Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Report on Consultation

Blarghour 132 kV Wind Farm Connection

May 2023

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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Figures

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line OHL, along with location of key angle structures.
Alignment (preferred)	An alignment for the overhead line taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of alignment options.
Alignment (proposed)	An alignment taken forward to consent application. It comprises a defined centre line for the overhead line and includes an indicative support structure (tower or pole) schedule, also specifying access arrangements and any associated construction facilities.
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission plc's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	A process intended to leave nature in a better state than it started using good practice principles established by the Business and Biodiversity Offset Programme (BBOP) and organisations including CIRIA, CIEEM and IEMA.
Conductor	A metallic wire strung from structure to structure, to carry electric current.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views and, normally, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.
Corridor	A linear area which allows a continuous connection between the defined connection points. The Corridor may vary in width along its length; in unconstrained areas it may be many kilometres wide.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	Environmental Impact Assessment. A formal process codified by EU directive 2011/92/EU, and subsequently amended by Directive 2014/52/EU. The national regulations are set out in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. The EIA process is set out in Regulation 4(1) of the regulations and includes the preparation of an EIA Report by the developer to systematically identify, predict, assess and report on the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
GWDTE	Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Habitat Management Plan	A plan outlining measures for preserving or managing wildlife within a given area. In the context of development, the plan often comprises part of the scheme of mitigation measures to control environmental impacts.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or poles.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from planting.

Term	Definition
RAG Rating	Each topic within the environmental, technical and cost categories should be considered in terms of the potential for the development to be constrained and a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating applied as appropriate.
Route	A linear area of approximately 1 km width (although this may be narrower/wider in specific locations in response to identified pinch points / constraints), which provides a continuous connection between defined connection points.
Route (preferred)	A route for the overhead line taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of route options.
Route (proposed)	A route taken forward following stakeholder consultation to the alignment selection stage of the overhead line routeing process.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.
Semi-natural Woodland	Woodland that does not obviously originate from planting. The distribution of species will generally reflect the variations in the site and the soil. Planted trees must account for less than 30% of the canopy composition.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Areas of national importance. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Span	The section of overhead line between two structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by the Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Special Protection Area – designated under Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive).
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SHE Transmission plc works.
Study Area	The area within which the Corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in the Great Britain.
Underground Cable (UGC)	An electric cable installed below ground, protected by insulating layers and marked closer to the surface to prevent accidental damage through later earthworks.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between a landowner upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed and SHE Transmission plc.

PREFACE

This Report on Consultation has been prepared by ERM Ltd. on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission), operating under licence held by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc, who own, operate and develop the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands. This report provides a summary of the responses received from key stakeholders (including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and individual residents) during consultation in May 2022 in response to the construction and operation of a 132 kV overhead line (OHL) connection from the proposed Blarghour Wind Farm Substation to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation.

The Consultation Document[1] is available online at the project website:

https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/blarghour-wind-farm-connection-project/

To engage stakeholders on the project, SSEN Transmission undertook open-door face-to-face consultations alongside a virtual consultation event via a virtual consultation platform to enable the local community to experience the full exhibition from home on a computer, tablet or mobile device. The online exhibitions were designed to look and feel like a real consultation in a community hall, with exhibition boards, maps, interactive videos and the opportunity to share views on the proposals.

Visitors were able to engage directly with the project team, via a live chat function, where they could ask any questions, they might have about the project and share their feedback on the current proposals.

In addition to this in person events were also held where members of the public could view exhibition materials as part of an open door consultation.

The consultation events took place at the following times:

- Wednesday 18th May 2022: open-door consultation 14:00 – 19:00;
- Thursday 19th May 2022: open-door consultation 14:00 – 19:00;
- Tuesday 24th May 2022: virtual public exhibition 17:00 – 19:00; and
- Wednesday 25th May 2022: virtual public exhibition 17:00 – 19:00.

This Report on Consultation also provides a summary of how SSEN Transmission have responded to comments received by key stakeholders on the Preferred Route options and details the actions that will be taken as the project progresses through to the alignment stage.

[1] SSEN Transmission (2022), Blarghour Wind Farm Project Consultation Document https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/blarghour-wind-farm-connection-project/

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SSEN Transmission undertook consultation in May 2022 to request comments on proposals to construct and operate a 132 kV OHL connection for an approximate length of 10 km from the proposed Blarghour Wind Farm Substation to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation. The proposed route options for the development consist of OHL and have been appraised against environmental, engineering and cost criteria. This Report on Consultation presents a summary of the consultation undertaken.

The consultation process included the publication of a Consultation Document to describe the evaluation of the different routeing options and invite interested parties to provide their views. In addition, SSEN published a poster, and held a virtual consultation[2] event along with live chat sessions. Through the consultation, comments were sought from members of the public, statutory consultees, and other key stakeholders on the Preferred Route option.

A full description of the OHL Routeing Selection process is provided in the Blarghour Consultation Document.

The optioneering process for selection of a route considered two OHL routes. This Report on Consultation Document summarises the comments provided by all interested parties, including statutory consultees and member of the public on the two options under consideration and details the actions taken by SSEN Transmission in response to the comments provided.

[2] SSEN Transmission (2022) Blarghour Wind Farm Project Consultation, available online at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/blarghour-wind-farm-connection-project/

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose of Document

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission) is proposing to construct a new 132 kV single circuit overhead line (OHL) to connect the proposed Blarghour Wind Farm to the wider electricity network (hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development would extend approximately 10 km and comprise a combination of steel lattice tower, trident wood pole and underground cable (UGC). It would connect from a proposed substation within Blarghour Wind Farm to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation.

The developer of Blarghour Wind Farm has been granted consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for a 73.1 MW wind farm, which has a contracted connection date of October 2027. SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to connect the new development to the transmission network by the contracted connection date.

The development is in line with SSEN Transmission's commitment and licence obligation to facilitate the connection of renewables generators to the grid through an economical, efficient and coordinated approach to transmission reinforcement.

A programme of consultation was designed to engage with key stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners, and individual residents to invite feedback on the rationale for and approach to, the selection of the Preferred Route.

This Report on Consultation documents the consultation on the Proposed Development under consideration by SSEN Transmission. The report describes the key feedback received and details the actions taken by SSEN Transmission in response to the comments provided.

1.2 Document Structure

This Report on Consultation is structured as follows:

1. Introduction – sets out the purpose of the Report on Consultation;
2. The Proposals within the Consultation – outlines the background/context to the project and provides a description of the key elements;
3. The Consultation Process – describes the framework for consultation and methods which have been employed;
4. Stakeholder Consultation Responses – summarises the range of responses, key comments and issues arising through the consultation process;
5. SSEN Transmission's Responses to Consultation – describes how the comments and issues raised during consultation will be addressed; and
6. Next Steps – provides a summary of the conclusions reached and actions going forward.

