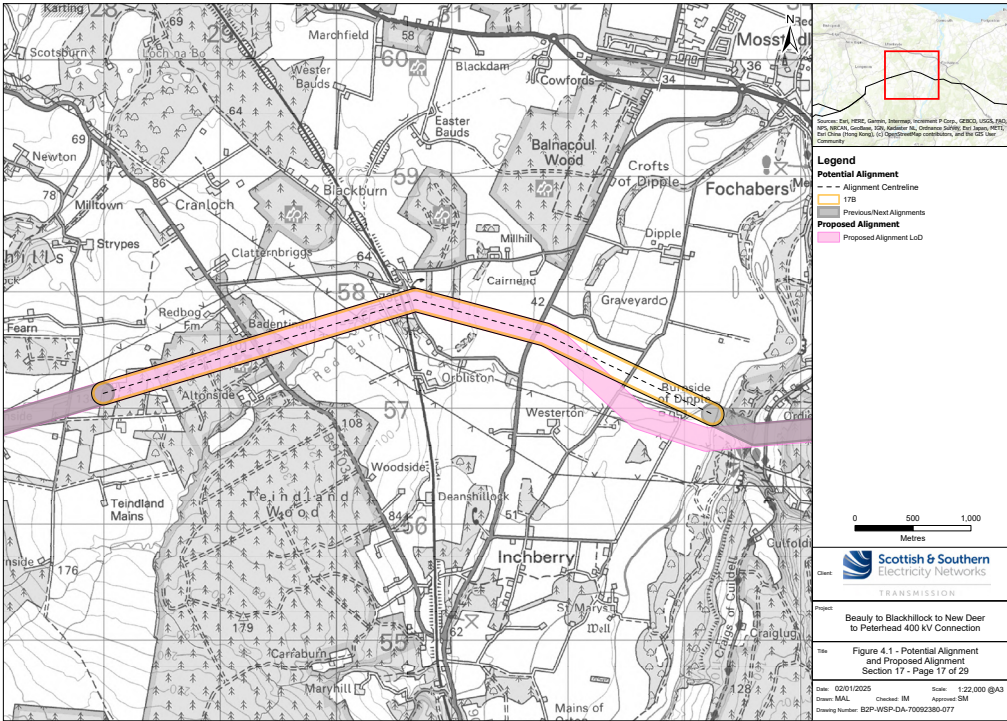


Alignment Section 17: Teindland to River Spey

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

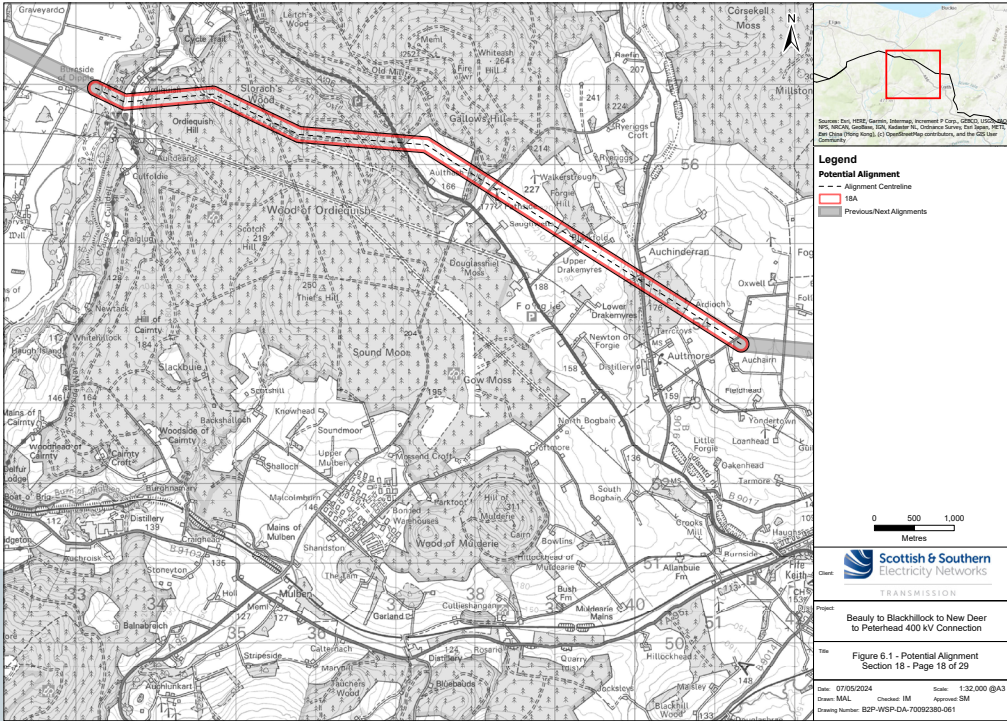


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

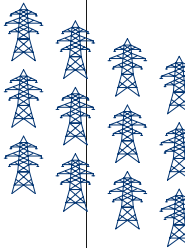
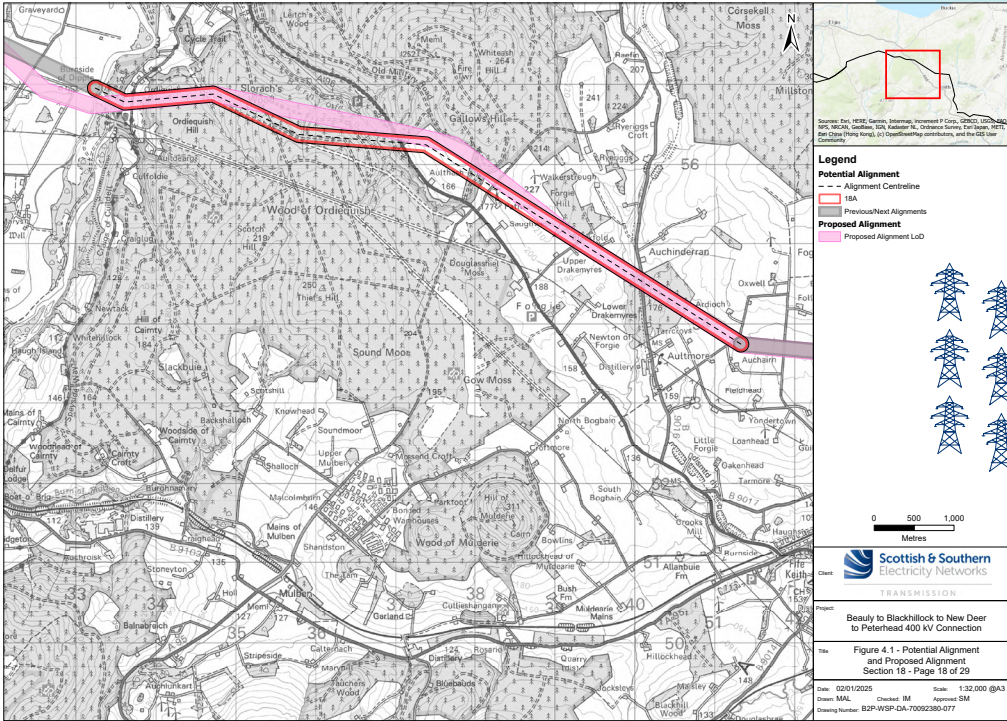


Alignment Section 18: River Spey to west of Keith





Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024







Proposed Alignment to be taken forward







Route Section 9 (Alignment Sections 19 to 24): Keith to south of Turriff

What we presented	Feedback received	Response to feedback	Explanation of decision
			
<p>Alignment Section 19 (West of Keith to Coachford substation): Potential Alignment 19C, A1 and B1</p> <p>Alignment Section 20 (Coachford substation to Whitehill): Potential Alignment 20D</p> <p>Alignment Section 21 (Whitehill to Knightsmill): Potential Alignment 21D</p> <p>Alignment Section 22 (Knightsmill to Frendraught): Potential Alignment 22D</p> <p>Alignment Section 23 (Frendraught to Hill of Carlinraig): Potential Alignment 23E</p> <p>Alignment Section 24 (Hill of Carlinraig to south of Turriff): Potential Alignment 24C</p>	<p>In Section 19 a request was made to move the Proposed Development to enable licenced dredging operations of the River Isla to continue.</p> <p>A suggestion was made to route the Proposed Development south of Keith to avoid a woodland and badger setts.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that the landscape to the southeast of Keith could become a wirescape, with a further suggestion that one of the diversions of the existing Blackhillock to Rothienorman OHL into Coachford substation should be moved to the southeast side of the Balloch Hill.</p> <p>In Section 20 concerns related to the potential for impacts to businesses, wildlife and livestock, the Garrowmuir Burn and the use of single-track roads for construction traffic. Close proximity of the Proposed Development to Auchanachie Castle was also raised, with requests received to move it further from the castle and a separate request to position the Proposed Development through Garrowmuir Wood which is scheduled to be felled.</p> <p>At consultation events concerns were also raised relating to the proximity of the Proposed Development to Cairnie village and the primary school.</p> <p>A request was also made to avoid a pond crossing which could impact future development proposals.</p> <p>In Section 21 a request was received to move the alignment further from a private water supply and concerns were raised relating to visual impact of the Proposed Development and views of Clashmach Hill, Tap o’ North, the Bin Forest and the Deveron Valley.</p>	<p>It was not possible to route the alignment to the south of Keith due to the number of electricity crossings which would be required. However, protected species such as badgers will be assessed within the EIA report and mitigation proposed as necessary.</p> <p>Landscape and visual impact is a key consideration of the routeing process and we consider options between keeping OHLs together, which intensifies infrastructure in one place, or further apart, which spreads the impact over a wider area. Most feedback received supported trying to keep OHLs together. Where we have done this, we have endeavoured to run the OHLs in ‘close parallel’ and with towers located in pairs, however this is not always possible due to other constraints.</p> <p>In response to feedback, an alternative alignment for the diversion of the existing OHL into Coachford substation around the southeast side of the Balloch Hill has been assessed (Alignment B6). However, on balance this alignment will not be taken forward as it passes in closer proximity to more properties and, although reducing ‘wirescaping’ to the west of Balloch Wood, it increases ‘wirescaping’ around Glen of Coachford and Braehead. This alternative alignment also has the potential for cumulative effects on Auchanachie Castle and would result in significant increased capital costs which do not outweigh the benefits relating to landscape fit and greater distance to Mill Wood SSSI.</p> <p>In recognition of the concerns raised, we have however reconsidered one of the previously assessed alignment options for the OHL diversion (Alignment B5), which passes through woodland on the lower slopes of Balloch Wood and behind a row of properties when compared to the Potential Alignment B1. Whilst Alignment B5 is more constrained due to proximity to public and private water supplies and increased forestry impacts, it does reduce the cumulative landscape and visual impact in this area for local residents, and on balance will therefore be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment.</p>	<p>Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 19 to 21. No changes have been made to the Potential Alignment in Sections 22 to 24. The Proposed Alignment as shown will be taken forward to the next stage of development.</p> <p>In Section 19, the Proposed Alignment has been amended to the north of Keith and northeast of Newmill to avoid impacts to river dredging operations and maintain distances from residential properties.</p> <p>Also in Section 19, the Proposed Alignment for the diversion of the existing OHL from Rothienorman into Coachford substation has been changed from Alignment B1 to Alignment B5, to help reduce cumulative impacts in the area to the west of Balloch Wood. The Potential Alignment A1 for the diversion of the existing OHL from Blackhillock substation to Coachford substation has been refined slightly to move it further from residential properties.</p> <p>In response to stakeholder feedback in Section 20, the Proposed Alignment takes a more northerly direction, moving further from the village of Cairnie and to avoid impacting future land use and a pond.</p>

