Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Harris - Stornoway 132 kV Overhead Line Replacement

Report on Consultation and Routeing Decisions

October 2022

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

CONTENTS

APPENDICES

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

132 kV	132 kilovolt (132,000 volt) capacity of an electricity power line.
Alignment	The centre line of an overhead line route, along with the location of key angle structures.
CnES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – the Planning Authority
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.
Consultation Booklet	A summary of the Proposed Development which was provided as part of the consultation events.
Consultation Document	A report detailing the selection process for the Preferred Route / Preferred Alignments, taking account of environmental, technical and economic factors.
ECU	Energy Consents Unit, the department of the Scottish Government responsible for processing applications for consent under the Electricity Act 1989 on behalf of Scottish Ministers
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* as amended. 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.
GSP	Grid Supply Point
GWDTE	Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
LOD	Limits of Deviation, an area which defines the practical limits within which micrositing of the OHL infrastructure can occur within the terms of the s37 consent which is to be sought. The purpose of Limits of Deviation is to allow flexibility within a s37 consent for the final micrositing of individual poles to respond to localised ground conditions, topography, engineering, and environmental constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation, or alleviation of adverse impacts.
NatureScot (NS)	Formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage, is the public body responsible for Scotland's natural heritage, especially its natural, genetic and scenic diversity. It advises the Scottish Government and acts as a government agent in the delivery of conservation designations, i.e. national nature reserves, local nature reserves, national parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and the national scenic areas.
Overhead Line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or wooden poles.
Planning application	An application for planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006. It should be noted that consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 usually carries with it deemed planning permission

132 kV	132 kilovolt (132,000 volt) capacity of an electricity power line.
	from the Scottish Ministers under Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
Preferred Alignment	A centre line of an OHL, along with location of key angle structures taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of Alignment options.
Preferred Corridor	The corridor option which is considered to represent the optimum balance between various technical and environmental considerations and which is taken forward to stakeholder consultation.
Preferred Route	A route for an OHL taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of route options.
Proposed Alignment	The alignment selected to be taken forward into the EIA and consenting process. It comprises a defined centre line for the overhead line and defined angle pole support structure locations.
Proposed Development	The Proposed Development is taken to be the description of: the location of the development; the physical characteristics of the OHL, based on the Proposed Alignment and limits of deviation (LOD), including an indicative support structure (tower or pole) schedule, also specifying access arrangements and any associated construction activities and land-use requirements. The Proposed Development also comprises a description of the main characteristics of the operational development and an estimate of residues and emissions associated with both the construction and operational phases (as set out in Schedule 4 of the EIA regulations).
Proposed OHL	The proposed new 132 kV overhead transmission line.
Proposed Route	A route taken forward following stakeholder consultation to the alignment selection stage of the overhead line routeing process.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation - designated under Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (known as - The Habitats Directive)
Section 37 (s37) application	An application for development consent under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
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 the Proposed Development.
Study Area	A defined study area for the consideration of effects (including direct, indirect and cumulative) on each factor defined under Regulation 4(3) of the EIA regulations
The Applicant	SHE Transmission plc is the Applicant, who, operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission), owns, operates and develops the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (the Applicant), operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission), owns, operates and develops the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands. The Applicant has a duty under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission; and to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity.

In order to meet these statutory obligations, the Applicant is required to provide a new single circuit 132 kilovolt (kV) overhead line (OHL) connection supported by trident H poles, between the existing Harris Grid Supply Point (hereafter 'Harris GSP') and the existing Stornoway Substation, a route of approximately 58 kilometres (km), (the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development is necessary in order to replace and strengthen the existing 132 kV OHL connection between these two connection points in accordance with the National Electricity Transmission System Security and Quality of Supply Standard (NETS SQSS).

The Applicant followed a systematic process to identify a Proposed Route for the new 132 kV OHL between the existing Harris GSP and the existing Stornoway Substation, having regard to feedback obtained via consultation with statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, landowners and the local community. The Applicant firstly identified a Preferred Corridor, representing the area of search between Harris GSP and Stornoway Substation. The Preferred Corridor was presented to statutory stakeholders, landowners and the public, after which it was adopted as the Proposed Corridor. A number of route options, and a Preferred Route was selected for which initial feedback was sought from statutory stakeholders, landowners and the local community in September 2021. The consultation consisted of the production of a Consultation Document, a Consultation Booklet that provided detail of the rationale for the Preferred Route, as well as holding online virtual consultation events with live chat functions. Following consultation, a Proposed Route was identified for further development.

Within the Proposed Route, a Baseline Alignment was developed which represented the preferred engineering solution. In most locations this was adopted as the Preferred Alignment; however, certain deviations were considered in order to minimise potential environmental effects. Following analysis of the alignment options a Preferred Alignment was selected and consulted on in February 2022. A key issue raised during the consultation process was potential effects on residential receptors at Ardhasaig. In response to consultee feedback, the alignment was amended in this area and an in-person consultation event was held in June 2022 to update the local community. A Proposed Alignment was then adopted, which forms the Proposed Development for which the Applicant is seeking consent under section 37 (s37) of the Electricity Act.

This Report on Consultation documents the route selection process, identifies issues raised by stakeholders during consultation, and how the Applicant has addressed these to develop the Proposed Alignment for which s37 consent is being sought from Scottish Ministers. The Applicant believes the Proposed Alignment provides the optimum balance between technical requirements and the key issues identified.

This report also identifies the issues where further consideration has been undertaken within the EIA Report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Report on Consultation (RoC) has been prepared by Ramboll UK Limited (Ramboll) on behalf of Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (the Applicant) who, operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission), owns, operates and develops the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands. This RoC will accompany an application for consent under section 37 (s37) of the Electricity Act 1989, as amended ('the Application').

1.1.2 The Applicant is proposing to construct and operate a single circuit 132 kV overhead line (OHL), supported by trident H poles between the existing Harris Grid Supply Point (Hereafter 'Harris GSP'), approximately 6 km south of Tarbert, Harris, and an existing substation on Lewis (hereafter 'Stornoway Substation), approximately 3 km south of Stornoway, a route of approximately 58 km (described hereafter as the 'Proposed Development). Further details on the Proposed Development can be found in Chapter 3 of this report, and the general location of the Proposed Development is shown in **Figure 1.1: Location Plan and Overview (Appendix A)**.

