Kintore to Tealing 400kV Overhead Line

Report on Consultation

November 2023

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this Report on Consultation (RoC) is to document the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV Overhead Line (OHL) combined corridor and route selection consultation process, and where appropriate, show how the routes being taken forward to the next stage have been informed by this process.

This Report details the consultation undertaken, including details of consultation methods and advertising, those consulted and/or contributing to the process and it summarises the feedback received, including objections, concerns, and areas of support. This document confirms which corridor and route options are being progressed to the next stage of development and provides information on the next steps we will be implementing, leading to the next public consultation events.

1.2. Project Overview

Based on the requirements outlined in National Grid's Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (issued in the capacity of the Electricity System Operator "ESO"), we have developed proposals to reinforce the transmission system via a new 400kV OHL between Kintore and Tealing. This also requires two new 400kV substations to be constructed near Fiddes and Tealing to enable future connections and export routes to areas of demand; these are being progressed as three separate projects and were all presented together as part of the consultation process.

This RoC covers the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL. Please refer to the project specific webpages for RoCs regarding the proposed Tealing and Fiddes 400kV Substations.

- Fiddes 400kV Substation
- Tealing 400kV Substation

New SSEN Transmission projects between Kintore and Tealing

The proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL forms part of the East Coast 400kV Phase 2 project. The new 400kV OHL, approximately 106km in length, will connect the existing Kintore Substation with a proposed new 400kV substation near Fiddes, in Aberdeenshire, and continue south to connect to a proposed new 400kV substation at Tealing, in Angus.

The broad geographical area in which an OHL could be developed was split into two Sections and within each Section several corridor options were identified:

- Section 1 covers the southern part of the Study Area between Tealing and Fiddes.
  - Three corridor options were identified 1a; 1b; and 1c.

- Section 2 covers the northern part of the Study Area between Fiddes and Kintore.
  - Three corridor options were identified 2a; 2b; and 2c.

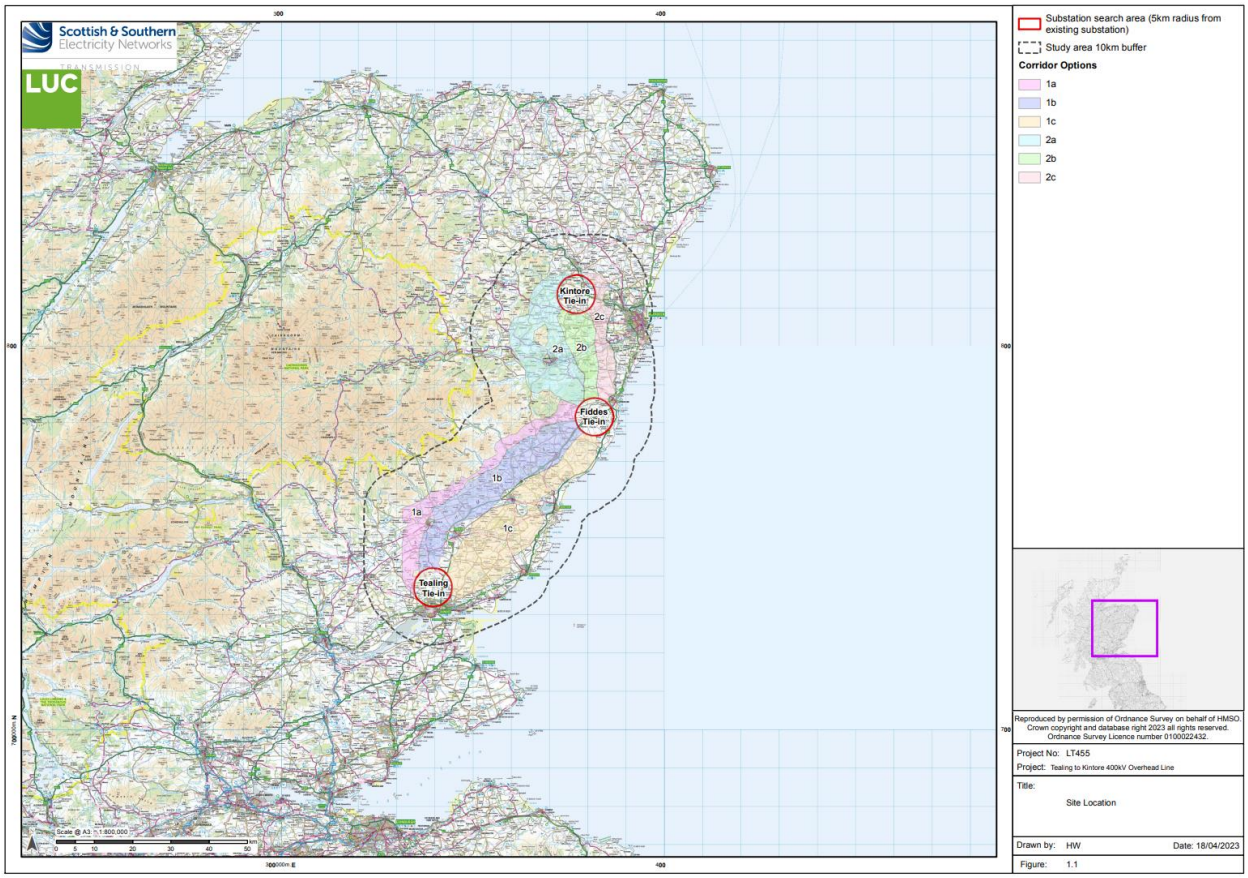


Figure 1.1: Corridor options for internal Corridor Selection appraisal

Within the Preferred Corridors 1b and 2b, the entire OHL route was divided into six geographical sections (identified in this Report as Sections A, B, C, D, E and F) to help manage the appraisal and reporting process as follows:

- Section A – Tealing to Forfar.
- Section B – Forfar to Brechin.
- Section C – Brechin to Laurencekirk.
- Section D – Laurencekirk to Fiddes.
- Section E – Fiddes to River Dee.
- Section F – River Dee to Kintore.

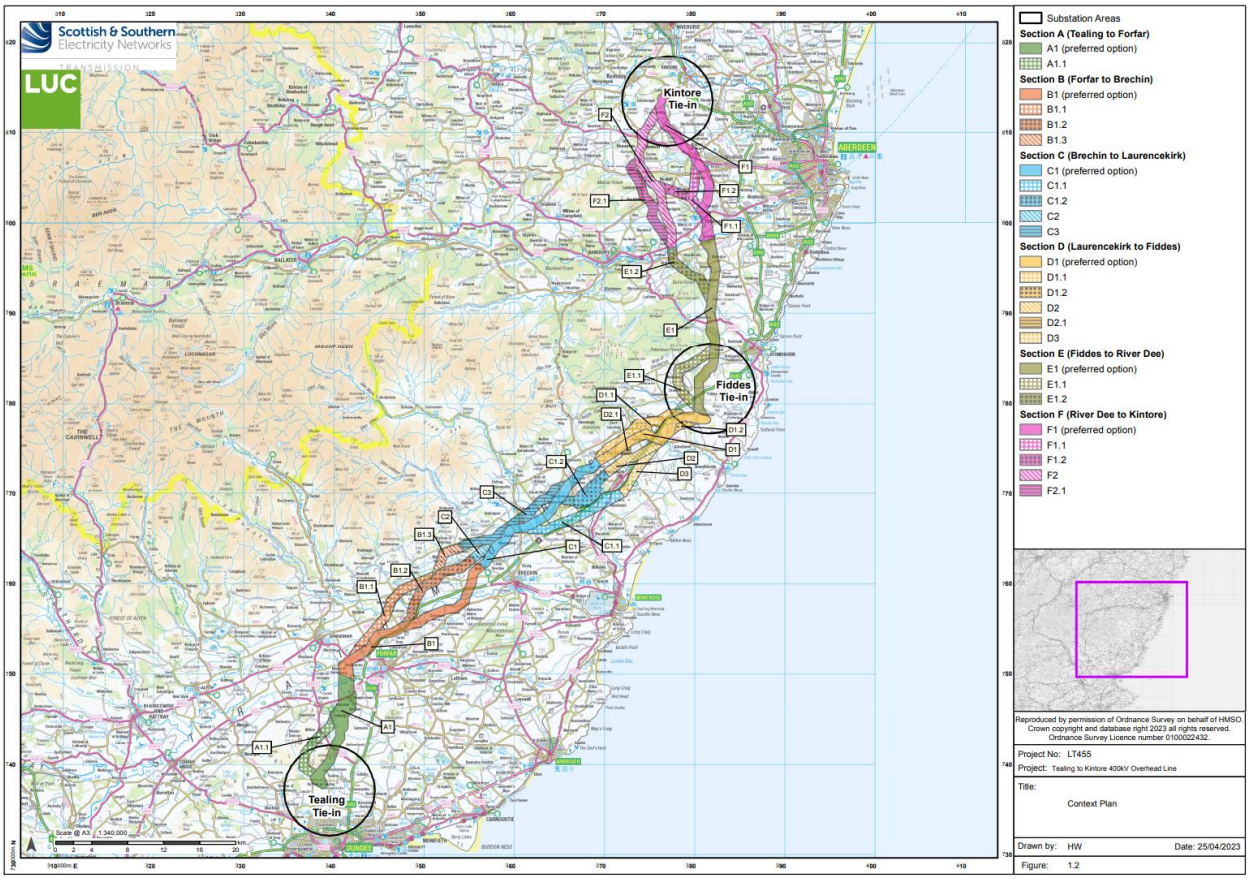
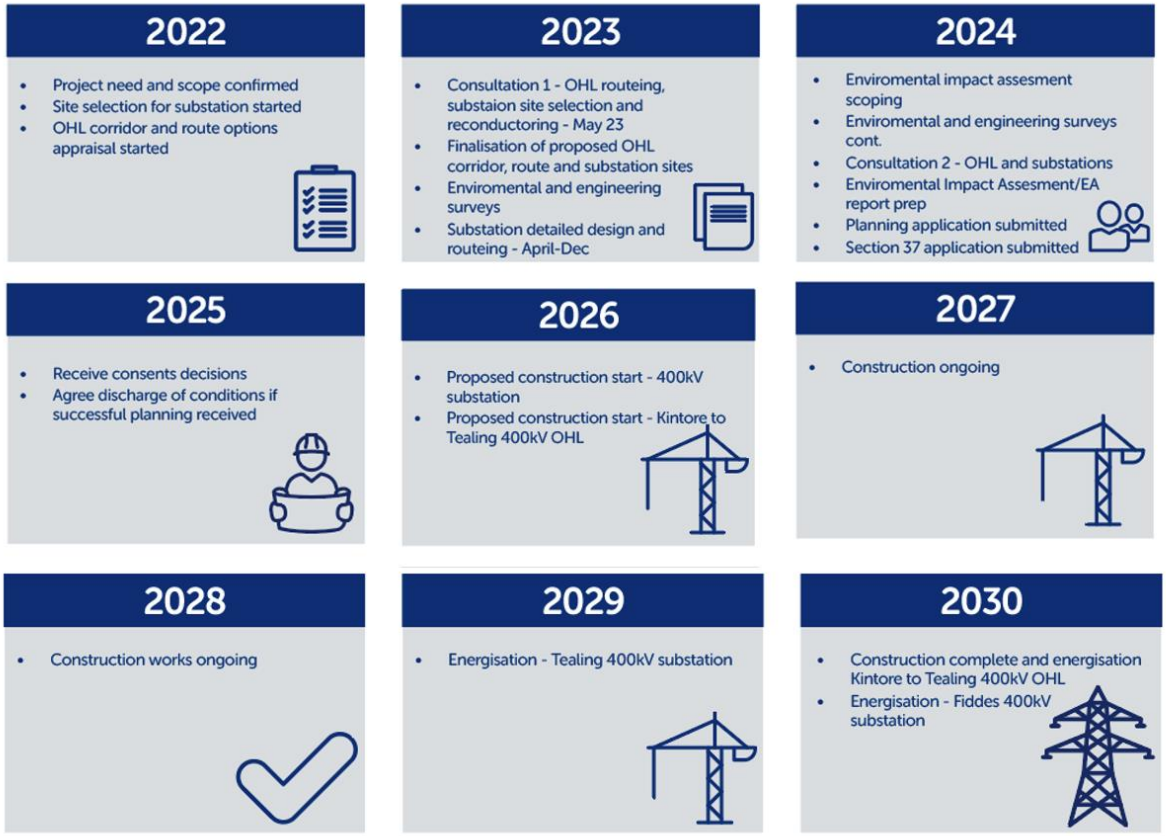