Route Section 9 (Alignment Sections 19 to 24): Keith to south of Turriff (Continued)

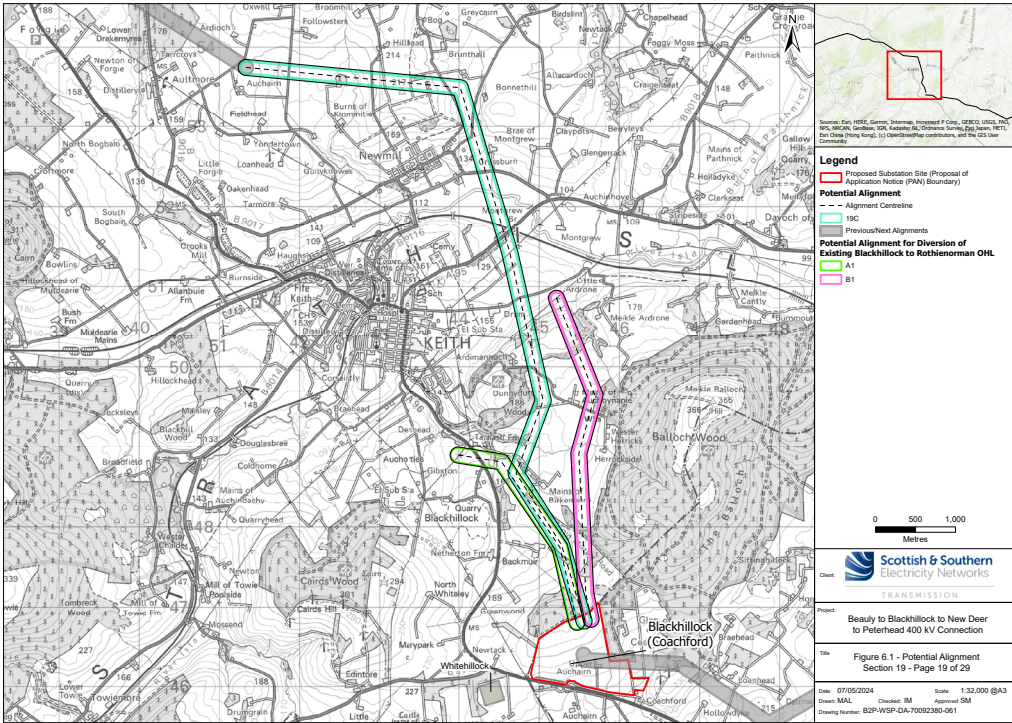
What we presented	Feedback received (continued)	Response to feedback (continued)	Explanation of decision (continued)
			
<p>See page 50.</p>	<p>In Section 22 concerns raised related to the potential impact of construction activities on local businesses.</p> <p>In Section 23 a request was made to move the Proposed Development to reduce impacts on a gaming estate business, with concerns raised relating to private water supplies, visual impact, construction traffic, property values and impact on a Category A listed building.</p> <p>Additional concerns across Section 23 related to migrating birds, impact on Crombie Moss, and wildlife.</p> <p>In Section 24 concerns related to the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on an informal school bus stop at Uppermill, ancient woodland at Balquholly, and concerns over possible flood risk.</p> <p>A request was made to reassess the routeing of the Proposed Development, suggesting that the alternative eastern routes would be better in relation to visual impact for the people of Turriff.</p> <p>Moray Council highlighted the need to avoid a flood alleviation scheme. NatureScot highlighted sensitive areas where extra consideration and careful design will be required. Historic Environment Scotland recommended further assessments be conducted requesting photomontages and visualisations relating to a number of historic and cultural designations.</p>	<p>As part of the EIA Report a full assessment of the potential impacts including landscape and visual, cultural heritage such as listed buildings and on traffic and transport will be carried out. A Construction Traffic Management Plan will also be prepared which will assess the proposed construction access routes and identify appropriate measures to minimise construction traffic disturbance.</p> <p>As a result of feedback from the local community, the alignment in the vicinity of the Garrow Burn has been changed to help alleviate concerns. However, the request to move the Proposed Development into Garrowmuir Wood was not able to be accommodated, as this would bring the line closer to an existing, and a further planned, holiday cottage.</p> <p>Landowner discussions and surveys are on-going to establish the location of private water supplies. Micrositing of towers and access tracks will seek to avoid them, and measures to protect private water supplies will be included within the EIA Report where required. Landscape and visual impacts have been a key factor in terms of designing and assessing the route and alignment options; however, due to the nature of the development they cannot be avoided. A landscape and visual impact assessment will be included within the EIA Report which will assess the impact of the proposed development and will consider mitigation measures where appropriate.</p> <p>We will work to minimise impacts on all communities including businesses during both construction and operation of the OHL.</p>	<p>The Proposed Alignment in Section 21 has been refined at the western end in order to avoid a private water supply and reduce visual impacts to nearby properties.</p> <p>In Section 22, no changes were requested therefore the Potential Alignment will be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment.</p> <p>In Section 23, no changes were made to the Potential Alignment which will now be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment. On balance, assessment of the two alternative alignments to the north and south were found to be more constrained than the Potential Alignment. For the more southern alignment option, these constraints included impacts to cultural heritage, landscape character, forestry removal, clearance distance from individual properties, visual impacts and increased capital cost. For the more northern alternative alignment option, significant effects were likely on the setting of two stone circle Scheduled Monuments, as well as impacts to the Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area. In acknowledgement of the concerns raised, we are continuing discussions with Historic Environment Scotland to reconfirm that the more northern alignment option would have unacceptable potential impact on the Scheduled Monuments. Our Contractor is reviewing elements of engineering concern to further understand if these could be reasonably mitigated.</p>

Route Section 9 (Alignment Sections 19 to 24): Keith to south of Turriff (Continued)

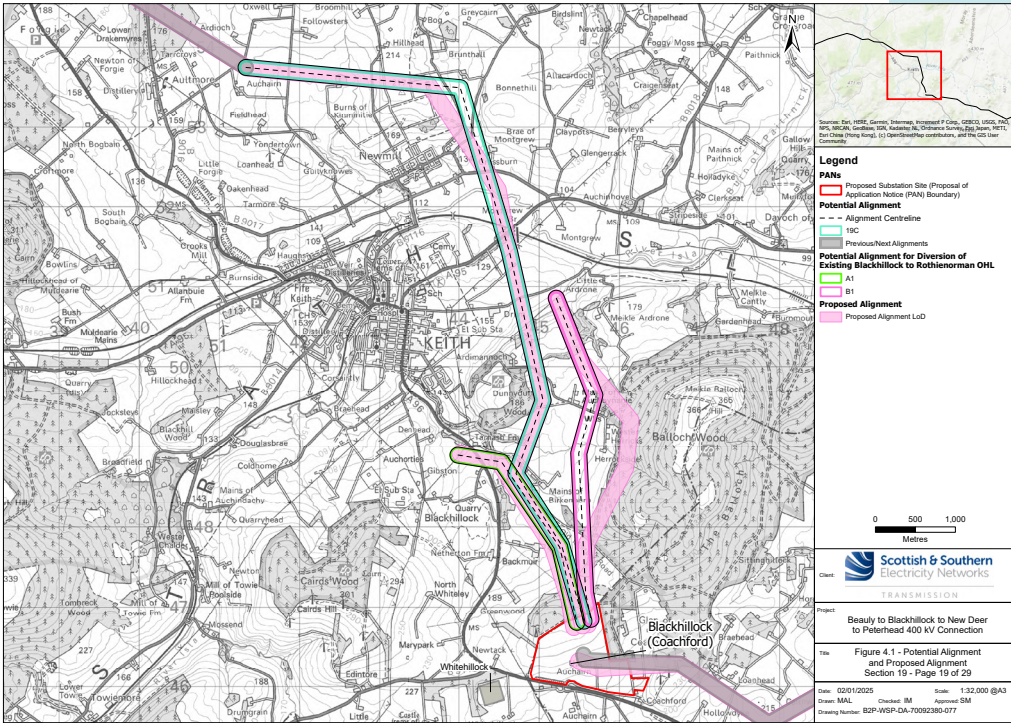
What we presented	Feedback received	Response to feedback (continued)	Explanation of decision (continued)
<div></div> <p>See page 50.</p>	<div></div> <p>See page 52.</p>	<div></div> <p>In response to feedback raised, we assessed a suggested alternative alignment option to the south of the Potential Alignment in Section 23 and also reconsidered one of the previously assessed alignment options further north.</p> <p>Wildlife, including birds and protected species such as badgers and otters, will be assessed in the ecological impact assessment and ornithological assessment to be undertaken as part of the EIA Report, with mitigation measures to minimise the impact on wildlife identified where required.</p> <p>We will work with the community to provide an alternative school bus stop solution at Uppermill.</p> <p>As we continue our more detailed forestry field surveys, we will seek to identify further opportunities to avoid if possible or look to further reduce the impact on native and ancient woodlands, veteran and ancient trees.</p> <p>We have used SEPA Flood Maps to identify flood risk locations and we will minimise the placement of OHL infrastructure within areas at risk of flooding. In addition, the EIA Report will include a more detailed flood risk assessment should a risk to flooding be identified at specific locations.</p> <p>We continue to engage with statutory consultees and will take account of their feedback when finalising the design and tower positions, seeking to minimise impacts on sensitive designations. Further assessment will be carried out as part of the preparation of the EIA Report, including visualisations as appropriate, and we will use mitigation during construction through the use of Environmental Management Plans and Species Protection Plans as standard practice.</p>	<div></div> <p>This alignment option also had increased forestry impacts and a higher capital cost when compared to the Potential Alignment.</p> <p>In Section 24, no significant changes were made as the alternatives would bring the Proposed Development in very close proximity to residential properties and did not provide feasible access into the Greens substation.</p>