1.1.3 The Proposed Development is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and an EIA Report (EIAR) has been produced.

1.1.4 The Applicant followed a systematic process (set out in Chapter 4) to identify a Proposed Alignment for the new OHL which was developed having regard to feedback obtained from consultation with statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, landowners and the local community.

1.1.5 The Applicant recognises that it is important to ensure communities close to a development are afforded appropriate and meaningful opportunities to comment on the proposals before they are finalised in accordance with good practice guidance.

1.1.6 This RoC documents the consultation process undertaken by the Applicant, how the technical solution was developed and the feedback provided by the statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, landowners and the local community during consultation. It also describes how the Applicant has addressed the feedback and any resultant modifications to the Proposed Development for which s37 consent is bring sought from the Scottish Ministers.

1.1.7 The RoC is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the consultation process followed;
- Section 3 summarises the need for the project and the project description;
- Section 4 describes the route selection process;
- Section 5 summarises the main views obtained during the consultation process and how the Applicant has responded to feedback provided by stakeholders; and
- Section 6 provides conclusions and a summary of the next steps.

2. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 During the corridor, routeing and alignment phases of the project, the Applicant has invited members of the public, statutory and other key stakeholders to provide comment on the Proposed Development. A range of consultation methods were used by the Applicant which included virtual consultations with live chat functions, and in person events where easing of COVID-19 restrictions allowed.

2.1.2 The consultation process was designed to engage with statutory and non-statutory consultees, in order to invite feedback on the study undertaken and to provide feedback on any factors or environmental features that may have been overlooked during the Corridor, Route and Alignment selection process.

2.1.3 The consultation process included the production of a Consultation Document and accompanying Consultation Booklet for both the routeing and alignment phases which are available on the project website: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/harris-stornoway-132kv-ohl/

2.1.4 Public consultation was first undertaken in June 2021 when the Preferred Corridor for a new 132 kV “H” pole trident overhead line between Harris GSP and Stornoway Substation which would replace the existing single pole trident design was presented (**Appendix B**). Further public consultation on a Preferred Route took place from September-October 2021 (**Appendix C**), and consultation on a Preferred Alignment took place from February-March 2022 (**Appendix D**). A final round of community consultation on the alignment selection stage took place in June 2022 (**Appendix E**).

2.2 Public Consultation Requirements and Guidance

2.2.1 Permission for the Proposed Development is being sought under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, as amended which does not carry a statutory requirement for formal consultation. However, the Applicant recognises the benefits of carrying out early consultation during the planning process and considers producing a Consultation Document as best practice.

2.2.2 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Scottish Government provided development planning and engagement regulations through ' The Town and Country Planning (Emergency Period and Extended Period) Regulations'. It is stated that stakeholders should engage digitally and the consultation engagement should involve information in user friendly format on a free, publicly accessible website. Also, the engagement should be enhanced in non-digital communication too, which may include placing articles in newspapers circulated locally, expanding contact with community councils, or letters to households in areas where there are significant proposals for change. It should be made clear if there are mechanisms for people to obtain copies of the engagement materials offline, as well as the ability for them to submit comments by post. These regulations have been adhered to during the project consultation.

2.3 Methods of Consultation

Website

2.3.1 A project website was launched by the Applicant in November 2020. The website provided easy access to all the Proposed Development information, consultation documentation and provided a way for the Project Team to be contacted.

https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/harris-stornoway-132kv-ohl/

Consultation Document

2.3.2 Two Consultation Documents have been published which describe the routeing and alignment phases respectively. These summarised the options evaluated and invited interested parties to provide their views. The Consultation Documents have been published and are available on the project website.

Consultation Booklet

2.3.3 The Applicant also published a Consultation Booklet at each stage of the routeing process which provided an overview of the project and consultation process, along with providing details of the virtual public consultation and live web-based chat sessions. These were also published on the project website, and are contained in **Appendices B-E**.

Public Consultation Events

2.3.4 In line with the COVID-19 pandemic guidance, the corridor, routeing, and some of the alignment public consultations were held virtually. The Applicant developed a bespoke platform which allowed stakeholders to visit a virtual consultation room and view the project information at their leisure. The virtual platform enabled stakeholders to experience the full exhibition from home on a computer, tablet or mobile device. It was designed to look 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. As an alternative to face-to-face events which the Applicant would normally hold, a live chat function was available at advertised times to allow attendees to ask questions and receive responses from the project team in real time.

2.3.5 The virtual platforms could be accessed from the project website. The consultation document and booklet were also available to view.

Corridor Consultation

The virtual consultation exhibition to present the Preferred Corridor was launched on 30th June 2021 and closed on 30th July 2021. Live chat sessions were held at the following times:

- Wednesday 30th June 2021, 1pm - 3pm; and
- Wednesday 30th June 2021, and 5pm - 7pm

2.3.6 A total of 4 people attended the live chat sessions.

Routeing Consultation

2.3.7 The Virtual Consultation Exhibition for the routeing was launched on 14th September 2021 and closed on 16th September 2021. Live chat sessions were held at the following times:

- Tuesday 14th September 2021, 2pm - 4pm;
- Wednesday 15th September 2021, 2pm - 4pm; and
- Thursday 16th September 2021, 6pm - 7.30pm

2.3.8 A total of 2 people attended the live chat sessions.

Alignment Consultation

2.3.9 The Virtual Consultation Exhibition for the alignment ran on 15th February and 17th February 2022. Live chat sessions were held at the following times:

- Tuesday 15th February 2022, 2pm - 4pm and 6pm - 7pm; and
- Thursday 17th February 2022, 2pm - 4pm and 6pm - 7pm

2.3.10 A total of 1 person attended the live chat sessions.

2.3.11 Following submission of the Scoping Report, and issues raised in relation to the alignment at Ardhasaig, another consultation event was held in June 2022 to indicate how the concerns raised had been addressed. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, these were held as open-door drop-in face to face consultations at the following times and locations:

- 7th June 2022, 3pm – 7pm, Kinloch Community Hub, Balallan 6 people attended
- 8th June 2022, 3pm – 7pm, Tarbert Community Centre, Tarbert 17 people attended

- 9th June 2022, 3pm – 7pm, Caladh Hotel, Stornoway 5 people attended

2.3.12 A total of 28 people attended.

2.3.13 Participants for both the routeing and alignment were encouraged to complete a feedback form. Phone and email contact details were provided for the Community Liaison Manager for any additional questions or feedback.