Figure 1.2: Route options considered for internal Route Selection appraisal

A copy of these figures are available to download from the project webpage.

1.3. Project Timeline



Find out more about our 2030 projects:www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects/

1.4. What we were consulting on

We understand the importance of involving communities and key stakeholders throughout each stage of our development process. Stakeholder feedback collected during consultations is critical to ensuring that our decision making is informed, and stakeholder concerns are taken into consideration at each stage of the project's development.

During this consultation, we presented options regarding our corridor and route selection for the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL. The consultation included information regarding environmental, technical, and cost considerations, the project development process, corridor options (Sections 1 and 2) and route options (Sections A-F), which were assessed as part of the detailed Route Selection Process.

The output of our internal Route Selection appraisal prior to the May 2023 Public Consultation identified the following as Preferred Corridor and Route Options:

Preferred Corridor (refer to Figure 1.1):

- Section 1, Corridor 1b.
- Section 2, Corridor 2b.

Preferred Routes (refer to Figure 1.2):

- Section A – Route A1.
- Section B – Route B1.
- Section C – Route C1.
- Section D – Route D1.
- Section E – Route E1.
- Section F – Route F1.

The Consultation Documents that provide the rationales for the Preferred Corridor and Route Options can be found here:

- Corridor Consultation Document.
- Route Consultation Document.

2. The Consultation Process

2.1. Who we consulted with

Our consultation process sought to capture the views of anyone who had an interest in our proposals, and we invited comments from all. During our engagements we aimed to ensure that we captured the views of:

- statutory consultees
- non-statutory consultees
- community members and local organisations; including local elected members
- landowners and occupiers

2.2. Consultation feedback period

The public consultation period was open from 2 May 2023 and was initially expected to end on the 9 June 2023, however it was extended to the 23 June 2023, and further to 28 July 2023 due to requests from stakeholders to allow more time to respond to the consultation.

Statutory consultees were invited to provide feedback on the Corridor and Route Consultation Documents (please see Consultation Document links provided in Section 1.3 above). Where possible, affected landowners were contacted ahead of the consultation period to discuss land related considerations or concerns.

2.3. The advertising process

The consultation events were advertised extensively using the following methods:

- The Angus County Press, The Courier and The Press and Journal.
- Our social media channels and the dedicated project webpage.
- Community Councillors and Local Elected Members were emailed in advance with information and a poster they could share within their local area.
- A postcard was sent to 11,276 homes and businesses within communities potentially impacted by our proposals.

Please see Appendix A for an example of the advertisement poster.

2.4. Stakeholder participation

A series of in-person consultation events were held between 2 May and 13 July 2023, where local stakeholders could meet with the project team to discuss the proposals in more detail.

Date	Event	Recorded attendance
2 May 2023	Kirkton of Skene – Milne Hall	67
3 May 2023	Ardoe – Ardoe House Hotel	40
4 May 2023	Laurencekirk – Dickson Hall	169
9 May 2023	Brechin – Brechin City Hall	133
10 May 2023	Kirriemuir – Westmuir Hall	54
11 May 2023	Tealing – Tealing Village Hall	75
13 July 2023	Forfar – Reid Hall	101

Attendance figures reflect the number of people who had registered attendance at a consultation event. For busier events, the number of attendees can often be considerably higher than recorded.

For members of the public who were unable to attend the face-to-face consultation events, a virtual consultation event was held on 17 May 2023.

The virtual consultation event was held via a virtual consultation room which provided information boards giving an overview of the project and the type of infrastructure proposed. During the virtual consultation event, a live chat function was available for members of the public to ask questions about the project.

The event was attended by 75 people and the exhibition within the virtual room has remained open and is available via the project website.

Stakeholder meetings

In the weeks before, during, and after the consultation events, various meetings were held with other key stakeholders such as landowners, statutory and non-statutory consultees, councillors, and community councils to discuss the project proposals.

Date	Meeting Type	Stakeholder group in attendance
19 April 2023	Pre-Consultation Microsoft Teams Meeting for Local Ward Councillors	Local Ward Councillors, 39 invited and 7 attended
25 April 2023	Pre-consultation Webinar for Community Councils	Local Community Councils, 27 invited and 2 attended
13 June 2023	Community Council requested in person public meeting.	Arbuthnott Community Council and community members.
14 June 2023	Community Council requested in person public meeting.	Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council and community members.
19 June 2023	Community Council requested in person meeting.	Royal Burgh of Forfar, Aberlemno and District and Kirriemuir Landward East Community Councils.
19 June 2023	Community Council requested in person public meeting.	Glamis and Area Community Council and community members
18 July 2023	Community Council requested in person public meeting.	Culter Community Council and community members.
20 September 2023	Call with Project Manager	Royal Burgh of Forfar Community Council

2.5. Feedback volume

Feedback from our stakeholders was welcomed via a range of methods. For the public consultation, only responses in the form of letters, emails, phone calls or the feedback form submitted by post or email, or online, before the feedback period end date, have been included in the analysis undertaken for this Report. Feedback received after the end date has been responded to and considered by the project team but has not formed part of the analysis presented in this Report.

Responses to public consultation

Respondents generally provided feedback on the wider scheme comprised of the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL, Tealing 400kV Substation and Fiddes 400kV Substation therefore the decision was made to present the feedback as one scheme.

Responses from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

A total of 43 statutory organisations were contacted by us and asked to provide feedback on the proposals. A total of 23 statutory organisations responded, with a summary discussed in Section 3.3 below and the full responses set out in Appendix B, Table 3.1.

A total of 34 non-statutory organisations were contacted by us and asked to provide feedback on the proposals. A total of 9 non-statutory organisations responded, with a summary discussed in Section 3.3 below and the full responses set out in Appendix B, Table 3.2.

Stakeholder representations

A number of other non-statutory organisations that were not directly approached by us have responded to the consultation through the public consultation channels. All their comments have been taken on board and were analysed for this RoC along with the public consultation responses. The list of consultees will be reviewed and updated for the next stage of the project.