Alignment Section 19: West of Keith to Coachford Substation

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

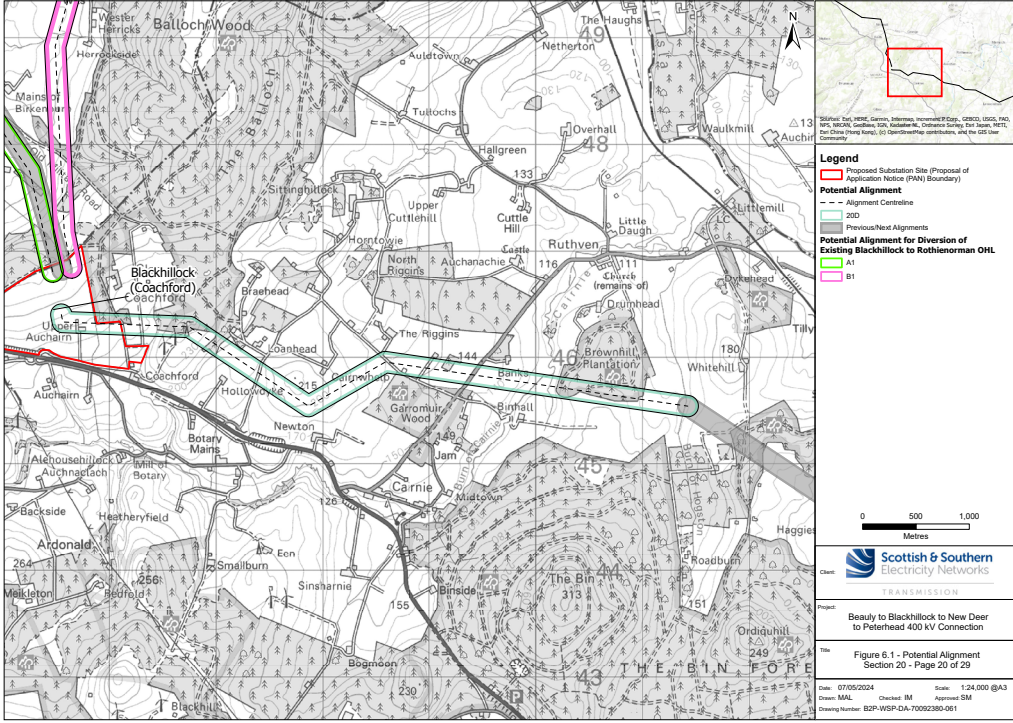


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

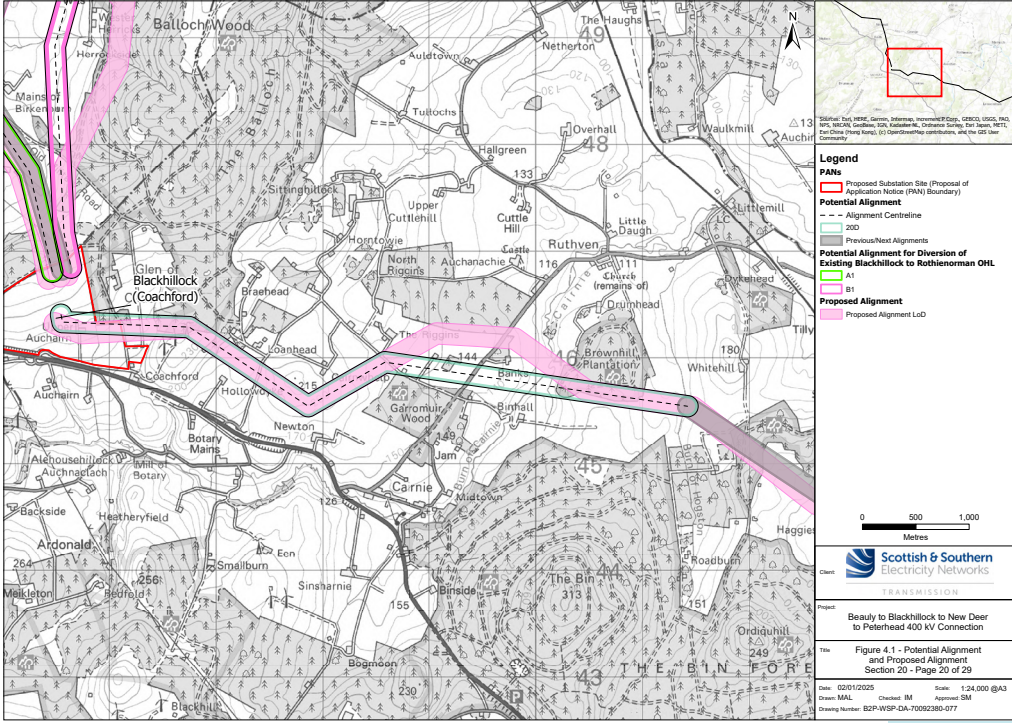


Alignment Section 20: Coachford Substation to Whitehill

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

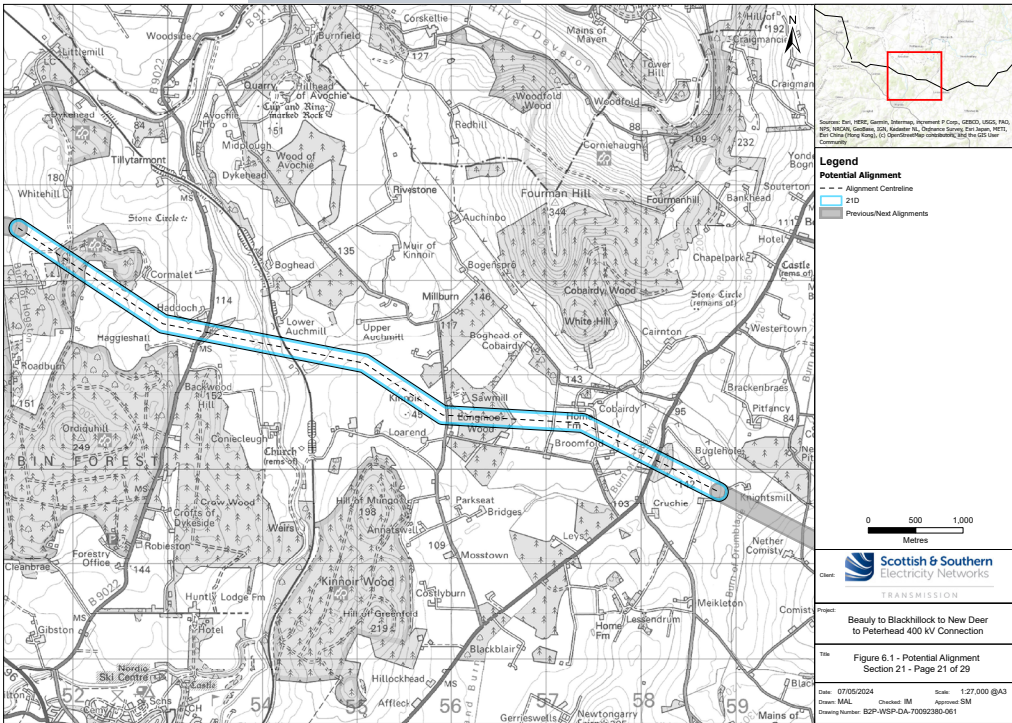


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

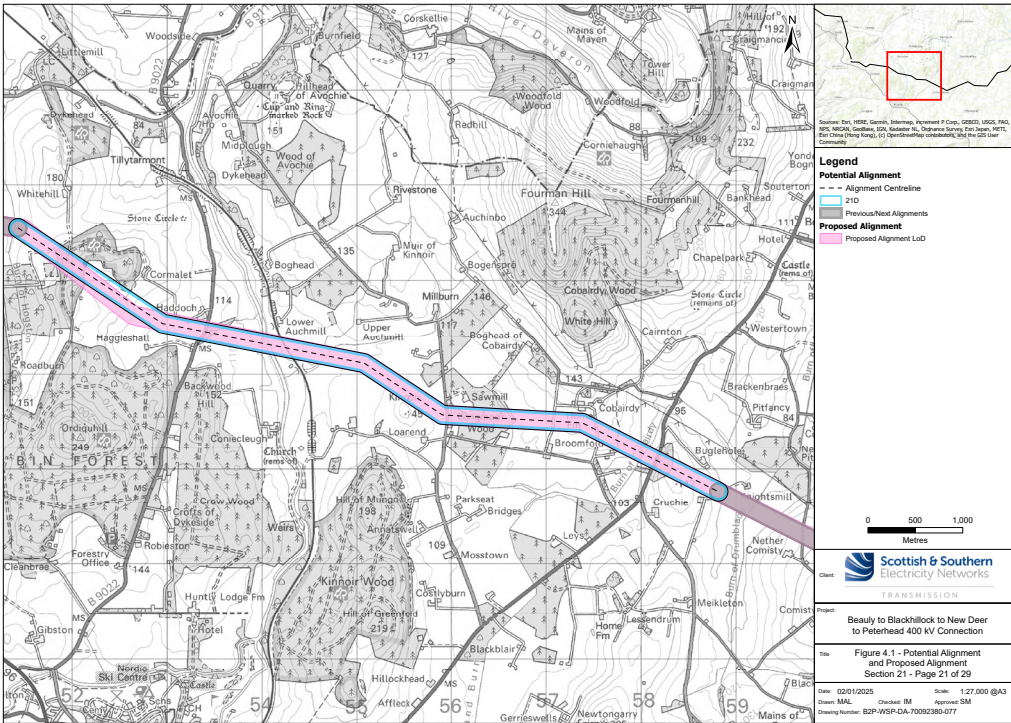


Alignment Section 21: Whitehill to Knightismill

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

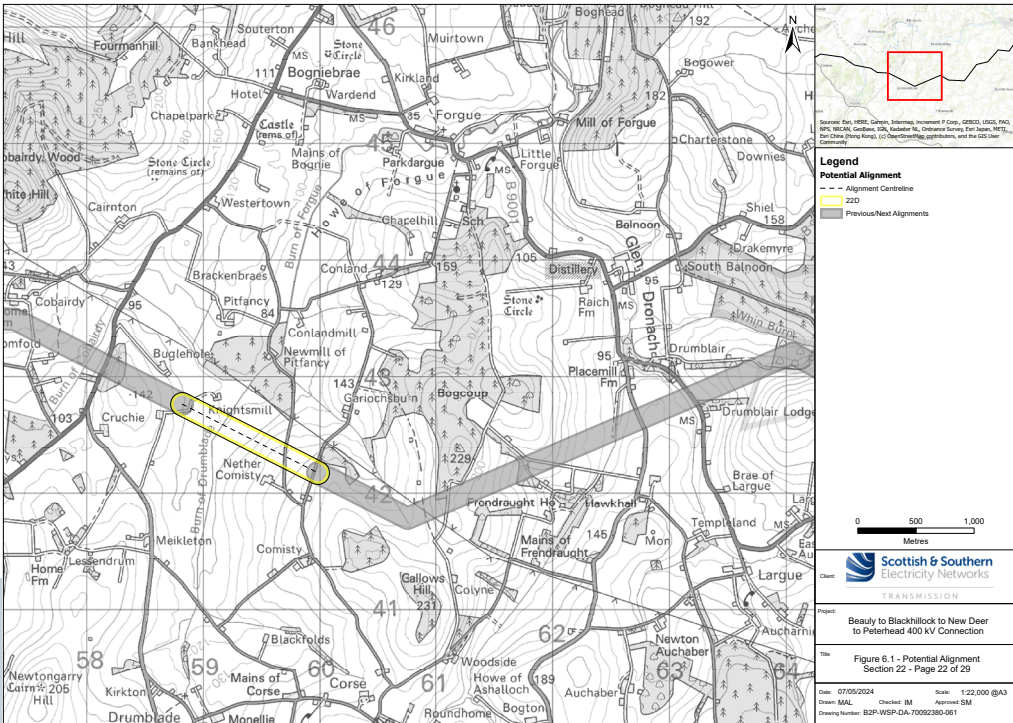


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

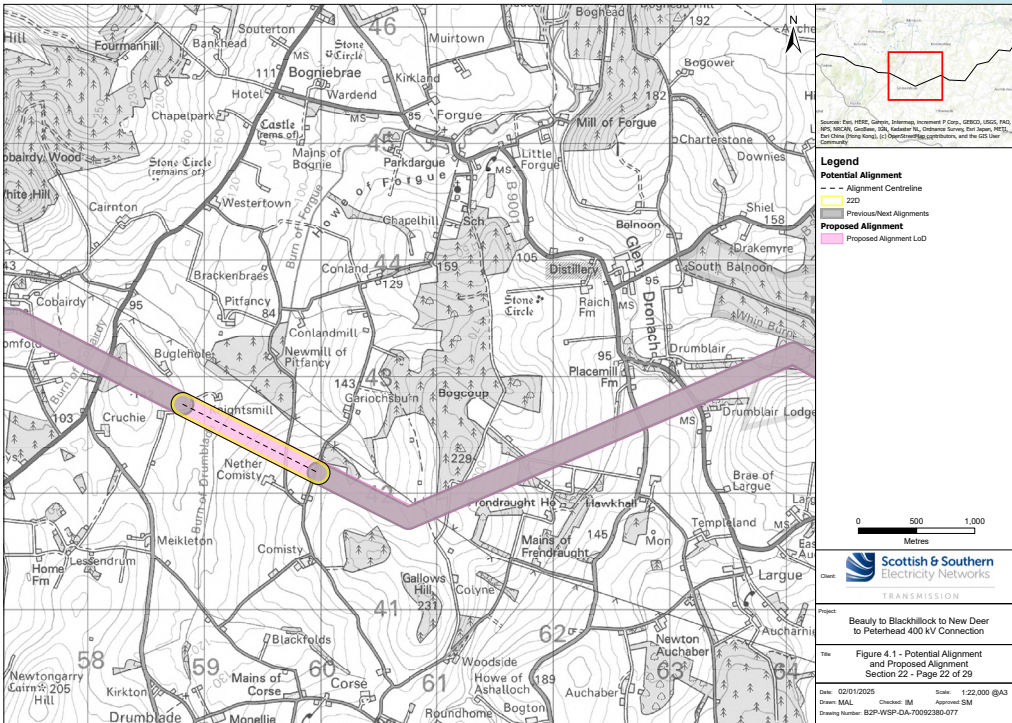


Alignment Section 22: Knightismill to Frendraught

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

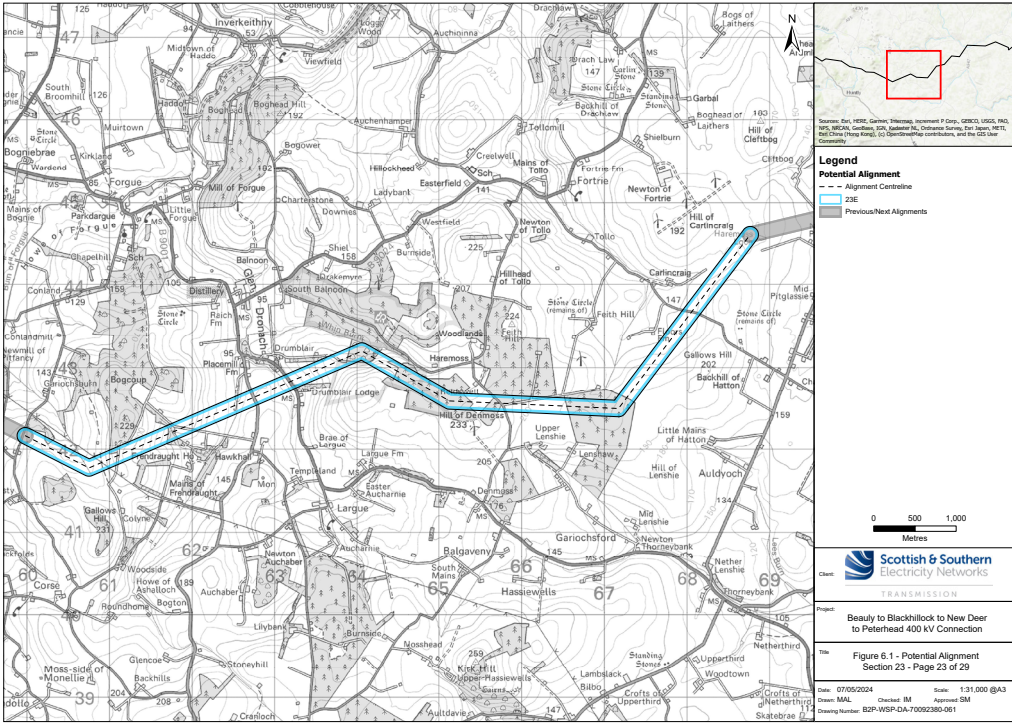


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

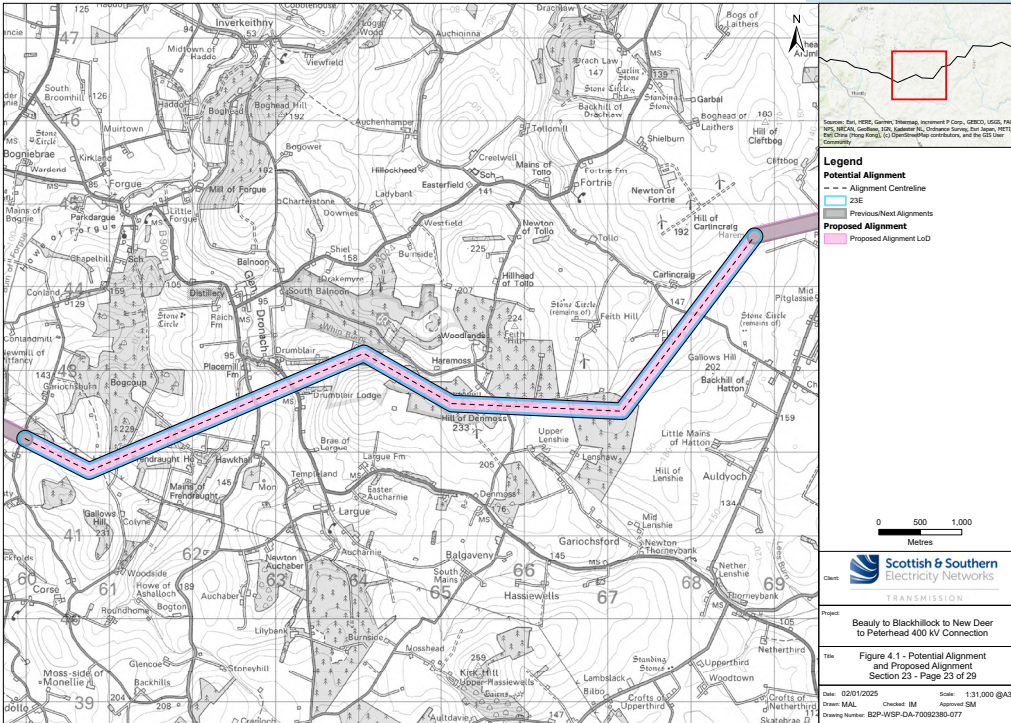


Alignment Section 23: Freendraught to Hill of Carlincraig

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

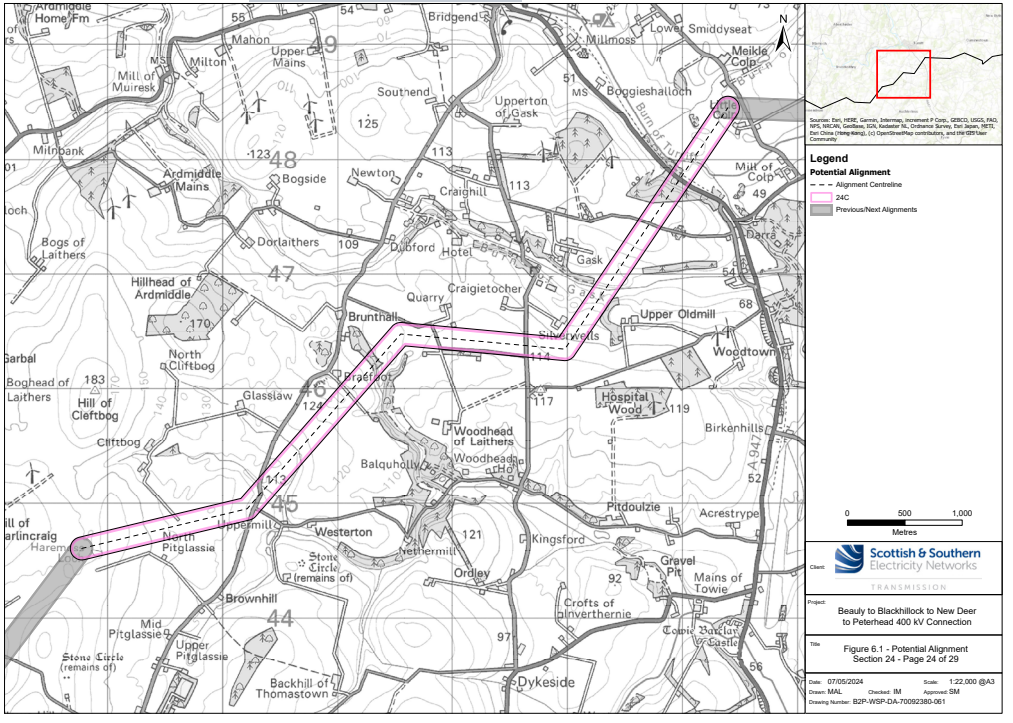


Proposed Alignment to be taken forward

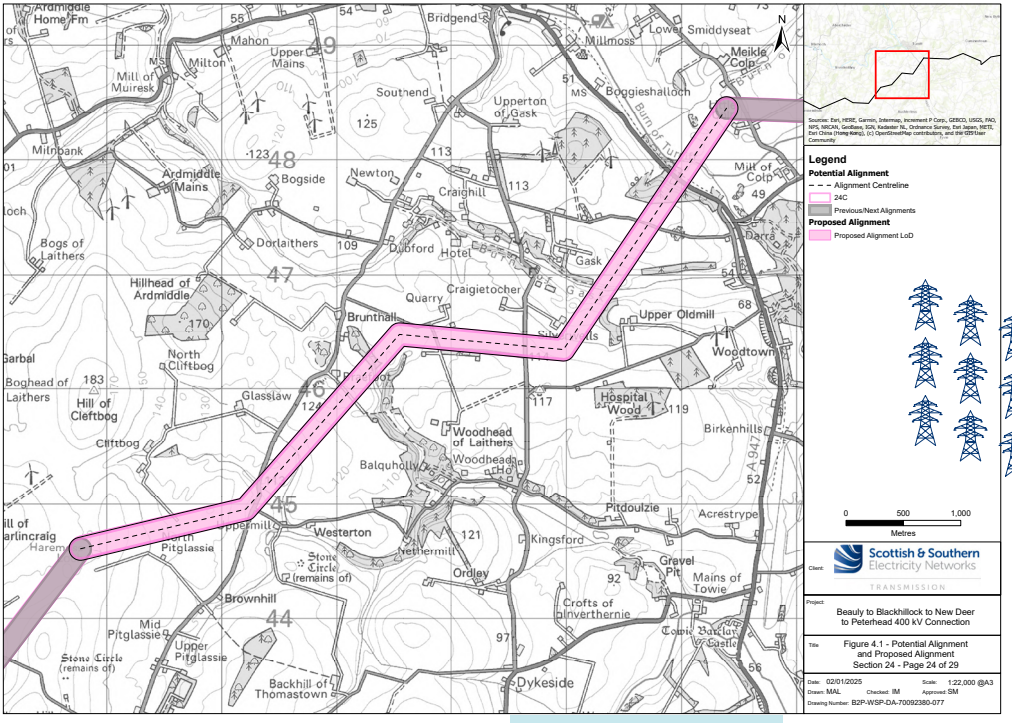


Alignment Section 24: Hill of Carlincraig to Burn of Turriff

