

APPENDIX 2.2: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES ALIGNMENT STAGE



APPENDIX 2.2: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES AT ALIGNMENT SELECTION STAGE

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Trans
Statutory		
THC	THC pointed out that there appears to be scope on the section north of the A839 for the route to follow existing forestry tracks and areas of more open ground, particularly to the south of Rosehall Wind Farm.	The alignment variants follow existing forestry process.
		Subsequent to the con Alignment Variant 3 for

Table 2.2.1 - Consultation Re	sponses from Statutor	v and Non-Statutory	v Consultees

THC	THC pointed out that there appears to be scope on the section north of the A839 for the route to follow existing forestry tracks and areas of more open ground, particularly to the south of Rosehall Wind Farm.	The alignment variants that were consulted on can be seen in Figure 2. Ali follow existing forestry tracks to the south of Rosehall Wind Farm and has b process.
		Subsequent to the consultation, it been considered by SSEN Transmission Alignment Variant 3 forwards as part of the proposed alignment to due to the Variant 3 would also follow the route of existing forestry tracks more so tha alignment stage consultation document.
	THC outlined that regardless of the route ultimately chosen, the River Oykel is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and any information submitted with the forthcoming Section 37 application to the Energy Consents Unit should detail how the potential impacts of the transmission route on this natural heritage resource, particularly in terms of soil and pollutant runoff, can be satisfactorily avoided or mitigated against.	The River Oykel SAC lies between approximately 400 m and 700 m downs closest points. It is unlikely that works associated with construction would i qualifying interests of the River Oykel SAC. Nevertheless, this will be cons 37 application. It is anticipated that appropriate site design and the applicat of the Applicant's SPPs and GEMPs (see Section 1.6) during construction is reduce or eliminate any potential effects.
	THC outlined that every effort should be taken to avoid disturbance of priority peatlands, although it is recognised that this may be unavoidable in some sections of the route.	Through the routeing and alignment selection stages, consideration has be peatlands as far as possible. This has included peat probing along alignment presence and depth of peat.
	THC outlined that any further submission must also include details of forestry removal and all temporary and permanent access tracks and laydown areas that are proposed.	This information will be included within the application for consent where point not known at this stage, separate consents may be sought by the Principal
NatureScot	Naturescot welcomed the opportunity to comment on the alignment proposals. In summary, their advice was largely unchanged from the route selection consultation stage; the alignments did not offer a significant or material difference to the protected areas, habitats, and species.	Previous comments from NatureScot are noted. The selection of a preferred habitat and protected species survey findings, and these will continually be
	NatureScot noted that the proposal lies close to the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, protected for its range of breeding birds. NatureScot outlined that survey work will be required to inform an assessment of the implications of an OHL and should follow NatureScot guidance on power lines and survey methods for onshore wind farms. NatureScot recommended their guidance on disturbance distances for qualifying bird species is used when assessing impacts to birds along the route and when developing appropriate mitigation measures (where required). Additional advice on the scope of bird survey work was provided to ASH via e-mail on 22 November 2022 and on 23 June 2023.	The nature conservation sites of international importance have been considered alignment options and will continue to be considered as the project progres. NatureScot guidance on power lines and survey methods as well as Nature qualifying bird species will be used when assessing impacts to birds along mitigation measures. The additional advice on the scope of bird survey work provided by Natures 23 June 2023 will continue to be referred to.
	NatureScot noted that the proposal lies close to the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC, protected for its range of upland habitats and for otter. Avoiding impacts to this site should be a key consideration in the design of a proposal in this area. Where impacts are identified, careful and thorough assessment will be required to demonstrate that a proposal can be built in this location without adverse effects on the qualifying interests of the site. The preferred alignment is outwith the water catchment for the SAC but it is within connectivity distance for otter. Where otter activity is identified, this should be fully considered as part of any upcoming application.	As above, the nature conservation sites of international importance have be and alignment options, and will continue to be considered as the project pro undertaken and where otter activity is identified, will be considered as the p
	NatureScot noted that the proposal lies within the catchment of the River Oykel SAC, protected for its Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel. The potential for direct and indirect impacts to the SAC will therefore need to be considered further as part of any future planning application. Given the proximity of the route corridors and the SAC, pollution prevention and siltation measures will be very important to maintain good water	As above, the nature conservation sites of international importance have be and alignment options and will continue to be considered as the project pro- measures will be considered as the project progresses, along with appropri- consulted in relation to impacts on the water environment.

mission

ignment Variant 3 to the north of Durcha does been considered during the alignment selection

that it would be appropriate to take the he properties at Durcha. Utilising Alignment in the preferred alignment as presented in the

stream from the Proposed Development at its impact water quality and compromise the sidered within the EA to support a future Section tion of best practice measures such as the use and maintenance works would effectively

en given to minimising impacts on priority ent options and variants to determine the

ossible. In some instances, where details are Contractor.

ed alignment has been informed by detailed reviewed as the project progresses.

dered during the appraisal of route and sses.

eScot guidance on disturbance distances for the OHL and when developing appropriate

Scot via e-mail on 22 November 2022 and on

een considered during the appraisal of route ogresses. Protected species surveys will be project progresses.

een considered during the appraisal of route ogresses. Pollution prevention and silt control iate mitigation measures. SEPA have been



Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	quality and safeguard the SAC features. Any mitigation measures proposed should be fully detailed in any future application. NatureScot also recommend consulting SEPA in relation to impacts on the water environment.	
	The alignment options are close to Grudie Peatlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is protected for its blanket bog and breeding peatland waders (dunlin, golden plover and greenshank). It also forms part of the larger Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, and our advice given above for this site will also be relevant for the SSSI. NatureScot are pleased to see that previous route options that crossed into the SSSI have now been discounted.	This has been noted. This nationally protected site was taken into considered alignment options and will continue to be considered as the project progree
	NatureScot are pleased to see that previous route options that crossed into the Kyle of Sutherland Marshes SSSI, protected for its wet woodland, flood-plain fen and flowering plants, have now been discounted. All alignment options are located within the surface water catchment of the Kyle of Sutherland Marshes though, so pollution prevention and siltation measures will be important to maintain good water quality and safeguard the notified features of the SSSI.	This has been noted. This nationally protected site was taken into consider alignment options and will continue to be considered as the project progree measures will be considered and appropriate mitigation measures propos impacts on the water environment.
	NatureScot note that the alignment options will pass through Class 1 and Class 2 areas of peatland. Class 1 and Class 2 areas are described as nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat, and priority peatland habitat likely to be of high conservation value and	Areas of Class 1 and 2 peat soils were identified during route and alignme surveys have informed the selection of a preferred alignment and design s peatland habitat where possible.
restoration potential. These areas are afforded significant protection under Scottish Planning Policy. As outlined in the consultation report, it will need to be demonstrated th any significant effects on these areas can be substantially overcome by design and micrositing plus other mitigation measures. Nature Scot outlined that where peat is present, specific peat surveys should be carried out in line with Scottish Government Guidance.	Since the alignment stage consultation, peat probing has been carried out preferred alignment and some of the alignment variants. Alignment Varia alignment goes through deeper peat than the Baseline Alignment does. It Transmission that although Alignment Variant 5 has other benefits, it wou Alignment forwards as part of the proposed alignment due to the presence confirmed within Section 6 of this report.	
		An Outline Peat Management Plan and Peat Landslide Hazard Risk will b application.
	NatureScot note that the potential for impacts to protected species will also need to be fully assessed as part of any future application and agree that referencing any existing information for nearby wind farms will be helpful when considering the scope of survey work required. However, additional survey work will be required.	Protected species surveys have been carried out and will inform further as progresses, as well as identifying appropriate mitigation measures to mini (SPPs).
	NatureScot referred to their previous correspondence at the route selection consultation stage and their advice presented. Naturescot also advised that any mitigation proposed for protected species should be outlined in appropriate Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and be included as part of any future planning application.	Previous comments from NatureScot are noted. Appropriate SPPs will be
	Naturescot outlined that the OHL would extend into the Wild Land Area (WLA) 34: Reay – Cassley. The special qualities of WLAs are recognised within National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The turbines and associated infrastructure of the proposed windfarm will have a significant impact on the WLA. The OHL connection should be included as an element of the larger proposed wind farm development within a landscape and visual impact assessment, to inform any future planning application.	The special qualities of the WLA have been factored into the route and ali considered further as the project progresses.
	NatureScot do not consider that their advice on the Achany Extension Wind Farm proposal is materially affected as a result of the publication of NPF4 and they therefore refer the Applicant to their response (20 June 2022) to the Scottish Government on the Achany Wind Farm Extension regarding impacts on wild land.	This has been noted. NatureScot's response to the Scottish Government impacts on wild land will be reviewed.
SEPA	To their response, SEPA attached their generic scoping requirements, but they also outlined that these should be considered within the context of NPF4. SEPA will be especially interested in the application clearly demonstrating how the mitigation hierarchy outlined in policy 5 has been applied.	All generic scoping requirements and comments will be considered in the soils.

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ent appraisals, and habitat and peat depth solution, seeking to minimise impacts on priority

at to establish the depth of peat along the ant 5 which was presented as part of the preferred t has since been considered by SSEN uld be more appropriate to take the Baseline be of deep peat and priority peatland. This is

be included as part of any future consent

assessment work to be undertaken as the project imise impacts, such as Species Protection Plans

e set out in the future application.