3. Consultation Feedback and Our Response

3.1. Common Themes

Across all of our Pathway to 2030 project consultations, we received feedback covering a number of common themes. Although some of this feedback related to topics which fell outside of the scope of our consultations, we recognise that it is important to address the points that our stakeholders took the time to raise, which we have summarised in this section. In addition, we have also developed a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that can be viewed here.

Project Need

The need for these projects has been independently assessed by both the GB Electricity System Operator, National Grid ESO (ESO); and the GB energy regulator, Ofgem.

Some responses questioned whether these projects are needed at all. In many cases, those questioning the need have done so as the electricity these projects will connect and transport is not all needed in the north of Scotland.

Under our licence, we have a legal obligation to provide connections to electricity generators looking to connect to our network and we do not determine the location of new electricity generation. This is led by generators themselves, often underpinned by Government targets and policies.

These projects - which are part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission network across Great Britain - are needed to unlock the north of Scotland's vast renewable electricity resources and transport that power to demand centres across the UK.

The renewable electricity these projects will transport will play a key role in meeting UK and Scottish Government renewable energy and climate change targets. They will also help secure the country's future energy independence by reducing dependence on imported power from volatile wholesale energy markets.

For more details on why these projects are needed and how this need has been assessed, we have published a short briefing paper.

Technology Choice

Several respondents have questioned the technology choice, particularly why the infrastructure cannot all be installed subsea or underground, instead of overhead line steel lattice towers.

Due to the significant volume of power we need to connect and transport from generation source to areas of demand the ESO concluded that there is a need for both onshore and offshore network reinforcements.

The ESO's and Ofgem's independent assessment of need for this project and our wider Pathway to 2030 programme was also based on the technology choices we are progressing.

Underground cabling is highly sensitive to ground conditions and terrain. There can be significant and lasting environmental impacts and future land use constraints associated with undergrounding; together with the technical challenges of operating, maintaining and in the event of a fault, restoring power.

Cost is also an important consideration, with subsea and undergrounding significantly more expensive than overhead. As the cost of investing in the electricity transmission network is ultimately recovered by electricity bill payers across GB, cost is one of the key factors in the ESO's and Ofgem's assessment of need, and in Ofgem's future assessment of the costs we are allowed to recover for these projects.

Environmental impacts

We have received feedback highlighting concerns about potential environmental impacts, particularly on local biodiversity.

As one of the greatest risks to our natural environment and biodiversity is climate change, these projects are part of the solution if we are to tackle the climate emergency and deliver net zero emissions in Scotland and across the United Kingdom.

However, we do recognise that in delivering these critical projects, there will be unavoidable impacts and we would like to reassure stakeholders that we take our environmental responsibilities extremely seriously.

To deliver our projects in the most sensitive way possible we ensure environmental factors are considered at every stage in the development of each project, along with technical requirements and economic considerations. A key way we do this for the environment is to follow the mitigation hierarchy. Firstly, we seek to avoid sensitive areas wherever possible and where impacts are likely to occur we seek to minimise these, provide mitigation and identify opportunities to restore.

In addition, all of our consent applications will be accompanied by detailed environmental assessments which are prepared by external specialists. These assessments will consider impacts on a wide range of environmental topics (many of which have been highlighted in the stakeholder responses to this consultation) and identify measures that may be required to mitigate any impacts.

We also acknowledge that minimising impacts is not enough on its own, and we have therefore committed to delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on all our projects; as well as compensatory planting for any trees felled during the construction phase, where possible with native species. Where our projects are unable to completely avoid irreplaceable habitats (for example peatland or ancient woodland), we have also introduced a commitment to restore more habitat than we affect.

You can find out more about how we are delivering a positive environmental legacy by clicking here.

In the following section of this Report on Consultation, we will address any specific environmental feedback relevant to the options we consulted on.

Socio-Economic impact

Several community responses highlighted concerns about the impact on the local community, including visual and tourism impacts. We have also been asked what local benefits these projects will provide.

We acknowledge that there will inevitably be a visual impact on some local communities and are committed to do all that we can to minimise and mitigate this as part of the ongoing development of this project. The environmental assessment that will accompany our consent applications will also consider landscape and visual impacts.

From a tourism perspective, as part of our consent application, we intend to consider socio-economic and tourism impacts as part of the suite of documentation to be submitted to relevant consenting authorities. This will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to these issues in the consenting process.

These projects will also provide significant benefits to local and national economies. Independent socio-economic analysis undertaken on our Pathway to 2030 projects has estimated that they will collectively support around 20,000 jobs across the UK, around 9,000 of which are expected in Scotland, adding billions of economic value to the economy.

We also expect these projects to deliver significant local benefits, including direct and indirect job opportunities, alongside supply chain opportunities for local businesses. We will set out more details of these opportunities in due course, including 'Meet the Buyer' events to introduce local businesses to the opportunities presented through our main supply chain partners.

We are also committed to introducing community benefit funding, recognising the important role host communities will play in delivering the infrastructure required to meet our national endeavours to build a cleaner, more secure and affordable energy system for homes and businesses across Scotland and Great Britain in the long-term.

In the following section of this Report on Consultation, we will address any specific community feedback relevant to the options we consulted on.

Consultation process

We have received some feedback that our consultation process was not well promoted to affected communities or wider stakeholders and concerns around the timescale provided for feedback to be given.

As we set out in the 'Consultation Process' section of this Report on Consultation, we held a number of public consultation events, public meetings and bilateral and group engagements, using a range of methods to promote our consultations to our stakeholders.

Even at this early stage of development, where our consultation activities are voluntary, we fully recognise the importance of gathering stakeholder input to help inform our development plans. In response to stakeholder feedback, we introduced extensions to our consultation period to encourage anyone interested in these projects to provide their feedback. In addition, we would like to highlight that there will be further opportunity to comment on our proposals through the consenting process and would encourage all stakeholders to fully engage in that formal consultation exercise.

We fully recognise there is always room for improvement and as we look forward to the next round of public consultations, we are committed to apply learning from our first round of consultations to increase awareness, accessibility and coverage of consultation events. We will continue to welcome feedback on how we can further improve how we consult with our stakeholders on our projects.

3.2. Specific Project Related Feedback

Introduction

This section summarises the project specific feedback for the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL that has been identified through the combined corridor and route consultation and sets out our responses to the key points raised.

The feedback included in this section also refers to the Common Themes in 3.2 and to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document which is available via the link in Section 3.1.

The project specific feedback is set out in the tables that follow under the three themes:

- Community Impact – see Table 3.3.
- Environmental Impact – see Table 3.4.
- Economic Impact – see Table 3.5.

Feedback was also provided by some consultees (mostly the statutory consultees) on the individual corridor and route options, Table 3.6 sets out the key points raised.

The stakeholders have been grouped into the categories outlined in the table below:

Stakeholder Group	Examples
Statutory Consultees	Historic Environment Scotland (HES), SEPA, NatureScot, Local Authorities
Non-Statutory Consultees	RSPB, Scottish Water, Forestry and Land Scotland
Community members and local organisations	Homeowners, local businesses, Residents Associations, elected members
Landowners & occupiers	Landowners, crofters, tenant farmers, occupiers of properties in closest proximity to substations

Table 3.3 Community Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Landscape and Visual Many points were raised by statutory consultees, including the community councils, relating to the potential for adverse impacts of the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL on landscape character, landscape designations and views. Specific areas mentioned that would be affected included, as examples, the views from the Howe to the Garvock or Cairn/Strathfenella, Angus Hills, Dee Valley and the surrounding hills, the Howe of the Mearns and the Vale of Strathmore. NatureScot indicated that several designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) were identified as areas of sensitivity. Aberdeenshire Council identified the Braes of the Mearns and Dee Valley SLAs as a principal constraint and indicated that effects must be minimised to avoid infringing upon the integrity of the special qualities of these areas, particularly with relation to woodlands, valley sides, riverbank crossings and notable viewpoints from within these designations. Points were also raised by Aberdeenshire Council about how the project may impact upon the contrast between the Howe of the Mearns area and the Highland Boundary Fault in the Braes of the Mearns SLA.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	It is acknowledged that with new transmission infrastructure there will be a change to the landscape setting in the areas where the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL would be sited. As such, consideration of the landscape is undertaken at the outset of the routeing study process. Wherever possible the OHL route options have avoided designated landscape areas, such as the Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) identified in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. However, in route option Section E and F the project would unavoidably pass through the eastern edge of the Dee Valley SLA, where the OHL crosses the River Dee. It is not feasible to move the OHL further to the east to pass outside of the SLA due to the high number of properties constraining that option. In this location, within the SLA, further detailed consideration of landscape setting will be given to the alignment design, alongside other constraints. The legacy of the author Lewis Grassic Gibbon and the connection between his writing and the area is noted, along with the landscape designations mentioned above. The design of the project alignment will carefully consider key landscape setting elements to integrate the project into the overall landscape in such a way that its prominence will be minimised as far

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
The majority of responses from members of the public raised concerns relating to landscape and visual effects, there was a feeling that the area was becoming industrialised and would lose its rural character as it would be dominated by OHL towers. It was considered by many respondents that the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV Overhead Line would be an eyesore and a blight on one of Scotland's most beautiful, famous and productive landscapes with views and vistas impacted. Feedback raised by numerous local residents, was that the Scottish writer Lewis Grassic Gibbon1 based his novels on the Mearns countryside, and the Grassic Gibbon Centre is located in Arbuthnott celebrating his life, work and times. It is this countryside that residents consider would be impacted and could not be mitigated or compensated. Some public responses were of the view that overhead lines and towers would be visible from a large number of residents' homes and businesses in a number of villages. It was considered that as		as possible. This will be achieved through siting towers on lower areas of land, avoiding ridges and the tops of hills, using hills as back drops to reduce skylining where possible and avoiding felling woodland and trees, which provide some screening and will interrupt views of the project. The following ongoing work will be undertaken as the project develops: • Landscape and Visual specialists will be involved in the alignment design and will undertake appraisals, which aim to minimise and mitigate landscape and visual concerns. • Viewpoints for detailed photography will be agreed with the relevant Local Authorities, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland. • An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report will be issued to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit that will provide details on how we propose to complete the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as part of the EIA.