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024



Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Route Section 10 (Alignment Section 25): South of Turriff to New Deer

What we presented

Feedback received

Response to feedback

Explanation of decision



Alignment Section 25 (Burn of Turriff to Greens substation): Potential Alignment 25C

In Section 25 concerns were raised around impacts of the Proposed Development on people living nearby who have sensory issues. Requests were also made to move the alignment to accommodate future potential development and to more closely follow field margins to minimise impacts on land use.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) recommended further assessment be conducted on the cultural heritage designations and assets in Section 25, requesting visualisations to accompany the consent submission.

Queries were raised in relation to how we intended to protect wild salmon and sea trout and ensure habitats would not be diminished both during construction and operational stages.

Feedback was provided on a popular walking trail outside Cuminestown, where a tower was indicated as being situated right on the edge of the walking path.

We understand there will be concerns around the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, especially where there are particular sensitivities within households. We would encourage anyone with concerns to inform us of this, so that we can work closely with affected households to minimise, where possible, any impact and ensure sufficient notice is provided ahead of any works.

HES comments will be taken on board and visualisations are being prepared as part of the cultural heritage assessment within the EIA report.

Further assessment will be carried out to understand the potential for impacts on the aquatic and riparian habitats, and any mitigation required. The Construction Environmental Management Plan will set out how works will comply with mitigation measures and industry best practice. This will then be overseen during the construction phase by a suitably qualified and experience Environmental Clerk of Works (ECOW), with support from other environmental professionals as required. Once operational, regular inspections are undertaken of the OHL and towers which would highlight any deterioration which may impact the environment.

Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Section 25, as described below. The Proposed Alignment as shown will be taken forward for EIA and detailed design.

