Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Report on Consultation (Route Options)

Loch Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro Connection

September 2025

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GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line (OHL), along with location of key angle structures.
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 (i.e. a 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 SSEN Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	The AWI is a provisional guide to the location of Ancient Woodland. It contains three main categories of woodland, all of which are likely to be of value for their biodiversity and cultural value by virtue of their antiquity: • Ancient Woodland (1a and 2a); • Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO) (1b and 2b); and • Other woodlands on 'Roy' woodland sites.
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)	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 effects of a proposed project or development.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
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 infrastructure 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 steel lattice towers or wood poles.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from planting.
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.

Term	Definition
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.
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)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive 74/409/EEC) to protect important bird habitats. Implemented under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by SSEN Transmission works.
The Highland Council (THC)	The Highland Council.
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.

PREFACE

This Report on Consultation has been prepared by ASH design+assessment Ltd. (ASH) 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 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 between May 2025 and September 2025 for a proposed new 400 kV double circuit steel lattice overhead line (OHL) to connect the proposed Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) scheme to the electricity transmission network at the proposed Loch Lundie 400 kV substation[1], as set out in a route option stage consultation exercise.

An in-person consultation event was held to seek the views of the local community on:

- 14th May 2025 between 14:00 to 19:30 at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, Inverness-shire, PH35 4W.

A Consultation Booklet[2] and a Consultation Document[3] were made available from 7th May 2025, online at the project website: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/fearna

This report summarises the feedback received from key stakeholders (including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners, and individual residents) regarding the potential route for the proposed OHL.

This Report on Consultation describes how the feedback from consultation has informed the identification of a proposed route to be taken forward to the alignment selection stage of the project.

[1] The proposed Loch Lundie Substation will be subject to a separate planning application by SSEN Transmission.

[2] SSEN Transmission (2025), *Loch Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro Connection: Overhead Line Routeing Consultation Booklet.* Online, available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/loch-fearna-psh-connection/loch-fearna-ohl-routeing-consultation-booklet.pdff, [last accessed: 19 September 2025].

[3] SSEN Transmission (2025), *Loch Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro Connection: Consultation Document (Route Options).* Online, available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/loch-fearna-psh-connection/loch-fearna-ps-grid-connection-routeing-stage-consultation-document, [last accessed: 19 September 2025].

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SSEN Transmission operating under licence as Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc, is proposing to construct a new 400 kV double circuit steel lattice OHL to connect an initial 300 MW of power from the proposed Fearna PSH scheme to the electricity transmission network at the proposed Loch Lundie 400 kV substation, to the north of Invergarry. There will be an additional 1,500 MW of power produced from the Fearna PSH scheme (totalling 1,800 MW), which would also need to connect onto the transmission network. The details of connecting this additional 1,500 MW are yet to be determined and subject to ongoing system studies being carried out by SSEN Transmission.

An application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 was submitted by Fearna Pumped Storage Ltd in February 2025 to construct and operate the 'Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro' project, located at the western end of Glengarry in the Highlands of Scotland. A decision on this application from Scottish Ministers is currently awaited. SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical transmission system in its licenced areas. SSEN Transmission has obligations to offer non-discriminatory terms for connection to the transmission system. In line with these duties and obligations, SSEN Transmission has entered into an agreement with the Fearna PSH scheme developer to provide a connection from the scheme to the National Grid.

This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken for the project during the route selection stage conducted between May 2025 and September 2025. 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 route options under consideration.

The approach to route selection is being informed by SSEN Transmission's guidance 'Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132 kV and above' which provides a framework to ensure environmental, technical and economic considerations are identified and appraised at each stage of the routeing process.

Six route options were identified to form a potential connection between the proposed Fearna PSH scheme and the transmission network at the proposed Loch Lundie substation (see **Figure 1**). The six route options are split into three 'western route options' (1a, 1b and 1c) and three 'eastern route options' (2a, 2b and 2c). The appraisal of route options identified physical, technical and environmental constraints in all of the route options which were assessed. The principal findings of the appraisal in terms of the key differences between the route options were summarised in the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3].

This report summarises the responses received and where relevant provides detail on the actions proposed in response to the issues raised. Having considered the consultation responses received, SSEN Transmission confirm that Route Option 1a and Route Option 2a (as described within the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3], are to be taken forward as the proposed route to the alignment selection stage of this project. These routes are considered to provide an optimum balance of environmental, technical, and economic factors. The proposed route is shown on **Figure 2** of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Document

1.1.1 This document has been prepared by ASH design+assessment Ltd. (ASH) on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (SSEN Transmission). SSEN Transmission operate under licence held by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc, owns, operates and develops the high voltage electricity transmission system in the north of Scotland and remote islands.

1.1.2 This Report on Consultation documents the route option stage consultation process between May 2025 and September 2025 for a proposed new 400 kV double circuit steel lattice overhead line (OHL) to enable 300 MW of electricity to be exported from the proposed Fearna PSH scheme to the electricity transmission network at the proposed Loch Lundie 400 kV substation. The project is known as the 'Loch Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) Connection'.

1.1.3 The programme of consultation was designed to engage with key stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners, and individual residents in order to invite feedback on the route options identified within the May 2025 Loch Fearna PSH Connection: Consultation Document (Route Options)[3], prior to identifying a proposed route to be taken forward to the alignment selection stage of the project.

1.1.4 This report summarises the responses received and details the actions taken in response to the issues raised.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The objectives of this report are:

- To document the consultation process between May 2025 and September 2025;
- To summarise feedback received from stakeholders;
- To document actions undertaken in response to feedback where relevant; and
- To clearly set out how the proposed route has been informed by the consultation process.

1.3 Document Structure

1.3.1 This report is comprised of eight sections as follows:

1. Introduction – sets out the purpose of the Report on Consultation and report structure;
2. Project Overview – outlines the background to the project need and provides a description of the key elements;
3. Route Selection – summarises the route selection process;
4. The Consultation Process – describes the framework for consultation and methods which have been employed;
5. Consultation Responses from Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees - summarises the responses from these bodies;
6. Community Consultation Responses– summarises responses received from the local community;
7. Identification of the Proposed Route – describes how the comments and issues raised during consultation have helped inform the identification of a proposed route; and
8. Conclusions and Next Steps – provides a summary of the conclusions reached and actions going forward.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 The Need for the Project

2.1.1 SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission. SSEN Transmission has obligations to offer non-discriminatory terms for connection to the transmission system.

2.1.2 The proposed grid connection is required to connect 300 MW of power from the proposed Fearna PSH scheme to the National Grid at the proposed Loch Lundie substation, as shown in **Figure 1**. The proposed Fearna PSH scheme would be located approximately 25 km west of Invergarry and 10 km east of Kinloch Hourn. The connection point for the Fearna PSH scheme would be located on the shore of Loch Cuaich, immediately west of the old quarry used for the construction of the Loch Quoich Dam. SSEN Transmission are contracted to provide a grid connection to the electricity transmission network by October 2032[4].

National Planning Policy

2.1.3 Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) was published by the Scottish Government on 13th February 2023[5]. NPF4 is a long-term strategy for Scotland (to 2045) that guides spatial development, sets out national planning policies, designates national developments and highlights regional spatial priorities. Alongside adopted local development plans, NPF4 now forms part of the statutory development plan for decision making in Scotland. In NPF4, transmission infrastructure is supported in both National Development ND3 'Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure' and in Policy 11 Energy, however proposals are required to be assessed against all relevant development plan policies.

2.1.4 The Proposed Development would form a vital element to deliver network and grid infrastructure required to deliver the UK and Scottish Government's legally binding targets for net zero emissions and renewable energy generation and energy storage objectives.

2.2 Proposed Technology Solution

2.2.1 The proposed technology solution for this connection project would be a 400 kV double circuit steel lattice OHL. The likely tower design for the project would be SSE400 tower suite, with the typical height approximately 60 m on average, although tower heights may vary where topography dictates in order to achieve sufficient clearance distances. The average span length between towers would be approximately 350 m.

2.2.2 For a connection of this length and scale, an UGC is not a feasible option in its entirety due to significantly increased costs in comparison with an OHL option, and the increased impact the project would have on peatlands and other sensitive habitats. This is due to the requirement for the install of a 400 kV underground cable to require the creation of a construction corridor of approximately 60 m to accommodate tracks, trenches, and excavated spoil. The larger, continuous and partially excavated working corridor also increases the risk of pollution events and watercourse contamination and increases the requirement for watercourse crossings and/or drilling under watercourses to install cables (although best practice construction and appropriate mitigation measures can be implemented to minimise and mitigate effects).

2.2.3 However, due to the known technical and environmental (particularly ornithology) constraints in the area, a section of UGC is anticipated to be required on the final approach into the proposed Loch Lundie substation. Due to other localised constraints throughout the connection, there may also be a requirement that other sections be undergrounded as well. The locations and extents of the UGC sections that may be required are yet to be

[4] The contracted position is currently for 300 MW, however a second phase to facilitate the additional connection requirements has recently been agreed between the developer and SSEN Transmission.

[5] Scottish Government (2023) *National Planning Framework 4*, [online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/, [last accessed: 19 September 2025].

determined and would be reviewed at the alignment selection stage of the project. Any undergrounding would require the construction of CSE (Cable Sealing End) compounds to facilitate the transition between UGC and OHL.

2.3 Proposal Overview

Overhead Line General Construction Activities

2.3.1 To facilitate the construction of the OHL components of the connection, the main tasks are anticipated to include:

- establishment of one or more construction compounds;
- establishment of suitable laydown areas for materials;
- construction of access tracks (both temporary and permanent) and other temporary access solutions as necessary;
- delivery of structures and materials to site;
- excavation and construction works associated with foundations, as necessary;
- assembly and erection of the OHL towers;
- stringing of conductors using pullers and tensioners;
- vegetation removal if necessary; and
- inspections and commissioning.