2. THE PROPOSALS WITHIN THE CONSULTATION

2.1 Project Context

The developer of Blarghour Wind Farm has been granted consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for a 73.1 MW Wind Farm, which has a contracted connection date of October 2027. The proposed Blarghour Wind Farm connection consists of a 132 kV OHL of approximately 10 km in length between the proposed Blarghour Wind Farm Substation and the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation. SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to connect the new development to the transmission network by the contracted connection date.

2.2 Project Description

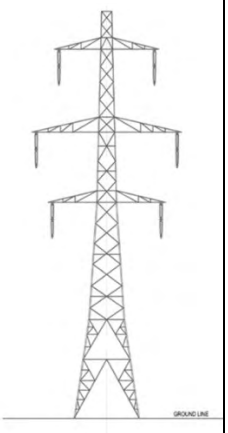
Two types of technology solution have been proposed and appraised as potentially being suitable for the Proposed Development.

- routes comprised of trident wood poles; and
- routes comprised of steel lattice structures.

Generally, the height, including extensions, for the wooden poles is 11-17 m and for steel lattice towers between 26-46 m. The selection of the supports suitable for the OHL are being considered separately to the OHL routeing process. The final designation of support type is generally dependent on three main factors: altitude, weather and the topography of the route. The size of supports and span lengths will also vary depending on these factors, with supports being closer together at high altitudes to withstand the effects of greater exposure to high winds, ice and other weather events. The support configuration, height and the distance between supports will therefore only be fully determined after a detailed alignment survey.

The proposed wooden trident poles will support three conductors (wires) on three insulators positioned at the top of the pole. The L4 steel lattice towers will support six conductors (wires) on six cross-arms (three on each side) and an earth wire between the peaks. Typical designs for both structures can be seen in **Figure 2.1** shows an example of a trident wood pole and steel lattice tower.

Figure 2.1: 'H' Wood Pole and Steel Lattice Tower examples.

Example of a trident "H" wood pole	Example of a steel lattice tower
	  Proposed L8 (c) Tower Suite

Ancillary works will be required for the construction and maintenance of the OHL. This may include tree and vegetation clearance; upgrades of existing or new junction bell-mouths and access tracks; and road and other infrastructure (bridges, culverts etc.) alterations.

Overhead Line Route Selection Process

A full description of the OHL Route Selection process is provided in the Blarghour Consultation Document. Two routes were identified (**Figure 2.2**) and reviewed in terms of cost, engineering, and environment. A summary of the proposed routeing options is set out in the section below.

2.3 Route Options

Two routes have been appraised, Route 1 and 2, these routes are described below and illustrated in **Figure 2.2.**

Route 1

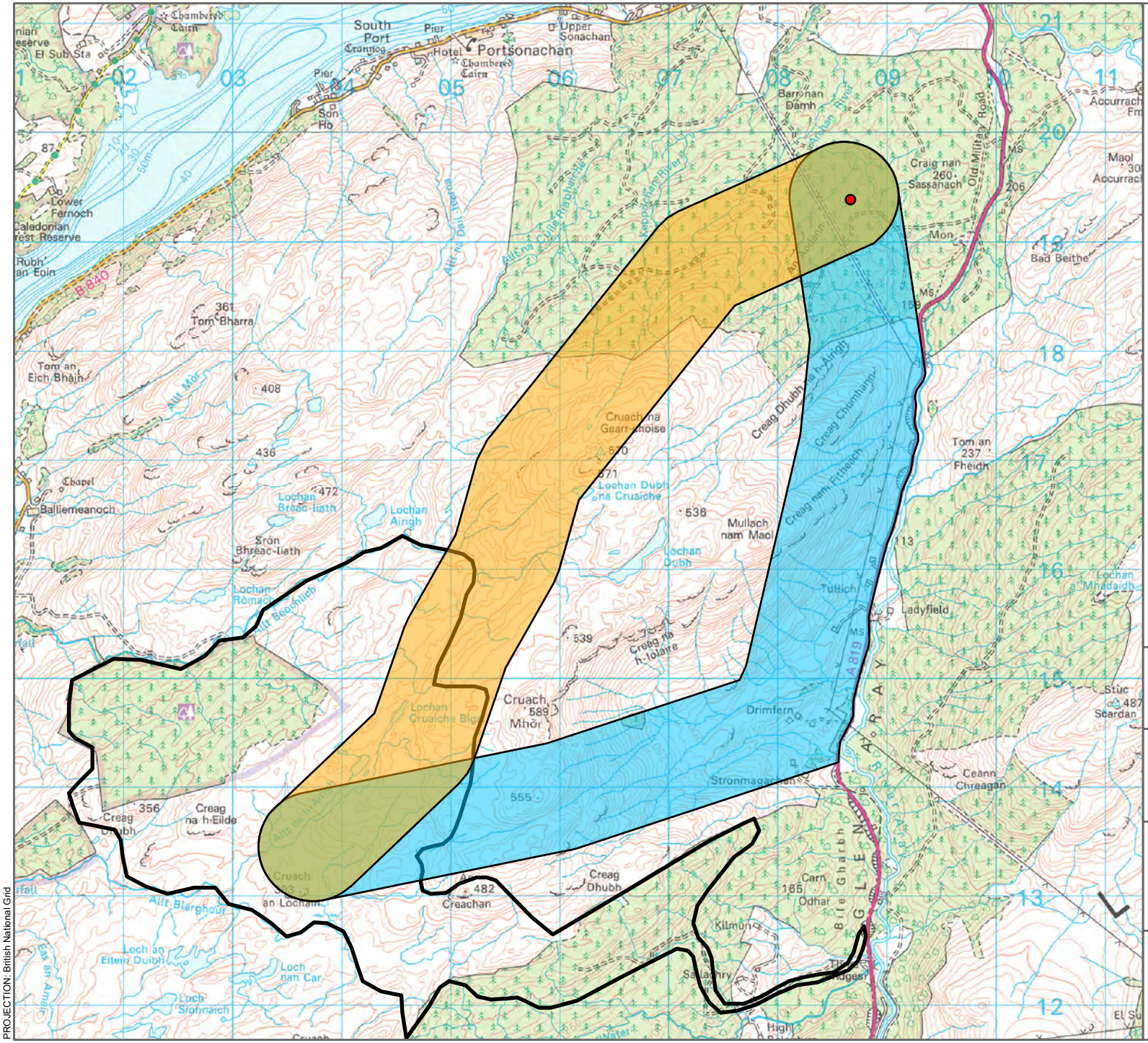
Heads north east from the proposed Blarghour Wind Farm Substation for approximately 8 km, roughly following the Cruach Mhor ridge line to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation. Upon exiting Blarghour Substation, the route passes multiple turbines to the south of the wind farm. The northern most 2 km of the route, on approach to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation is through plantation woodland.