Promotion of Consultation Events

2.3.14 The consultation events were advertised using several methods, as summarised in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Promotion of Consultation Events

Method	Details
Consultation Booklet	Shared via the Applicant's website
Consultation Poster	
Consultation Banner	
Email to stakeholders	MSP, MP, Councillors, Community Councils
Social Media Campaign	Promoted through Twitter and the Applicant's Facebook page
Mail Drop	4396 properties in proximity to the Preferred Route
Newspaper advert	Colour advert in the Stornoway Gazette
Harris Voluntary Service Promotion	The Harris Voluntary Service promoted events in their fortnightly magazine

Scoping

2.3.15 A Scoping Report (ref.: ECU00004490) was submitted to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on 11th May 2022 for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. A Scoping Opinion was requested under Regulation 12 of the *Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017*[1].

2.3.16 The Scoping Report went live on the ECU website on the 11th May 2022 with Statutory and Non-Statutory consultees consulted as part of the formal scoping process.

2.3.17 Summaries of the statutory consultees' responses are provided in the EIAR in Technical **Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register (EIAR Volume 4)**.

[1] The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, No.101.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Background and Project Need

3.1.1 The Applicant owns and operates the electricity transmission network infrastructure in the north of Scotland. As part of its Electricity Transmission Licence, it has a number of obligations, including:

- the development and maintenance of an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission;
- facilitating competition in the supply and generation of electricity; and,
- ensuring that the security of the network is maintained as the demand and/or generation connections change over time.

3.1.2 These licence obligations mean that the Applicant must endeavour to ensure that this connection is maintained, and should do so in an efficient, coordinated and economic way.

3.1.3 The primary requirement for this project is to address the condition of the existing Harris-Stornoway 132 kV OHL connection, with a secondary requirement to improve network resilience. This project would also support the Applicant's goal of one third reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, through the reduced need for diesel generation in the Western Isles due to unplanned outages. The requirement is to construct a 132 kV OHL H pole trident line between Harris GSP and Stornoway Substation, to replace the existing single pole trident design with a new trident H pole line.

3.2 Alternative Technical Options

3.2.1 Alternative technical options to the construction of a new OHL were considered by the Applicant. These alternatives were:

- replacement of the existing poles in situ;
- underground cabling of the full route;
- installation of a subsea cable; and
- alternative OHL solutions.

3.2.2 None of the alternative options were considered a viable alternative to a new trident H pole OHL on the basis of wider connection issues and/or cost. Further details on the above alternative options are set out in **Chapter 3: Alternatives (EIAR Volume 2)** of the EIAR.

3.2.3 A new trident H pole OHL was therefore identified as the preferred solution as it would have improved reliability over the existing OHL, meeting increased climatic design parameters, and would also include a fibre-optic cable, thus meeting the requirements for modern communication, protection and operation of the circuit.

3.3 Proposed Development

3.3.1 The Proposed Development would comprise the construction and operation of a c.58 km single circuit 132 kV OHL supported by trident H poles between the existing Harris GSP to the existing Stornoway Substation, as shown on **Figure 3.1: Proposed Development**.

3.3.2 Other ancillary works would be required to facilitate construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The Applicant would seek deemed consent for the below ancillary works under Section 57(2) of the *Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997*:

- vegetation clearance along the OHL for the lifetime of the Proposed Development to comply with the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002[2];
- upgrade existing or establish new junction bellmouths;

[2] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2665/contents/made

- establishment of temporary access for the construction of the OHL;
- measures to protect road and other public/private crossings during construction; and
- dismantling of the existing OHL.

3.3.3 The Proposed Development will replace the existing aged 132 kV OHL asset which will be dismantled and removed as part of the project works.

3.3.4 The Proposed Development would not have a fixed operational life. It is assumed that the Proposed Development will be operational for 40 years or more.

3.4 Indicative Overhead Line Design

3.4.1 The Proposed Development would comprise the construction of a new 132 kV OHL supported by trident H poles. Low-profile steel trident H poles may be used in certain locations to achieve long spans. The design of the low-profile steel poles is still to be finalised; however, it is envisaged that they will look very similar to the wood pole trident, the only marked difference would be the replacement of the wood poles with steel poles.

3.4.2 The spacing between the trident poles would vary depending on topography, altitude and land use, with a maximum span length of 120 m and an average span of 80 m. The trident H poles would be a maximum of 18 m above ground level, with a typical average pole height of 13 m above ground level. The OHL would be composed of a combination of suspension poles, angle / tension poles, failure containment poles and terminal poles

Plate 1: Typical trident wood pole design

3.4.3 The Proposed Alignment has been determined based on the environmental assessments, engineering analysis and cost considerations and stakeholder consultation undertaken to date. The detailed pole schedule is included as part of the EIAR.

Limits of Deviation

3.4.4 Following consent, the investigation of sub-surface and geotechnical conditions at proposed pole locations would be undertaken and may result in the requirement for additional adjustments (micro siting) in the pole locations or heights, subject to the agreed horizontal limits of deviation (LOD). There may also be a need to adjust the alignment to avoid any unexpected environmental sensitivities, such as protected species or unidentified cultural heritage features. To strike a balance between providing certainty between the location of the Proposed Development and any environmental impacts, and the need for some flexibility, horizontal Limits of Deviation (LOD) have been defined within which the Proposed Development would be constructed. The application of the LOD would be limited to variations that do not result in adverse change to the level of significance of effects on the environment as detailed in the EIAR. Any utilisation of the LOD would be evaluated against the level of significance of effects reported in the EIAR. Should the evaluation identify an adverse change to the level of significance identified consultation would be carried out with the ECU (and any relevant statutory consultees) for approval of the proposed change.

3.4.5 Consideration was given to the following principles in defining the LOD for the Proposed Development:

- presumption towards the optimum LOD whilst providing flexibility for micrositing during the detailed design phase;
- presumption towards avoiding sensitive environmental features; and
- presumption towards avoiding residential properties.

3.4.6 The following parameters have been applied to the Proposed Development:

- a horizontal LOD of 100 m width (50 m either side of the OHL) where no specific environmental constraints have been identified;
- a horizontal LOD of 60 m width (30 m either side of the OHL) where the OHL passes through woodland; and
- a vertical LOD set at a maximum of 18 m (height) above ground level (agl).