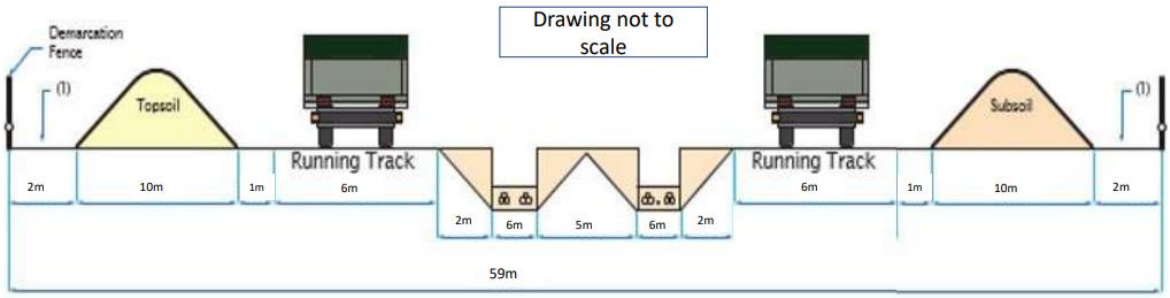
Underground Cable General Construction Activities

2.3.2 As described in **Section 2.2**, some areas of UGC may be required for the connection. Should this be the case, where required, the installation of the UGC would involve the following tasks:

- establish a working corridor approximately 60 m wide, centred on the cable centreline;
- excavate a trench up to 2 m in depth and 1 m wide, widening through benching and battering where stability and safety concerns arise;
- clear out all materials likely to damage cable ducts, e.g. clods, rocks, stones and organic debris, and employ use of pumps to remove any water;
- place cabling within the trench, surrounded by engineered backfill in suitable layers for protection, with marker boards placed above the cable line; and
- reinstate excavated surface layers in reverse order.

2.3.3 **Plate 2.1** shows a diagram of a typical UGC construction corridor.

Plate 2.1: Example of a typical UGC Construction



Forestry Removal

2.3.4 Construction of the project may require the removal of sections of commercial forest, depending on the choice of the proposed OHL alignment. This would be undertaken in consultation with affected landowners. Scottish Forestry would be consulted, and the project would comply with the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy[6].

2.3.5 An Operational Corridor (OC) would be required to enable the safe operation and maintenance of the OHL (or UGC) through areas of forestry. This would vary depending on the type of forest (based on species present) and the height of support structures proposed. The OC that has been preliminarily assumed at this stage for the steel lattice towers is 70 m (35 m either side of the OHL).

Access Strategy

2.3.6 Vehicle access would be required to each tower location during construction to allow excavation and creation of foundations and installation. Existing tracks would be used where possible. However, both temporary and permanent stone tracks may be necessary in some areas depending on existing access conditions, terrain and altitude.

2.3.7 For any sections of UGC, a construction haul road would be required to facilitate construction. Once installed, it is anticipated that the construction corridor would be reinstated, with an OC being maintained. Permanent access tracks would be required to access any associated CSE compounds.

Programme

2.3.8 It is anticipated that construction of the project would take place over a 24-month period, following the granting of consents, although detailed programming of the works would be the responsibility of the Contractor in agreement with SSEN Transmission.

2.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

2.4.1 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was pre-development. SSEN Transmission has developed a BNG toolkit based upon the Natural England metric[7], which aims to quantify biodiversity based upon the value of habitats for nature. It is an efficient and effective method for demonstrating whether development projects have been able to maintain or increase the biodiversity value of a development site after construction works.

2.4.2 The BNG toolkit would be applied to the project to quantify the overall potential biodiversity impacts; this includes a biodiversity baseline assessment, analysis of habitat losses due to temporary works and permanent infrastructure, and analysis of biodiversity gains following reinstatement of habitats in areas of temporary construction work.

SSEN Transmission's Biodiversity Ambition

2.4.3 SSEN Transmission is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment by minimising the potential impacts from their construction and operational activities. As part of this approach, SSEN Transmission has

[6] Forestry Commission Scotland (2009) Control of Woodland Removal Policy [online] Available at: https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/support-and-regulations/control-of-woodland-removal/285-the-scottish-government-s-policy-on-control-of-woodland-removal [last accessed: 19 September 2025].
[7] Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.1. [online] Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5450039124819968 [last accessed: 19 September 2025]

made commitments within its Sustainability Strategy (2018)[8] , Sustainability Plan (2019)[9] and RIIO-T2 Business Plan[10], for new infrastructure projects to:

- Ensure natural environment considerations are included in decision making at each stage of a project's development;
- Utilise the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impacts by consideration of biodiversity in project design;
- Positively contribute to the UN and Scottish Government Biodiversity strategies by achieving an overall 'No Net Loss' on new infrastructure projects gaining consent in 2020 onwards and achieving Net Gain on all new projects gaining consent in 2023 onwards; and
- Work with their supply chain to gain the maximum benefit during asset replacement and upgrades.

2.4.4 The design and evolution of this grid connection project will be carried out in line with these commitments.

[8]SSEN Transmission (2018) *Delivering a smart, sustainable energy future: The Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Sustainability Strategy* [online] Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/media/2701/sustainability-strategy.pdf [last accessed: 19 September 2025]

[9] SSEN Transmission (2019) *Our Sustainability Plan: Turning Ambition into Action.* [online] Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/media/3215/our-sustainability-plan-consultation-report.pdf [last accessed: 19 September 2025]

[10] A Network for Net Zero - SSEN Transmission (2022) [online] Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/information-centre/riio-t2-plan-and-uncertainty-mechanisms/ [last accessed: 19 September 2025]

3. ROUTE SELECTION

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] sets out the approach to the consideration and appraisal of route options, in line with SSEN Transmission's guidance 'Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132 kV and above.'[11] The guidance provides a framework to ensure environmental, technical and economic considerations are identified and appraised at each stage of the routeing process.

3.1.2 The guidance splits the routeing stage of a project into four principal stages, as follows:

- Stage 0: Routeing strategy development;
- Stage 1: Corridor Selection;
- Stage 2: Route Selection; and
- Stage 3: Alignment Selection.

3.1.3 Each stage is an iterative process and involves an increasing level of detail and resolution, bringing environmental, technical and cost considerations together in a way which seeks to achieve the best balance at each stage. The stages carried out can vary depending on the type, nature and size of a project and consultation is carried out at each stage of the process as appropriate.

3.1.4 The Proposed Development is currently at Stage 2: Route Selection, the objective of which is to identify a proposed route prior to commencing the alignment selection stage. Appraisal of each route option was undertaken against a number of environmental, engineering and cost criteria set out within the SSEN Transmission guidance, as follows:

Environmental Criteria

- Natural Heritage – designations, protected species, habitats, ornithology, hydrology, geology and hydrogeology;
- Cultural Heritage – designations and cultural heritage assets;
- People – proximity to dwellings;
- Landscape and visual – designations, landscape character and visual;
- Land Use – agriculture, forestry and recreation; and
- Planning – policy and proposals.

Engineering Criteria

- Infrastructure Crossings – major crossings (overhead lines, rail, river, navigable canal, gas or hydro pipeline) and road crossings;
- Environmental Design – elevation, contaminated land, pollution and flooding;
- Ground Conditions – terrain and peat;
- Construction and Maintenance – access, angle support; and
- Proximity – clearance distance, windfarms, communication masts, urban areas, metallic pipes.

Economic Criteria

- Capital – construction costs; and
- Operational – inspections and maintenance costs.

3.1.5 A Red, Amber, Green (RAG) matrix was used for the appraisal, with the ratings compared, across the criteria, to examine which has the greatest and least potential for the development to be constrained.

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

3.2 Route Options

3.2.1 The route options appraised and consulted on are shown on **Plate 3.1** below (see also **Figure 1**).

3.2.2 As set out within the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3], six route options were identified, comprising three 'western route options' (Route Options 1a, 1b and 1c) and three 'eastern route options' (Route Options 2a, 2b and 2c). Any of the western route options could join with any of the eastern route options to form a complete connection between the connection points at Fearna PSH scheme and the proposed Loch Lundie substation.