Route 2

Heads east from the proposed Blarghour Wind Farm Substation for approximately 4.8 km, down slope, towards Drimfern, where the route then continues north following a similar route to the existing Inveraray – Taynuilt OHL running alongside the A819, before terminating at the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation. The northern most 1 km of the route, on approach to the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation is through plantation woodland.

2.4 Identification of a Preferred Route

The Preferred Route presented within the Consultation Document was selected on the basis that it was considered to provide an optimum balance of environmental, engineering and economic factors. This included reduced elevation constraints, avoidance of existing and proposed developments, less presence of woodland and moorland habitat and reduced potential for tree felling. The Preferred Route is shown in **Figure 2.2.**



PROJECTION: British National Grid

Path: \\UKSSMBNAF-a383.ops.erm55.com\UKSGISData01\London\0612294 - SSE Argyll Windfarms\MAPS\0612294 - SSE Argyll Windfarms - Corridor Report.aprx\0612294 - Figure 4.1 - Route Options - Blarghour - A01

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.

In accordance with SSEN Transmission's guidance[3], a process of consultation on the Preferred Route has been undertaken. This is described in the sections below.

3.1 Methods for Consultation

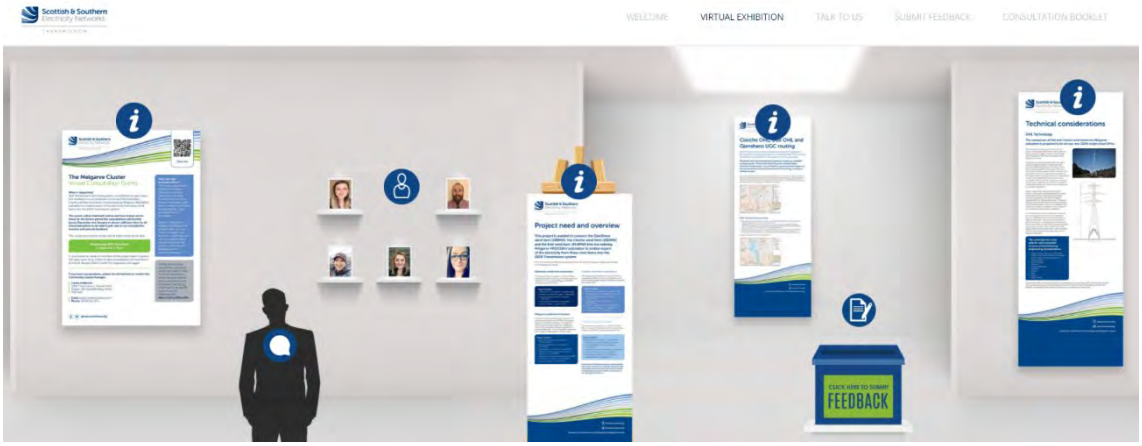
The following methods were used to consult on the Preferred Route, as set out below.

Virtual Consultation

Previously, due to the restrictions in place around social gatherings because of the Covid-19 pandemic, SSEN Transmission's public consultations were held virtually. We developed a bespoke online consultation platform which allowed stakeholders to visit a virtual consultation room and view the project information at their leisure – this year's took the same form. The virtual platform was designed to enable stakeholders to experience the full exhibition from home on a computer, tablet or mobile device. It was designed to look (**Image 3.1**) and feel like a face-to-face consultation in a community hall, with exhibition boards, maps, interactive videos and the opportunity to share views on the proposals. This platform was available throughout the consultation period. Furthermore, as an alternative to face-to-face events, if people were not available for the in-person events, a live chat function was available at advertised times to allow attendees to ask questions and get responses from the project team.

The virtual platform could be accessed from the project website where there was also the consultation brochure available to view for those who preferred this format or struggled with internet bandwidth when accessing the virtual room.

Image 3.1 : Virtual Consultation Platform.



The virtual consultation events took place via the project website at the following times:

- Tuesday 24th May 2022: virtual public exhibition 17:00 – 19:00; and
- Wednesday 25th May 2022: virtual public exhibition 17:00 – 19:00.

In Person Public Consultation Events

There were two face-to-face public consultations which took place at the Loch Fyne Hotel in Inveraray on the following dates:

- Wednesday 18th May at 14:00 – 19:00; and
- Thursday 19th May at 14:00 – 19:00.

[3] SSEN Transmission (September 2020), Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132kV and above

How was the consultation promoted?

This consultation was promoted via maildrop to 156 local properties and adverts were placed within the Oban Times and the Argyll Advertiser detailing information regarding the events. Emails were sent out to those signed up for updates for the project as well as Inveraray Community Council, Community Councillors for Bute and Cowal, the local MSP Jenni Minto and the MP Brendan O'Hara.

Consultation Document

The Blarghour Wind Farm Connection Consultation Document was produced detailing the selection process for the Preferred Route, taking account of environmental, economic and technical factors. The Consultation Document was made available for download on 11th May 2022 from https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/blarghour-wind-farm-connection-project/.

The consultation period ended on 6th June 2022, and feedback on the Consultation Document received before this date has been included herein.

3.2 Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees

Comments were sought from a range of stakeholders both with statutory and non-statutory interest in the consenting process. The list of consultees, both statutory and non-statutory, invited to comment as part of the consultation on the Preferred Route is provided in **Table 3.1.**

Table 3.1: List of Stakeholders

Stakeholders	
Statutory Consultees	
Argyll District Salmon Fisheries Board	Argyll and Bute Council
BT	Civil Aviation Authority- Airspce
Defence Infrastructure Organisation	Fisheries Management Scotland
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	NatureScot
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Scottish Water
Scottish Forestry	Transport Scotland
Joint Radio Company (JRC)	John Muir Trust
Mountaineering Scotland	Nuclear Safety Directorate (HSE)
NATS Safeguarding	RSPB
Non-Statutory Consultees	
Argyll Fisheries Trust	Sustrans
Argyll Estate	West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WOSAS)
Scotways	

Additionally, the affected landowners across the route were invited to comment on the Preferred Route.

Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through the following methods:

- A series of questions were asked within the Consultation Document requesting comments on specific aspects of the project as follows:
    1. Do you feel sufficient information has been provided to enable you to understand what is being proposed and why?

2. Which of the two Options would you consider the best option for SSEN Transmission to develop? Please provide an explanation of your answer.
3. Which of the two Options would you consider the least preferable option for SSEN Transmission to develop? Please provide an explanation of your answer.
4. Are there any potential risks or benefits associated with this project, that you believe have not been included in the Consultation Document?
5. Do you have any other comments on the Proposed Development?

- A live chat function formed part of the virtual public exhibition events allowing members of the public to raise questions directly with SSEN Transmission representatives; and
- A feedback form was also provided on the project webpage alongside the virtual exhibition link allowing users to submit comments.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEES

In developing the Blarghour Wind Farm Connection Project, SSEN Transmission considered technical, environmental, economic constraints on the design and safe operation of the assets along with views expressed by stakeholders. Gathering views from a variety of stakeholders is vital to developing and shaping a solution that balances their differing views. To ensure that we are transparent throughout our consultation process, it is vital that we provided the opportunity to share the feedback we have received from stakeholders on the proposals we have presented.