3.4.7 The LOD is illustrated on **Figure 3.1: Proposed Development**.

4. OVERHEAD LINE ROUTE SELECTION PROCESS

4.1 Background

4.1.1 This section summarises how the Applicant has identified the proposed OHL alignment, to be taken forward for detailed environmental assessment and application for consent under s37 of the Electricity Act 1989, as amended.

4.1.2 The overall aim of the OHL route selection process is to develop a proposed alignment in a systematic manner, which is technically feasible, economically viable, and could be anticipated to cause the least disturbance to the environment and those living in it, working in it, visiting it or using it for recreational purposes.

4.2 Methodology

The standard SSEN Transmission route selection process follows four principal stages[3], as set out within **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: SSEN Transmission Routeing Process

Stage	Scope of Work
Stage 0 – Routeing Strategy Development	• Development of a Routeing Strategy, including consideration of alternative technical options and establishing the methodology to be used for routeing and consultation
Stage 1 – Corridor Selection	• Establish area of search between defined connection points; • Identify one or more corridor options; • Identify the preferred corridor; and • Undertake consultation with stakeholders to gain feedback on proposals.
Stage 2 – Route Selection	• Identify route options within the Proposed Corridor identified by the Applicant; • Identify the preferred route; and • Undertake consultation with stakeholders to gain feedback on proposals.
Stage 3 – Alignment Selection	• Within the preferred route identify a baseline alignment; • Identify alternative alignment options based on environmental, engineering or cost constraints; • Identify the preferred alignment; and • Undertake consultation with stakeholders to gain feedback on proposals.

4.2.1 This report on consultation is written with regard to Stages 1-3 shown in **Table 4.1**. The considerations made at Stage 0 are summarised in section 3.2 of this report.

4.3 Stage 1 – Corridor Selection

4.3.1 In this case, a single corridor option (the 'Proposed Corridor') was selected based on the ability to deliver the shortest cost-effective solution for the Proposed Development. The key parameters driving this single option were:

- the possibility of utilising an existing OHL corridor and routeing within it;
- the potential to develop an OHL alignment offset to the existing 132 kV OHL and remove the old infrastructure;

[3] SSEN Transmission (2020) PR-NET-ENV-501: Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132kV and above. REV 2.00

- estimated costs for an onshore 132 kV trident wood pole are substantially less than a subsea connection;
- the small scale of the Islands combined with the challenging physical environment means there is limited opportunity for multiple viable corridor options; and
- there are extensive environmental designations covering the area of either side of the Proposed Corridor, both onshore and offshore.

4.3.2 The Proposed Corridor is shown on **Figure 4.1: Proposed Corridor**.

4.4 Stage 2 – Route Selection

4.4.1 Route selection work was previously undertaken in respect of a connection between a proposed new switching station south-west of Balallan, Lewis, and a new converter station and substation site at Arnish Point, Lewis, as part of a separate SSEN project (Balallan-Stornoway 132 kV Overhead Line Replacement). This separate project was put on hold; however, the route selection work served to identify a proposed alignment for a new 132 kV OHL between Balallan and a point approximately 1.5 km south west of Stornoway Substation. This proposed alignment is shown on Figure 4.1 and no further work was undertaken at Stage 2 for this section of the Proposed Corridor.

4.4.2 A Route Selection study was undertaken in Q2 2021 for the remainder of the Proposed Corridor. For ease of assessment and reporting, the Proposed Corridor was split into four sections, based on topography and landform, as follows:

- Section 1: Stornoway to Arnish;
- Section 2: Balallan to east of Abhainn a' Mhuil;
- Section 3: East of Abhainn a' Mhuil to Taobh (northwest of Tarbert); and
- Section 4: Tarbert to South Harris

4.4.3 A number of route options were identified, as shown in **Figure 4.2: Route Options** and described as follows:

Section 1: Stornoway to Arnish

4.4.4 Within Section 1, the short stretch of Route 1 represents the only route option identified in this area, while Route Options 1a and 1b represent two alternative route options, on either side of the existing 132 kV OHL.

Section 2: Balallan to east of Abhainn a' Mhuil

4.4.5 Within Section 2, the short stretch of Route 2 allows consideration of switching from Route Option 2a to Route Option 2b to the east of Beinn a Mhuil summit, while Route Options 2a and 2b represent the two alternative route options identified within Section 2, on either side of the existing 132 kV OHL.

Section 3: East of Abhainn a' Mhuil to Taobh (northwest of Tarbert)

4.4.6 Within Section 3, Route 3 represents the only route option identified in three distinct areas. The northern part of Route 3 lies immediately west of the existing 132 kV OHL, around Ardvourlie. The central part of Route 3 lies to the south of the existing 132 kV OHL and the A859 road, south east of An Cliseam summit. The southern part of Route 3 lies to the north of the A859 road as it approaches Tarbert.

4.4.7 Route Options 3a and 3b represent the two alternative route options identified to the west of Loch Seaforth, on either side of the A859 road.

4.4.8 Route Option 3c and 3d represent the two alternative route options identified to the south of An Cliseam, on either side of the A859 road.

4.4.9 Route Option 3e and 3f represent the two alternative route options identified at Ardhasaig.

Section 4: Tarbert to South Harris

4.4.10 Within Section 4, the short stretch of Route 4 represents the only route option identified as the connection crosses Tarbert village. Route Option 4a and 4b represent the two alternative route options identified within the remainder of Section 4, on either side of the existing 132 kV OHL.

Summary of Comparative Analysis

4.4.11 The environmental and engineering teams reviewed the route options and from this process a 'Preferred Route' was brought forward to consultation and further analysis to identify potential alignment options.