lignment selection process, and will be

t on the Achany Wind Farm Extension regarding

e context of NPF4, including Policy 5 relating to



Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	 SEPA outlined that the following key issues must be addressed in the next stage of the development before the alignment is finalised: (a) Minimising impacts on peat and peatland (b) Avoiding good quality or rare GWDTE habitats and minimising impacts on other GWDTE habitats, and (c) Avoiding impacts on watercourses and other water features by ensuring suitable buffers and using best practice design crossings for any temporary or permanent watercourse crossings. 	The key issues referenced by SEPA have been considered during the rout minimise impacts as far as possible.
	SEPA requested the inclusion of peat probing at the next stage as the alignment appears to traverse Class 1 and 2 peatland for a significant portion of its length. In accordance with NPF4 the finalised layout should show how the location of the towers avoids areas of deep peatland and any good quality habitat. The S37 application should include clear information on supporting infrastructure such as tracks including whether they are temporary or permanent and method of construction. They should be shown to minimise peat disturbance. A Peat Management Plan will also be required which should clearly demonstrate how all disturbed peat will be used in site reinstatement or peatland restoration, then the submission should include information on the location of the areas to be restored and a justification for the need for the works.	Areas of Class 1 and 2 peat soils were identified during route and alignme surveys have informed the selection of a preferred alignment and design s peatland habitat where possible. Since the alignment stage consultation, peat probing has been carried out preferred alignment and some of the alignment variants. Alignment Variar alignment goes through deeper peat than the Baseline Alignment does. It Transmission that although Alignment Variant 5 has other benefits, it woul Alignment forwards as part of the proposed alignment due to the presence confirmed within Section 6 of this report. An Outline Peat Management Plan and Peat Landslide Hazard Risk will be application.
	SEPA outlined that an NVC survey should be carried out of all wetland habitats. SEPA acknowledge that it will likely not be possible to avoid impacts on wet heath, but impacts should be minimised as much as possible and good quality habitat avoided. The layout submitted at the application stage should demonstrate that it has avoided any mapped acid flushes or other highly groundwater dependant habitats.	An NVC survey will be carried out of all wetland habitats, and appropriate application. Mitigation will be outlined to minimise and avoid impacts.
	In relation to the drawings to be provided SEPA asked that SSEN to please ensure they are at a scale and include relevant information to allow us to easily understand how the proposal will impact on aspects of the environment in which we have an interest. For example, showing buffers to watercourse and individual peat probes.	This comment is noted.
	In relation to the flood extents of the Allt an Rasail and River Shin, SEPA will wish to see it demonstrated that no landraising or temporary infrastructure will take place within these areas.	It is not anticipated that landraising or temporary infrastructure will be requand River Shin.
	SEPA asked that it be noted, that due to the timescale of this project, it is likely that it may fall under SEPA proposed new Integrated Authorisation Framework which may be in place in early 2024.	This has been noted
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	HES had no substantial comments to make on the information presented in the alignment stage consultation document. They are content that none of the heritage assets within their remit has been overlooked during the selection of the preferred alignment or the potential alignment variants.	This has been noted
	HES outlined that their previous advice at route stage is still applicable. HES suggested their previous advice may be particularly helpful in terms of producing any relevant visualisations for heritage assets. They stated in their previous letter that: 'We recommend that as the development progresses and further consultation is undertaken that a visualisation is provided showing Invershin Farm, standing stone 220m ENE of (SM1791) in its setting looking north-west towards the existing Shin substation and the proposed OHL. This would enable a full assessment of the impact of the proposed OHL on the setting of the monument.'	This was noted at route selection stage. A visualisation will be prepared a demonstrate the visual impact from Invershin Farm, standing stone 220m

te and alignment selection stage of the project to

ent appraisals, and habitat and peat depth solution, seeking to minimise impacts on priority

t to establish the depth of peat along the nt 5 which was presented as part of the preferred has since been considered by SSEN Id be more appropriate to take the Baseline e of deep peat and priority peatland. This is

e included as part of any future consent

information will be provided as part of a future

uired within the flood extents of the Allt an Rasail

and included with the section 37 application to ENE of (SM1791).



Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