In response to this consultation, we have received no completed feedback forms. Some respondents chose to voice queries in person at our in-person consultation and via email.

4.1 Summary of Engagement from the In-person / Virtual Exhibitions

During the 5-week consultation period, there were 25 people in attendance over two days at in-person consultation events gathering information and providing feedback on our proposals.

The Blarghour Wind Farm connection project webpage was viewed 52 times and the interactive consultation portal was viewed by 43 individuals. The interactive portal covered both the Blarghour Wind Farm Connection Project and the proposed Creag Dhubh to Inveraray 275 kV OHL Project. In addition to this;

- Seven emails were received regarding the Proposed Route; and
- No completed feedback forms were received.

4.2 Summary of Feedback - Statutory and Non-Statutory Stakeholders

Table 4.1 sets out a summary of the feedback received for the grid connection from statutory and non-statutory consultees following the consultation period. A response to the feedback is also provided by SSEN Transmission in the table, together with confirmation of the action to be taken, where relevant.

The following consultees did not provide any feedback to the consultation:

- Argyll Fisheries Trust;
- CAA – Airspace;
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation;
- Fisheries Management Scotland;
- NATS Safeguarding;
- Nuclear Safety Directorate (HSE);
- Sustrans;
- Scotways; and
- West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS).

Table 4.1: Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultee Feedback on Grid Connections

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
Statutory		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	HES have reviewed the Route Options Consultation Document (May 2022) and are content that the potential impacts on heritage assets and their settings have been correctly identified and appraised as part of the consideration of the alternative route options for the overhead line. HES note that it has not been possible to select the route option which would minimise impacts on the historic environment. The Preferred Route 2 would give rise to impacts on the settings of nearby heritage assets within their remit. Careful consideration should therefore be given to the design of the overhead line at the route alignment stage to ensure that impacts are minimised where possible. The design work should be informed by an environmental assessment including relevant supporting ZTV Information and visualisations.	SSEN acknowledges Historic Environment Scotland (HES) comments in respect to cultural heritage assets and their setting. The route will be refined as we go through the alignment phase where potential impacts may be further minimised. When a final alignment has been selected this will be subject to an impact assessment, including ZTV and visualisations, where impacts on setting will be carefully considered. The final impact assessment will be submitted as part of the consent application.
NatureScot	**Ornithology** Both of the route options are located centrally within the golden eagle range G/LAE as well as potentially within range G/LAE1B. Satellite data exists for the G/LAE and G/LAE1B golden eagle pairs and this should be obtained to inform your assessment. The Creag Dhubh to Inveraray project may have already obtained this data. I believe the relevant pairs relate to the Glen Aray territory (tag 582) and the Douglas Water territory (tag 816). The boundary between the pairs potentially runs along Route 2 and it may be that the pair to the south (G/LAE1B) are more likely using the area despite the proximity to the G/LAE nest. Both route options run close to nest sites (potentially ~400 m) which introduces the potential for significant disturbance and major constraints for any construction / maintenance. Please see our guidance on the use of helicopters and aircraft in relation to disturbance risks to Schedule 1 and 1A raptors and wider Schedule ` species. Should aerial works be required in the vicinity of specially protected bord species the forward planning is crucial to identify the general level of risk and any action required before any activity takes place i.e. the production an appropriate method statement including flight maps, exclusions zones, flight paths etc.	SSEN acknowledges NatureScot's comments in respect to ornithology. SSEN will look to source the suggested satellite data for golden eagle pairs in the vicinity of the Proposed Development and their respective potential nest sites, using this to inform future detailed design and impact assessment. SSEN welcomes advice over construction methodologies in respect to bird disturbance and the suggestion that detailed method statements are produced well in advance. Such method statement shall form part of the project Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). SSEN agree with NatureScot's assessment that an HRA should be considered in order to assess any likely significant effects and in combination effects, this will be undertaken to inform the consenting stage of the project. SSEN has commissioned 12 months' worth or bird surveys (Aug 21 – Aug 22). All bird surveys are undertaken as per NatureScot guidance. During the consenting stage of the project ornithological impacts will be assessed and appropriate mitigation measures determined.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	The proposal has the potential to impact on the Natural Heritage Zone (NH14 Argyll West and Islands) golden eagle population, both on its own and in combination with the other developments in the area. If golden eagles could be affected, we advise that, in addition to survey work, GET (Golden Eagle Topographical) modelling is used to inform the likely use of the area by golden eagles. Whilst not designated as part of the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne Special Protection Area (SPA) it is likely that the project will have connectivity with the SPA either alone or in combination with our projects. As such a Habitats Regulation Appraisal may be required for this project, which will need to consider the qualifying feature of the PSA. We advise that all bird survey work should follow our guidance. Once survey work is completed an assessment of potential impacts through habitat loss/change, disturbance and/or displacement, and collision risk to SPA and wider countryside bird populations will be required, both for the proposal on its own and in combination with other projects. Mitigation options should be considered as part of this process. We would also refer you to the Guidance - Assessment and mitigation of impacts of power lines and guyed meteorological mast on birds which provides advice on how to assess the potential impacts on birds of proposed overhead power lines.	
	Peatland & habitats We advise that peatland surveys are carried out in accordance with the Peatland Survey 2017 'Guidance on Developments on Peatland'. A Peat Slide Risk Assessment may also be required and should follow the latest 2017 guidance, "Peat landslide hazard and risk assessment: best practice guide for proposed electricity generation developments". We advise that impacts to native woodland are avoided where possible. If the proposal includes woodland removal we advise the applicants to liaise with Scottish Forestry at the earliest opportunity to discuss the forestry removal policy and any requirements for compensatory planting.	SSEN acknowledges NatureScot's comments in respect to peatland and habitats. At each step in the design process we look to increase our understanding of site sensitivities through desk study, consultation and eventually specific site surveys. At each step in the process as these sensitivities become better understood the design is adjusted to minimise impacts (balanced against other factors). For the Proposed Development SSEN have undertaken habitat surveys and are proposing peat probing of the Proposed Alignment when it is developed, these will be used to inform any impact assessment (and appropriate mitigation) undertaken as part of the consent application, particularly in respect to any Annex 1 habitats. Further to this these surveys will inform our internal Biodiversity Net Gain objectives for the project. SSEN acknowledges NatureScot's recommendations on guidance for peat slide hazard and risk assessment and will use this to inform such documents as part of the consent application.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
		SSEN recognises the importance of native / ancient woodland and its value to biodiversity, through our optioneering process we aim to avoid impacts in the first instance with further refinement as an alignment is selected. In respect to commercial forestry SSEN are in consultation with Scottish Forestry and will seek any required licencing and identify any required compensatory measures through these discussions and from an early stage.
	Protected species The study area is large and is therefore likely to support a number of protected species such as bats, otters and badgers. The greatest potential for this project to impact on such species is likely to arise from disturbance to their places of rest and/or shelter. However, this will be dependent on the micro-siting of the individual towers. It is therefore at this stage that potential impacts on protected species, and any requirement for licensing, should largely be addressed.	SSEN acknowledges NatureScot's comments in respect to protected species. SSEN have commissioned a suite of protected species surveys which will look to confirm presence / likely absence of species within the Proposed Route (including identification of shelters) and use the results of these surveys to inform impact assessments to accompany the consent application and any required licencing in advance of construction.
	Landscape and Visual Whilst the Route options are not located within any nationally designated landscapes for which NatureScot is a statutory consultee, there could be potentially significant landscape and visual effects on regionally important landscapes e.g. Inveraray Castle Gardens and Designated Landscapes (GDL), particularly elevated parts of the landscape including Dun na Cuaiche. We refer you to Historic Scotland for advice on potential impacts on the Inver\ray GDL and Argyll and Bute Council for potential Area of Panoramic Quality impacts.	SSEN acknowledges NatureScot's comments in respect to landscape and visual effects. SSEN note there is potential for impacts on regionally important landscapes such as those specified. These sites will be considered as part of the L&V and Cultural Heritage impact assessments and further consultation shall be undertaken with HES.
	Scoping and pre-scoping advice There are no directs comments however there are some generic pre-application/ scoping advice on shore wind farms available online at: https://www.nature.scot/general-pre-application-and -scoping-advice-onshore-wind-farms.	SSEN welcomes NatureScot' advice in respect to pre-application/ scoping advice on shore wind farms and where it can be found.
RSPB	**Cumulative Impact** RSPB Scotland note that Route 2 overlaps with the proposed Creag Dhubh – Inveraray 275 kV OHL where it runs adjacent to A819 road. The Creag Dhubh to Inveraray project involves constructing nearly 9 km of new 275 kV OHL, supported by steel lattice towers, between proposed substation at Creag Dhubh and a connection point at Tower 18 on the recently constructed Inveraray to Crossaig OHL. Once the Creag Dhubh to Inveraray OHL is	SSEN acknowledges RSPBs comments in respect to ornithology and cumulative impact assessment. As part of the consents application an impact assessment will be undertaken to determine the likely effects of the Proposed Development. As part of this impact assessment in combination effects of this project and other local projects will be