4.4.12 The comparative analysis is summarised as follows:

- In Section 1, Route Option 1a was preferred over Route Option 1b on the basis of environmental, engineering and cost considerations, as it would have least potential for impact on sensitive habitats (Class 1 peatland) and would require fewer crossings of distribution voltage OHLs.
- In Section 2, Route Option 2a was preferred over Route Option 2b on the basis of environmental, engineering and cost considerations. It was acknowledged that a greater extent of forest felling would likely to be required for Route Option 2a; however, Route Option 2b would have greater potential for impact on non-designated heritage assets, landscape character and residential amenity. In addition, Route Option 2b has greater potential than Route Option 2a to be constrained technically as a result of its crossing the existing 132 kV OHL, crossing the A859 road twice and crossing existing distribution voltage OHLs in two locations. In terms of total cost, Route Option 2b would have a higher cost due to the greater number of road crossings and distribution OHL crossings in comparison with Route Option 2a.
- In Section 3, Route Option 3a was marginally preferred over Route Option 3b as it would have lesser potential for impact on a PWS and to sensitive habitat (Class 1 peatland). Route Option 3b was also identified as being longer and requiring a greater number of distribution voltage OHL crossings. In comparing Route Options 3c and 3d, it was concluded that Route Option 3c was preferred on the basis of engineering and cost considerations, as Route Option 3d would be technically difficult to install without substantial earthwork, due to its largely being situated on side slopes of up to 30 degrees. There would also need to be permanent access works to allow safe access to the pole positions for construction and future maintenance of the proposed development. In comparing Route Options 3e and 3f, it was concluded that Route Option 3e was preferred on the basis of engineering considerations while Route Option 3f was preferred on the basis of environmental considerations. On balance, Route Option 3e was selected as the preferred option as it was concluded that Route Option 3f would be technically difficult to install without substantial earthwork, due to its largely being situated on side slopes of up to 40 degrees. There would also need to be permanent access works to allow safe access to the pole positions for construction and future maintenance of the proposed development.
- In Section 4, Route Option 4a was preferred over Route Option 4b on the basis of environmental, engineering and cost considerations, as it would have less potential for impact on landscape, visual amenity and proximity to dwellings, although it was acknowledged that Route Option 4b may have marginally less potential for constraint in relation to hydrology (PWS) and peatland habitat. In terms of engineering and cost considerations, Route Option 4a was preferred as a result of its lesser number of road crossings and crossings of existing distribution voltage OHLs.

4.4.13 Consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders both with statutory and non-statutory interest in the consenting process. Feedback on the route options is set out in further detail in Chapter 5, but key issues emerging from consultation responses included:

- potential impacts on landscape and visual amenity, particularly at Ardhasaig;
- potential impacts on cultural heritage assets;
- potential impacts on hydrology and hydrogeology;

- potential impacts on land use, including telecommunications masts and walking routes.

4.4.14 A Proposed Route was established, as illustrated on **Figure 4.3: Proposed Route** and issues raised during the route selection stage were addressed during the alignment selection stage.

4.5 Stage 3 – Alignment Selection

4.5.1 An Alignment Selection study was completed using a three-step approach as detailed below:

- Step 1: Identification of Baseline Alignment;
- Step 2: Review of Baseline Alignment with reference to environmental and cost criteria;
- Step 3: Alignment Deviations Analysis.

4.5.2 The OHL design contractor, LSTC, instructed by the Applicant, developed the Baseline Alignment for a 132 kV OHL, within the extents of the Proposed Route, by means of desk-top analysis, site survey and on-site assessment. The information gathered was used to determine the most suitable engineering alignment.

4.5.3 The Baseline Alignment was then analysed in terms of environmental criteria. For the majority of the Baseline Alignment, no obvious benefit was identified from alternative alignment options and the Baseline Alignment was confirmed as the Preferred Alignment. However, four deviations from the Baseline Alignment, in three specific areas, were identified for comparative assessment. The four deviations are shown on **Figure 4.4: Alignment Options** and are described below:

Alignment Deviation 1A

4.5.4 This deviation moved the Alignment to the east and further from the Druim Dubh, stone circle (SM 5504) and was introduced in order to offer potential improvements to the setting of this scheduled monument, in response to advice received from Historic Environment Scotland (HES) during the routeing consultation.

Alignment Deviation 2A

4.5.5 This deviation moved the Alignment to the east and further from the Aline Woodland walks, whilst seeking to retain as much distance as possible from waterbodies. This deviation was introduced in order to offer potential improvements to visual amenity from the woodland walks, in response to concerns raised by CnES regarding potential impacts on walking routes during the routeing consultation.

Alignment Deviation 3A

4.5.6 This deviation moved the Alignment to locate it immediately west of the A859 road at Ardhasaig. It was considered that this deviation may offer potential improvements to visual amenity from surrounding dwellings, in conjunction with the undergrounding of the existing distribution connection in that location.

Alignment Deviation 3B

4.5.7 This deviation moved the Alignment, to locate it further to the west and further from residential dwellings on the Ardhasaig peninsula. It was considered that this deviation may offer potential improvements to visual amenity from surrounding dwellings, which lie at greater distance than the alternative alignment options at Ardhasaig.

Summary of Comparative Analysis

4.5.8 A comparative analysis of the alignment deviations and the Baseline Alignment was completed, which resulted in the following decisions:

- an alternative deviation which lies closer to the Baseline Alignment than Deviation 1A was agreed, on the basis that this would allow greater distance between the Proposed Development and the scheduled monument (Druim Dubh) than for the Baseline Alignment, thereby reducing potential impacts on the setting

of the scheduled monument, while also reducing the need for angle poles and remaining closer to the road than Deviation 1A;

- it was agreed that the Baseline Alignment would be retained over Deviation 2A on the basis that this would minimise tree loss and make use of the existing forestry corridor, thereby having a lesser impact on visual amenity; and
- an alternative deviation in preference to the Baseline Alignment, Deviation 3A and Deviation 3B was discussed and agreed on the basis that this would represent a preference in engineering terms, while also remaining close to the road and allowing the existing distribution connection to be undergrounded in this area (thereby reducing potential visual impacts).

4.5.9 The Preferred Alignment is shown on **Figure 4.5: Preferred Alignment**.

4.5.10 The Preferred Alignment was brought forward for public and stakeholder consultation in February 2022. Detailed responses are summarised in Chapter 5 but the key issues emerging from consultation included:

- potential impacts on scheduled monument Druim Dubh stone circle (SM5504);
- potential impacts on habitats and peatlands; and
- siting of the alignment at Ardhasaig.

4.5.11 The Preferred Route was subsequently identified as the Proposed Route and, in May 2022, the Applicant submitted an EIA Scoping Report[4] to the ECU, which identified the following topics for consideration within the EIA:

- Landscape and Visual Amenity;
- Cultural Heritage.
- Ecology;
- Ornithology;
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils; and
- Traffic and Transport.

