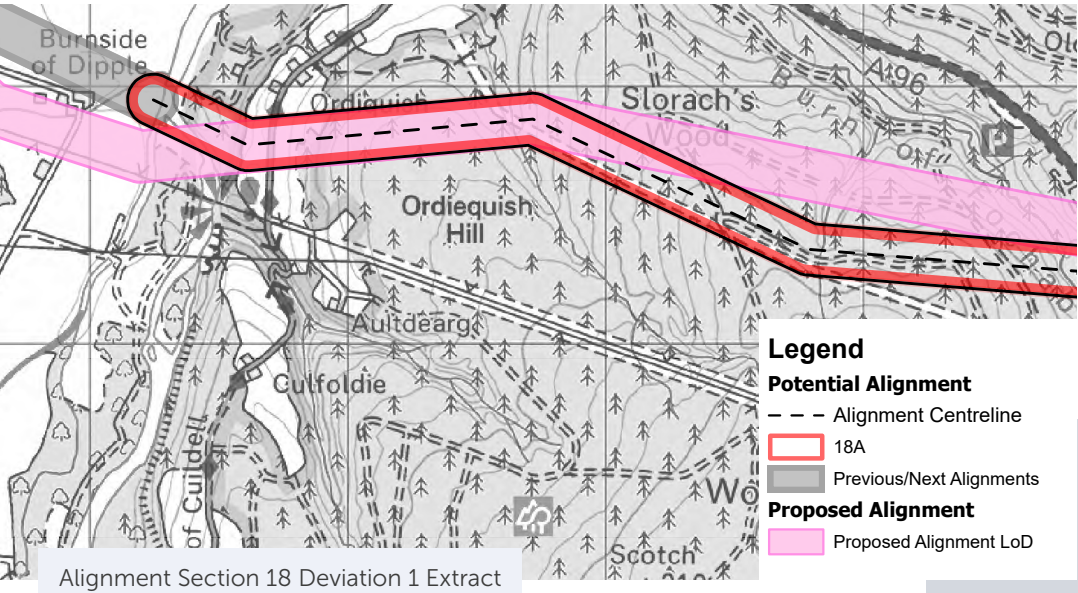


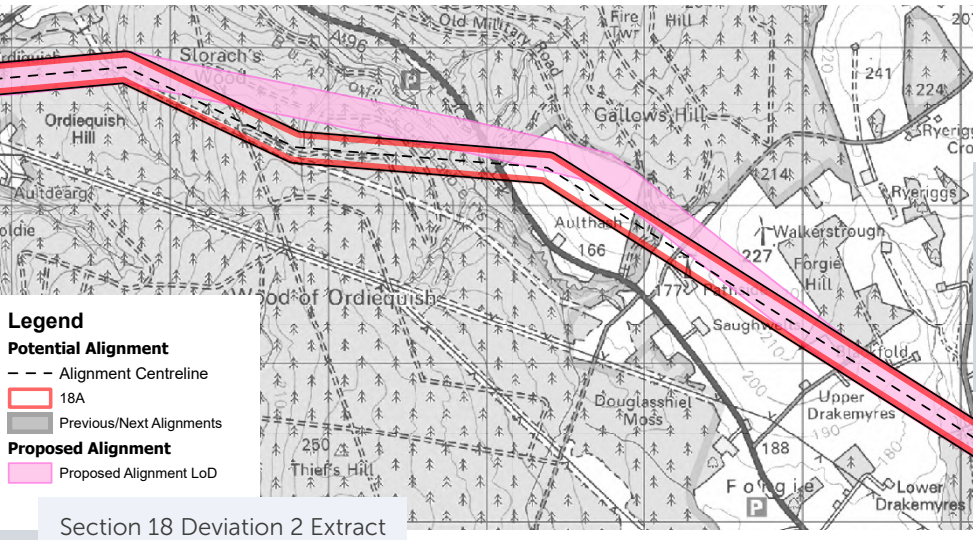
In Section 18 we identified two alignment deviations (Alignment 18J1 and 18J2) which would provide a connection from the revised Proposed Alignment in Section 17 (Alignment 17D) to the Potential Alignment 18A in this section. Further assessment of these options concluded that Alignment 18J1 was marginally preferred over Alignment 18J2, as it is slightly better for landscape character and visual impacts which

is a key driver in this sensitive landscape area. Alignment 18J1 is also preferred from an engineering perspective as it crosses the River Spey at a less steep point than Alignment 18J2. Further information is provided in the Alignment Deviations Appraisal in Appendix C. Alignment 18J1 will therefore be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment for EIA and detailed design.



Also within Section 18, following review of consultation feedback we identified another alignment deviation (Alignment 18H) which takes a more northerly alignment to Potential Alignment 18A through Slorach's Wood and to the east of the A96, to reduce impacts to forestry operations and avoid a private water supply. Further assessment concluded

that Alignment 18H is acceptable from an environmental, engineering and cost perspective in comparison to the Potential Alignment 18A. Further information is provided in the Alignment Deviations Appraisal in Appendix C. Alignment 18H will therefore be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment for EIA and detailed design.



Route Section 9
(Alignment Sections 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24)

Based on consultation feedback and further assessments, we have made some changes to the Potential Alignment in Sections 19, 20 and 21, as described below. No changes have been made to the Potential Alignment in Sections 22, 23 and 24.

In Section 19 we identified an alignment deviation (Alignment 19E) that crosses the River Isla at a slightly more easterly point than the Potential Alignment 19C, to prevent interference with dredging requirements of the River Isla. Consequently, it takes a gentler angle as it comes around the north of Newmill to maintain distances from residential properties. Further assessment concluded that Alignment 19E is acceptable from an environmental, engineering and cost perspective in comparison to the Potential Alignment 19C. Further information is provided in the Alignment Deviations Appraisal in Appendix C.

Alignment 19E will therefore be taken forward as the Proposed Alignment for EIA and detailed design.