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	operational, the existing 132 kV Inveraray to Taynuilt OHL between Inveraray and the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation will be removed. There are therefore three significant pieces of OHL work taking place to the north-west of Inveraray (two new OHL installations; one redundant OHL downtaking). The Blarghour Wind Farm itself is also likely to have changed how protected species utilise the local landscape. Cumulatively, these works carry the potential for significant negative impact on protected species such as Golden eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* (Schedule 1).	considered in particular in relation to golden eagle and other protected bird species.
	Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA While Route 2 does not cross into the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA (designated for its nationally significant population of breeding Golden eagles), it is just 100 m from the SPA boundary at its closest point. The clear potential for negative impacts on the protected area and its features (i.e., breeding Golden eagles) from the proposed development requires that a Habitat Regulations Assessment is conducted by appropriately qualified persons to the approved standard methodology.	SSEN acknowledges RSPBs concerns in respect to the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA and their associated golden eagles. SSEN considers all consultation responses it receives and has to balance the wide range of constraints / impacts our projects can have, in order to arrive at the "best" project possible, considering environmental, technical and economic factors. Comments in respect to maximising distance to eyries will be taken forward to influence design where possible. A Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) will be undertaken during the consenting phase of the project and will be submitted with the consent application.
	Golden Eagle <u>Displacement/Disturbance</u> The cumulative impact of the developments/works noted above means that some Golden eagle ranges are now boxed-in by the Blarghour Wind Farm at the rear; the new connecting OHL line to the south; the new 275 kV Creag Dhubh to Inveraray project to the east; and downtaking activity for the existing 132 kV Inveraray to Taynuilt OHL between Inveraray and the proposed Creag Dhubh Substation. RSPB Scotland advised that an alternative route was preferred. However, due to the presence of hazardous ordinance, this route was deemed unviable. The current proposed route therefore does not reflect advice that the line should follow the most eastern edge of the corridor to maximise distance from eagle eyries. <u>Collision Risk</u> Route 2 as currently proposed passes <1 km from some Golden Eagle nesting sites. Although on lower ground, the route runs close to known eyries (i.e., areas in which activity	As part of the impact assessment for the Proposed Development collision risk modelling will be considered for species considered to be at risk of impact from the project, this will be used to inform the consent application. The outcome of such a risk assessment and impact appraisal will be the determination of appropriate mitigation to be employed (e.g. line marking).

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	is concentrated), and eagles have been found to collide with low-lying structures such as deer fences during periods of reduced visibility (e.g., fog and low cloud).	
	Golden Eagle Construction Phase / Operational Mitigation To reduce the potential for negative impacts on this Golden eagle population, RSPB Scotland advise that mitigation is required. Minimising Disturbance As Route 2 passes <1 km of known eyries sites (and therefore clear potential for disturbance during the breeding season exists) RSPB Scotland advise that all works – particularly those requiring use of helicopters – should occur 1. Outwith the breeding season (February to August inclusive); or 2. Within that period only if breeding is confirmed to be unsuccessful that season. Line marking RSPB Scotland advise that line visibility is increased where transits close to eagle eyrie sites to reduce collision risk. It is also recommended that SSEN mark the offshoot from the main OHL route by the A819 to the wind farm substation. Line marking measures will ideally comprise coloured line sheathing; failing this; hanging bird deflectors which are checked and replaced as part of the routine line maintenance schedule (ideally on an annual cycle). Measures must be in place and maintained for the lifetime of this development. Biodiversity Net Gain RSPB Scotland strongly recommend that SSEN liaise with neighbouring developers/landowners to offset negative impacts on this Golden eagle population resulting from the cumulative developments/works noted above. The easiest way to deliver this offsetting would be to enhance current wind farm management plans, and RSPB Scotland would be pleased to advise on appropriate actions to secure net biodiversity gain.	SSEN acknowledges RSPB's points in respect to construction phase and operational monitoring. SSEN will develop management plans to inform construction works, these will form part of the CEMP detailing all mitigation measures to be adopted (including works scheduling), as part of the project. Maintenance of mitigation measures will be appropriate to the level and type of impact and may extend to the lifespan of the Proposed Development. As part of the impact assessment for the Proposed Development collision risk modelling will be considered for species considered to be at risk of impact from the project, this will be used to inform the consent application. The outcome of such a risk assessment and impact appraisal will be the determination of appropriate mitigation to be employed (e.g. line marking). SSEN acknowledges RSPBs comments in respect to BNG and will be working with all relevant stakeholders to ensure our internal targets on BNG are met. This will be detailed in a BNG report for the project following submission of the consent application.
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	SEPA offer their standard comments at this stage. It is SEPAs understanding that that SSEN are aware of these standard comments.	SSEN welcomes SEPAs response and acknowledges SEPAs standard comments.
Scottish Water	A review of our records indicates that there are no Scottish Water drinking catchments, water abstraction sources or Scottish Water assets (including water supply and sewer pipes, water and waste-water treatment works, reservoirs, etc.) in the area. Scottish Water	SSEN acknowledges Scottish Water's comments in respect to Drinking Water Protected Areas and Scottish Water Assets. We note the routes are located within a Drinking Water Protected Area and as such both