4.5.12 A scoping opinion[5] was received from the Scottish Government in July 2022 outlining the scope of the EIA.

4.5.13 Due to the ongoing concerns in the community regarding the Preferred Alignment, specifically at Ardhasaig, the Applicant proposed an alignment deviation at Ardhasaig, as presented at consultation events held in June 2022, and detailed in the consultation booklet from June 2022 (**Appendix E**). This potential alignment deviation was subsequently adopted as the Proposed Alignment, as shown on **Figure 4.6: Proposed Alignment**. This alignment deviation also forms the Proposed Development as described in Chapter 3.

[4] SSEN Transmission (May 2022): Harris to Stornoway 132 kV OHL Replacement Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report

[5] The Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (11 July 2022): Scoping Opinion on behalf of Scottish Ministers Under The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, Harris to Stornoway 132 kV Overhead Line Replacement, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES RECEIVED, KEY FEEDBACK AND THE APPLICANT'S RESPONSES

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 At the Corridor Selection stage, a virtual exhibition was held on 30 June 2021 with a live chat session during which four queries were raised by stakeholders.

5.1.2 At the Route Selection stage, a consultation meeting was held (via MS Teams) between the Applicant and the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) Planning Manager and Archaeologist on 23rd September 2021. In addition, a further three (3) written consultation responses were received from statutory consultees and three (3) completed feedback forms were received from stakeholders during the consultation period from September to October 2021.

5.1.3 At the Alignment Selection stage, two (2) written consultation responses were received, from statutory consultees, during the consultation period from February to March 2022. In addition, a number of queries were raised during the live chat sessions and addressed by the Applicant at the time.

5.1.4 A Scoping Opinion was requested in May 2022 and a formal Scoping Opinion received from Scottish Ministers on 11th July 2022. The feedback received in the scoping responses are addressed in detail in the EIAR within each technical chapter and summarised in **Technical Appendix 4.3: Consultation Register (EIAR Volume 4)**.

5.1.5 A final round of public consultation, in person, took place in June 2022 in order to address community concerns over the OHL alignment near Ardhasaig. Four (4) written consultation responses were received, from stakeholders, following the consultation events.

5.2 Corridor Selection Consultation

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the queries and issues raised at the early stages of the project, when the Preferred Corridor was presented at virtual exhibitions. It also contains the Applicant's response.

Table 5.1: Stakeholder Feedback (June 2021)

Issue Raised	The Applicant's Response
Are poles only being replaced north of the South-Harris-Transformer station?	Yes. We are only replacing the 132kV circuit poles which run from Harris substation, situated south of Tarbert, to Stornoway substation.
So no change to the 33kV network as part of this project - only the 132kV?	There may be some alterations to the 33kV network if the new circuit has to cross over the existing distribution lines. However, the purpose of this project is to replace the 132kV circuit and we will aim to keep the disruption to the existing distribution lines to a minimum.
Undergrounding – has this been completely ruled out for all sections?	Undergrounding the entire circuit has been discounted for a number of reasons. The main reason is for the maintenance of the line in the future. In the event of a fault on the line, the fault can be detected and rectified in a matter of days. However, if the fault occurs in an underground cable the time needed to locate and rectifying the fault increases and could potentially take months to fix.
How much is the remote location a factor in the decision regarding undergrounding? Presumably, SHETL would still consider undergrounding in less remote areas with greater network resilience?	The remote location has not been a factor in our decision making on this project. OHL is always our preference on SHETL projects.

Table 5.1: Stakeholder Feedback (June 2021)	
What would the capacity of the new OHL be roughly? Presumably, there will be an increase from the existing OHL due to improvements in technology even if it is still 132kV?	Due to improvements in technology the new circuit will be of a higher capacity compared to the existing line. However, we cannot provide the exact capacity due to the early stages of the project.
My question concerns the proposal for renewal of poles through woodland at grid ref NB 148 000. This woodland which is close to Tarbert is the responsibility of Diracleit and Kendebig Crofters. Will there be a requirement for heavy machinery to access this area?	Preference would be given to the use of low ground pressure vehicles and trackway panels in boggy / soft ground areas to reduce any damage to, and compaction of, the ground. Further details on access is provided in Chapter 2 (EIAR Volume 2).
Will there be changes to poles through the woodland near Tarbert?	The alignment of the proposed OHL through the woodland would be broadly the same as the OHL it is replacing. The existing poles would be replaced with trident H poles.

5.3 Route Selection Consultation

5.3.1 **Table 5.2** provides a summary of the responses to the routeing Consultation Document provided by statutory consultees. It also contains the response from the Applicant regarding how the project developed to take account of the comments provided. **Table 5.3** provides a summary of the feedback received from stakeholders via the feedback forms, including the Applicant's responses.

Table 5.2: Routeing Statutory Consultee Respondents		
Organisation	**Comment**	**The Applicant's Response**
Statutory Consultees		
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES)- Planning	CnES Planning Manager provided some local information and advice/ guidance, detailed below, for the Applicant to consider and take forward in the next steps of routeing: • Ardhasaig is an area subject to a fair amount of potential activity and constraint including: a number of housing plots on the peninsula currently yet to be developed; fish farms on the headland itself; consent for 5 warehouses linked to the distillery; and it is an area that likely influences the setting of the Old Whaling Station. • There would likely be a high visual impact if anything is set or routed in that area CnES Planning Manager can provide proposed developments mapped in proximity to the route if the Applicant provide the shapefiles for the preferred route.	Noted. The Applicant provided GIS shapefiles of the preferred route to CnES Planning Manager.
	CnES Planning Manager queried the option of cabling for the route.	The Applicant confirmed that cabling would be a mitigation option but not an option considered viable for the route in its entirety. Certain areas are recognised as locations where the Applicant may consider undergrounding although that may introduce its own issues in terms of technology and operational risk.
	CnES Planning Manager highlighted the number of/ expanding network of telecoms masts across the island. The route has encountered a few to route round already but will have to be aware of plans for any future masts. Access was discussed and the potential impact on walking routes, namely the Hebridean Way. The Way does appear to criss cross the route but unknown to what extent.	Potential land use constraints, including existing and proposed new telecommunications masts and existing access routes, including the Hebridean Way, were considered during the alignment selection stage of routeing.
	Scaladale was highlighted as an area of note in relation to proposed developments, and a new mountain bike trail is proposed there. Planning Ref: 21/00207	Noted. The Applicant ensured application 21/00207 and others relevant along the route were considered during subsequent stages of routeing and alignment selection.