[1] Lewis Grassic Gibbon (pen name for James Leslie Mitchell) was a Scottish author who wrote books including Grey Granite, Stained Radiance: A Fictionist's Prelude and Sunset Song which was set in the Mearns and became his most popular novel which has been adapted for TV, radio, film, theatre, and music.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
the Mearns lies on fairly flat land all the towers would be skylined on the horizon and very visible. It was expressed by a large number of respondents that people moved to the area for a quiet, tranquil way of life with countryside views and that the presence of an overhead line would fundamentally alter people's way of life.		• Once the design is finalised an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will be written, this will include a specific chapter reporting on the LVIA which will also consider the potential for wider cumulative impacts when viewed against the backdrop of other existing and planned infrastructure in the area. • The EIAR will be submitted with the Section 37 application to the Energy Consents Unit and will be subject to a separate consultation process.
Roads and Access Community Councils (including for example Aberlemno and District Community Council and St Cyrus Community Council) raised a number of concerns relating to road traffic as well as access to farms and houses during construction which may be compromised by the project. Specific concerns related to the use of large vehicles on narrow single-track roads which would cause further degradation due to the presence of existing potholes. Points were raised by Transport Scotland relating to road networks, indicating that the assessment of the proposed delivery routes for the construction of the project needs to include the suitability of trunk road junctions as well as the local roads. Further assessments were suggested ie an Abnormal Loads Assessment report that identifies key pinch points on the trunk road network and a swept path analysis. Changes to the trunk road network would need to be discussed and approved by	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	It is acknowledged there will be some impacts from road traffic movements during the construction and operation of new developments and as a responsible developer we will do all we can to minimise and mitigate traffic impacts which will be assessed as part of the EIA process. Access to OHL tower locations for construction and maintenance will seek to utilise existing roads and access tracks (upgrading where required) as far as practicable to reduce the need for new accesses and the disruption that may cause. For projects of this scale, we intend to produce a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). This will require approval from Transport Scotland and Local Authorities. We will undertake specific liaison with Transport Scotland and Local Authority Roads Departments as the project develops to agree measures for public road

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Transport Scotland, such as road widening, installations of new junctions or bridge reinforcements. Transport Scotland also commented that the crossing of a trunk road by the overhead line would need further discussion. A number of points were made by the public relating to construction and access concerns including seeking reassurance that roads would not be closed off, access to properties restricted or roads and footpaths damaged during construction.		improvements, temporary traffic management and other mitigation that may be required. A range of measures can be undertaken to reduce traffic impacts. In local communities these can include avoiding deliveries at peak travel times for local commuting; route planning to avoid schools, shopping areas, community hubs; and implementing public road improvement works (eg widen roads, strengthen bridges, repair road surfaces). We would apply for road closures only as needed and through our community liaison team, we will monitor any traffic concerns from local communities and act to resolve them.
Construction Impacts A number of statutory and non-statutory consultees, St Cyrus Community Council as an example, indicated that their main concerns were in relation to the impacts on the environment and in particular road traffic during the construction of the project. Details were requested regarding the hours in which construction work / traffic would operate as there were concerns about the noise and disturbance to residents as well as increased levels of stress, dust and pollution.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	For projects of this scale, we will prepare a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to construction commencing. Implementation of the CEMP will ensure that best practice measures are employed during construction to control noise, dust and prevent pollution. The plan will include strict requirements to safeguard and monitor relevant private water supplies and protect the water environment and wildlife. Within the EIAR, working hours for construction will be proposed. Whilst these have not been discussed in detail at this early stage of the project, working hours would normally be attached as a condition of the deemed planning permission that would accompany

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Further points raised by some community councils related to the potential for disruption and pollution of private water supplies during construction work, and biosecurity issues specifically concerning the spread of eelworms and Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) which can be caused by the movement of people and vehicles. Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council noted that the use of local businesses that operate within the area for this project would be beneficial. The National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) also raised concerns relating to contractor working practices related to biosecurity issues, particularly with regards to PCN spread, noting that previous projects carried out by SSEN has seen contractors breach their own protocols relating to prevention of spread. Construction impacts were a significant concern with many public consultee responses raising points relating to the severe disruption and delays that the construction works would bring to the area for many years. Additionally, points were raised concerning the levels of dust and pollution which would need careful management and monitoring during construction. Concerns were also raised relating to the appointment and		a Section 37 consent with any changes requiring Local Authority approval. The concern of community safety and security is noted. All staff employed on the project will carry identification and staff will park in designated areas. Safety is a priority, and our Community Liaison Team will work with local communities and our contractors to monitor and act on safety concerns. Concerns regarding local businesses and biosecurity are set out in Table 3.5 Economic Impact.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
management of contractors on site during construction. Construction contractors have a poor reputation with some local residents in the area based on previous experience. Of specific note were concerns about biosecurity, security and safety issues.		
Noise Numerous comments raised by members of the public related to sound, noise and vibration particularly around construction work sites and noise levels relating to an increase in traffic, particularly HGVs. A number of members of the public raised the issue of noise, and the fact that the operation of an OHL can generate noise in certain damp or wet weather conditions. It was felt that a crackling noise can be experienced from an OHL, and for those people living close by the noise can be very wearing and can have serious detrimental effects on people's mental health and well-being. In addition, members of the public felt that while the operational noise from an OHL is typically at frequencies inaudible to humans, it can still affect wildlife and livestock in the area. Noise pollution may disrupt animal communication, breeding patterns, and overall animal well-being.	Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	Noise mitigation is a primary consideration within the OHL development process and noise surveys will be carried out with a noise impact assessment completed and reported in the EIAR. This will consider the existing noise levels, potential noise impacts from the proposed new infrastructure (for its construction and operation); cumulative noise impacts and consideration of any mitigation required to ensure noise is within acceptable levels. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report will be issued to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit that will provide details on what we propose to include in the environmental assessment in relation to noise impacts.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Open Space, Recreation and Rights of Way Consultees indicated there is a large number of areas of open space that the route options cross and felt that fragmentation would be difficult to avoid. Key open spaces for example include Elrick Hill, Brimmond Hill and Kirkhill Forest. Outdoor access, including Rights of Way, Core Paths and National Cycle Networks (NCN) routes should be considered at the next stage of the project. Concerns relating to amenity revolve around potential impacts to open spaces, including designated sites such as the River South Esk, responses cited concerns that the project would damage habitats and the tranquillity of areas. A number or residents raised points relating to impacts on recreation and wellness and that they considered the project would impact people's enjoyment of the countryside in the area and that footpaths and trails would be affected by either being cut off, rerouted, damaged or no longer enjoyable to use. It was noted by a number of residents that overhead lines would display notices warning people to keep away because of danger	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	The routeing study process considered Core Paths, National Cycle Networks and Rights of Way as well as areas of open space by avoiding these features wherever possible. They will continue to be taken into account in the development of the proposed project alignment and the potential for impacts on recreational users will be assessed as part of the EIA. The linear nature of these features and of the project mean that it can be difficult to fully avoid crossing these recreation assets. Where the OHL does require to cross Core Paths, National Cycle Networks and other recreational areas, consideration will be given to project siting (eg sensitive siting of towers, avoid or reduce tree felling) such that, as far as possible, the amenity value at the crossing location will not be significantly affected. During construction, an Access Plan is implemented to protect public footpaths and diversions are provided, where necessary, to ensure footpaths remain open for safe use wherever possible. In addition, the project will be constructed to ensure safe clearances meaning people can continue to safely access footpaths that are over sailed by any OHLs.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
of death which would deter people from walking / running / hiking and enjoying the countryside in the area of the project. It was also noted by some respondents that woodland and forests across the area provide camping facilities that would also be affected in terms of their character and the peace and tranquillity offered. Some specific improvement projects were suggested including improving walks and trails in the area and visitor facilities.		
Health and Safety Points were raised by a number of community councils, including for example Feughside and Mearns Community Councils, regarding health and welfare related to noise and vibration, with the view that the project would impact the health, wellbeing and quality of life of people living nearby. There was a view from Aberlemno and District Community Council that dust, pollution and stress could trigger diseases such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Glamis and Area Community Council stated that no information related to assessment of health concerns had been provided. A large number of members of the public raised health concerns, including relating to levels of stress and anxiety caused by the project so far. The concern stems from the view that the	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	An EIA Scoping Report will be issued to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit that will provide details on what we propose to include in the environmental assessment. The EIAR will consider noise and vibration as part of the assessment to ensure that they are within acceptable limits, and as part of standard best practice, measures to control the management of dust are also applied. The OHL is designed for at least an 80-year operational lifespan. In addition, the standard tower design can withstand the extreme weather conditions faced in the north of Scotland. In areas known for frequent extreme weather conditions in remote and/or high-altitude locations, bespoke designs can be developed to increase the