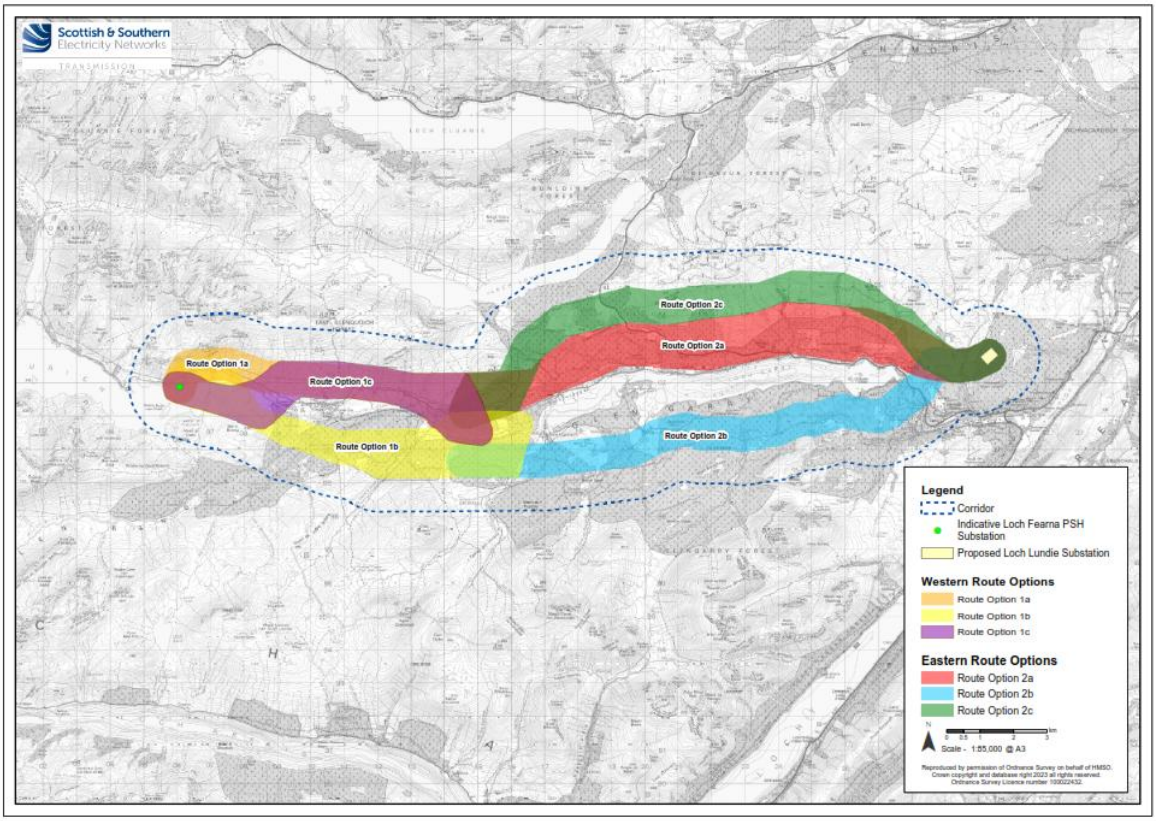


Plate 3.1: Route Options

3.3 Summary of Constraints

3.3.1 The principal findings of the appraisal of route options are summarised here. Further detail is provided within the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3].

Western Route Options (1a, 1b and 1c)

3.3.2 From an environmental perspective, of the three western route options, Route Option 1a comprises good opportunities to follow existing infrastructure on the northern extent of Loch Poulary, therefore minimising the spread of new infrastructure and potential interaction with qualifying / notified features of the West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, the potential for cumulative effects would be increased within this route option given the presence of existing and proposed infrastructure including the Skye Reinforcement Project, which would require careful consideration at the alignment selection stage.

3.3.3 Route Option 1b and 1c both have the potential to be constrained by a number of environmental factors, including the potential for collision risk to qualifying species of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI. Furthermore, an OHL within these route options could increase the potential for landscape and visual constraints by introducing vertical features which may be prominent in views along the loch, which could in turn reduce some of the remote qualities of this landscape. Both Route Options 1b and 1c would need to cross the

eastern extent of Loch Cuaich, either using tall OHL towers or a Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) cable with a Cable Sealing End (CSE) compound near the shore to facilitate transition back to OHL. Both approaches would introduce new infrastructure into visually sensitive areas and could result in additional environmental constraints. Route Option 1b would be preferable as an HDD crossing compared to an OHL Loch crossing, however, Route Option 1b also passes through an area of semi-natural woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) to the south of the River Garry near Tomdoun, which includes Caledonian Pinewood. Additional areas of ancient woodland and Caledonian Pinewood lie to the east, near its transition with Route Option 2c. Although direct impacts on these sensitive habitats may be avoidable, their presence significantly constrains options for an OHL.

3.3.4 From an engineering perspective, Route Option 1a offers good access opportunities due to its proximity to the C1144 minor road and relatively few road crossings. However, it presents significant challenges including steep terrain, limited suitable ground at the route option's starting point, and proximity to existing transmission infrastructure. The area also experienced a major landslip in 2018, which damaged towers on the existing Fort Augustus – Quoich 132 kV line and led to the installation of NeSTS structures. Additionally, Route Option 1a passes within 250 m of properties and requires crossing a distribution asset.

3.3.5 Route Option 1b avoids close proximity to residential properties and distribution assets and is expected to require fewer angle towers compared to other route options. However, it presents significant access challenges, particularly due to the remoteness of the southern side of the valley. Route Option 1c, while requiring three crossings of the C1144 minor road, offers better access compared with Route Option 1b as it largely follows the C1144. It also avoids steep terrain, and areas with known slope instability to the north of Loch Cuaich. Though it has some clearance constraints and a distribution asset crossing, it avoids the remote, inaccessible south side of the valley and benefits from more stable ground conditions overall. Both Route Options 1b and 1c would need to cross Loch Cuaich, where a substantial span of approximately 480 m, presenting a significant engineering undertaking, regardless of the technical solution for the crossing.

Eastern Route Options (2a, 2b and 2c)

3.3.6 From an environmental perspective, all the eastern route options are highly constrained across more than one topic area, with particular constraints noted for natural heritage designations, ancient woodland, protected species and visual effects. Due to existing electrical infrastructure and other known constraints on the approach to Loch Lundie substation, it is proposed that approximately 2 km of the final section of the connection be installed as underground cable.

3.3.7 In terms of the qualifying and notified species of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI, whilst Route Option 2a follows existing transmission infrastructure which would likely minimise any 'novel' impact of a new OHL, consideration would need to be given to the potential for cumulative effects as it would follow the route of the proposed Skye Reinforcement Project. Within the Inchlaggan area, the back clothing effect of topography and the presence of tree cover may provide some opportunities to mitigate collision risk in this area, however, this would need further review at the alignment selection stage, along with other opportunities to mitigate likely significant environmental effects. The potential for cumulative effects with other electricity transmission infrastructure within Route Option 2a are also important considerations for other topic areas, in particular in terms of landscape character, visual amenity, habitats, protected species and forestry. Route Option 2a includes several areas of ancient woodland, both of semi natural and plantation origin, as well as areas of native woodland, typically upland birchwoods. Whilst there are opportunities to minimise impacts on these sensitive habitats, this would require careful consideration at the alignment selection stage if this option were taken forward, particularly given the presence of other existing and proposed electrical infrastructure within this route option.

3.3.8 Whilst Route Option 2b would have less of an impact on SPA and SSSI species compared to Route Option 2a (and 2c), given it is to the south of Loch Garry (with commuting flights typically heading north), this route option would pass through extensive and continuous areas of ancient woodland, Caledonian Pinewood and native

woodland, requiring significant felling. The associated habitat loss, fragmentation, and disturbance would impact a variety of protected species, including red squirrel, pine marten, and wildcat. There would also be potential for cumulative effects (including cumulative landscape and visual effects) with the proposed Coire Glas Grid connection to the eastern extent of the route near Whitebridge.

3.3.9 Route Option 2c has increased potential for collision risk to SPA and SSSI species compared with Route Options 2a and 2b as it travels further north and is situated on higher ground, potentially disrupting commuting flights of designated species. Route Option 2c would also run to the north of the A87, crossing the road towards its western end. Due to its scale, and the elevated views towards the mountainous landscapes to the west, an OHL within this route option has the potential to be a distracting feature. It may also be seen in combination with the turbines of the proposed Beinneun 2 Wind Farm. Route Option 2c also passes through some areas of ancient woodland of semi-natural origin.

3.3.10 From an engineering perspective, Route Option 2a offers good access opportunities, running close to the C1144 minor road, and a network of forestry tracks. However, it crosses more elevated ground and also passes within 100 m of a property and within 750 m of a communication mast, raising the potential for constraint that would need further consideration at the alignment selection stage. Additionally, like Route Option 1a, it follows an existing transmission corridor, which may limit available space for development and increase the potential for cumulative impacts.

3.3.11 Route Option 2b has more limited access, relying on existing forestry tracks with limited public road access, which could raise construction costs. It sits at a generally lower elevation than Route Options 2a and 2c, but passes within 100 m of a property and within 550 m of a communication mast. Furthermore, it includes an unavoidable distribution asset crossing.

3.3.12 Route Option 2c presents the greatest access challenges of the eastern route options, with large sections lacking supporting infrastructure. It traverses the highest terrain of all the route options, reaching elevations up to 449 m AOD, and contains areas of steep gradient. Route Option 2c avoids properties and distribution assets, but it passes through the proposed Beinneun 2 Windfarm, posing a constraint for potential development conflict. It also has the highest estimated number of angle towers of all route options.

3.4 Potential Route Option

3.4.1 The route selection appraisal presented at consultation thus indicated that the combination of **Route Option 1a** and **Route Option 2a** is the route which offers the most balanced solution taking into account environmental, technical and cost considerations.

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 In accordance with SSEN Transmission's guidance[11], a process of consultation at route option stage has been undertaken.

4.2 Methods for Consultation

Consultation Document

4.2.1 The Loch Fearna PSH Connection Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] was produced detailing the appraisal of route options, taking account of environmental, economic and technical factors. The Consultation Document[3], and a summary Consultation Booklet[2], were made available from 7th May 2025 via the project website: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/loch-fearna-psh-connection/

4.2.2 **Table 4.1** details the stakeholders in receipt of the Consultation Document or Consultation Booklet, or otherwise informed of the website or public consultation events details:

Table 4.1: List of Stakeholders

Stakeholders	
Statutory Consultees	
The Highland Council (THC)	NatureScot
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Non-Statutory Consultees	
British Horse Society	Civil Aviation Authority
Crown Estate Scotland	Fisheries Management Scotland
Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS)	Glengarry Community Woodlands
Glengarry Community Council	John Muir Trust
Mountaineering Scotland	National Air Traffic Services
Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust	Ness District Salmon Fishery Board
RES (Beinn Bheag Wind Farm Developer)	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Scottish Forestry	Scottish Water
Scottish Wild Land Group	Transport Scotland

4.2.3 Feedback on the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] was originally requested by **25th June 2025**, however this was later extended to allow sufficient time for all interested parties to respond.