Table 5.2: Routeing Statutory Consultee Respondents		
CnES - Archaeology	Advise to back up the preferred route with a walk over as soon as feasible. The HER data extracts can become quickly dated so the more on the ground the better to keep the issues/ possible features current. Linked to the above, the Applicant should ensure the archaeological contractor refreshes any previous data extracts from HER. Can be old, may or will likely need refreshed as is this data set is updated regularly Some areas don't show any records on the HER. This is likely to be a combination of lack of previous survey and/or landscape not conducive to earlier activities (such as elevated barren rocky environments or boggy areas). These sections are the Substation at Grósa Cleit to Tarbert, Tarbert to Ardhasig, Ardhasig to Ardvourlie and Bowglas to Ceann Tarabhaigh. Sites of initial note that will require some focus: • Druim Dubh, stone circle (SM 5504), which lies alongside the public road towards the north end of Section 1, and close to the existing OHL. There will likely be issues concerning the setting. • Bowglass, although busy probably has enough wiggle room in relation to the features there. Across the river at Bowglass there is deep peat (see note below re: trees unearthed) • Ardhasaig, another area of interest and constraint but you would likely still be able to find a route through/around Areas of deep peat should be identified and mapped. It is known that the peat in Lewis could have formed over early features or, for instance, trees with evidence of tool cuts. The latter was found at Bowglass.	Detailed cultural heritage surveys and assessment were undertaken as part of the subsequent alignment selection and EIA process, including a detailed assessment of the potential for direct and indirect (setting) effects on heritage assets, including the scheduled monument: SM 5504 Druim Dubh, stone circle and heritage assets at Bowglass and Ardhasaig. The cultural heritage assessment is contained in the EIA Report (**Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage, EIAR Volume 2**)
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	HES considers the need for the Project has been adequately explained in the document. • HES confirms that the approach taken to select the Preferred Route has been adequately explained. • HES does not consider that their historic environment interests have been overlooked during the Preferred Route selection process. • HES considers that the Preferred Route is appropriate for consideration at the Alignment selection stage and would advise that potential impacts on two scheduled monuments: SM 5504 Druim Dubh, stone circle and SM 5362	Detailed cultural heritage surveys and assessment were undertaken as part of the subsequent alignment selection and EIA process, including a detailed assessment of the potential for direct and indirect (setting) effects on heritage assets, including the two scheduled monuments: SM 5504 Druim Dubh, stone circle and SM 5362 Bunavoneadar, whaling station. Further consultation with statutory authorities was also undertaken throughout the alignment selection and EIA stages of the Proposed

Table 5.2: Routeing Statutory Consultee Respondents		
	Bunavoneadar, whaling station are considered during the identification of a Preferred Alignment Option.	Development, to ensure that potential impacts on cultural heritage have been fully taken into consideration.
SEPA	The Consultation Document – Overhead Line Route Selection (dated August 2021) clearly describes the need for the project (including to help reduce reliance on diesel generation due to unplanned outages), likely components of the works and appraisal undertaken to identify the preferred route of the line replacement. At this stage SEPA has no concerns with the preferred route. It is acknowledged that this is adjacent to the existing line (and A859) and therefore likely to maximise the opportunities to utilise existing infrastructure to enable the works. While extensive peatland has been identified along all sections, SEPA understands that results from peat depth surveys will be used to inform alignment selection and/or further define potential impacts on peatland and supports this approach. SEPA also welcomes the commitment to the use of bog mats where required. SEPA understands that the next steps involve further engineering and environmental surveys to identify a preferred alignment within the proposed route. As well as peat surveys, this should include further design work to ensure protection of the vast number of hydrological features in the study area and investigation in relation to private water supplies (highlighted on Sections 3 and 4). With reference to forest removal (discussed in Section 2.2) SEPA recommends you have regard to our guidance on the management of forest waste.	Further design work during the alignment selection stage included detailed consideration of hydrological features including private water supplies. SEPA guidance on the management of forest waste was also considered. Detailed hydrology surveys and assessment were undertaken as part of the detailed site design and subsequent EIA process. Further consultation with SEPA has also been undertaken throughout the alignment selection and EIA stages of the Proposed Development, to ensure that potential impacts have been fully taken into consideration.
NatureScot	NatureScot is content that the potential impacts on the natural heritage of the Preferred Route are, on the whole, likely to be as or more benign that those of any of the alternative options identified for each section. This includes impacts on the Lewis Peatlands Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area (NSA), as well as protected species and habitats in the wider countryside, including peatland. In this, we are in agreement with the comparison tables in part 4 of the consultation document. We look forward to giving further advice at the next stage, i.e. consultation on the Preferred Alignment.	Further consultation with NatureScot has been undertaken throughout the alignment selection and EIA stage of the Proposed Development, to ensure that potential impacts on ornithology and ecology and on landscape and visual amenity have been understood and assessed.

Table 5.3: Stakeholder Feedback (September-October 2021)	
Issue Raised	**The Applicant's Response**
Could you tell me what preparations are being made for the health and safety of residents? There is going to be a lot of heavy plant on an already busy road and no walkway at the west end of Balallan. Are you going to provide us with a suitable walkway. Surely our wellbeing is as important as wildlife.	The project will undertake a transport management plan (TMP) which will incorporate aspects like this. The TMP will be provided to the Council for their review. If the Council deem that a walkway is to be installed then the project will do so.
Would it be SSE who would meet the cost [of a walkway]?	If a footpath was required as part of a planning condition then the Applicant would likely pay for the installation.
The pylons/poles seem to be much larger than the existing ones. Will they be further away and will any of the existing poles come down and if so when?	The new poles are going to be roughly the same height as the existing 132 kV wood poles. The only difference is that all of the new poles will be twin pole structures rather than single pole structures. The old 132 kV wood poles will be removed when the new circuit is complete. The exact location of the new line is still to be determined but it is likely to follow the existing circuit for much of the route.
What about the switching station, when will it go ahead?	The switching station at Balallan is part of another project, which is currently on hold until further notice. This project is for the replacement of the wood pole OHL only.

5.4 Alignment Selection Consultation

5.4.1 **Table 5.4** provides a summary of the responses to the alignment Consultation Document provided by statutory consultees, along with a reply from the Applicant regarding how the project developed to take account of the comments provided. **Table 5.5** provides a summary of the queries raised by stakeholders during the live chat sessions in February 2022, including the Applicant's response. **Table 5.6** provides a summary of the responses received from stakeholders following the June 2022 consultation events, including the Applicant's response.