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	abstractions are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas (DWPA) under Article 7 of the Water Framework Directive. A review indicates that Route 1 and Route 2 both fall within a drinking water catchment where Scottish Water abstraction is located. Scottish Water abstractions are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas (DWPA) under Article 7 of the Water Framework Directive. The Cladich Intake supplies Cladich Water Treatment Works (WTW) and it is essential that water quality and water quantity in the area ae protected. In the event of an incident occurring that could affect Scottish Water we should be notified immediately. If we deem it necessary additional local Scottish Water contact details will also be provided to ensure operational teams are aware of the activity, which is likely to be the case with this activity when work begins.	quality and quantity of water are protected. In the event of any incidents affecting water quality Scottish Water's Helpline will be called. Your comments on the resilience of the River Aray as opposed to the Douglas Water (in respect to abstraction) are noted and will be included within the project CEMP to ensure this is complied with. Scottish water precautions will also be considered within the CEMP. It is noted that Scottish Water records show no assets in the area and this will be confirmed through obtaining plans from the Asset Plan Providers.
Forestry.Gov	Following a review of the information provided it is noted that Route 2 is preferred, and that it overlaps with the proposed Creag Dhubh – Inveraray 275 kV OHL where it runs adjacent to the A819 road. Ancient woodland within the route corridor should be retained and all efforts to avoid impacting the woodland should be made by careful siting of infrastructure. It is advised that the UK Forestry Standard -4th Edition – 2017 (UKFS) and Scottish Governments Control of Woodland Policy 2009 (CoWRP) apply to the proposal.	SSEN acknowledges Scottish Forestry's response in respect to Ancient Woodland along the Preferred Route. SSENs policy is to minimise impacts on AWI and as such will work to microsite infrastructure away from such areas, where possible, using natural gaps in the woodland to minimise impacts on woodland integrity. SSEN the advisement of use of the UK forestry Standard and will consider this as the project progresses.
British Telecom (BT)	We have studied this proposal with respect to EMC and related problems to BT point-to-point microwave radio links. The conclusion is that the Project indicated using the study corridor and route options provided should not cause interference to BT's current and presently planned radio network.	SSEN welcomes BT's comments in respect to telecoms interference and that the conclusion based on current information is that no interference is likely.
Joint Radio Company (JRC)	JRC confirm that, based on the shapefile data provided as part of the consultation request, there will not be any issues.	SSEN welcomes Joint Radio Company's comments in respect to telecoms interference and that having mapped the shapefiles provided you can see no current issues, it is noted that this may change in the future and should be checked closer to the consent application.
John Muir Trust	John Muir Trust sent a notification of thanks. It was considered that Route 2 is correctly identifies as the preferred route.	SSEN welcomes John Muir Trust's agreement with the outcomes of the optioneering process.
Argyll and Bute Council	The Pre-application advice request has been noted and the planning department will respond in writing as soon as possible.	SSEN welcomes ABC's confirmation of this.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
Mountaineering Scotland	There are no comments to be made at this time.	SSEN welcomes Mountaineering Scotland's confirmation of this.
Transport Scotland	As the proposed do not intersect the trunk road network. Transport Scotland are primarily concerned with impacts associated with traffic generated during the construction / installation phase for the OHL.	SSEN welcomes Transport Scotland's comments in respect to the trunk road network and Traffic and Transport assessment. As noted neither route intersects with the trunk road network. A traffic and transport assessment will be considered during the consenting phase of the project. Any traffic and transport assessment will be undertaken as per best practice guidance and Transport Scotland will be contacted in respect to the scoping of such an assessment.
	Observation 1: No commentary appears to have been provide at this stage regarding any proposals for the assessment of traffic and transport impacts. It is advised that these should be assessed at the appropriate stage and associated information provided for consideration by Transport Scotland. Any assessment undertaken should be prepared in line with IEMA Guidance and scoped in advance with Transport Scotland. Scoping discussions should be informed by a proposed methodology detailing the approach to the assessment of traffic and transport effects and setting out anticipated construction traffic generation.	
Other Consultees		
Argyll Estate	A substantial proportion of the Blarghour Wind Farm Preferred Route (Route 2), as identified by SSE in the consultation document issued in May 2022, is located on land belonging to Argyll Estates, potentially in excess 80% of the route.	Whilst it is regrettable that Argyll Estates are hosting a large proportion of the infrastructure of this project, SSEN are very limited on the route of infrastructure for this project. Our assessment of routing options does not consider the number or identity of landowners.
	In development of the Preferred Route Argyll Estates note that SSE has considered only two routes and moved very quickly to selecting one of these.	The alignment and access tracks have been developed in conjunction with landowners and occupiers since November 2021. Comments have been continually taken on board from all parties and inputted into our evolving design. A consultation period was held during May 2022, with a deadline for responses of 6th June 2022. A face to face public consultation event was held on Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th May and a