4.2.4 In the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3], stakeholders were asked a series of questions on specific aspects of the project as follows:

- Has the requirement for the project been clearly explained?
- Are there any additional factors, or environmental features, that you consider important and should be brought to the attention of the project team?
- Do you have any comments about any of the route options?
- Following a review of the provided information, how would you describe your understanding of the Loch Fearna PSH Connection Project?
- Do you have any community benefit opportunities you would like us to consider, or are there any local initiatives you would like us to support?

4.2.5 A feedback form was also provided on the project webpage allowing users to submit comments.

Public Consultation Events

4.2.6 An in-person consultation event took place for this project on:

- 14th May 2025 between 14:00 to 19:30 at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, Inverness-shire, PH35 4W.

4.2.7 Consultation events were advertised in the local press, SSEN Transmission's social media channels and the dedicated project website. A mail drop of a booklet and letter informing of the event was also carried out to over 1,000 households along the route options ahead of the consultation event.

4.2.8 Approximately 12 people attended the public consultation event on 14th May 2025. No feedback forms were received by post, but one online feedback form was received after the consultation event.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEES

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 **Table 5.1** sets out a summary of the feedback received by statutory and non-statutory consultees following the consultation period (May 2025 to September 2025). A response to the feedback is also provided by SSEN Transmission, together with confirmation of the action to be taken, where relevant.

5.1.2 Where a consultee is listed in **Table 4.1**, but not **Table 5.1**, this indicates that the consultee did not provide a response at this stage.

Table 5.1: Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultee Feedback

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
Statutory		
NatureScot	NatureScot recommends that the route selection process should be informed by surveys and assessments, particularly to avoid impacts on protected areas, especially the West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA).	The route selection process to date has been informed by a series of surveys undertaken in 2024 and 2025, this includes habitat and protected species walkovers. Ornithology surveys commenced in September 2024 and finished in August 2025. These surveys comprised of Vantage Point watches, walked transects, breeding bird surveys and targeted species-specific watches for flight activity. A document presenting this proposed scope of bird survey work designed to inform the routeing process and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stages of the project and to seek any comments from NatureScot and RSPB Scotland was prepared and shared in March 2025. NatureScot comments and feedback that was received in June 2025 and the methodology for the surveys was agreed upon. Future correspondence with NatureScot will be maintained as the project progresses. As the project progresses to alignment selection stage, design will be guided by both desk-based review and further ecological and ornithological surveys as required, with particular attention on minimising impacts on the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA.
	NatureScot note that the Potential Route Option is close to the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA, which is protected for breeding black-throated divers and common scoters. They state that a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) would be required and that it would be likely to conclude there is a likely significant effect for both black-throated divers and common scoter because of collision risk and potential for construction-related disturbance. If any construction was to occur during breeding season, then a 750 m exclusion buffer around the SPA lochs may be required.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge the potential constraints associated with the qualifying features of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA to the route options under consideration. As detailed within the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3], potential impacts to the qualifying features of the SPA have been an important consideration during the appraisal process for the route options identified. This will continue through the alignment selection process and SSEN Transmission will maintain an open dialogue with NatureScot to discuss further detailed analysis. A HRA will be prepared as part of a future application for the project. It is anticipated that an appropriate buffer could be maintained around the SPA lochs during the construction stage. This will be fully considered as the project progresses and reflected in the construction planning and programme.
	In relation to the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA, NatureScot also note that there is potential water quality impacts during construction, but NatureScot agrees that best practice can likely mitigate this. If Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) were to be proposed upstream of the SPA,	This has been noted. SSEN Transmission acknowledge the potential for water quality impacts and agree that these can likely be mitigated through the implementation of best practice construction measures, the details of which will be provided as part of a future application and HRA.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
	NatureScot note that more information would be needed on break-out and pollution risk.	
	NatureScot highlight that any future application would need to demonstrate there was no adverse impact on the site integrity of the SPA.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge the potential constraints associated with the qualifying features of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA to the route options under consideration. Further detailed consideration of these constraints and potential impacts will continue through the alignment selection and EIA stages of the project. Dialogue with NatureScot will be maintained throughout this process.
	NatureScot note that Route Option 2a is currently the overall preferred in the consultation document but is rated 'Red' for SPA risk, whereas Route 2b is 'Amber', suggesting lower risk. This is attributed to the higher risk of collision for a route option between Loch Garry and Loch Loyne, both from the Loch Fearna PSH Connection proposal on its own and in combination with the consented Skye Reinforcement Project. The Consultation Document proposes that mitigation to reduce the 'Red' rating would be given further consideration at the alignment stage. NatureScot however note that assessment of collision risk may not be straightforward, and they advise that more detailed assessment is undertaken before the potential route option is selected.	NatureScot concerns regarding the potential for collision risk and cumulative impacts are noted, and are acknowledged within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3]. The potential for such impacts are understood by SSEN Transmission and their technical advisers given the recent work and consultation with NatureScot for the Skye Reinforcement Project. A meeting via Microsoft Teams was held between the SSEN Transmission project team and NatureScot on 24th July 2025 to discuss the points that were raised in NatureScot's written response to the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3]. At the meeting, SSEN Transmission reiterated that as the project progresses to alignment selection stage, design will be guided by both desk-based review, ornithological surveys and further analysis of collision risk to ensure potential impacts on the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA as a result of the Proposed Development are minimised. SSEN Transmission are committed to further liaison with NatureScot on these issues as the project progresses and will keep NatureScot informed of further assessment work in this regard.
	NatureScot note that Route Option 2b may pose a lower collision risk than Route Options 2a and 2c, due to its location south of Loch Garry and the potential to underground Route Option 1b at the Loch Cuaich crossing. However, without full survey data, they cannot determine which option minimises collision risk to SPA birds. Their initial view is that a route south of Loch Garry may be preferable, and they advise obtaining desk study information from the RSPB, particularly regarding additional constraints associated with Route Option 2c.	As set out in the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3], SSEN Transmission acknowledge that a route south of Loch Garry may pose a lower collision risk, particularly if undergrounding at Loch Cuaich is feasible. However, in accordance with SSEN's routeing guidance, a balance needs to be struck to achieve the best solution, taking into account all environmental, technical and economic considerations. In this case, the Consultation Document (May, 2025) [3] identified how an OHL route to the south of Loch Garry would pass through extensive and continuous areas of ancient woodland, Caledonian Pinewood and native woodland, requiring significant felling. The associated habitat loss, fragmentation, and disturbance would impact a variety of protected species, including red squirrel, pine marten, and wildcat. There would also be potential for cumulative effects (including cumulative landscape and visual effects)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
		with the proposed Coire Glas Grid connection to the eastern extent of the route near Whitebridge. The selection of a route and subsequent alignment that minimises potential collision risk to the qualifying features of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA will be an integral consideration of the project moving forwards and will be subject to more detailed analysis.
	NatureScot highlight that, although not detailed in the Consultation Document, access routes linked to the Fearna PSH scheme application would also follow a route south of Loch Garry. Additionally, they note that the current proposal may be followed by a second phase connection. NatureScot therefore recommend that any potential for cumulative impacts from these elements is assessed early in the process.	SSEN Transmission are aware that the likely access routes for the Fearna PSH scheme application are routed to the south of Loch Garry. This would not reduce felling requirements for an OHL, which would require an Operational Corridor through areas of woodland to facilitate its construction and safe operation. There will be an additional 1500 MW of power produced from the Loch Fearna PSH Scheme, which will need to connect into the Transmission network. The location of this connection is yet to be determined and is subject to ongoing system studies.
	NatureScot agree with the consultation document conclusion that potential impacts to Quoich Spillway SSSI and Garry Falls SSSI could be avoided by careful siting and design.	This has been noted, and any potential for impacts on these designated sites would be considered as the project progresses.
	In relation to ornithology, NatureScot highlighted that their previous responses on methodology remain valid. In particular, that data should be obtained from RSPB, Highland Raptor Study Group, and Forestry and Land Scotland as well as results of previous surveys undertaken by SSEN Transmission and the Fearna PSH scheme developers. As NatureScot have not yet seen full details of the survey results and assessment, they cannot comment on the likely impacts of the proposal at this stage. They do however state that mitigation should be considered as part of the process and design.	NatureScot's previous response refers to their June 2025 consultation response in relation to the ornithology survey methodology for the project that SSEN Transmission sought their advice in March 2025. The relevant desk study records have been requested from RSPB, Highland Raptor Study Group, and Forestry and Land Scotland. Mitigation will be considered as part of the design process, in discussion with NatureScot.
	NatureScot recommended that NVC-level habitat survey be conducted to inform design and avoid sensitive habitats. Where avoidance isn't possible, they advise on minimisation, mitigation, restoration, or compensation. If peatland habitat is present, NatureScot recommend surveys following NatureScot peatland guidance.	NVC-level habitat surveys will be undertaken to inform the alignment selection and EIA stages of the project, with the aim to minimise impacts on sensitive habitats where possible. Where avoidance is not feasible, appropriate mitigation, restoration or compensation will be considered. Opportunities for restoration and enhancement will be considered and delivered in line with SSEN Transmission's BNG commitments. A Stage 1 Peat Management Plan and Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment,