Table 5.4: Alignment Statutory Consultee Respondents		
Organisation	**Comment**	**The Applicant's Response**
Statutory Consultees		
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	• HES is content that the need for this Project and the approach taken to selecting the Preferred Alignment have been adequately explained. • HES has not identified any historic environment issues that have been overlooked during the Preferred Alignment selection process. • HES noted that consideration of potential setting impacts on a scheduled monument, Druim Dubh stone circle (SM5504), had influenced the selection of Alignment Deviation 1A. HES therefore considered that the Preferred Alignment is appropriate for further consideration from their historic environment perspective. However, HES would need to see a visualisation showing the proposed OHL in view from the monument to be able to provide more detailed comments on potential setting impacts on this stone circle.	Noted. A visualisation showing the Proposed Development in view from the scheduled monument (SM5504) is provided as part of the EIA Report.
SEPA	SEPA had no additional comments to add over and above the previous comments provided on 4th October 2021 as part of the Overhead Line Route Selection Consultation. Once habitats surveys (including GWDTE mapping) and peat probing are concluded, SEPA will be able to offer more site-specific comments on the Preferred Alignment of the OHL.	Noted. Further consultation with SEPA has been conducted as part of the EIA process, at the completion of the aforementioned surveys.

Table 5.5: Stakeholder Feedback (February 2022)	
Issue Raised	**The Applicant's Response**
Why is the existing route in Ardhasaig not being followed?	The existing OHL is located on steep sloping hillside and, from a health & safety perspective for the construction and long-term operational maintenance of the new OHL, the Applicant would not seek to put the new OHL in the same position as the old one.
An onsite meeting was requested in Ardhasaig to discuss the project in more detail.	An on-site meeting was held on 28th March 2022, when members of the Applicant's project team met with members of the community. Formal written feedback from the community was requested at the meeting but had not been received by the time of compiling this report.

Table 5.6: Stakeholder Feedback (June 2022)	
Consultee Response	**The Applicant's Response**
North Harris Community Council expressed the concern of local residents regarding the proposed location of the new OHL and the detrimental effect that this would have on their crofts and home valuations. In particular, they were unhappy with any poles being placed on the lower side of the road, in front of any houses from the bottom of Ceann an Ora through Ardhasaig.	The Applicant has responded to this feedback by selecting the Potential Alignment Deviation (May 2022), as presented in June 2022, which is located immediately east of Ardhasaig settlement, in proximity to the existing 132 kV OHL
Ardhasaig Common Grazings Committee provided a written objection to the proposed overhead line through Ardhasaig and requested that the new line follows the same route as the existing line, above the road. The Committee stated that crofts in Ardhasaig are used for grazing and the construction work would spoil/reduce croft land, and locating the overhead line below the road in the village would devalue homes and land in a scenic area. They also raised health risk concerns regarding noise and concerns relating to maintenance work requiring destruction of existing fencing.	The Applicant has responded to this feedback by selecting the Potential Alignment Deviation (May 2022), as presented in June 2022, which is located immediately east of Ardhasaig settlement, in proximity to the existing 132 kV OHL
The owners of the properties Seaview and 2A Ardhasaig responded to state that the intended purchase of Seaview by SSE at the market rate would be acceptable, should the alternative route at Ardhasaig, as presented to the community in June 2022 be selected. With regard to 2A Ardhasaig, the re-siting of two poles was requested.	The Applicant is currently negotiating with the owners of Seaview for this purchase. The re-siting of the two poles will discussed further with the owners during the detailed design stages.
A letter of objection was received from residents of 3 Ardhasaig, based on the potential visual impact of the proposed OHL alignment running through Ardhasaig village, as presented in June 2022.	The Applicant has responded to this feedback by selecting the Potential Alignment Deviation (May 2022), as presented in June 2022, which is located immediately east of Ardhasaig settlement, in proximity to the existing 132 kV OHL.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process, setting out the OHL route selection process, issues raised by statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, landowners and the local community during consultation, and how the Applicant has addressed these to develop the Proposed Alignment for which s37 consent is being sought from the Scottish Ministers.

6.1.2 The Applicant has followed a systematic process to identify an optimum alignment for the proposed Harris-Stornoway 132 kV OHL Replacement. Key issues emerging from consultation responses included:

- potential impacts on landscape and visual amenity, particularly proximity to dwellings at Ardhasaig;
- potential impacts on cultural heritage assets in particular the scheduled monument Druim Dubh stone circle (SM5504);
- potential impacts on hydrology and hydrogeology;
- potential impacts on land use, including telecommunications masts and walking routes; and
- potential impacts on habitats and peatlands.

6.1.3 Proximity to residential dwellings was the key concern of local residents throughout the consultation process. To address these concerns, changes were made to the Proposed Alignment at Ardhasaig to move the alignment away from, and therefore minimise potential effects to, residential properties. To address any remaining concerns, the EIA includes a detailed assessment of potential effects on visual amenity.

6.1.4 The other key issues raised within the consultation responses which have the potential to have a significant effect on the environment have been addressed within the EIA process. The EIAR is provided with the s37 consent application.

6.2 Next Steps

6.2.1 The next steps of the consenting process for the OHL are as follows:

- The Applicant is publishing an EIAR to consider the key issues identified within the Scoping Opinion for the OHL as well as other issues noted in **Tables 5.1 - 5.6** to accompany the statutory consent application; and
- The Applicant is submitting an application for consent for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 and deemed planning permission under Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) to the Scottish Ministers.

6.2.2 Any representations to the s37 application may be submitted via:

- the Energy Consents Unit website at www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx;
- by email to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit mailbox at representations@gov.scot; or
- by post to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU.

6.2.3 Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations, identify the proposal (Harris-Stornoway 132 kV Overhead Line Replacement) and specify the grounds for representation. Only representations sent by email to representations@gov.scot will receive acknowledgement.

6.2.4 All representations should be received by the date stipulated in the notice issued following the submission of the s37, although Ministers may consider representations received after this date.

6.2.5 To keep the local community fully informed of upcoming work/activities and to deal with any concerns/issues during construction, the Applicant will look to establish a Community Liaison Group ahead of construction.

6.2.6 Information will continue to be posted on the project website at https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/harris-stornoway-132kv-ohl/