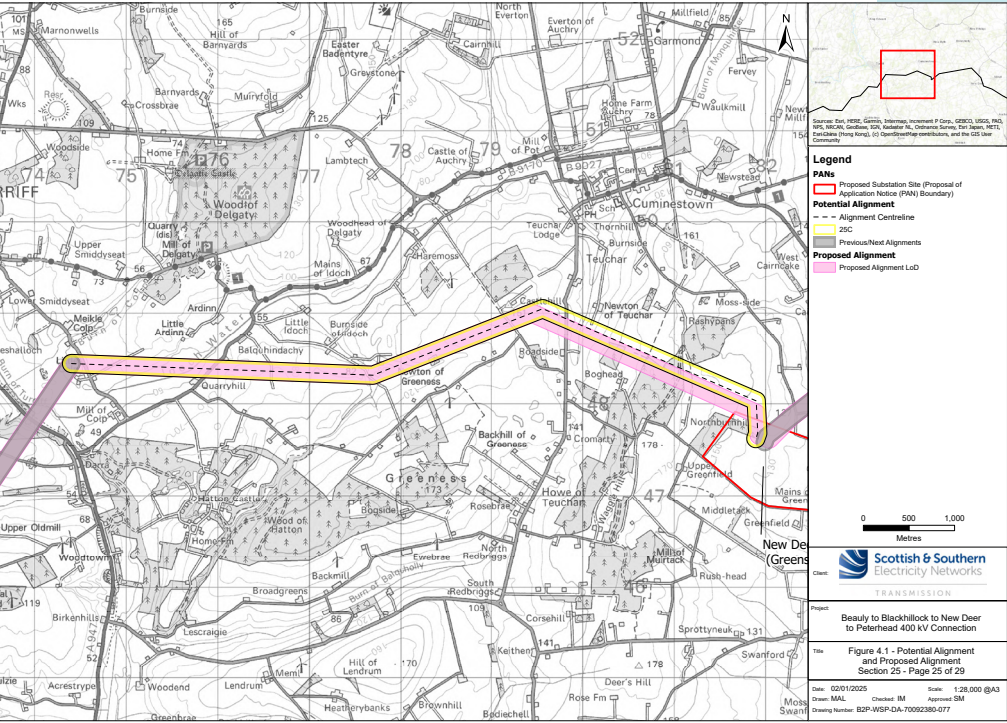
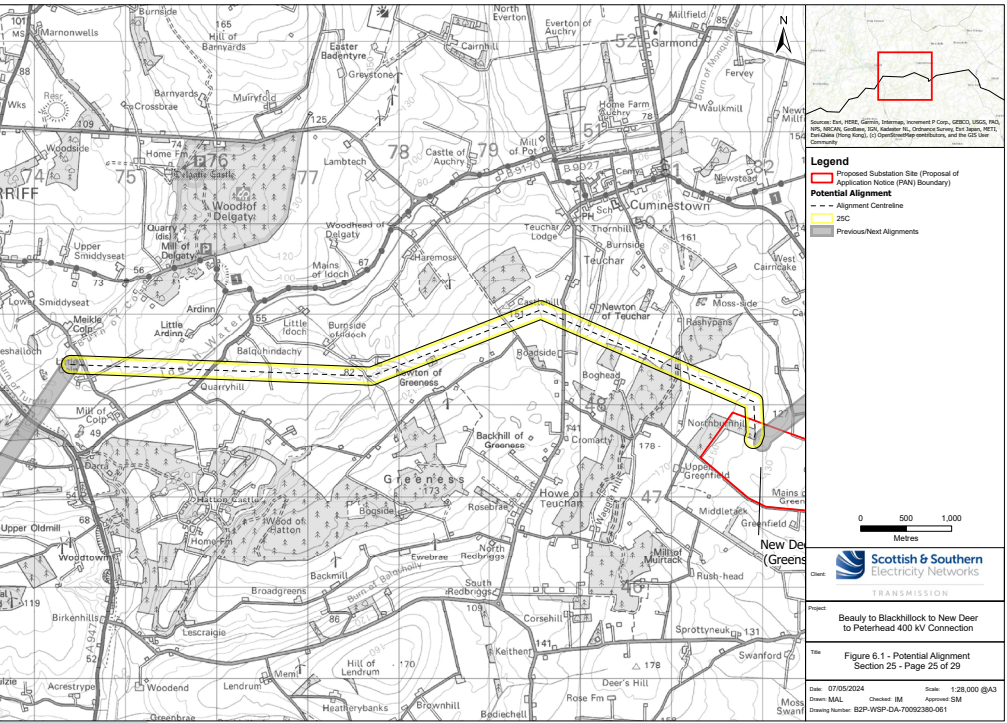
The Proposed Alignment has been moved slightly further south than Potential Alignment 25C at the eastern end, to be closer to field margins and reduce limitations to future land use.

The Proposed Alignment has also been moved further from the footpath.





Alignment Section 25: Burn of Turriff to Greens Substation

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024





Proposed Alignment to be taken forward







Route Section 11 (Alignment Section 26 to 29): New Deer to Peterhead

What we presented	Feedback received	Response to feedback	Explanation of decision
			
<p>Alignment Section 26 (Greens Substation to east of New Deer):Potential Alignment 26A</p> <p>Alignment Section 27 (East of New Deer to Hill of Dens): Potential Alignment 27C</p> <p>Alignment Section 28 (Hill of Dens to southeast of Stuartfield): Potential Alignment 28G</p> <p>Alignment Section 29 (Southeast of Stuartfield to Netherton Hub): Potential Alignment 29E</p>	<p>Concerns raised included the proximity of the alignment to the settlements of Maud and New Deer, impacts on property values, impacts to native and riparian woodland and landscape impacts due to loss of tree belts at Allathan.</p> <p>Concerns also related to the potential impact on the Culsh Monument, views from Aikey Brae stone circle and archaeology to the south of Maud.</p> <p>Construction traffic impacts to the local road network around New Deer was also raised.</p> <p>A request was made to adjust the alignment in Section 26 to avoid impacts on property and protect future development potential. A further request was received asking that the alignment to be moved to avoid a private water supply feeding several properties.</p> <p>In Section 27 concerns were raised relating to migrating birds, including swans, geese, owls and cranes. Concerns were also raised about potential impacts to pedigree livestock.</p> <p>A request was made in Section 27 to move the alignment to reduce the potential impacts on ecology, including corn bunting and short eared owls.</p> <p>Mobile Broadband Network Ltd (MBNL) noted the presence of emergency telecommunications links within Section 27 that would need to be avoided.</p>	<p>The Potential Alignment maintains the greatest distance to the north of New Deer of the alignment options considered. We have looked to achieve a balance between maintaining distance from New Deer and Maud, whilst trying to identify alignments through the dense scatter of residential properties outside the main settlement areas.</p> <p>Concerns in relation to impacts on property values are being noted by our team however, as a regulated business, SSEN Transmission is 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 recommend that you engage a professional adviser and SSEN Transmission will generally meet reasonably incurred professional fees in these circumstances.</p> <p>Views from and of the Culsh Monument were a key consideration in the selection of the Potential Alignment, which is located on lower lying ground and at a greater distance from the monument compared with the other options considered. The Proposed Alignment has also been selected and designed to minimise the impacts on the noted stone circle, and Historic Environment Scotland has been consulted throughout each stage of the routeing process. The EIA Report will include a cultural heritage assessment which will consider the potential effects on the stone circle, the Culsh Monument and archaeology.</p> <p>In relation to woodland, careful consideration has been taken to avoid or reduce impacts to native woodlands where possible and, as we continue with more detailed forestry field surveys, we will seek to identify further opportunities to avoid or further reduce impacts on ancient and veteran trees. Specifically in relation to Allathan House, we have taken on board information on the tree belts in this area and have minimised impacts to them as much as possible, however due to other constraints we will not be able to avoid them entirely. All trees that are impacted by felling within the operational corridor will be replanted by way of compensatory planting, within the landowner holding where possible or the local council area, in line with Scottish Government’s Control of Woodland removal policy.</p>	<p>Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 26 to 29, as described below. The Proposed Alignment as shown will be taken forward for EIA and detailed design.</p> <p>The Proposed Alignment in Section 26 has been moved slightly further north at Loanhead of Fedderate and slightly further west at Mains of Artamford to accommodate the requested changes to reduce impacts on property and private water supplies.</p> <p>The Proposed Alignment in Section 27 takes a more northerly route around Gilkhorn, in order to avoid proposed developments, emergency telecommunications links and in response to landowner feedback.</p>

Route Section 11 (Alignment Section 26 to 29): New Deer to Peterhead (continued)

What we presented	Feedback received (continued)	Response to feedback (continued)	Explanation of decision (continued)
			
<p>See page 64.</p>	<p>In Section 28 concerns were raised about impacts on wildlife, equestrian activities and the New Arc animal shelter. Concerns were also raised about impacts to environmental improvements and planned future investment in the Crichton area. Our knowledge of the drainage in the area was questioned.</p> <p>A request was received in Section 28 to move the alignment to be closer to field margins.</p> <p>In Section 29 support was received for the route to the south of Mintlaw.</p> <p>NatureScot highlighted the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for wintering geese at Loch of Strathbeg and Ythan Estuary, Sands of Forvie and Meikle Loch, with advice provided on foraging range.</p> <p>SEPA provided advice on contamination in the area associated with historical uses, requiring additional site investigation to be undertaken.</p> <p>Ugie District Salmon Fisheries raised concern about impact on fishing activity in the area.</p>	<p>In relation to potential impacts on roads, a traffic assessment will be provided within the EIA Report along with a Construction Traffic Management Plan. We will also endeavour to return land/tracks to the same or better condition as before. Landowners will be compensated for any losses sustained on a case-by-case basis, if required. Surveys will take place before works begin to assess the condition of the roads in advance.</p> <p>In response to feedback received previously regarding migratory birds in the Hill of Dens area, we included additional alignment options that maintain a greater distance to the south, with the most southerly alignment option (27G) being selected as the Potential Alignment. An ornithology impact assessment will be included within the EIA Report, which will identify where there is a requirement for additional mitigation to manage any potential risks to birds. This assessment will also consider the impacts on short eared owls and corn bunting highlighted in this section.</p> <p>The Proposed Alignment being taken forward is located over 5km to the north of the New Arc Animal Shelter. Wildlife is present throughout the study area and sites designated due to wildlife have been avoided. Protected species (such as badgers and otters) and protected bird species have been factored into the selection of the alignment and an ecological impact assessment will be included in the EIA Report, including identification of mitigation measures where required.</p> <p>In relation to equestrian activities and potential impacts, we have consulted with the British Horse Society. Roads, including those used by horse riders, will be considered within the traffic and transport assessment within the EIA Report. Maintenance of access along the path network will also be considered within the recreation and tourism assessment, which will include an outline Outdoor Access Management Plan to ensure access for recreation is maintained throughout construction.</p>	<p>The Proposed Alignment in Section 28 takes a more northerly route across Jock's Hill than Potential Alignment 28G, in response to the changes made in Section 27, also allowing field margins to be followed more closely.</p> <p>The Proposed Alignment in Section 29 has been slightly refined at its western end due to a change in angle tower position following engineering surveys.</p>