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
		supported by an appropriate level of peat depth data, will be provided in support of a future application for consent.
	NatureScot advised that all survey work for protected species follows their standing advice.	Survey work for protected species will follow NatureScot's standing advice.
	NatureScot highlight that no supporting landscape or visual assessment material such as ZTVs or visualisations have been provided at this stage. They note that some route options may slightly overlap with the Kinlochhourn - Knoydart - Morar Wild Land Area (WLA 18). If development is proposed within the WLA, they recommend a Wild Land Assessment be undertaken in line with NatureScot guidance. They also note that The Highland Council should advise on Special Landscape Areas and other landscape and visual impacts.	Given the stage of the project (route options) the production of visualisations or a ZTV has not been undertaken. However, further supporting information such as visualisations from a select number of viewpoints will be provided at the alignment selection stage of the project. Further discussion and agreement on the scope of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to support a future application for consent (as part of an EIA Report) will be carried out following the conclusion of the alignment selection stage.
SEPA	SEPA did not provide site-specific comments at this route optioneering stage. SEPA referred to the relevant standing advice in the SEPA Triage Framework and Standing Advice which is applicable to Electricity Act applications. SEPA advised that if they are consulted at a later stage by the Energy Consents Unit, once a route option has been selected, they may then provide site-specific comments.	SSEN Transmission will refer to SEPA Triage Framework and Standing Advice as the project progresses. As the alignment selection stage is progressed, avoiding and minimising impacts on environmental features within SEPA's remit will be a key design consideration. SSEN Transmission will consult SEPA again at the alignment selection stage, and SEPA will be consulted on by ECU as the project progresses into the EIA stage.
	In general, SEPA preference would be for the route option to follow previously disturbed corridors, where possible.	This has been noted. Utilising existing infrastructure corridors has formed an important consideration in the route options appraisal and will continue to do so as the project progresses.
	SEPA recommended that SSEN Transmission pay particular attention to the standing advice on Development on Peat, which is referenced in their triage framework, as, parts of the potential route option may involve crossing areas of peatland.	This has been noted. SSEN Transmission will detail how the design has accounted for and minimised the disturbance of peat, through its various design iterations. A Stage 1 Peat Management Plan and Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment, supported by an appropriate level of peat depth data, will be provided in support of a future application for consent. SSEN Transmission will refer to SEPA Triage Framework and Standing Advice as the project progresses.
HES	HES welcomed that cultural heritage has been considered as part of the route stage consultation document, however, did not have any comments to make at this stage.	This has been noted. SSEN Transmission will continue to consult with HES as the project progresses.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
Non-Statutory		
FLS	FLS provided a clear indication that it cannot accept any routeing of a grid connection route through the FLS Invergarry Forest Block (to the south of Loch Garry) for several reasons, as discussed in the subsequent rows.	This has been noted, and further responses to the points raised are provided below.
	FLS highlighted that Route Option 1b, 1c and 2b would directly impact Caledonian Pine (CP) Wood reserves including critical core areas, as well as the ongoing restoration programme to return the landscape to native woodland (CP, riparian habitats, etc.). The restoration primarily to CP native woodlands is a long-term process (+100 year) that has been ongoing for over 30 years. Any route through these forest blocks will have a detrimental impact on the successful FLS work already carried out and the overall long term restoration objective of one contiguous woodland with the environmental benefits this brings.	As reflected in the Consultation Document (May, 2025) [3], SSEN Transmission acknowledges the potential impact of an OHL routed to the south of Loch Garry on Caledonian Pine woodland reserves and the long-term restoration objectives. This is one of the key factors for the route options to the south of Loch Garry not being preferred in the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3].
	FLS emphasised that, while Caledonian Pine (CP) restoration is a primary focus, their objectives extend more widely to include the enhancement and establishment of diverse wildlife habitat networks (vertebrate, invertebrate, avian, etc.) and a range of woodland types that the forest block can support. CP forests also provide critical habitat for rare and endemic species. Any route through the forest block would fragment the restoration already underway, disrupt proposed habitat networks, and reduce the overall area available.	Such constraints to other woodland types and the wildlife these habitats support is reflected in the Consultation Document (May 2025) [3] for route options to the south of Loch Garry.
	FLS noted that they anticipate that, should the Fearna PSH scheme be consented, it will deliver Biodiversity Net Gain works within the Invergarry Forest Block. These works would further support the ongoing restoration programme and contribute to FLS's objective of establishing Invergarry as a high-quality Caledonian Pine Forest.	The biodiversity enhancement measures proposed to be delivered as part of the Fearna PSH scheme within the Invergarry Forest block are noted.
	FLS expressed the view that it is highly unlikely any clear evidence could demonstrate that a route through the FLS Caledonian Pine reserve would result in a significantly lower environmental impact than alternative route options to the north of Loch Garry.	In accordance with SSEN Transmission's routeing guidance, the route options appraisal process aims to identify a proposed route that reaches an optimum balance of environmental, technical, and economic factors. The appraisal of all route options is set out within the Consultation Document (May, 2025) [3], which suggested a potential route option that avoided the areas to the south of Loch Garry.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
Glengarry Community Council	Glengarry Community Council noted that they object to both the development of the Fearna PSH scheme itself and the Loch Fearna PSH connection.	This has been noted. For clarity, the Loch Fearna PSH Connection project currently subject to consultation at route option stage (Consultation Document, May 2025) would be subject to a separate consent application and assessment process to the Fearna PSH scheme.
	In their response, Glengarry Community Council called for a pause of all major applications, given the impact upon our communities, which may hasten depopulation in some areas until a clear national energy policy is in place and an economic impact assessment undertaken given that tourism is currently the backbone of The Highland economy. Specifically for the Loch Fearna PSH Connection, Glengarry Community Council objects to any route as it will be of significant detriment to the landscape and scenery of Glengarry.	SSEN Transmission has a statutory duty under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical transmission system in its licenced areas. SSEN Transmission has obligations to offer non-discriminatory terms for connection to the transmission system. In line with these duties and obligations, SSEN Transmission has entered into an agreement with the Fearna PSH scheme developer to provide a connection from the PSH scheme to the National Grid. SSEN Transmission is committed to seeking the views of local communities and other stakeholders during the routeing process to inform the identification of a proposed alignment that balances environmental, technical and economic considerations.
	Glengarry Community Council state that if a connection is to be allowed, Glengarry Community Council objects to the southern access route for the development of Loch Fearna PSH Scheme and objects to the use of that route for pylons.	This has been noted. For clarity, the “southern access route” forms part of the Fearna PSH scheme application, which is being progressed separately from the Loch Fearna PSH Connection. The route options for the Loch Fearna PSH Connection as set out within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3], suggested a potential route option that avoided the areas to the south of Loch Garry. This would be in line with avoiding the “southern access route” of the Fearna PSH scheme application.
	Glengarry Community Council state that if there must be a route, they generally support the potential route options presented at consultation (Route Options 1a and 2a). However, given the width of the Corridors, Glengarry Community Council highlight that they reserve the right to further object until more detailed design is available.	This has been noted. The route options presented at consultation are subject to further refinement as the project progresses. The next project stage is alignment selection, where more refined alignment options will be appraised, to ultimately selected a proposed alignment to be taken forwards to EIA stage. SSEN Transmission will continue to engage with Glengarry Community Council, wider community and other stakeholders throughout the alignment selection and design stages, providing additional detail as it becomes available.
	To better understand the connection project, Glengarry Community Council wish to see the criteria used to position pylons, within a narrower corridor.	The Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] sets out the approach to the consideration and appraisal of route options, in line with SSEN Transmission’s guidance ‘Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines and Underground Cables of 132 kV and above.’[11] The guidance provides a framework to ensure environmental, technical and