Forestry and Land Scotland	FLS pointed out that the alignment variants cross about 11 km of Scotland's National Forest and Land (NFL) managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Seven of the alignment variations considered, and the Baseline Alignment, would have an impact on the NFL. FLS objects to any new OHL crossing the NFL as it is an unreasonable constraint on FLS's ability to sustainably manage the NFL. FLS stated that they do not want any additional burdens and their associated constraints on the land they manage, and they will object to and resist the imposition of such burdens and constraints unless it can be shown they are absolutely essential and unavoidable.	FLS's objection has been noted. FLS's interests have been considered three selection process and virtual meetings were held in March and May 2023 were Section 3.3.
(FLS)		The proposed grid connection is required to connect the consented Achany is recognised as a National Development in NPF4, given that it is of a scale 'Major' by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (So SSEN Transmission have corresponded further with FLS during the alignm withdrawn their objection due to SSEN Transmission clarifying where the b cost, engineering and environmental constraints.
	FLS acknowledged that the analysis of the various alignment variants gives a fair assessment of the impacts of each alignment variant and how they compare. If Achany Wind Farm Extension OHL has to cross the NFL, then FLS' preferred alignment would be along the same corridor as the Rosehall Wind Farm export cable which is undergrounded across the NFL; it is noted that this is not one of the alignment variants being consulted on.	The alignment selection process has sought to identify alignment variants lineatural, built and cultural heritage features, on balance with other environm route of the Rosehall wind farm export cable shares, in part, a similar route Variants 3 and 5.
		SSEN Transmission are contracted to develop the connection types stipula developer, which is OHL. Should an OHL connection be deemed unfeasibl grounds, other options, including UGC connections, can be explored. In the is necessary as the connection leaves the proposed Achany Wind Farm Expresented by the proposed turbines of the wind farm. However, beyond the preferred solution in light of technical constraints and to minimise disturbance being the most cost-effective solution.
	Of the alignments being considered FLS objects to and will not accept the use of alignment variants numbered 7, 4 and the Baseline Alignment where it differs from alignment variants 5, 8, 9 and 11 due to the loss of productive forest and the additional burdens and increased costs associated with harvesting the adjacent crop.	This has been noted.
		Alignment variants 7 and 4 were not presented as preferred in the consulta case.
		Alignment Variant 8 is not preferred as it would pass into ancient woodland
		One of the main reasons for not selecting Alignment Variant 9 and Alignme presence of peat. Alignment Variant 9 and Alignment Variant 11 would pase Alignment Variant 5 and the Baseline Alignment.
		However, in order to demonstrate SSEN Transmission's commitment to fine viability or otherwise of alignment variants, the peat probing that was conducted neighbouring alignments where possible to better understand the nature of Alignment Variant 5 which was presented as part of the preferred alignment Alignment does. It has since been considered by SSEN Transmission that a benefits, it would be more appropriate to take the Baseline Alignment forwar the presence of deep peat and priority peatland. This is confirmed within Set
		Following the peat probing, SSEN Transmission have corresponded further objection due to SSEN Transmission clarifying where the best alignment sh and environmental constraints.
	Of the alignment variants being consulted on FLS considers Alignment Variant 12, Alignment Variant 5 combined with Alignment Variants 8 and 9 or 11 to be the least burdensome to the management the NFL but objects to the installation of another OHL across the NFL.	This has been noted. With regards to Alignment Variant 12, this is not pref (approximately 110 m) to a residential property. Please see above comme with Alignment Variants 8 and 9 or 11.
	FLS queried the use of OHL rather than UGC, and queried if SSEN Transmission might be resistant to undergrounding due to familiarity with the overground technology rather than for sound technical reasons. If undergrounding a particular section of powerline is technically impossible FLS needs to be convinced of this.	SSEN Transmission are contracted to develop the connection types stipula developer, which is OHL. Should an OHL connection be deemed unfeasible grounds, other options, including UGC connections, can be explored. In the is necessary as the connection leaves the proposed Achany Wind Farm Expresented by the proposed turbines of Achany Wind Farm Extension. How OHL is the preferred solution, in line with the connection agreement.
	In order to make the proposed OHL across the NFL acceptable to FLS and remove its	See above for comments in relation to UGC point.
	objections, FLS suggested that the connection needs:To be buried through the afforested areas as a minimum, ideally on a parallel alignment to the undergrounded Rosehall Wind Farm export cable.	In relation to a package of remedial works to mitigate the impact on the NFI environmental net gain, SSEN are committed to compensatory planting and across the entire length of the route taken forward.