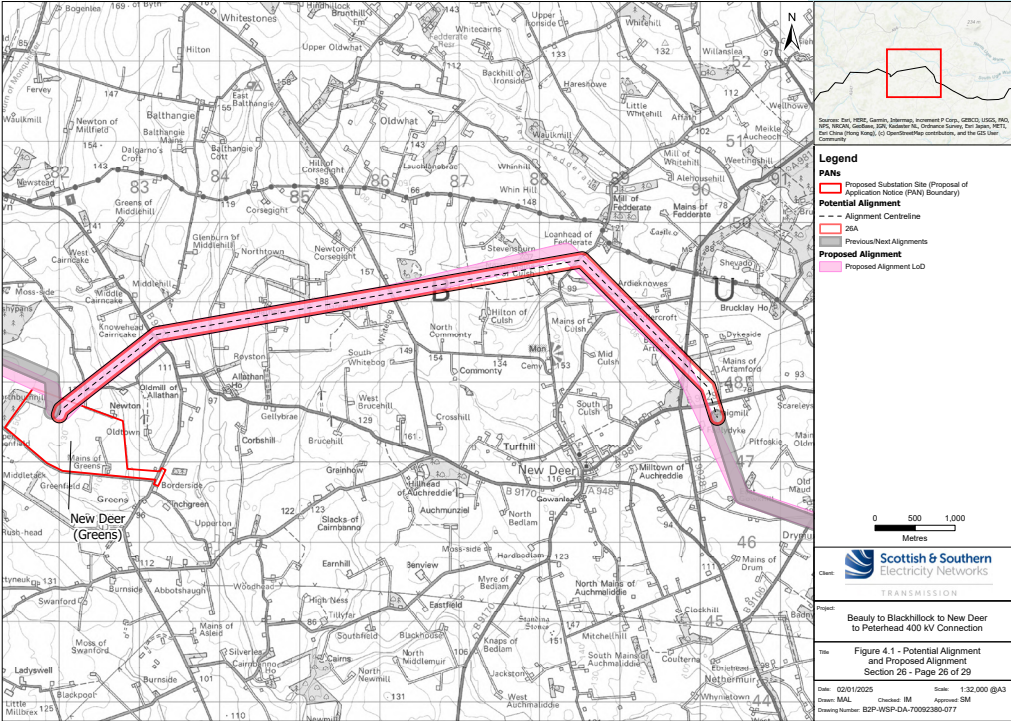
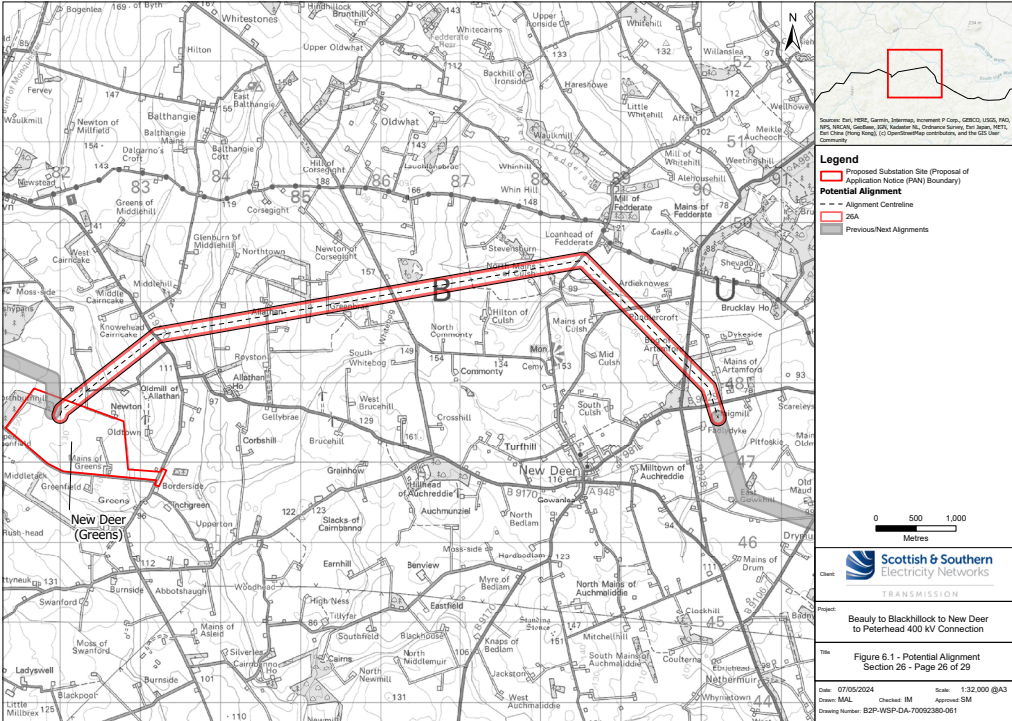
Route Section 11 (Alignment Section 26 to 29): New Deer to Peterhead (continued)

What we presented	Feedback received	Response to feedback (continued)	Explanation of decision
			
See page 64.	See pages 64 and 66.	<p>In the area around Crichtie, we have sought to balance a range of environmental factors, including maintaining distance from scattered residential properties and minimising landscape and visual impacts to the settlement of Stuartfield. Towers will be located to minimise impactson sensitive environmental features where possible.</p> <p>We use SEPA Flood Maps to identify flood risk locations and where possible tower locations will be located outwith flood risk areas. The EIA Report will consider flood risk in general and will include more detailed assessment should a risk to flooding be identified at specific locations.</p> <p>In Section 29 the Proposed Alignment lies 4km to the south of Mintlaw, taking advantage of the opportunity to keep the new OHL close to an existing line.</p> <p>We have noted and taken on board feedback and advice from statutory and non-statutory consultees. In relation to wintering geese, these designations have informed the process so far and will continue to inform the EIA and Habitat Regulations Appraisal process. Based on studies to date the Proposed Alignment is not understood to be in areas that represent core foraging areas for birds associated with the SPAs.</p> <p>We will undertake the required contamination investigations and make these available to SEPA for further comment as part of the EIA Report.</p> <p>We will assess potential impacts to the water environmental and aquatic ecology both during construction and operational use within the EIA Report. We will also protect fish stocks through the application of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).</p>	See pages 65 and 67.

Alignment Section 26: Greens Substation to East of New Deer

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

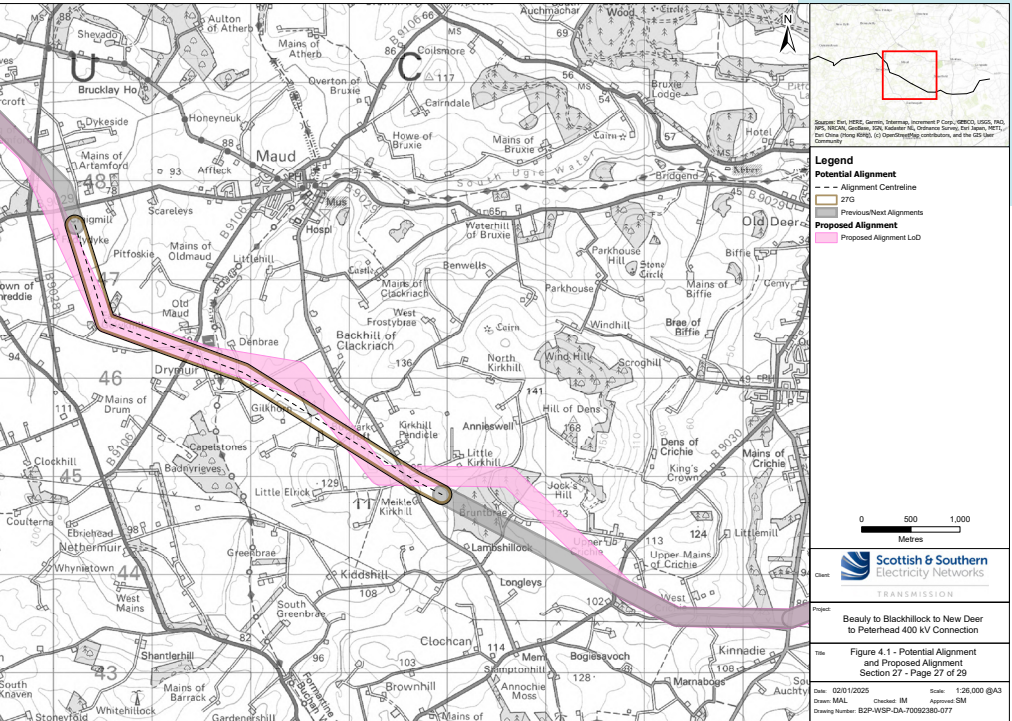
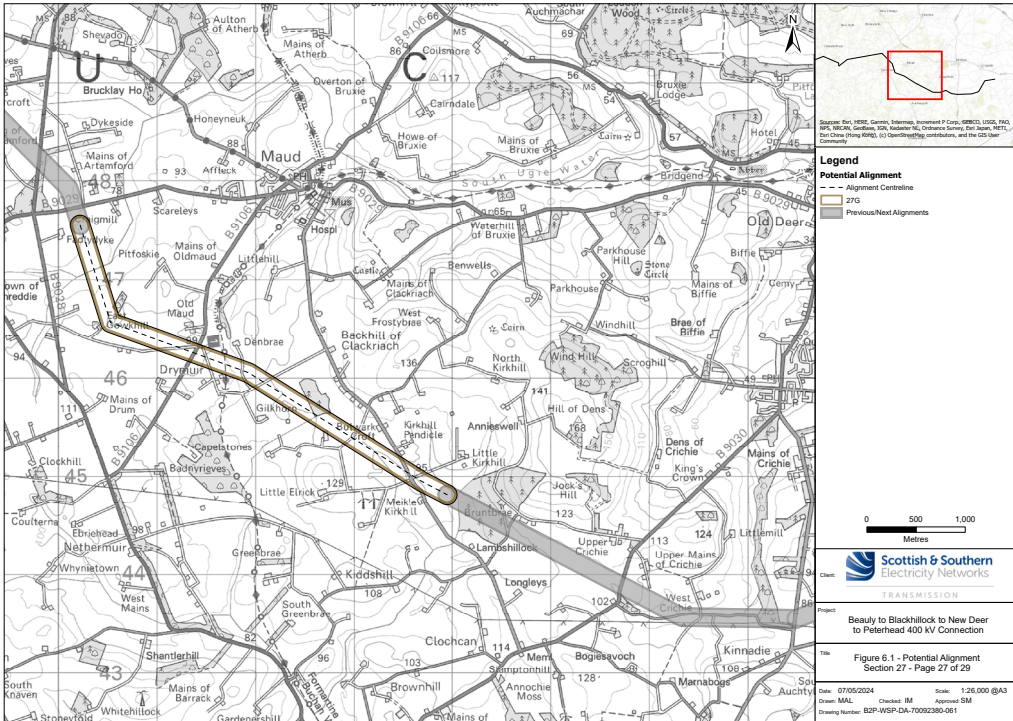
Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Alignment Section 27: East of New Deer to Hill of Dens