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
		economic considerations are identified and appraised at each stage of the routeing process which includes corridor selection, route selection and alignment selection. Continuous engagement with the Glengarry Community Council will be undertaken throughout the project, and further information will be provided.
RSPB	RSPB note that an additional 1,500 MW of power produced from the Fearna PSH scheme (totalling 1,800 MW). RSPB queried whether the Loch Fearna PSH Connection has been designed to accommodate both the initial 300 MW and the additional 1,500 MW of power from the Fearna PSH scheme, or if a second line would be required.	There will be an additional 1,500 MW of power produced from the Fearna PSH scheme, which will need to connect into the transmission network. At this stage, the proposed connection is intended to accommodate the initial 300 MW. There will be an additional 1500 MW of power produced from the Loch Fearna PSH Scheme, which will need to connect into the Transmission network. The location of this connection is yet to be determined and subject to ongoing system studies.
	RSPB highlighted that they objected to the Fearna PSH scheme S36 application in a letter dated 6th June 2025 as they do not believe that it can be concluded that there would be no adverse effect on site integrity on the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA. RSPB note that one pair of Common Scoter and part of their breeding range is likely to be lost from the already small and declining breeding population, as a result of the Fearna PSH scheme.	RSPB's objection to the Fearna PSH scheme's Section 36 application is noted.
	RSPB note that the area between the proposed Fearna PSH scheme and Loch Lundie substation is highly ecologically constrained. The route options contain Annex 1 priority habitats such as woodlands and peatlands, and pass through sensitive locations that support numerous bird species of high conservation concern, including Annex 1 and Schedule 1 species.	SSEN Transmission acknowledge the ecological sensitivity of all route options appraised between the Fearna PSH scheme itself and the proposed Loch Lundie substation. Such constraints and potential impacts are noted within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3]. As the project progresses, further survey and assessment work will inform the design moving forwards with the aim of avoiding or minimising impacts on priority habitats and protected species where possible.
	RSPB highlight that the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA supports 25 – 30% of the entire GB breeding population of Common Scoter, which totals only 52 pairs according to the most recent national survey. This population is classified as 'unfavourable declining'. The SPA is also part of the West Inverness Glens Nature Restoration Project, a multi-partner initiative aimed at reversing these declines.	As noted within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3], the international importance of the SPA for common scoter (and black-throated diver) and the critical conservation status of the species has been considered in the appraisal of route options to date, and will continue to be the subject of detailed assessment work as the project progresses.
	RSPB raise concern that while route options following existing infrastructure are generally less sensitive than routes in new areas, the significantly larger size of the proposed Fearna PSH scheme	The potential for increased collision risk to SPA species will be carefully considered and subject to detailed assessment as the project progresses.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
	infrastructure and increased number of OHLs, would result in substantially greater impacts. They consider this to pose an unacceptably high collision risk to SPA-designated bird species.	
	RSPB advise that timing restrictions will likely be necessary across any of the route options to avoid disturbance to breeding birds during construction and maintenance. They also highlight that helicopter use for material delivery and site activity could cause significant disturbance and should be carefully timed and routed.	Where required, timing restrictions to protect breeding birds will be incorporated into construction and maintenance planning and detailed in the EIA Report as part of a future consent application. The use of helicopters would be assessed as part of a construction access strategy once a proposed alignment has been identified.
	RSPB emphasise that while construction-related disturbance may be mitigated, the long-term collision risk to SPA species, particularly Common Scoter and Black-throated Diver, remains a major concern along Route Options 1a and 2a. They note that a Habitat Regulations Appraisal (HRA) will be required and welcome the consultation document's recognition of commuting flights between Loch Garry and Loch Loyne. However, based on long-term observations, RSPB highlight additional flight routes involving other lochans and significant elevation changes, including movements between Loch Garry, Loch Loyne, and Loch Fearna.	The potential for collision risk of an OHL within Route Options 1a and 2a is noted within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3]. The potential for such impacts are understood by SSEN Transmission and their technical advisers given the recent work undertaken as part of the consented Skye Reinforcement Project. More detailed assessment of collision risk, as agreed with NatureScot, including the potential for cumulative impacts, will continue to be explored as the project progresses to alignment selection stage.
	RSPB queried the basis for the statement in Section 6.2.3 of the Consultation Document that Route Option 1a "avoids key commuting flight paths between the lochs." They note that they are not clear on how these flight paths were identified. Furthermore, RSPB note that they would not agree with the assumption in Section 6.2.6 of the Consultation Document that Common Scoters are likely to take the shortest, lowest flight path between Loch Garry and Loch Loyne. They note that little is known about Common Scoter movements and argue that flight paths may be influenced by factors such as feeding areas, topography, weather, wind farms, and artificial lighting. They also reference previous observations of the species flying and breeding at high altitudes.	On the assumption that commuting flights between Loch Garry and Loch Loyne occur, then these flights are more likely to be the most direct flight line between lochs where the intervening topography is lowest. This is based on the understanding that common scoter will follow the lowest topography and avoid flying over high ground to minimise energetic cost and effort, and, to minimise the risk of predation. A theoretical flight corridor was provided in Appendix V2-5.5: Figure 5.5.3 of the Skye Reinforcement Project EIA Report (September 2022) that illustrated a route utilising a natural saddle in the landscape. This theoretical flight corridor has previously been accepted by both NatureScot and RSPB in their consultation responses to the Skye Reinforcement Project. Such routes necessarily involve flying over currently unmarked earth wires associated with the existing 132 kV steel lattice tower OHL, the existing replacement 132 kV OHL supported on wood poles, and the existing unmarked 33 kV distribution lines. There are no records of collision mortality associated with the existing OHLs within this area.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
	RSPB express serious concern about both the individual and cumulative effects of Route Options 1a and 2a when considered alongside existing overhead lines and the Skye Reinforcement Project. They highlight the potential for adverse impacts on SPA species, particularly Common Scoters and Black-throated Divers, due to the height of the proposed 60 m towers. These concerns are heightened by evidence that these species often fly at low altitudes, including during nocturnal movements between breeding lochs, which may place them at greater risk of collision with the proposed infrastructure.	The potential for collision risk of an OHL within Route Options 1a and 2a is noted within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3] and is well understood by SSEN Transmission and their technical advisers given the recent work undertaken as part of the consented Skye Reinforcement Project. More detailed assessment of collision risk, including the potential for cumulative impacts, will continue to be explored as the project progresses to alignment selection stage. SSEN Transmission are also aware that in 2023, NatureScot commissioned an Expert Opinion Review to aid their understanding of common scoter behaviour related to the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA. From what is publicly available in NatureScot's April 2023 updated response to the Bunloinn Wind Farm application (ECU00003304), it was concluded that there is no evidence for scoters flying between the main SPA breeding lochs, although foraging flights between the main lochs and their associated lochans are likely to occur.[12] It is stated that there is also no evidence that breeding females undertake flights between the main lochs at night.[12]
	RSPB note that while line marking may help reduce collision risk during daylight, its effectiveness is significantly compromised in complex woodland settings, poor weather, and nocturnal conditions. They note that wildfowl have low visual acuity, and markers may be difficult to perceive against tree-covered slopes or under low visibility, leaving birds with insufficient time to avoid collision.	The potential for mitigation measures such as bird flight diverters along sections of the proposed OHL will be explored during the alignment selection and EIA stages of the project. It is noted that the effectiveness of line marking has been accepted by NatureScot for the consented Skye Reinforcement Project.
	RSPB argue that due to the critically endangered status of the SPA Common Scoter population and SSEN's commitment to No Net Loss of Biodiversity, the only way to eliminate collision risk in the most sensitive areas is to underground the sections of the line that pass between SPA component lochs where collision mortality risk is highest.	RSPB's concerns regarding the potential for collision risk are noted, and are acknowledged within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3]. The potential for such impacts are understood by SSEN Transmission and their technical advisers given the recent work and consultation with NatureScot for the Skye Reinforcement Project. More detailed assessment of collision risk, as well as potential mitigation, will continue to be explored as the project progresses to alignment selection stage.
	RSPB acknowledge that full undergrounding of the connection is not feasible due to cost and environmental impacts associated with the required construction corridor. However, they welcome the flexibility shown in the consultation document regarding undergrounding near the	RSPB's support for a commitment to undergrounding the connection on approach to Loch Lundie is welcomed. More detailed assessment of collision risk near Loch Garry,

[12] NatureScot (2023). Application - NatureScot updated response REMOVING OBJECTION - 28 April 2023 - Bunloinn Wind Farm. Available Online: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00003304&T=0, [last accessed 19 September 2025].

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
	Loch Lundie substation and strongly recommend that undergrounding also be considered along the section of the route adjacent to Loch Garry to eliminate collision risk.	as well as potential mitigation, will continue to be explored as the project progresses to alignment selection stage.
	RSPB state that all western route options should avoid crossing Loch Poulary, and other protected waterbodies.	This has been noted. The constraints associated with crossing Loch Poulary, and other protected waterbodies, are noted within the Consultation Document (May, 2025)[3].
	RSPB highlight that any additional pressures on the SPA Common Scoter population, could undermine the objectives of the West Inverness Glens Nature Restoration Project. They stress that increased mortality from collision risk would be contrary to the West Inverness Glens Nature Restoration Project's aims and could heighten the risk of extinction for this critically endangered UK breeding species.	This has been noted and further consideration and detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the qualifying features of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA will be undertaken throughout the alignment selection and EIA stages of the project.
	RSPB observe that while the consultation document states further bird survey work will be undertaken to inform alignment selection, it does not specify what survey work has already been completed. They therefore cannot comment further at this stage and strongly recommend that Common Scoter data be requested from RSPB Scotland to help avoid disturbance to breeding pairs.	Specialist ornithology sub-consultant's based the text in the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] on desk studies using data requested from RSPB, Highland Raptor Study Group, and Forestry and Land Scotland, as well as data from other projects in the area such as the Skye Reinforcement project. Twelve months of vantage point ornithology surveys as well as breeding bird surveys are currently concluding for the Loch Fearna PSH Connection project and will be used to inform the alignment selection of the OHL moving forwards. The methodology for these surveys was agreed upon in correspondence with NatureScot in June 2025. The results will form a part of the EIA reporting and will be shared with RSPB and NatureScot in advance of this, if required.
	RSPB state that both permanent and temporary access tracks that would likely be required for overhead line and underground cable options should avoid sensitive habitats, including blanket bog, Caledonian pine woodland, and other native woodland. They acknowledge that Annex 1 wet heath may be difficult to avoid.	SSEN Transmission will seek to minimise impacts of the proposed OHL and ancillary infrastructure on sensitive habitats through careful route planning and adherence to the mitigation hierarchy, prioritising avoidance of irreplaceable habitats where possible.
	RSPB recommend that, due to the importance of wet heath and bog pools in the area for several rare and endangered breeding dragonfly species, the British Dragonfly Society should be consulted at this stage.	The British Dragonfly Society has been contacted, and the data relevant to the area had been secured. Any additional dragonfly data that is obtained through SSEN Transmission commissioned surveys will also be shared with the British Dragonfly Society.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
		Furthermore, should SSEN Transmission surveys identify species of conservation interest, then the British Dragonfly Society guidelines for mitigation or translocation (if required) will be adhered to.
	RSPB state that Section 2.3.5 of the Consultation Document identifies a 70 m operational corridor (35 m either side of the OHL) for the steel lattice towers. They emphasise the importance of requesting nest location data from the Highland Raptor Study Group at the alignment stage, noting the presence of breeding White-tailed Eagles within the forestry, the nests of which are legally protected year-round.	Engagement with the Highland Raptor Study Group is already underway and the data will be used to inform the alignment selection and EIA stages of the project.
	RSPB note that the SSEN Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) toolkit is proposed for use on the project. However, they express concern that existing metrics may not be suitable for identifying the most appropriate focus and location for enhancement, as they are not designed to support Scotland's nature restoration priorities. They emphasise that the mitigation hierarchy should be followed before enhancement is considered, and that any metric must be interpreted alongside other site-specific ecological information, particularly where irreplaceable habitats may be impacted.	The mitigation hierarchy will be applied, ensuring that avoidance, minimisation, and restoration are considered before enhancement. The BNG toolkit will be utilised to form alignment selection, and at the point of application in relation to non-irreplaceable habitats. SSEN Transmission are committed to delivering a 10% biodiversity net gain on their projects for non-irreplaceable habitats. (as mentioned in **Section 2.4** of this report). Impacts on irreplaceable habitats are excluded from the SSEN Transmission Metric, as SSEN Transmission do not consider it an appropriate tool for assessing such impacts. Instead, compensation is provided on an area basis, ensuring that more irreplaceable habitat is restored than is lost. The SSEN Transmission Toolkit and biodiversity metric is a consistent and transparent approach towards measuring biodiversity within SSEN Transmission, as biodiversity in its entirety is impossible to measure.
	RSPB would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss the project further. They hope the information provided is helpful and constructive in supporting the delivery of the project with full consideration of environmental impacts.	SSEN Transmission appreciates all feedback given by RSPB at this early stage of the project. A meeting invitation will be considered to facilitate further discussion and ensure continued engagement with RSPB as the design develops.
Scottish Water	Scottish Water requested the shapefiles of the route options in a zipped folder format to map onto their Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and check for Scottish Water assets.	SSEN Transmission provided these items to Scottish Water on 22nd May 2025.
	Upon receipt of the shapefiles, Scottish Water sought clarification on if the Loch Fearna PSH Connection project was a part of the Skye	SSEN Transmission confirmed that the Loch Fearna PSH Connection project was entirely separate from the Skye Reinforcement Project. SSEN Transmission also confirmed that this project is at an early stage of the routeing process, so details on