oughout the route and alignment stage with representatives from FLS as discussed in

Wind Farm Extension to the national grid, and that would have otherwise been classified as cotland) Regulations 2009.

ent selection process. FLS have since est alignment should be situated balancing

likely to have the least adverse impact on nental considerations including people. The to the Baseline Alignment and Alignment

ated by the Achany Extension wind farm le on environmental, engineering or economic he case of this project, it is deemed that an UGC extension substation given technical constraints e extent of the wind farm, an OHL is the face to habitats and watercourses, as well as

tion document and this continues to be the

I (Category 3).

ent Variant 11 as preferrable options was the ss through more Class 1 and 2 peat than

ding consensus with FLS and to confirm the ucted was done to provide information on the peat and in turn the associated risks. It goes through deeper peat than the Baseline although Alignment Variant 5 has other ards as part of the proposed alignment due to ection 6 of this report.

r with FLS. FLS have since withdrawn their nould be situated balancing cost, engineering

ferred given its very close proximity ents in relation to Alignment Variant 5 combined

ated by the Achany Extension wind farm le on environmental, engineering or economic ne case of this project, it is deemed that an UGC atension substation given technical constraints vever, beyond the extent of the wind farm, an

L and the production of a biodiversity and d BNG measures to help mitigate impacts



Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	Agree a package of remedial works to mitigate the impact on the NFL and produce a biodiversity and environmental net gain for both the project and the surrounding forest.	In order to achieve these commitments, SSEN Transmission would welcor which could take place within its land holding. SSEN Transmission will be as part of the project and would then seek further engagement with FLS. A be achieved through habitat creation to a value of 10% gain over the base potential to undertake significant BNG works working with FLS if suitable in
NOROS (No Ring of Steel)	NOROS is a group representing local residents in relation to the continuing number of Windfarm developments and associated infrastructure around the areas of Rosehall, Altass and Linside. Members of the group visited the consultation event and wanted to pass on some of their concerns about the development.	This has been noted.
	It was outlined by NOROS that there was some anger that the route stage consultation event was held in Lairg, making it difficult for many to attend. NOROS noted that it was understood that this was due to construction vehicles needing to come through Lairg to access the site. It was felt by NOROS members though, that it would have been important to first inform residents that are going to be affected by the infrastructure on a daily basis, rather than communities affected by traffic for a few weeks.	This comment was noted at route selection stage for implementation at fut selected as the location for the alignment selection stage consultation even
	NOROS noted that SSEN Transmission stated that 2,500 invitations to this event were sent out, but as there are only 250 residents in the local area NOROS queried where else these could have been sent.	SSEN Transmission outlined in the April 2023 Route Stage Report on Con informing of the event was carried out to 1,393 households within the vicin consultation. As stated in Section 3.3 of this Alignment Stage Report on C in the local press, SSEN Transmission's social media channels and the de booklet and letter informing of the event was also carried out to 1,393 hous consultation. Following the consultation event, SSEN Transmission have corresponded
		map used to carry out the maildrop for the event.
	NOROS suggested that although the Alignment Stage Consultation Document was detailed, the maps were of very poor quality, hard to read and very difficult to pick out details from, or to truly see what residents would be affected.	This has been noted. Regarding the maps in the booklet, it is challenging 2a - 2d in the Alignment Stage Consultation Document were produced to s consultation event, SSEN Transmission had detailed maps on display prin Maps can also be viewed on the project webpage.
	NOROS agreed that the approach taken to select the most optimal alignment had been adequately explained in relation to natural and cultural heritage sites. NOROS did not feel that the affect of the OHLs to local residents, especially those living in Durcha, the visual affect to those visiting the area or the affect on local wildlife has been fully taken into account. NOROS outlined that residents of Durcha currently have a wind farm behind their house, and are subject to noise and vibrations when the blades turn. With the recent approval of the Meall Buidhe windfarm, Durcha residents may now face this in front of their homes so an OHL also passing closely by would be additional infrastructure.	This has been noted. As well as consultation responses received on this t at Durcha was received at the event. SSEN Transmission have subseque Variant 3 as the preferred alignment in order to locate the OHL further awa It has since been considered by SSEN Transmission that although Alignment more appropriate to take the Alignment Variant 3 forwards to EA stage due
	NOROS outlined that the local economy is based on rural tourism with visitors coming to enjoy the peace and quiet and rural nature of the area, and that the threat of more infrastructure destroying the countryside is frightening.	The proposed grid connection is required to connect the consented Achan is therefore recognised as a National Development in NPF4. Consideration on landscape, visual and recreational receptors during the route and align further assessed as the project progresses.
	NOROS suggested that OHLs present a risk to resident birds. NOROS outlined that it was brought to SSEN Transmission's attention near the project is an active Osprey nest. NOROS suggest that OHLs could pose a threat to breeding adults flight lines to nest sites, to young birds when they fledge, and to migrating birds when they return to the area.	The presence of sensitive bird species has been identified through desk-backwhich has been agreed with NatureScot. The information collected from the alignment selection stages of the project, and potential impacts on birds, to mitigation to minimise impacts, will continue as the project progresses.
	NOROS also outlined that there is an active badger sett in the wood close to the project.	Protected species surveys are being carried out to inform the alignment ar impacts on protected species, including badger. Species Protection Plans phase.
	NOROS stated that being told that Ofgem want the cheapest technology solutions to avoid costs on peoples bills, is not good enough. NOROS stated that cheapest is not always the best option, and when people hear of the annual profits of companies such as SSEN Transmission and see their soaring energy bills it doesn't add up.	Although cost is an important topic area, the alignment selection process h have the least adverse impact on natural, built and cultural heritage feature considerations including people. SSEN Transmission are also contracted to develop the connection types s developer, which is OHL. Should an OHL connection be deemed unfeasible

me FLS' input into identifying potential initiatives e quantifying biodiversity and woodland units lost All of SSEN Transmission's BNG works need to eline biodiversity lost and, therefore, there is initiatives can be identified.

ture consultation events. Rosehall was therefore ont held in June 2023.

nsultation that a mail drop of a booklet and letter nity of the route options ahead of the route stage Consultation, consultation events were advertised edicated project website. A mail drop of a seholds ahead of the alignment stage

further with NOROS on this, and supplied the

to show detailed maps at small scales. Figures show constraints at a closer scale. At the public nted out to A0 to also try and address this issue.

topic, feedback feedback from residents that live ently assessed the viability of utilising Alignment ay from those properties.

nent Variant 1 has other benefits, it would be e to the Durcha properties.

ny Wind Farm Extension to the national grid, and n has been given to minimising potential impacts ment selection stage of the project, and will be

ased and field surveys, the methodology of hese studies has informed the route and ogether with the identification of appropriate

nd any appropriate mitigation to minimise will be implemented during the construction

has sought to identify alignment variants likely to es, on balance with other environmental

stipulated by the Achany Extension wind farm ble on environmental, engineering or economic



	Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
			grounds, other options, including UGC connections, can be explored. In the is necessary as the connection leaves the proposed Achany Wind Farm Ex- presented by the proposed turbines of Achany Wind Farm Extension. How OHL is the preferred solution in line with the connection agreement.
		Although NOROS understand the need for the power to be transmitted from the Achany extension site, they disagree that the reasons for not undergrounding have been fully explained. NOROS outlined that residents feel that if the current Achany Wind Farm Grid Connection is UGC and has been working fine, there is no need for Achany Wind Farm Extension Grid Connection to be OHL. They outlined that the environmental damage of UGC, stated by SSEN Transmission staff is not evident for the Achany Wind Farm Grid Connection, so question why this newer line should be more damaging. NOROS note that the damage during construction will be evident but once the UGC is buried, that nature would reclaim the land as it has from the current UGCs. NOROS suggest that OHLs will be visually permanent, and access routes and tree clearance to protect the overhead lines will be ongoing and leave a scar on the natural area.	The existing Achany Wind Farm Grid Connection UGC is only capable of s Extension Wind Farm Grid Connection would require a 132 kV connection. associated with the use of UGC at this voltage that must be addressed in c comments). Due to the physical and performance characteristics of UGCs constraints on their installation meaning that where a 65 kV cable has been location is suitable for larger higher rated cable installation such as a 132 k
			As explained above, the decision to progress with an OHL for this project is SSEN Transmission and the wind farm developer, together with considerat It should be noted though that UGC can have a greater impact on sensitive m wide construction corridor along it's length. As with OHL's, UGCs also re require tree clearance in woodland or forested areas. Furthermore, joint ba 500–1,000 m to facilitate access to the UGC in the event of a fault or maint structure is also required on an UGC to facilitate transition between UGC a
		NOROS requested that the alignment should avoid the residents of Durcha and Linsidemore.	This has been noted. As well as consultation responses received on this to was received at the event. SSEN Transmission have subsequently assess as the preferred alignment in order to locate the OHL further away from the
			It has since been considered by SSEN Transmission that although Alignme more fitting to take the Alignment Variant 3 forwards to EA stage due to the
			In the area of Linsidemore, the preferred alignment would not come within
Peter Graham & Associates (on behalf of Brook Forestry)	Peter Graham & Associates	Peter Graham & Associates (on behalf of Brook Forestry) are in support of the connection being undergrounded along the road near Rosehall Wind Farm.	This has been noted. Please see above comments on undergrounding con
	(on behalf of Brook	Peter Graham & Associates (on behalf of Brook Forestry) disagreed with the idea that the environmental impact of an OHL would cause the lower impact when compared to UGC. They note following the route of an existing road would cause minimal environmental domage even with the additional infrastructure required for LICCs.	This has been noted.
	Forestry)		Utilising Alignment Variant 3 as the preferred OHL alignment would follow the preferred alignment as presented in the alignment stage consultation docu
			In relation to UGC running alongside existing road, this would also mean run has already been disturbed by the existing Rosehall Wind Farm UGC, considered by the temperature that it can safely be operated at. The inclusion in an increase in the heating of the surrounding soil mass and could potent. Wind Farm UGC circuit and the existing capacity for which it is designed. If Rosehall Wind Farm UGC on any potential future UGC circuits such as Act need of an easement width that well exceeds the width of previously disturbe exacerbated in areas of deepening which are necessary to cross waterous temperatures increase with depth, circuit spacing would have to increase for construction easement width of approximately 40 m over undisturbed group new UGC circuit where it runs in proximity to the existing Rosehall Wind Farm
Rosehall Wind Farm	Rosehall Wind Farm	Rosehall Wind Farm outlined that they would require a minimum of 186 m clearance from the closest impacted turbine to the OHL. Rosehall Wind Farm had a number of additional technical and operational queries related to the project, their wind farm and their 33 kV underground HV cable.	This has been noted. The Achany Wind Farm Extension OHL would maint closest turbine which is 186 m. All further technical and operational querie SSEN Transmission and Rosehall Wind Farm. SSEN Transmission will co project progresses.
		Rosehall Wind Farm outlined that they have Habitat Management Plan (HMP) obligations within certain areas of their wind farm that cannot be disturbed.	This has been noted. SSEN Transmission have received a copy of Roseh preferred alignment does not interact with the Rosehall Wind Farm HMP.
	RTS Forestry (Coille An Fheoir)	RTS Forestry are unclear if the OHL would cut through their conifer stand. Should this be the case then RTS forestry would ask that the alignment be moved south.	The preferred alignment as presented at consultation, was anticipated to consultation. SSEN Transmission have continued to liaise with RTS Forestry in relation subsequently SSEN Transmission have altered the alignment of the Basel
			Forestry land completely.

he case of this project, it is deemed that an UGC extension substation given technical constraints wever, beyond the extent of the wind farm, an

supplying 65 kV, while the proposed Achany a. There are several additional challenges order to determine feasibility (see above s, lower voltage cables have a lot less en installed it does not follow that the same kV UGC.

s driven by the contractual agreements between tion of environmental, technical and cost factors. e habitats due to the requirement to create a 30 equire a wayleave to be created, which would ays, which are concrete lined, are required every tenance activities. A sealing end compound or and OHL.

opic, feedback from residents that live at Durcha ed the viability of utilising Alignment Variant 3 ose properties.

ent Variant 1 has other benefits, it would be e Durcha properties.

500 m of properties.

nsiderations.

the route of an existing road more so than the ment.

unning alongside existing UGCs. Although land sideration must be given to the interaction eat, and the performance/rating of a cable is on of additional UGC circuits in proximity results tially negatively impact the existing Rosehall Furthermore, the heating effect of the existing thany Wind Farm Extension would result in the bed ground. Issues of thermal interaction can courses and other natural obstacles. As soil further in these cases. An additional ind would be envisaged to accommodate any arm UGC.

tain a 3x rotor diameter distance from the es have been discussed in further detail between ontinue to liaise with Rosehall Wind Farm as the

all Wind Farm HMP and confirm that the

ross approximately 100 m of RTS Forestry land. to this.

ine Alignment by around 100 m to avoid RTS



Table 2.2.2 - Community Consultation Responses from The Public Exhibition Event by Topic