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

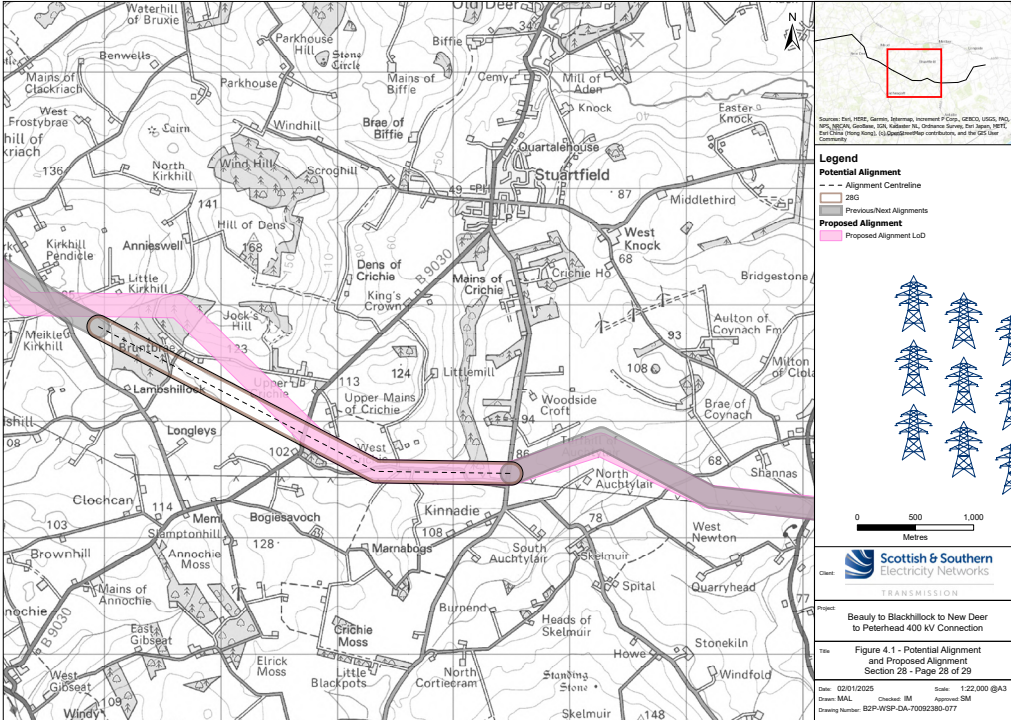
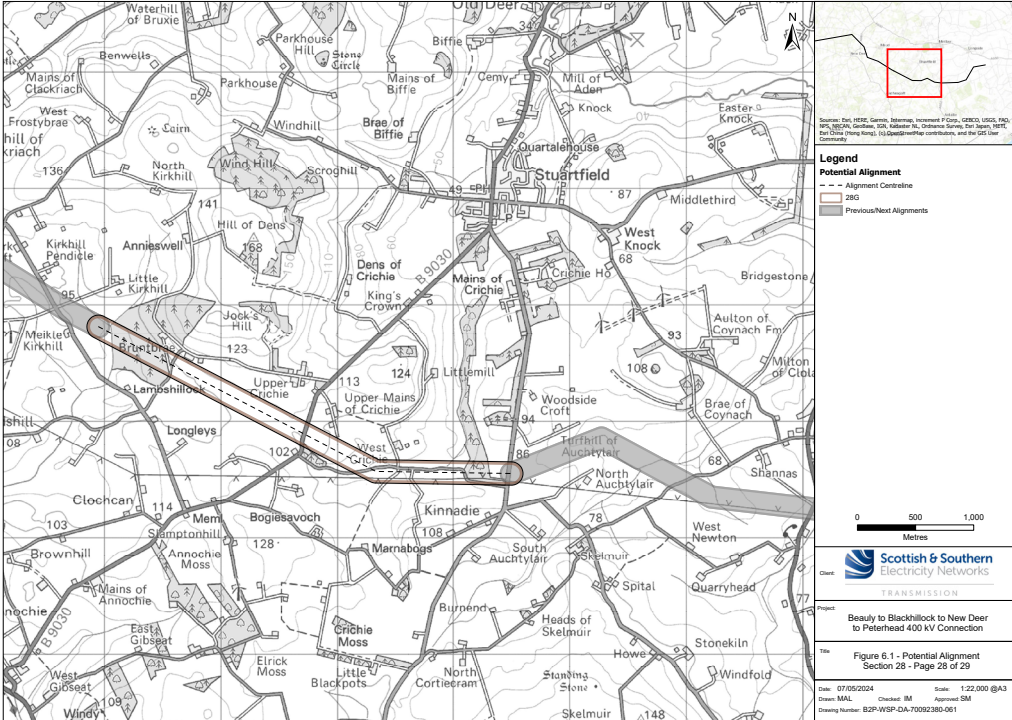
Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Alignment Section 28: Hill of Dens to southeast of Stuartfield

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

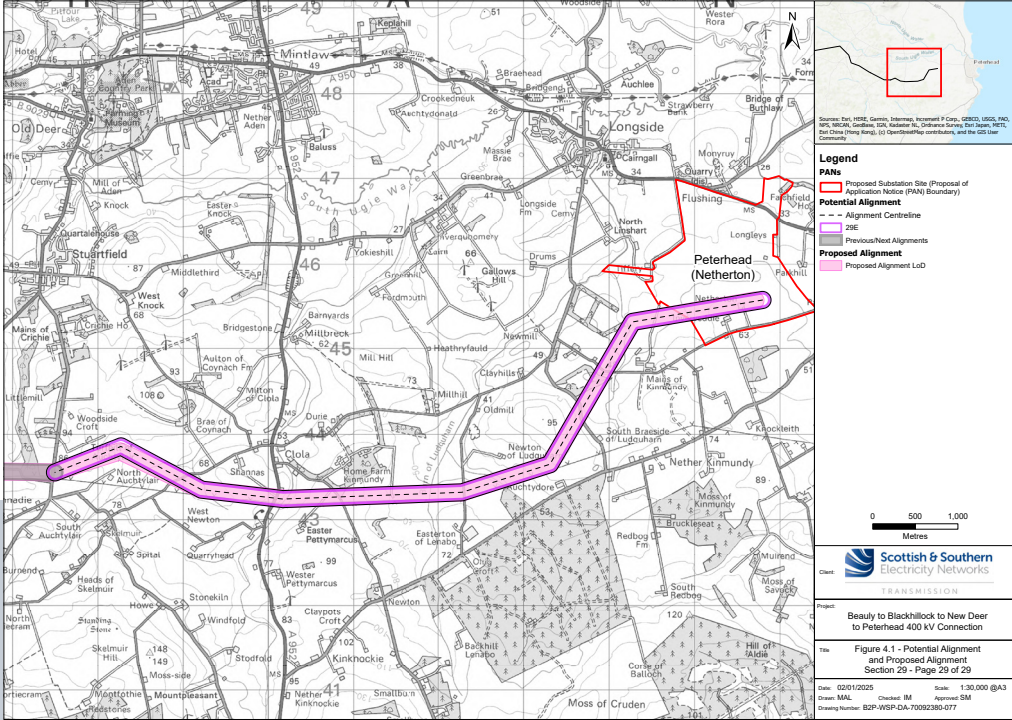
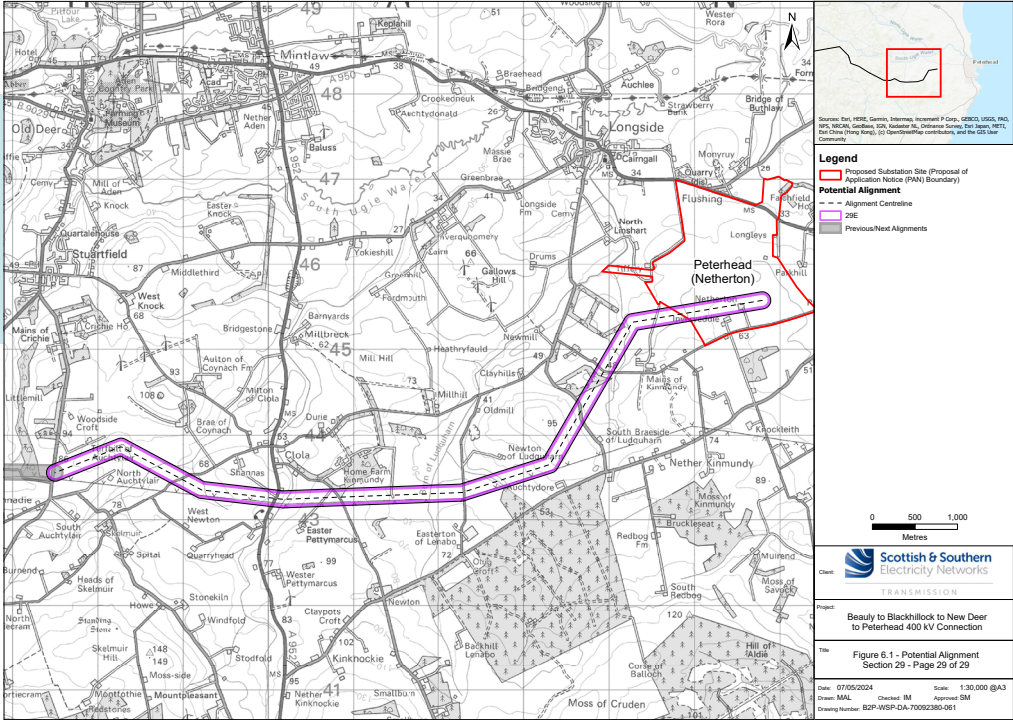
Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Alignment Section 29: Southeast of Stuartfield to Netherton Hub

Potential Alignment presented in May/June 2024

Proposed Alignment to be taken forward



Next Steps

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