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
		virtual exhibition was held on Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th May 2022.
	The impact (visual, character and environmental) of the overhead line (with 30 m towers) is less significant that the wind turbines (136.5 m) comprising Blarghour Wind Farm which sits in an elevated location and will be visible from many locations.	SSEN has strict guidelines on arriving at route options for any overhead line. This (amongst other factors) is based on Holford Rules which state a hill / tree background should be preferred. Visually, the location / height of the overhead line is not considered in relation to the location / height of the wind turbine towers.
	Some of the reasons given for the preference of Route 2 relates to the need to avoid running overhead lines in close proximity to the proposed wind farm. This could be easily resolved by making the connection to the wind farm output at the northern end of the wind farm, thereby avoiding the need to run overhead lines adjacent to the easternmost four turbines and reducing the distance of Route 1 by almost 2 km.	The location of the substation within the wind farm site is determined by the developer. As such, SSEN are unable to comment on the reasons for its siting in a particular location.
	The analysis of Route 1 identifies the difficulty of gradient and mountainous terrain for routing, access and construction. No mention of the issue of steep or mountainous slopes appears in the engineering discussion for Route 2, despite the greater maximum and average gradients on Route 2.	The remainder of this paragraph explains this statement further that a route with a maximum and average gradient of below 40% is considered to have low potential to constrain development. Gradients for Route 1 are given in the same paragraph. Gradients for Route 2 are given in **Section 5.3.2**. The report therefore demonstrates that the topography of both routes are deemed to have low potential to constrain development.
	For both Route 1 and Route 2 it is noted that *"The landscape is likely settled with few residential properties and settlements".* In fact there are no residential properties or settlements along Route 1 (and reference to the closest settlement of Ardbrecknish is meaningless as that settlement is located over a hill, in a different glen and completely remote from the	**Section 5.2.2** states that Route 1 has good clearance from any buildings, properties or communication masts. **Section 5.3.2** states that Route 2 has four buildings / properties within the route corridor, which means it's far away from any residential properties.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	proposed line), whereas Route 2 has numerous properties and active farm steads along its route. The description of Route 2 at **5.3.1** states that where Route 2 runs alongside the A819 it has "potential for longer distant views from the local road network". We disagree. We believe it is certain that there will be views from the local road network and that these will not be longer distant views but in fact near distant views.	**Section 5.4.1** therefore concludes that Route 2 has a greater number of scheduled monuments, listed buildings and undesignated assets within the route corridor. Ardbrecknish is noted as being the **closest** settlement to Route 1, not that it would be most affected by the route option. It is likely that Route 1, given the elevation and height of towers will be visible from both the A819 and the B840 which runs along the east shore of Loch Awe. As noted above, tree and hill backgrounds should be chosen in preference to sky backgrounds. The report considers both the longer distance views and the views from within Glen Aray. This is to ensure the visual impact is fully considered.
	Both route are identified as being approximately 9 km in length. However, on questioning SSE further, it appears the lengths are in fact (Route 1 - 8.02 km, Route 2 – 10.2 km) Route 2 is therefore 27% longer than Route 1, but the document indicates that both routes are of the same length. We believe this is very considerably misleading.	These are currently route corridors proposed in this consultation document. Depending on the alignment within this corridor, the route length can vary, hence it is difficult to provide route lengths at this stage but approximate lengths are given.
	Both routes are described as passing through *"An area of open craggy upland / moorland Landscape Character Type within a medium / large scale landscape".* We do not consider that Route 1 does in fact pass through a craggy landscape, whereas Route 2 requires the line to pass over a very significant craggy area verging on being a cliff face.	As assessed by NatureScot, the areas are identified as defined in the consultation document.
	SSE has recently been consulting on the creation of a new 275 kV overhead line (LT194 - Inveraray to Creag Dhubh Substation). This will comprise substantial steel	This has been considered in relation to various other factors on each of the proposed routes. Route 1 would likely also be visible

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	lattice towers running alongside of the A819 road parallel to an existing overhead tower line. SSE proposes that Route 2 will run adjacent to these two lines. The estate believes this will have a significant detrimental impact in terms of landscape character and, counter to SSE's own guidance, create a confusing wirescape impact.	from the A819 given the height of towers required at this elevation which would not reduce the wirescape impact. Route 2 can be placed on wood poles once it reaches lower elevations and as such will have a lesser visual impact.
	The environmental assessment talks about the potential views of Route 2 "viewed alongside the existing Taynuilt to Inveraray 132 kV OHL route" but in this section the consultation makes no mention of the proposals for LT194, a line considerably more substantial than the existing 132 kV line.	The route is considered alongside existing infrastructure. Whilst we are also proposing to install LT194 along a similar route and for a short period of time, towers and lines for both routes will be in situ, the existing 132 kV line will be dismantled. The views are therefore correctly assessed in relation to one additional overhead line.
	Golden eagle is mentioned in relation to the potential of a barrier and collision impacts, but we would question whether this is relevant given the heights at which golden eagle fly and the significant impact that the wind farm itself will have. We believe that the corridor of Route 2 does not stand off 100m from the closest point of the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne SPA but in fact abuts the SPA. However, Route 1 is at least 1.5 km from the SPA (consultation document states 1 km, but it is at least 1.5 km on the basis that the connection will not extend beyond the Creag Dhubh Substation). As the northern section of the connection will be undergrounded, the proximity from Route 1 to the SPA is likely in fact to be at least 2 km.	The SPA sits on the other side of the A819, the exact distance from the SPA will be known at alignment stage. Likewise for Route 1, the exact distance will not be known until the alignment stage. The distances were intended to provide an estimate and illustrates that Route 2 is in closer proximity to the SPA than Route 1.
	The consultation identifies that Route 1 was found to have 5% of the route within a 1 in 200 year flood zone which apparently "shows intermediate potential for development constraints due to flooding". Any developer proceeding beyond a very high level overview will require to carry out a flood risk assessment and these often reveal that the SEPA flood map is based on relatively broad brush contours. We do	Further surveys will be carried out at alignment stage but it is not feasible to carry out detailed surveys of the flood risk at this stage. The SEPA flood map is widely used as an indicator for flood risk and provides our best assessment at this stage.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	not believe that 5% of the route being subject to a 1 in 200 year flood risk should lead to the conclusion that there is "intermediate potential for development constraint".	
	The route analysis does not appear to have contemplated the impact that Route 2 will have on people who live and work along that Route or the land use (agriculture) during construction use and maintenance. Noted that these units are already be affected by the construction of LT194, should that development proceed, and further temporary and permanent land loss, and the lengthy period requirement required for ground reinstatement, will have further adverse impact on these important rural activities.	This is considered and is largely the reason for consultation. Regular meetings and correspondence with landowners and occupiers allows us to further consider and, where possible, mitigate these effects.
	The comparisons identify that peat covers a greater part of the Route 1 than of Route 2. However, a more complete analysis would identify that the proximity to the public road and the alleged possibilities of using existing tracks on Route 2 does not relate to the areas where peat exists, and regardless of these existing tracks, and whether any further tracks might be provided by LT194, there will still be a substantial section of peat to cross where either line departs from the wind farm. Relocation the Blarghour substation could reverse the comparative proportions.	Route 1 being further from the public road will likely require a greater distance of access tracks to be installed. This is particularly of consideration where such access tracks will be required to cross peatland. It may be possible to utilise the tracks installed for LT194 in order to minimise the need for further access tracks for the Blarghour Wind Farm connection.
	The estate's consistent policy is that any new access created on Argyll Estates' ground is originates and terminates within the landholding without passing through a third party ownership. Meeting this requirement should be recognised in the costings, environmental and engineering considerations informing the comparative analysis of the routes.	Noted.
	The principal difference between the route costings, according to the consultation document, is the greater number of steel lattice towers required for Route 1 and for	As mentioned at point 1 above, SSEN route options do not account for the number or identity of landowners.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SSEN Transmission
	Route 2. However, we believe that there is no guarantee that wood poles can be used for as much of Route 2 as we believe SSE envisages. In terms of the cost of Land Assembly costs, Route 1 appears to be largely in the ownership of the owners of the site of the Blarghour Wind Farm. We would anticipate that the landowners would have agreed with the wind farm developer to enter into agreements with SSE as required to connect the wind farm to the grid. This, combined with the lower value land use and lack of / limited agricultural activity on Route 1, suggests a lower land assembly cost for Route 1. It is acknowledged that Route 1 does impact on a commercial forest at the northern end, but Route 2 does likewise.	Costings are an estimate at this moment in time based on information available to us. Further analysis of costings will be required during alignment phase and will be refined with the detailed design of the scheme.
	Although the RAG tables include an entry for planning, there is no description or dialogue or analysis of this in the text so we would question what informed the selection of Medium.	A RAG rating of medium was set for both projects as there are no known planning constraints to the scheme, nor has there been any positive feedback on the likelihood of obtaining planning consent.

5. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM THE VIRTUAL PUBLIC EXHIBITION EVENTS

Table 5.1 sets out the common themes received from the local community and general public during the live virtual consultation events held in May 2022. Responses by SSEN Transmission are also included, setting out the action to be taken where relevant.

Table 5.1: Public and Local Community Feedback by Topic

Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
Common Themes	
Landscape and visual impact	The next phase of the project is Alignment selection whereby a series of alignments will be assessed within the Proposed Route. Alignments will be assessed in a similar manner to the route selection process with landscape and visual impact being one of the key considerations. The Preferred Alignment selected will balance environmental, technical and economic considerations. Landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken for the Proposed Development following completion of the Alignment selection. A part of these assessments is the identification and assessment of impacts on specific receptors, including residential properties. Where significant impacts are identified mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or remove these impacts. Should any residual impacts remain, these will be presented within the assessment and subject to scrutiny as part of the consent application.
Health implications – mental and physical	Noise, visual impact and air quality will be assessed. A part of this assessment is the identification and assessment of impacts on specific receptors. Where significant impacts are identified mitigation measures will be identified to reduce or remove these impacts. Should any residual impacts remain, these will be presented within the assessment and subject to scrutiny as part of the consent application.
Adverse effects on tourism and small businesses during construction and when the project is operational	Impacts on land use and visual impact will be considered as part of the consenting phase of the Proposed Development, with both construction and operational phases of the project assessed. A part of the assessment is the identification and assessment of impacts on specific receptors including tourist attractions. Where significant impacts are identified mitigation measures will be identified to reduce impacts. Should any residual impacts remain, these will be presented within the assessment and subject to scrutiny as part of the consent application.
Devaluing house prices	The introduction of new infrastructure onto property has varied effects on the property value and each case is considered on its individual merits within the statutory framework of the Electricity Act 1989 and the Land Compensation Act 1961.That is, SSEN Transmission are obliged to follow a legal framework, therefore effects on value of property need to be dealt with on a case by case basis.
Noise pollution from structures	A noise impact assessment will be prepared for the Proposed Development. A part of this assessment is the identification and assessment of impacts on specific receptors (including residential properties). Where significant impacts

Feedback Comments	Response by SSEN Transmission
	are identified mitigation measures will be identified to reduce the level of impact. Should any residual impacts remain these will be presented within the assessment and subject to scrutiny as part of the consent application.
Concerns around emergency services accessing properties during road closures	In the lead up to the construction phase of the Proposed Development a Construction Environmental Management Plan will be developed. Within this document will be an Emergency Response / Management Plan which will cover safeguarding measures for both the workforce and general public. Included will be emergence response access.
Frustration at the impact of pollution from our site works, i.e. dust from track roads, working near PWS (private water supplies)	In the lead up to the construction phase of the Proposed Development a Construction Environmental Management Plan will be developed. Within this document will be a Pollution Prevention Plan which will include management plans for specific identified sources of pollution such as works generating dust. Further to this SSE Transmission work sites are managed through the standard roll out of General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) which cover a range of construction related operations including works around PWS.
No advantages for the residents, i.e. nothing done for the community	SSEN Transmission does not currently have a dedicated community fund however they are actively exploring this and are happy to consider local opportunities on a case by case basis. With other projects they have supported the local community in various ways including hosting community liaison groups, carrying out volunteering days, providing materials to community projects and engaging with the local schools / college etc.
The local economy being negatively affected	The local economy will benefit during the construction of the project with contractors using local amenities. Landscape and visual impacts will be assessed, including views from any popular tourist sites.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

6.1 Conclusion

This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken for the project in May 2022. The programme of consultation was designed to engage with stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and individual residents in order to invite feedback on the rationale for and approach to, the selection of the Preferred Route.

This report has described the key responses received and provides detail on the actions proposed in response to the issues raised. The consultation on the route selection process has been successful in obtaining a large amount of feedback from both statutory and non-statutory consultees.

A number of stakeholder responses provided information on further material to be considered for the alignment appraisals. The specific comments raised will be incorporated in the further assessment work to be undertaken. The points raised include the need for additional consideration of the potential impacts upon specific receptors or areas, the need for further environmental information, recommendations for continued consultation with stakeholders and the importance of various assessments for the protection of environmental aspects as the project evolves.

To address these points, the following actions are being undertaken:

- Alignment options will be developed and will consider appropriate technological options along the Preferred Route. The results of these studies will be reported at Alignment Selection (Stage 3);
- Further environmental survey and assessment work will be undertaken in parallel with the engineering studies to enable a collaborative approach in seeking to identify Preferred Alignments through this sensitive landscape and environment. In particular, this will involve further survey effort and advice relating to landscape and visual, ornithology, hydrology, peat, soils and cultural heritage matters. The results of these studies will be reported at Alignment Selection; and
- Further consultation will be organised with key statutory and non-statutory consultees, local councillors and local communities to provide updates on the project during the alignment stage. This will include addressing comments relating to the provision of information during the consultation process. Formal consultation will be organised to enable comments from stakeholders to be sought on the Preferred Alignments identified.

All comments and considerations to date will be taken forward into the alignment stage, through which assessments will be carried out for all relevant environmental aspects. This process will remain inclusive, seeking further consultation where appropriate.

The Consultation Document concluded that the Preferred Route 2 was marginally preferred over Route 1. The consultation process has further highlighted that Route 2 would likely have a lower impact on interested assets. Notably this includes:

- A lower potential for impact to sensitive habitats including peat and blanket bog;
- Route 2 runs alongside existing infrastructure providing better potential access for the majority of the route;
- The constraints present along Route Option 2 are well understood in order to provide potential mitigations;
- Route 2 may be preferable due to the ability to backcloth the OHL in Glen Aray, and route alongside existing electrical and road infrastructure;
- Route 2 is at lower elevation which is likely to reduce restrictions and impacts on the selection of a suitable tower / pole structure relative to Route 1.

The consultation process has confirmed that Route Option 2 remains the Preferred Route, Route 2 will now be taken forward as the Proposed Route.

6.2 Next Steps

The project will now be taken into Stage 3 (Alignment Selection), commencing with identification of alignment options within the Proposed Route. These will be informed by this and further consultation exercises, and through detailed surveys, which may identify any additional and / or currently unknown engineering, environmental or land use constraints.