Theme	Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
tion	Several respondents suggested that undergrounding the connection would be the preferred and more appropriate technology, as there would be positive impacts in relation to various constraint topic areas including recreation, ecology, ornithology and landscape and visual. Some respondents suggested that SSEN Transmission's approach to select the most optimal alignment seems to have just been based on costs, not looking at effects on the area and those living there.	The alignment selection process has sought to identify alignment variants likely to have on balance with other technical and cost considerations. As detailed in the above responses in Table 4.1, there are a number of environmental, associated with undergrounding at 132 kV. The ability to install underground cabling is and terrain and there can be significant and lasting environmental impacts and future la Although UGCs are visually less intrusive, a significant land take is required for laying from any buildings or woodland to allow for access in the event of cable faults, as is the problems for UGC installations as described in responses in Table 4.1. SSEN Transmission are also contracted to develop the connection types stipulated by which is OHL. Should an OHL connection be deemed unfeasible on environmental, er including UGC connections, can be explored. In the case of this project, it is deemed t leaves the proposed Achany Wind Farm Extension substation given technical constrain Achany Wind Farm Extension. However, beyond the extent of the wind farm, an OHL connection agreement.
inding the conner	Members of the public suggested that the reasoning behind favouring OHL over UGC for this project is not clear, particularly as the already existing Achany Wind Farm Grid Connection is UGC and there have been no notable or publicised issues.	The already existing Achany Wind Farm Grid Connection of UGC is only capable of ca Wind Farm Extension Grid Connection will need to be capable of carrying 132 kV. There are more challenges associated with the use of UGC at 132 kV voltage that mus (see above comments). Due to the physical and performance characteristics of UGCs on their installation meaning that where a 65 kV UGC has been installed it does not fol higher rated cable installation such as a 132 kV UGC.
Undergrou	One person queried why a "ploughing" technique could not be used as a method for installing UGC to reduce impacts.	 The ploughing technique has not been proposed to be taken forwards for this project. examples of previous installations do not present a complete picture and there are a si below: Thermal Backfill: cable systems require careful design of thermal backfill arran and ultimately failure in service. For the thermal backfill to function correctly, n the cable circuit and whilst most parameters are checked at source, it needs to meets the minimum cover dimensions in all areas around the cables/ducts and these things can be checked consistently or easily for ploughed installation as would be required in order to do so, negating the benefits of ploughing. Formation: Closely related to the item above on thermal backfill, the accuracy impact thermal performance, along with induced voltage and impedances for the installation, and lastly safety of the asset. A ploughed installation. Strapping uniform on installation and remains as such of the life of the cable system, ever settlement which can be quite a common occurrence. Terrain: Ploughing lends itself to terrain without significant obstacles (such as (restoration and depth of installation), boulders etc. It is not a practical installation there is some concern around long term stability of some terrain types such as inadvertently lead to de-stabilisation of such terrain types on shallow slopes, redisplacement of peatland and landslides, something that is a known risk in Sco. Land Drainage: The installation of large duct banks by ploughing naturally lead surrounding indigenous soils, which could lead to performance impacts of naturally lead surrounding indigenous soils, which could lead to performance impacts of naturally lead to the source of the termanic presence of the source of the source of the source of the there is a known risk in Sco.

e the least adverse impact on the environment,

, technical, and operational constraints s highly dependent on suitable ground conditions and use constraints associated.

UGCs, and a corridor is required to be kept clear e case of OHLs. Peat also poses a number of

the Achany Extension wind farm developer, ngineering or economic grounds, other options, that an UGC is necessary as the connection ints presented by the proposed turbines of is the preferred solution in line with the

arrying 65 kV. In contrast to this, the Achany

st be addressed in order to determine feasibility s, lower voltage cables have a lot less constraints llow that the same location is suitable for larger

Whilst ploughing shows some promise, the ignificant number of challenges, including the

ngements to avoid the risk of thermal runaway material qualities must be consistent throughout o be ensured that what is installed in the trench d also achieves the correct densities. Neither of excavation and exposing the installed duct bank

of duct placement and trench formation directly the system, effective frictions for cable ow for strapping of the duct bundle as gensures the arrangement of the ducting is en in the presence of small amounts of

large watercourses, roadways etc.), peatland tion methodology for many cable routes and s peatland and the risk that ploughing might esulting in soil creep or even significant otland.

ds to the upheaval and compression of ural land drainage.