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
overhead line and the associated towers would harm the health and mental wellbeing of people living and working near them. Comments were made by consultees relating to the perceived lack of research on the dangers of electromagnetic fields (EMI/EMF) on physical health including cancer risk, autism, general wellness and the impact on mental health, stress and anxiety. Other comments related to the need for more information on how the project would assess the potential health risks including on mental health. Some of these concerns extended to animal and wildlife health also. A number of comments were also raised about the consideration of the safety and reliability of OHL given climate change, extreme weather conditions and the expected greater frequency of storms. Issues related to the risk of OHL and pylons (towers) being damaged in storms and coming down close to those living and working around them, but also the risk to residents, businesses and livestock from extended power outages.		resilience of the OHL. The clearances during extreme weather conditions including heavy ice and wind is modelled during the design stage to identify any potential issues. This can lead to towers increasing in size or changing locations if infringements cannot be designed out. For steel lattice towers, a fault is unlikely to occur due to extreme weather conditions as the tower size, layout and orientation is designed to prevent such faults occurring. In addition, for steel lattice towers, we maintain a clear corridor in woodland areas to prevent trees falling on the line during extreme weather. Finally, if a fault does occur on an OHL, we are usually able to rectify the fault quickly as the fault can be more easily identified, accessed, and fixed. Please also refer to the Common Themes discussed in Section 3.2 and the FAQs for further information on public health concerns.
Community Viability It was noted by a large number of public consultees and respondents that there are many houses located within the route options which the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL project could affect. There was a view that all residential properties,	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees	As part of our routeing process, we aim to maintain as much distance as possible between OHLs and residential properties. Please refer to Common Themes regarding Socio-Economic impacts.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
education, health and care facilities should be avoided by the project and large separation distances applied. Many local residents and businesses felt the area would be less rural and less attractive to future families, businesses and visitors which may ultimately affect the viability of the area as residents move away and demand for services and facilities reduces. Numerous points were raised indicating that no-one wants to live in, work in or visit an area with 400kV overhead lines.	Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	We have recently announced a Community Benefit Fund2. This fund is the first of its kind for a transmission operator in Scotland and will provide a direct opportunity for us to work with local communities that will be affected by the project on a variety of local initiatives. These will be community led and will directly support communities across the North of Scotland.
Cumulative Impacts Some points from consultees related to cumulative impacts, particularly around the presence of existing overhead line and transmission towers, other projects and other components of this project particularly in relation to landscape and visual, and ecology impacts.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees	Cumulative impacts are assessed in the EIA and reported within the specialist chapters in the EIAR, taking account of other relevant existing and planned infrastructure in the area. Landscape and visual, noise, historic and natural heritage issues are primary considerations of the project and detailed impact assessments will be completed through the EIA process. These will consider the existing environment (including existing other projects

[2] Information on our Community Benefit Fund: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/information-centre/Community-Benefit-Fund/.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
A number of points made by Angus Council related to the potential for cumulative impacts upon residential receptors, particularly in relation to landscape and visual impacts as well as noise levels, as a result of the project when combined with other similar developments within the area.	Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	on the ground), potential impacts from the project and cumulative impacts when considered along with other potential future projects including the substations at Hurlie and Tealing.
Mitigation It has been noted that mitigation to screen the project through the use of planting of hedgerows, trees and woodlands would enhance the landscape character and biodiversity of the area. Further meetings have been requested with SSEN Transmission by the statutory consultees to discuss matters such as road safety, landscape and visual impacts, sensory amenity matters and public access.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community, organisations & officials Landowners and occupiers	In the first instance we will seek to avoid impacts in the design of the project and the way it will be constructed. Where this is not possible, mitigation will then be applied to the project through the EIA and design process. Specific mitigation measures will be discussed and agreed with statutory consultees along with further general mitigation measures, these will be provided in a Schedule of Mitigation in the EIAR. In addition to mitigation, we will also deliver our commitments to Compensatory Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement and suggestions made by consultees will be considered by the project team and incorporated into the design where practical. Section 3.2 on Common Themes – Environmental Impact, discusses this and includes a reference to a leaflet for further information.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Electromagnetic Interference (emergency services, communication masts, phone signals and broadband) Arbuthnott Community Council stated concerns around interference with signals, such as phone signals, emergency signal and air ambulances, in an area that has had previous connectivity difficulties. Additionally, Mearns Community Council raised concerns that electromagnetic fields and noise generated by the overhead line may impact upon wildlife in the area. Concerns were raised by the Radio Protection Network related to the potential for the project to specifically interfere with BT's current and future radio network. In addition, a number of comments were made about electromagnetic interference and possible effects on telephone and internet signals in the area. Concern was specifically raised about interference with the communication equipment of farmers and emergency response vehicles (including on Global Positioning Systems (GPS)).	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	We will engage with the mast operators once the towers positions are defined to carry out relevant assessments. This may result in tower repositioning as it is the towers that can cause interference rather than the conductors. Our experience is that mitigation to avoid interference will be achievable. Regarding queries on whether farm technology, and specifically GPS equipment would be affected by OHLs, we have not received complaints to this effect for its existing network and understands it is not an issue for current farm operations that occur under and adjacent to our infrastructure.

Table 3.4 Environmental Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Forestry and Woodland Numerous concerns were raised during the consultation process relating to the quantity of forestry and woodland that may have to be removed for the project. Points related to forestry and woodland were raised by statutory consultees including the community councils, with comments made relating to the need to minimise woodland loss where possible and for compensatory planting (CP) to be provided where woodland removal is required. Scottish Forestry advises that the area of CP should exceed the area of woodland removed. Concerns were raised by a large number of the public consultation respondents about the loss of forestry, woodland, trees, hillside habitat and hedgerows in the project area. Numerous points were made that these features provide connections for wildlife across the region (such as red squirrel) and are also considered to significantly add to the area's rural and tranquil character and nature. It was considered that the loss of forests, woodland and trees would cause a loss of habitat and reduce the amenity value of the area.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	Forestry and woodland were considered in the routeing process that was undertaken, and woodlands were also factored into the analysis of other environmental constraints (including the landscape and visual analysis, and natural heritage). Ancient woodland is discussed under Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites below. It is acknowledged that forestry and woodland is an important contributor to the area's uniqueness, and that national and local planning policy sets out a presumption against tree removal. However, the development of linear infrastructure projects such as the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL usually requires some tree and woodland removal during construction to create clear corridors for the OHL and its future maintenance in areas where woodlands cannot be avoided. As noted in Table 3.3 Community Impact - Landscape and Visual, areas of forestry, trees and woodland will help to screen the project from views and help integrate it into the landscape. Therefore, we will aim to avoid tree removal where possible and where it cannot be avoided, we will endeavour to keep any tree or woodland removal to an absolute minimum.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Respondents provided a range of information on specific local woodlands that could be affected by the project, such as the wood at Elfhill Den which contains bluebell, woodland between Balglassie and Balbinn which have red squirrel, Bervie Woods and Lady Jane's Plantation near Fettercairn. A number of areas of ancient woodland were also identified by respondents with details on the number of ancient woodland inventory species identified by the North-East Biological Records Centre (141 different varieties). It was noted that a number of forests and woodlands are used for camping and recreation by locals, visitors and tourists. The loss of, or damage or disruption to these was considered by respondents to have a detrimental impact on tourism and local businesses in the area. A few respondents raised concerns about the future protection of established forests and woodlands and that cutting through these areas for the project would cause further damage to the remaining trees when they were exposed to the next storm.		Forestry and woodland impacts will be assessed in detail in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and factored into a number of the other specialised studies in the EIA (eg the landscape and visual impact assessments, and the noise and vibration, and natural and cultural heritage assessments). In addition to avoiding and minimising tree removal, we will mitigate for any tree loss with Compensatory Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement measures which will be agreed with the statutory consultees at key stages in the consenting and construction process (see Section 3.2 above Common Themes – Environmental Impact).