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
	Reinforcement project. Scottish Water queried if there will be tree felling required and if access tracks would be created.	the extent of tree felling are not yet known, but it is expected that some felling would be required to form an operational corridor. Existing access tracks would be utilised where possible, although there will also be a requirement for new permanent and temporary tracks.
	Scottish Water confirmed that a review of their records indicated that the potential route option falls within a drinking water catchment where a Scottish Water abstraction is located. Scottish Water abstractions are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas (DWPA) under Article 7 of the Water Framework Directive. Loch Ness supplies Invermoriston Water Treatment Works (WTW) and Scottish Water note that it is essential that water quality and water quantity in the area are protected. Part of the potential route option also falls within the Aldernaig Burn (Invergarry Heb Intake) which supplies Invergarry WTW, where there may be some risk to water quality. Scottish Water referenced their list of precautions which details protection measures to be taken within a DWPA, the wider drinking water catchment, and if there are assets in the area.	The presence of drinking water catchments are known, as detailed within the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3]. The potential impacts on the water environment, together with the development of appropriate mitigation measures, will be given further consideration as the project progresses through the alignment selection and EIA stages.
	Scottish Water indicated that they would prefer to see the southern-most route options (Route Option 1b and 2b) utilised as they avoid crossing smaller operational catchments and remain in the larger Loch Ness catchment.	Scottish Water's preference for the southern-most route options has been noted. SSEN Transmission are confident that impacts on the water environment can be controlled through design and appropriate mitigation.
	Scottish Water outlined that there may be assets that need to be considered in the area and therefore requested that SSEN Transmission follow the actions required on their "Precautions to protect Scottish Water Assets during development activities"[13] document.	Where applicable, Scottish Water's highlighted document will be referred to as the project design progresses.

[13] Scottish Water (2020) List of Precautions for Drinking Water and Assets (General Edition), Available Online: https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/-/media/ScottishWater/Document-Hub/Key-Publications/Energy-and-Sustainability/Sustainable-Land-Management/091120SWListOfPrecautionsForDrinkingWaterAndAssetsGeneralEdD.pdf, [last accessed 19 September 2025].

6. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM THE PUBLIC EXHIBITION EVENT

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 **Table 6.1** sets out the feedback received by the local community and general public following the consultation period (May 2025 to September 2025), including comments received during the consultation events. Responses by SSEN Transmission are also included, setting out the action to be taken where relevant.

6.1.2 **Table 6.1** is ordered by topic. Where a point was raised multiple times, this has been combined into one entry, but the approximate number of times a point was raised has been included in the Table.

Table 6.1: Landowner, Public and Local Community Feedback by Topic

Feedback Comments	Number of Times Point Raised	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
Utilisation of existing lines: On the map of the Potential Route Option, there is an existing 400 kV OHL line running as far as a substation above Loch Poulary. Would it not be possible to utilise that line, and extend it as far as the proposed Loch Quoich termination?	1	SSEN Transmission believe that the existing line being referenced is the existing 132 kV steel lattice line that formed part of the connection to Skye. This section of the line has been replaced by a new 132 kV trident wood pole OHL as far as Loch Cuaich. The OHL will be replaced by the Skye Reinforcement Project, which comprises a new steel lattice double circuit 132 kV OHL. Despite the new line having an increase in capacity, the replacement line is only 132 kV and the capacity requirements of Loch Fearna PSH Connection exceed this, requiring a 400 kV connection. This means the infrastructure requirement for Loch Fearna PSH Connection is very different. As such, utilising the existing circuit between Fort Augustus and Skye would not be possible.
Construction Access and Cumulative impacts: The most common themes voiced in anecdotal feedback during the consultation event were concerns regarding potential significant cumulative construction impacts, especially when considering the Fearna PSH scheme, local wind farm proposals and other SSEN Transmission connection and reinforcement projects in this rural area. It was also highlighted that the C1144 road may not be suitable for the delivery of any of these projects.	12 +	SSEN Transmission acknowledge concerns regarding the cumulative impact of transmission and renewable development projects in the local area. This will be a key consideration for the project teams as the project is progressed. SSEN Transmission currently sit on the Glengarry Community Led Liaison Group, which SSEN are finding to be a really productive forum for discussing cumulative impacts with local projects in the area. The group has a focus on cumulative traffic movements and suggestions for mitigation and collaborative working. The final project application will also include consideration regarding cumulative impacts, and access considerations will be a key design factor as the project progresses into alignment selection stage. A Transport Assessment will be undertaken as part of the EIA, which will assess impacts on the road network.
Impact to local businesses and accommodation: A question was received in person regarding how impacts to local hospitality businesses are considered and if a strategy will be in place regarding worker accommodation.	1	Impacts to local businesses and accommodation will be considered in further detail throughout the development process and discussions will be undertaken with THC. SSEN Transmission are willing to discuss any specific concerns in more detail to gain a full understanding of community requirements and concerns during this process. Any strategy to assess potential workers' accommodations will be the responsibility of the Principal Contractor, which is not yet been appointed.

Feedback Comments	Number of Times Point Raised	Response / Action by SSEN Transmission
Community Benefits: Local community organisations were keen to understand SSEN Transmissions approach to sponsorship and how Community Benefits can be accessed.	1	Information regarding SSEN Transmission's Community Benefit Funds can be accessed via the dedicated Community Benefit Fund project webpage.[14] SSEN Transmission are also keen to work closely with local communities in proximity to their projects to understand what opportunities there may be to leave a local legacy. Any sponsorship requests can be also raised with the project Community Liaison Manager to take to the business for consideration.
Concerns regarding Route Option 2b: Local residents voiced their agreement that Route Option 2b would not be optimal for the development due to reasons such as impacts to forestry, access, and proximity to property.	1	This has been noted. The current potential route option avoids the southern route options including Route Option 2b, and therefore avoids these impacts to forestry, access, and property.
Caledonian Woodland: SSEN Transmission received request to avoid development within the southernly route options (Route Option 1b and 2b) to avoid impacts on Caledonian Woodland.	1	This has been noted. The current potential route option avoids the southern route options and therefore avoids interaction with Caledonian Woodland.
Glengarry West Viewpoint: Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on the Glengarry West viewpoint from an additional overhead line infrastructure developed through the glen. It was questioned why the line could not be routed further south within existing forestry.	1	Concerns regarding the potential impact on the Glengarry West viewpoint have been noted, and this will be a consideration at alignment selection stage. The route options to the south of Loch Garry are not currently considered as a preferred route path due to a number of reasons including ancient and Caledonian woodland, protected species and habitats.
General: Glengarry Community Council submitted a list of questions regarding the development following a community council meeting prior to the consultation event.	N/A	SSEN Transmission appreciate the time Glengarry Community Council has spent collating questions regarding the development. The responses to the list of questions received are available to download from the 'Document' section of our project webpage.[15]

[14] SSEN Transmission (2025) *Community Benefit Fund*, Available online at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/information-centre/community-benefit-fund/, [last accessed 19 September 2025].
[15] SSEN Transmission (2025) *Loch Fearna PSH Connection: Documents*, Available online at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/loch-fearna-psh-connection/, [last accessed: 19 September 2025].

7. IDENTIFICATION OF A PROPOSED ROUTE

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 SSEN Transmission has reviewed and considered the responses provided by all stakeholders following the appraisal of route options and identification of potential route options, as set out within the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3]. Responses to the general points raised by stakeholders through the consultation process are included in Sections 5 and 6 above.

7.1.2 The below paragraphs outline how the project will implement consultation feedback considerations and move forwards.

7.2 How the Route has been Informed by the Consultation Process

7.2.1 The consultation process for the project raised a number of comments from Statutory and Non-Statutory bodies as well as from the local community and landowners.

7.2.2 For the western route options, the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] identified the presence of natural heritage designations, ornithology and landscape and visual effects as key environmental constraints. From an engineering perspective, elevation, terrain and peatland were noted as important considerations. Stakeholder comments also noted these constraints, and emphasised the presence of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA, which protects breeding black-throated divers and common scoters. The importance of ongoing ecological surveys and assessments was highlighted by stakeholders to informing a route and subsequent alignment. As the project progresses to alignment selection stage, SSEN Transmission design will be guided by both desk-based review and ongoing surveys, with particular attention on minimising impacts on the SPA.