Theme	Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
	A person queried why Shin substation was selected rather than Muir Lairg substation and queried the rationale for 132 kV being used rather than a	It has been assumed that by "Muir Lairg substation", the consultee meant the relativel is not a substation that exists.
	lower rating.	A feasibility assessment was carried out seeking to explore the options of connecting both at Dalchork substation and at Shin substation. It was concluded that a connection was considered technically less challenging. Shin substation also has the capacity to substation expansion.
		During the initial review, using the 132 kV rated line was recommended as the most e requirement of Achany Wind Farm Extension.
ol ا	A person suggested linking Achany Wind Farm Extension to the existing Achany Windfarm then joining that connection to Muir Lairg substation.	It has been assumed that by "Muir Lairg substation", the consultee meant the relativel is not a substation that exists.
ection		The proposed Achany Extension will have an output of 132 kV and therefore requires enough capacity in the existing UGC.
conne	A person proposed the use of an existing access road which has a 33 kV cable running from Rosehall Wind Farm. They suggested it could link the wind farm extension to either the existing Rosehall Wind Farm or to avoid Rosehall Wind Farm and link to a forest road and windfarm road and follow a route to the southeast of the preferred alignment to Shin substation. Ga da A gu na acc U S w al	The existing Rosehall Wind Farm UGC is only capable of supplying 33 kV. The property and therefore requires a new method of connection as there is not enough capacit
Alternative		In relation to an UGC running alongside an existing road, this would also mean running already been disturbed by the existing Rosehall Wind Farm UGC, consideration must potential future UGC circuits. UGC circuits generate heat, and the performance/rating can safely be operated at. The inclusion of additional UGC circuits in proximity results soil mass and would therefore negatively impact the existing Rosehall Wind Farm UG designed. Furthermore, the heating effect of the existing Rosehall Wind Farm UGC of Achany Wind Farm Extension would result in the need of an easement width that well ground. Issues of thermal interaction can be exacerbated in areas of deepening whice natural obstacles. As soil temperatures increase with depth, circuit spacing would have additional construction easement width of approximately 40 m over undisturbed grour UGC circuit where it runs in proximity to the existing Rosehall Wind Farm UGC. Subsequent to the consultation, it been considered by SSEN Transmission that althout would be more appropriate to take the Alignment Variant 3 forwards due to the Durch also follow the route of an existing forest road more so than the preferred alignment a document
lation	Respondents suggested that the local population does not want the additional burden of more windfarms and associated infrastructure. It was outlined that there is a disproportionate amount in the area with much energy exported elsewhere.	The proposed grid connection is required to connect the consented Achany Wind Far
ocal popu	Several respondents suggested that the connection should be kept away from properties at Durcha as they are becoming surrounded by infrastructure.	This has been noted. As well as consultation responses received on this topic, feedbound received at the event. SSEN Transmission have subsequently assessed the viability of alignment in order to locate the OHL further away from those properties.
The l		It has since been considered by SSEN Transmission that although Alignment Variant appropriate to take the Alignment Variant 3 forwards due to the Durcha properties.
	One person commented that Alignment Variant 2 was not their preference.	Alignment Variant 2 is not a part of the preferred alignment and will not be taken forwa
ithology rotected pecies	Some respondents commented that active osprey nests and badger setts near to the project should be brought to the attention of the project team. One respondent suggested that for raptors and other animals the	Protected species surveys are being carried out to inform the alignment and any appr protected species, including badger. Species Protection Plans will be implemented du vicinity of the project are known and additional advice on the scope of bird survey wor November 2022 and on 23 June 2023
S D S D S D S D S D S D S D S D S D S D	or introduction of species.	
<u>The</u> <u>consultat</u> ion process	Some members of the public suggested that the images in the Consultation Document were very poor with little detail and that it was hard to clearly see the connection and who it will affect.	This has been noted. Regarding the maps in the booklet, it is challenging to show dee the Alignment Stage Consultation Document were produced to show constraints at a SSEN Transmission had detailed maps on display printed out to A0 to also try and red project webpage.

ly new Dalchork substation. Muir Lairg substation

Achany Wind Farm Extension to the network on to the electricity network at Shin substation take the connection without requiring extensive

efficient solution to meet the 105 MW connection

ly new Dalchork substation. Muir Lairg substation

a new method of connection as there is not

osed Achany Extension will have an output of 132 ty in the existing UGC.

ng alongside existing UGCs. Although land has t be given to the interaction between it and any g of a cable is impacted by the temperature that it is in an increase in the heating of the surrounding GC circuit and the existing capacity for which it is on any potential future UGC circuits such as I exceeds the width of previously disturbed ch are necessary to cross watercourses and other ive to increase further in these cases. An nd would be envisaged to accommodate any new

ugh Alignment Variant 1 has other benefits, it a properties. Utilising Alignment Variant 3 would as presented in the alignment stage consultation

m Extension to the national grid.

back from residents that live at Durcha was of utilising Alignment Variant 3 as the preferred

1 has other benefits, it would be more

ards.

ropriate mitigation to minimise impacts on uring the construction phase. Osprey nests in the rk was provided by NatureScot via e-mail on 22

tailed maps at small scales. Figures 2a - 2d in closer scale. At the public consultation event, duce this issue. Maps can also be viewed on the



Theme	Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
Some respondents outlined that the first consultation was not near the relevant area, and that only 2 weeks' notice was given for the event. One respondent noted that the consultation booklet and public event banners, were only available 48 hours before the event and could only be accessed if someone had email.	The comment regarding where the first consultation was held was noted at route select consultation events. Rosehall was therefore selected as the location for the alignment 2023.	
	The consultation booklet and public event banners were prepared for the public consultation booklet and public event banners were prepared for the public consultation available prior to the event on the project website and will remain there whilst the project events were advertised in the local press, SSEN Transmission's social media channel of a booklet and letter informing of the event was also carried out to 1393 of housholds.	
	One person requested that the specific relationships between the various companies within the SSE group should be fully explained.	The relationship between SSE and SSEN Transmission was shown on an organogram consultation event, as well as on the project website.
	A person requested a copy of the route stage Report on Consultation (April 2023).	The April 2023 route stage Report on Consultation is available on the project website: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/achany-wind-farm-extension
	One person proposed that there is a Stakeholder Board established to contribute more to the planning and proposals and widen the considerations for the project process.	SSEN Transmission will continue to liaise closely with local residents, communities an progresses.
Other	One person supplied some additional documents as a response to the consultation. These were "Brief Presentation for Policy Development, Route Selection and Technical Solutions as Part of the Consultation Process: PART 1 – Response to - Public Consultation Event" and "Brief Presentation for Policy Development, Route Selection: Reference - Alignment Stage Consultation Document; Achany Wind Farm Extension Grid Connection June 2023 as Part of the Consultation Process: PART 2 – Response to - Public Consultation Process: PART 2 – Response to - Public Consultation Event: Enhanced Alignment Options."	These documents have been received by SSEN Transmission and will be discussed in are applicable to this grid connection project.

ction stage for implementation at future nt selection stage consultation event held in June

ultation. All exhibition materials were made ject is in development stages. Consultation als and the dedicated project website. A mail drop ds ahead of the consultation.

m on the information boards available at the

on-connection

nd Community Councils as the project

n further detail with the stakeholder where points