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
It was noted by a small number of respondents that more mixed woodland, in Aberdeenshire in particular, is needed to replace the large plantation planting and pine trees which are considered devoid of wildlife in comparison to mixed woodland. More tree planting of native trees is very much encouraged, and it was hoped that the project could contribute to the area in this way. Some specific improvement projects were suggested including woodland repairs at Drum Castle and general increasing native mixed woodland and Caledonian forest across the area following damage caused by Storm Arwen a few years ago.		
Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites A number of points were raised by NatureScot, Aberdeen City Council and some of the community councils relating to habitats, wildlife, ornithology and protected species. Disruption and disturbance to birds was noted as a concern by some respondents, with several community councils specifically concerned about the removal of habitat for ground nesting birds. It was also noted that many bird populations, including red kites, greylag geese, pink-footed geese, goosander and goldeneye traverse north-south as well as east-west and may be impacted by the construction of the project. Members of the public raised a number of comments about bird species in the area that would	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	Wildlife and natural heritage aspects have been a key component of the route options study process undertaken to date, and the large number and variety of natural heritage designations is noted, from international sites to local wildlife sites, and including areas of woodland identified on the ancient woodland inventory for Scotland. Wherever possible the OHL route options have avoided designated sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and ensured that buffers and clearance areas are left between designated sites and the project to help avoid wildlife disturbance during construction. The OHL alignment and the required access tracks to the OHL towers will be designed to avoid and reduce impacts on

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
require surveys to be undertaken such as golden eagles, red kite, osprey, grouse, owls and pink footed geese and swans. Some of these are migrating species which are only present in the area at certain times of the year. Other species noted included lapwing, curlew, oystercatcher and partridge populations and large numbers of small garden and woodland birds residing in the wooded and agricultural areas.		habitats and species as far as possible and mitigation measures will be identified including through the provision of compensatory habitat and, later, through proposals for biodiversity enhancement. In areas where bird species such as geese are sensitive to collision with the OHL conductors, mitigation such as the design of bird diverters to be attached to the conductors to help reduce the risk of collision by key bird species.
A number of points were raised by NatureScot regarding the presence of statutory and non-statutory ecological designations within the route options. Specific sites that were noted included the River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC); the River South Esk SAC; Loch of Kinnordy Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site; Loch of Lintrathen SSSI/SPA/Ramsar site; Montrose Basin SSSI/SPA/Ramsar site; the River North Esk and West Water Palaeochannels SSSI; Fowlsheugh SPA; the River Dee SAC; the Loch of Park SSSI; and the Loch of Skene SSSI/SPA/Ramsar site. A large number of comments from members of the public also related to designated sites for biodiversity (such as SACs, SPAs, Ramsar, SSSI and local wildlife sites), wildlife, habitats, ornithology and protected species.		The consultation process has provided a wealth of detailed national, regional and local information which will be considered by the project team at the next stage. This will be used to help focus survey work and to provide a context for the ecological assessment of the proposals. We will continue to liaise with statutory consultees through the next stage of the project which will involve ecologists considering the scope of the EIA in terms of ecological and ornithological (bird) surveys and assessments, and in terms of any Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) which may be required where the proposals could affect the interests of the most important sites designated as SACs or SPA.
NatureScot also noted the need to consider the connectivity distance for foraging geese associated with some of the		We note the legislative requirements regarding protected ecological and ornithological sites. It is also recognised that national and local

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
SPA/Ramsar sites listed above which can have a foraging distance of 10-15km from the designated sites. A number of other points were raised in relation to habitats and protected wildlife, and the need for measures to be in place to avoid harm or disturbance to them, particularly in relation to pollution and biosecurity risks. Aberdeenshire Council mentioned the potential to connect fragmented areas of habitat through mitigation or improvement measures. Several points made by the RSPB Scotland related to ornithology, protected species and wildlife in general. Concerns relating to birds related to the potential high collision risk with proposed overhead lines, specifically where the proposals would be in proximity to the Loch of Skene SPA & Ramsar site. It was also noted that the woodland to the north of Eslie Moss SSSI support large populations of red kite. Additionally, concerns related to the potential impact on the designated wildfowl and wader species of the Montrose Basin SPA/SSSI/Ramsar, particularly for migratory species, including pink-footed geese and greylag		government planning policy has a number of policy objectives related to avoiding and minimising impacts on protected sites and species. The following work, which has already progressed, will be undertaken as the project develops: • Fieldwork will be undertaken by ecologists and ornithologists to survey key habitats and species along the preferred OHL route and provide a baseline understanding of the area's ecological importance. • Ecological specialists will be involved in the OHL alignment design and will undertake appraisals, which aim to avoid and mitigate ecological impacts on protected sites and species. • A request for a Scoping Opinion will be issued to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit to identify the scope of impacts to be addressed and the method of assessment to be applied in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). • Once the design is finalised an EIAR will be written, this will include specific chapters reporting on the predicted ecological and ornithological impacts of the proposals including the potential for wider cumulative impact when viewed against the backdrop of other existing and planned infrastructure in the area. • There may be the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
geese. RSPB Scotland also noted the presence of the River Tay SAC and the River South Esk SAC which require protection. Survey suggestions from the RSPB Scotland indicated the need for extensive bird surveys (vantage point, breeding bird and wintering bird) to inform the assessment of the risk to birds and to provide up-to-date information on bird activity and distribution. RSPB Scotland also suggested that an in-combination impact assessment should account for overhead lines (including those to be decommissioned) with operational and in-planning wind farms and other projects. Comments from the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) relating to the River Dee included a concern that the project would impact upon the river's floodplain and riparian habitats (specifically the riparian woodland) which could have subsequent effects upon the salmon populations. Other specific concerns related to impacts on protected species such as red squirrel, badgers and bats, and other species such as toads, hare, invertebrates plus flora such as areas of native species like bluebell.		2017) where there is a predicted likely significant effect on qualifying interests in an SAC or SPA. This requirement will be understood following the completion of the ecological and ornithological impact assessments, as part of the EIAR. • The EIAR along with an Appropriate Assessment, should this be required, would be submitted with the Section 37 application to the Energy Consents Unit. In addition to avoiding and minimising ecological impacts, we will mitigate any further adverse ecological and ornithological effects with Compensatory Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement measures (see Section 3.3 Common Themes – Environmental Impact). Species Protection Plans (SPPs) will be agreed with NatureScot for all key protected species which have the potential to be adversely affected by the proposals.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Some specific local points were raised by respondents also, such as that the proposed route runs through a wildlife reserve at Culter Burn between the Orr Dam and Anguston or Loch Skene wildlife. It was also noted that some species thrive in local specialised habitat such as wetland or bog that cannot easily be replaced elsewhere if lost or disturbed by the project. A particular note which was raised by a few respondents was in relation to poor biosecurity measures during construction which could also have a detrimental impact on wildlife and habitats. Some respondents commented that the project could contribute to biodiversity improvements in the area in a number of ways such as: mixed woodland planting, rewilding areas with native-wildflower projects, creating wetlands, tree planting, hedge planting, and providing bat and bird boxes.		
Cultural Heritage Points were raised by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Aberdeen City Council in relation to the presence of cultural heritage designations or assets within the proposed route options, particularly around the number of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments or Garden and Designed Landscapes	Statutory Consultees Community members and local organisations	**From extensive work completed already, we are aware of the large number and variety of cultural heritage designations or assets within the proposed route options. This includes a number of nationally important cultural heritage designations such as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments or Garden and Designed Landscapes (GDLs). The route option assessment undertaken to date has considered these key constraints and avoided major sites where possible. The consultation process has provided a wealth of**

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
(GDL). HES provided information on the presence of key sites of national importance in each of the route sections. The setting of specific buildings, such as the listed Nether Anguston Farmhouse, were identified as having the potential to be impacted by the project and were raised by Aberdeen City Council. HES stated that the Park House GDL forms a significant constraint in the northern part of the route. Concerns relating to the impact of the project on cultural heritage and social history were mentioned in several points made by community councils including for example Glamis and Area Community Council and Arbuthnott Community Council. Areas and cultural heritage sites specifically mentioned included Glamis Castle, the Vale of Strathmore, the Howe of Mearns, the Mitchell Literary Estate, the Grassic Gibbon Centre and his childhood home and the surrounding landscape, as well as Pictish heritage and standing stones. The National Trust for Scotland raised concerns about the impact of the project on the setting of Drum Castle, including its GDL and the Old Wood of Drum which surrounds part of the estate. They also noted the proximity of the project to Crathes Castle	Landowners and occupiers	**detailed national, regional and local information which will be included by the project team at the next stage as the OHL alignment is designed so that areas of cultural heritage (including for some sites their locality or 'setting') are avoided as far as possible in the design process.** We will continue to liaise with statutory and non-statutory consultees (including HES and the local planning authorities) through the next stage of the project which will involve cultural heritage specialists considering the scope of the EIA in terms of further cultural heritage surveys and assessments of the potential impacts of the OHL proposals on cultural heritage. We note the legislative requirements regarding protected cultural heritage sites. It is also recognised that national and local government planning policy has a number of policy objectives related to avoiding and minimising impacts on cultural heritage assets. The assessment on cultural heritage will be closely aligned with the landscape and visual assessment (which is discussed in Table 3.3 Community Impact) in terms of character, setting, and reflecting the integrated landscape and cultural heritage importance of GDL

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
and its GDL which is located to the west of the route options considered in Section F of the route. Numerous comments were raised by the public relating to cultural heritage points of interest in the area including areas relating to historical, educational and literary interest particularly in relation to the childhood home of Lewis Grassic Gibbon**Error! Bookmark not defined.**, and the adverse visual impacts that it was considered the project would have on it. Points were raised that indicated that the Mearns countryside is considered an area of exceptional beauty and a deep-rooted part of the culture and history in the North East of Scotland. Numerous references were made by members of the public that once the area was impacted by the project the history and connection to the past would be lost forever. Some respondents also provided details of ancient settlements and historical artefacts within the area that should be protected such as the iron age monuments of the Brown and White Caterthun hilltop enclosures, Pictish stones, burial mounds identified within the stretches of land in and around Aberlemno, as well as other sites such as Battledykes Roman Camp,		designations. The teams involved in these assessments, and others such as the ecology specialists, will work together to understand the overall effect on the various environmental aspects including in-combination effects, and mitigation measures will be developed by the project's specialists wherever possible.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Battledykes and Arniefoul cairns, Finavon Fort and historic properties such as Finavon Castle. A number of points were raised relating to the archaeological significance of the area and requesting that archaeological assessments should be undertaken.		
Flooding and Water Resources Flooding was an area of concern raised in several points by statutory consultees (including SEPA) as well as by community councils. Within the project corridor a number of wide flood extents have been identified associated with several watercourses, namely the River Dee south of Peterculter, the River North Esk and the tributaries located north of Edzell, Dean water and its tributaries as well as the River South Esk and Leuchar Burn. SEPA requested that development, landraising or temporary construction compounds should be avoided on areas that are at risk of flooding, of particular note are those associated with the River North Esk and the River Dee.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations	The OHL route options have avoided areas at risk of flooding where possible however it is acknowledged that in some areas the OHL may need to cross short sections of land prone to flooding. In discussion with SEPA any requirement for flood risk assessments will be progressed, considering future climate change predictions. Design development will need to consider that the risk of flooding isn't increased on project land or elsewhere. The consultation process has provided detailed flooding and water resources information including Private Water Supplies, water pipelines and assets and Drinking Water Protection Areas which will all be taken into consideration by the project team at the next stage as the alignment and access tracks are designed. We note the legislative requirements regarding flood risk and water resources. It is also recognised that national and local government