7.2.3 In determining the preferred western route option that should form part of the proposed route, SSEN Transmission have concluded that given the natural heritage and landscape and visual constraints on Route Option 1b and 1c, as well as the technical difficulty of crossing Loch Cuaich, Route Option 1a is to be taken forward as part of the proposed route. It is recognised however that this route option does have the potential to be constrained by the Skye Reinforcement Project and other infrastructure, and peatland. Wider landscape and visual effects as well as effects on the SPA will require careful consideration in order to find a suitable alignment within this route option.

7.2.4 In relation to the eastern route options, the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3] noted the presence of protected species and habitats as well as ancient woodland (particularly for Route Option 2b) and access concerns as key constraints. For Route Option 2a and 2c, concerns regarding views from the Glengarry West Viewpoint were raised during consultation. This will be a key visual consideration moving forwards, and alignment options that pass to the northern side of this viewpoint will be appraised as well as those to the south through the glen. The avoidance of Scottish Water assets to the east will also be incorporated into the project design moving forwards.

7.2.5 In relation to the eastern route options, there was mixed consultation feedback in relation to passing to the south or to the north of Loch Garry. Some consultees such as RSPB and NatureScot suggested that there would be less potential impact on birds with Route Option 2b. Furthermore, Scottish Water indicated that they would prefer Route Option 2b as well, as it would avoid crossing smaller operational catchments and remain in the larger Loch Ness catchment. Conversely though, members of the public flagged that the Caledonian woodland and other constraints to the south of Loch Garry should be avoided. Glengarry Community Council, whilst opposed to the project generally, flagged that they would be particularly opposed to a route option to the south of Loch Garry, and that if there must be a route, their preference would be the potential route options presented at consultation (Route Options 1a and 2a). FLS is also strongly opposed to any route passing through the Caledonian Pine that lies to the south of Loch Garry. They emphasised that route options to the

south of the loch would have the potential to cause significant, unavoidable damage to ongoing restoration and habitat networks, which would be unlikely to be able to be effectively mitigated. This is a key consideration moving forwards, and at present, SSEN Transmission still considers the route options south of Loch Garry to not be environmentally, technically, or economically preferred. For this reason, Route Option 2b has not been considered as a preference.

7.2.6 When choosing between the eastern Route Option 2a and 2c to the north of Loch Garry, Route Option 2c faces additional engineering challenges, such as access, major crossing and proximity to wind farms, as well as additional constraints associated with landscape character. For this reason, Route Option 2a is to be taken forward as part of the proposed route. It is recognised however that this route option does have the potential to be constrained by the Skye Reinforcement Project and other infrastructure, elevation, communication masts and peatland.

7.2.7 For all the route options, in relation to cumulative impacts associated with the species of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA, a subsequent meeting via Microsoft Teams was held between the SSEN Transmission project team and NatureScot on 24th July 2025 to discuss collision risks and line markers. The selection of a route and subsequent alignment that minimises potential bird collision risk will be an integral consideration of the project moving forwards, and SSEN Transmission have committed to undertaking further collision risk assessments both to the north and to the south of Loch Garry.

7.2.8 Therefore, having considered all the feedback, SSEN Transmission has concluded that the proposed route option to be taken forward to the alignment selection stage should comprise **Route Option 1a** and **Route Option 2a**. The proposed route can be seen in **Figure 2**. This is with the stipulation that SSEN Transmission will undertake further collision risk assessments in the route options both to the north and to the south of Loch Garry as agreed with NatureScot.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

8.1 Conclusion

8.1.1 The proposed Fearna PSH scheme requires connection to the electricity transmission network. It is anticipated that this will be achieved via the construction and operation of a new 400 kV double circuit steel lattice OHL routed between the proposed scheme and the proposed Loch Lundie substation which lies to the northwest of Invergarry.

8.1.2 This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken for the project between May 2025 and September 2025. 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 in response to the route options identified for the proposed Loch Fearna PSH Connection, as set out in the Consultation Document (May 2025)[3].

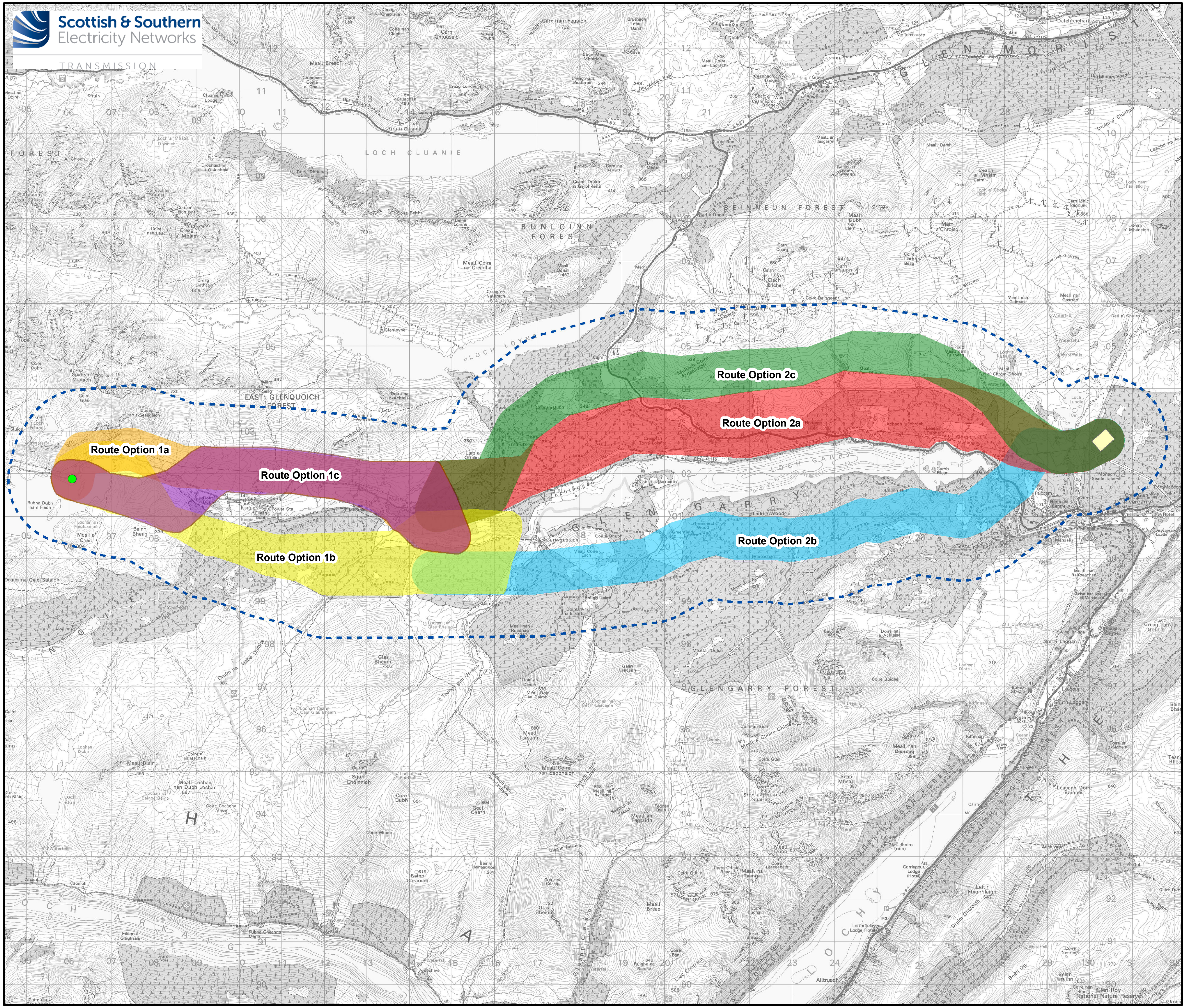
8.1.3 This report has described the key responses received and how this feedback has informed the identification of a proposed route to be taken forward to the alignment selection stage of the project. The consultation process has confirmed that **Route Option 1a** and **Route Option 2a** should be taken forward as the proposed route within which to identify and appraise alignment options.

8.1.4 Although this conclusion has been reached, SSEN Transmission has committed to undertake further collision risk assessments in the route options both to the north and to the south of Loch Garry as agreed in discussion with NatureScot. The results of this work will be discussed with NatureScot and, if required, a review of the route option stage conclusions will be undertaken.

8.2 Next Steps

8.2.1 The project will now progress into Stage 3 (Alignment Selection), commencing with the 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.

8.2.2 Formal consultation will be organised on completion of the alignment studies to enable comments to be sought on the preferred alignment identified. It is anticipated that this will occur in Spring 2026.



Legend

Corridor

Indicative Loch Fearna PSH Substation

Proposed Loch Lundie Substation

Western Route Options

Route Option 1a

Route Option 1b

Route Option 1c

Eastern Route Options

Route Option 2a

Route Option 2b

Route Option 2c

N

0 1 2 4 km

Scale - 1:85,000 @ A3

Project:	LT000506-507 - Fearna PSH Grid Connection: Report on Consultation (Route Stage)
Title:	Figure 1 - Route Options
Drawn by:	HL — Date: 30/07/2025
Drawing:	123020 -D1-RoC-1.0.0

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Legend

- Corridor
- Indicative Loch Fearna PSH Substation
- Proposed Loch Lundie Substation

Proposed Route Option

- Route Option 1a
- Route Option 2a

N

0 1 2 4 km

Scale - 1:85,000 @ A3

Project:	LT000506-507 - Fearna PSH Grid Connection: Report on Consultation (Route Stage)
Title:	Figure 2 - Proposed Route Option
Drawn by:	HL
Date:	30/07/2025
Drawing:	123020-D2-RoC-1.0.0