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Several other points were raised relating to hydrology, geology and hydrogeology concerns, particularly as all route options cross a number of watercourses. Other comments raised by SEPA included information on the presence of Private Water Supplies (PWS) within the route options and the potential for risk of greater levels of run-off rates compared to existing levels. A number of PWS were specifically identified as requiring further investigation with particularly high concentrations noted in the Howe of Mearns area. Aberdeenshire Council commented that the information provided was not clear as to whether private water supplies had been considered in the determination of the project to date, these should be avoided or suitable mitigation should be provided. SEPA identified two Drinking Water Protection Areas (DWPAs) which are at risk of being impacted by the project: the River Dee (Inchgarth) and the River Tay DWPAs. Water quality and quantity within DWPAs should be protected. There are also a number of assets related to water provision such as access roads and pipe crossings which need to be identified.		planning policy has a number of policy objectives related to avoiding and minimising impacts on the water environment. We will ensure that we continue to liaise with consultees (notably SEPA, the local authorities and Scottish Water) throughout the whole of the EIA process. The project's specialist hydrogeology team will work with our project team, alignment design contractors and environmental specialists to develop suitable mitigation. The hydrological regime in any area is influenced by the ground conditions, topography and climatic factors which will be factored into the assessment of hydrology and hydrogeology. The prevalence of PWS in some sections of the route is noted and the potential impacts of the project on these will be assessed in the EIA work, and where mitigation measures are required to maintain water supplies these will be committed in the EIAR and delivered during construction in liaison with relevant affected property owners. The EIA will consider the operation and construction processes and through the design and construction planning stages we will aim to avoid and minimise impacts on water recourses including from for

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
SEPA raised points about the requirement for method statements which should address risks as a result of construction, including for habitats and species arising from biosecurity issues and pollution. Temporary construction works should be carefully considered since these may impact on riparian habitats and riverbanks. Several points were made by Scottish Water in relation to water pipelines/supplies, stating that the project falls under two drinking water catchments where Scottish Water abstraction is located (designated as DWPA). Scottish Water also stated that there are multiple Scottish Water assets within the project area. A number of members of the public identified areas that were prone to flooding and ground conditions that warranted surveys and investigation including areas of wetland, bog and peat.		example run-off, siltation and disturbance to rivers and drainage channels or groundwaters and water supplies. As noted in Table 3.3 we will prepare a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to construction commencing. The CEMP will ensure that best practice measures are employed during construction to prevent pollution. The plan will include strict requirements to safeguard and monitor private water supplies and protect the water environment and wildlife. In addition to avoiding and minimising flood risk and water resource impacts appropriately, we will mitigate further any adverse effects with Compensatory Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement measures which will be agreed with the statutory consultees at that stage.
Contaminated Land SEPA raised the need for further surveys to be undertaken in relation to peatland sensitive areas and potential contaminated land. Several areas have been identified with the potential for contaminated land including Balhall Airfield, Balmain Airfield, Edzell WW1 Airfield, Edzell WW2 Airfield and Fordoun Airfield.	Statutory Consultees	The project is being developed in a rural location which is generally not predicted to encounter areas of land which may be contaminated by past uses. In a small number of locations, consultees have identified some potential contaminated sources (e.g. at former airfield sites) and the OHL routeing process has sought to avoid these, as far as possible.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
		Development of the project alignment and any relevant access tracks will take account of relevant information on former land uses including any areas of potential contamination and if avoidance is not possible further investigations and risk assessments will be undertaken as part of the EIA process. Further investigation of areas where the project crosses peatland will be undertaken to support the alignment design and assessment of impacts on ground conditions and soils.
Cumulative Impacts Some queries related to cumulative impacts, particularly around the presence of existing overhead lines and towers, other projects and other components of this project particularly in relation to natural and cultural heritage, as well as farming and tourism. A number of members of the public indicated that the development of the project would need to consider wind farms, pipelines and other transmission infrastructure in the area.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	These aspects are discussed above in Table 3.3 Community Impact.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Upgrade or Extend the Existing OHL A number of questions were raised about why the existing 275kV OHL that runs to the east of the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL could not be upgraded or extended, which would avoid the need for new sites, reduce time and expense and reduce the impacts and industrialising effects further infrastructure would have on the area.	Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	The existing OHL between Alyth and Kintore is currently being upgraded for 400kV operation as the towers on that existing line are large enough to enable safe 400kV operation. The existing 275kV OHL between Tealing and Kintore is not suitable for 400kV operation. The towers are not tall enough to provide suitable 400kV clearances, which are greater than required for 275kV operation. In addition, the existing towers are not strong enough to cope with the additional weight of the larger 400kV capable conductors. This 275kV network is still needed to connect large quantities of smaller scale renewable generation (such as onshore windfarms, hydro schemes, and battery/solar PV energy parks) and to transfer power to local demand centres within our licensee area. The new 400kV infrastructure is needed to enable significant power transfer capability to take power from large scale offshore renewable generation (connecting under the ScotWind process on the east off the coast of Aberdeen) and transport this power to demand centres.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Mitigation Mitigation was raised by several statutory consultees including Aberdeenshire Council. The key aspects of mitigation related to the natural environment and compensatory planting which should be provided to mitigate for areas lost eg woodlands, trees and hedgerows. It was also noted that mitigation should be used to help screen the project through planting of hedgerows, trees and woodlands which would also enhance the landscape character and biodiversity of the area. The NFU suggested mitigation through creation of irrigation lagoons / wildlife ponds, implementing woodland in areas of fields too small to be viable for agriculture, or creating and upgrading, as well as managing, access paths for walking. Further meetings have been requested with SSEN Transmission by the statutory consultees to discuss matters such as drainage and flooding, as well as historic and natural heritage assessments including a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA).		The principles for cumulative assessment and mitigation in the EIA apply also to the environmental topics raised by consultees here and which have been discussed in the previous sections of this table. As noted above, in addition to the EIA mitigation we will set out our commitments to Compensatory Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement (see Section 3.2 Common Themes – Environmental Impact) and suggestions made by consultees will be fully considered by the project and incorporated into the design where practical.

Table 3.5 Economic Impact

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Agriculture and Farming The presence of prime agricultural land has been noted within the route options by statutory consultees including the local authorities, who indicate that mitigation measures will be required, as well as restoration of the land following construction. Arbuthnott Community Council stated that it would not be possible to fully restore the land once taken out of agricultural production. A large number of points raised by the community councils related to agriculture, with Aberlemno and District Community Council as well as Glamis & Area Community Council specifically mentioning that prime agricultural land within Scotland totals less than 8% of the total land mass. A key concern raised was the impact of the project on farmers' livelihoods due to prime agricultural land being used for the towers, and construction methods causing other areas of agricultural land to be out of use for approximately four years, reducing the yield of the land. This is of major concern given the farm businesses in the rural areas supply produce locally as well as nationally and internationally.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	It is acknowledged that the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL project will unavoidably affect areas used for agriculture and farming. Agriculture and farming were factored into the corridor and route options assessment process as part of the appraisal methodology. However, in some locations all the options considered would unavoidably need to cross areas of prime agricultural land. At the next stage of the project, as the OHL alignment and access tracks are designed the potential impact of the project on agriculture will be avoided wherever possible through sensitive location of towers and tracks to reduce field severance and fragmentation. Liaison with farmers to understand their businesses and how they use their land will continue. Tower positions and access to towers will be discussed individually with each landowner/occupier. We are fully aware of the legislative requirements regarding agricultural land, notably prime agricultural land, and Government and Planning Policy relating to avoiding the loss of, and minimising impacts on prime agricultural land. The design of the project alignment will carefully consider impacts on land holdings and farming units in the area. From the outset we

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Other points related to the potential impact on agricultural productivity as a result of land sterilisation, access will always be required to the pylons for maintenance which reduces the land area that can be used for agricultural purposes. Additionally, concerns related to the use of farming technology, specifically GPS equipment, which the overhead lines may interfere with, and which could inhibit more modern and efficient forms of farming. Further concerns related to the spread of disease by people and vehicle movements, specifically eelworms or potato cyst nematode (PCN) during the construction period. The National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) raised a number of points relating to the loss of prime agricultural land, considering the project would have economic implications for the rural economy and farming businesses. The NFUS requested that the fragmentation of farmland should be avoided as a preventative measure, utilising field margins or boundaries. It was noted that some fields may become non-viable for agricultural practices due to the smaller footprint available once infrastructure has been constructed.		will aim to minimise the impacts of the project on prime agricultural land by careful design and positioning of our temporary construction sites and laydown areas, as well as our permanent sites for the towers and maintenance access points. We will endeavour to minimise any severance and fragmentation of farmland and will work where we can to existing boundaries and field margins. Farm access routes will be fully considered as part of this process, and we will work with farms and landowners to ensure that construction access plans are developed to take account of field and farm access requirements. Changes in temporary and permanent land use including areas used for agriculture will be assessed as part of the EIA and reported in the EIAR. Construction is discussed in Table 3.3 Community Impact, under Construction Impacts. For projects of this scale, we will prepare a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to construction commencing. The CEMP will ensure that best practice measures are employed during construction to control noise, dust and prevent pollution and address biosecurity.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Other concerns raised by the NFUS related to the potential for the overhead line corridor to be used for the planting of trees and greening of hedges following construction which could impact farmers' incomes from the Scottish Government rural payment scheme. The NFUS also raised concerns about biosecurity risks particularly those related to seed potatoes and the potential spread of Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN), which also threatens daffodil crops. It was noted that experience has shown that contractors may breach their own protocols and NFUS Members were concerned about the impacts on their farming businesses from inadequate biosecurity. Pre-entry Record of Condition should include PCN / soil sampling. This applies to land surveys and preconstruction activities including those undertaken using drones. The NFUS considered that farmers in the local communities impacted by the project should receive some benefit, eg guaranteed grid capacity for renewables. It is vital that the community should benefit from the project.		Regarding queries on whether farm technology, and specifically GPS equipment would be affected by OHLs, we have not received complaints to this effect for its existing network and understands it is not an issue for current farm operations that occur under and adjacent to our infrastructure. Large agricultural machinery will be able to operate under the new OHL. The minimum clearance to ground level in all locations is 9m. Typical farming activities can usually return to normal following construction but any specific concerns (eg clearances between machinery and the OHL) will be discussed with individual landowners and/or occupiers. Strict biosecurity measures will be required of all site staff including those undertaking pre-construction surveys, enabling and construction work and post-construction testing and assurance checks. We fully appreciate the concerns raised and the impact poor biosecurity can have on agricultural activities. Our land team will be in contact with all farm owners and tenants and will work closely with them throughout the next stages of the

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
It is also noted by the NFUS that property values in communities will be devalued and negatively impacted. A large number of points were made by the public indicating that they felt the consultation process under-reported the impact the project would have on the farming industry locally and nationally, and the importance of local food production for the UK's food security. Numerous respondents pointed out that a large proportion of the land through which the project would run is prime agricultural land, and that planning permission is not normally granted for development on such land. It was considered that the project should not be located on the route options set out in the consultation which affect prime agricultural land. A number of points were raised by many respondents relating to land becoming sterilised by the OHL, rendering some fields unviable for continued agricultural use, or it would be severed and split into smaller parcels or damaged and disturbed during construction. These comments related to farming access routes, land and facilities in addition to productive fields. Concerns were also raised about the impact on, or risks to, agricultural irrigation systems and field drainage systems which could be inhibited or damaged by construction work.		project to ensure that their needs are understood and that impacts are minimised on their businesses and livelihoods. Entitlement to compensation is governed by law under the Electricity Act 1989. Compensation will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the legislation.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
It was also raised by members of the public that the pylons (towers) would impede the use of the current large machinery typically employed in the arable sector along the route. Financial concerns were raised about the economic viability of farming businesses due to the impact of the project on individual farms, and on the ability for farmers to secure farming grants and/or financial support. Some respondents raised design suggestions such as siting towers on field boundaries or margins to minimise potential impacts upon agriculture, and to avoid fragmenting agricultural land into small parcels. Significant concerns were raised by the public relating to biosecurity during construction and the need for strict biosecurity protocols.		
Tourism and Other Local Businesses The socio-economic impact is believed by the public to have been underestimated, with impacts occurring in the present but also in the future when construction has been completed.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees	We note the concerns raised about impacts on local businesses notably tourism and address these further in Section 3.2 discussing Socio-economic impact in our Common Themes.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
A number of points raised by community councils related to the four-year construction period which could impact upon businesses, visitors and agricultural practices. Points raised by community councils also related to the potential for the project to have long term impacts on the area, for example on tourism, particularly as many visitors travel to the area for the views which it was considered would be detrimentally affected. There was a concern that a reduction in tourism would impact local businesses resulting in the loss of jobs within the area. Specifically mentioned areas at risk included the Angus Hills, the Vale of Strathmore and the Howe of the Mearns. Other points related to the potential impact on holiday cottages, and areas with visitor attractions such as Glamis Castle. Of particular concern, raised by Arbuthnott Community Council, is the potential for the project to impact upon the legacy of Lewis Grassic Gibbon and the Grassic Gibbon Centre which is a notable tourist destination in the village of Arbuthnott. A number of points were raised by community councils relating to the lack of provision of compensation for communities particularly for those who would be relocated as no suitable	Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	We intend to consider socio-economic and tourism impacts as part of the suite of documentation to be submitted to Scottish Ministers. This will ensure that appropriate consideration is given to these issues in the consenting process. A number of the concerns raised related to the likely impact on local businesses related to landscape, visual and amenity issues. The EIA work will consider these issues and aim to avoid and minimise environmental impacts and introduce mitigation measures to offset or compensate for any residential significant landscape and visual effects. This is turn should help ensure that the impact on businesses and tourism is minimised. We are actively committed to maximising opportunities to support local businesses and the economy throughout the construction phase and work with the main contractors to use local supply chains where possible. Project specific opportunities will be developed, and local partners identified as the project moved towards construction. In addition to mitigation, we will also provide our commitments to Compensatory Planting and Biodiversity Enhancement (see Section

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
compensation could be proposed due to the long-term effects that the project could have on residents. It was considered by a large number of members of the public that the project would have significant economic implications for the rural economy beyond farming and that these impacts appear to have been overlooked or ignored. Such negative impacts would be felt more strongly locally given the current cost of living crisis and the majority of local jobs being in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Tourism is an important part of the local economy as many small farms, small holdings and rural properties have diversified into the tourist trade to supplement their income. These businesses rely on the rural countryside to encourage people to visit the area. Some respondents considered that the impact on tourism would be significant as people would be deterred from visiting areas near pylons and overhead lines. Concerns also extended to the detrimental impacts on other businesses that serve and support the farming and tourism industries in the area. It was felt by many that the economic impacts would be felt deeply in the area and jobs would be lost.		3.2 Common Themes – Environmental Impact) and suggestions made by consultees will be considered by the project and incorporated into the design where practical. Also, we have recently announced a Community Benefit Fund2. This fund is the first of its kind for a transmission operator in Scotland and will provide a direct opportunity for us to work with local communities that will be affected by the project on a variety of local initiatives. These will be community led and will directly support communities across the North of Scotland.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
Property and Land Value Concerns were raised by some of the community councils, including Crathes, Drumoak and Durris Community Council for example, relating to the potential to see a decrease in the valuation of house prices within the area with no apparent compensation proposed which would address the issue. One point raised by Westhill and Elrick Community Council and Arbuthnott Community Council suggested that residents, should they wish to sell, would be unable to. A significant number of points were raised by members of the public about the impact of the project on property prices in the area. It was noted that property would be devalued, and the local housing and land market would be severely affected causing major issues for those trying to sell their house now and in the future, and those looking to secure mortgages now and in the future.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	Compensation will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with the relevant legislative provisions in the Electricity Act 1989. Please refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and to our FAQs.
Compensation A number of points stated by one of the community councils related to the fact the community felt that there was no suitable compensation proposed for those who will have to move out of their homes and businesses and will be impacted by the project. It was mentioned that other large-scale projects, such as	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees	We have recently announced a Community Benefit Fund2. This fund is the first of its kind for a transmission operator in Scotland and will provide a direct opportunity for us to work with local communities that will be affected by the project on a variety of local initiatives. These will be community led and will directly support communities across the North of Scotland.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
windfarms, provide financial support and grants to give back to the community. Mearns Community Council stated that they had concerns that the compensation offered would not address the true cost of the loss of property rights and any associated damages, they stated that they felt there needed to be an explanation as to what the benefits would be for the area. Responses highlighted that no details were provided during the consultation process about the compensation scheme for those that will lose land to the project or be affected by the project; it was strongly felt that locals shouldn't lose out financially. A common point raised by many respondents related to what benefits the proposed project would have on the local communities, many felt that the local community would suffer in environmental and socio-economic terms for the benefit of others and would gain nothing locally. Suggested benefits for local communities included enabling lower energy prices in the Northeast, providing profit share or shared ownership opportunity with the local community like many onshore	Community members and local organisations Landowners and occupiers	Please refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and our FAQs.

Summary of feedback	Contributing Stakeholder Group	Our Response
windfarm projects provide, or enabling farmers to have guaranteed grid capacity for renewable projects they develop.		

Table 3.6 Summary of Feedback per OHL Route Section

Route Section	Summary of Key Feedback	Our Response
Route Section A	• Ecological designations – impacts on River Tay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Montrose Basin Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites and the species they are designated for. • Habitat / ornithology / protected species – impacts on Loch of Kinnordy, Loch of Lintrathen and the species and habitat they support. • Forestry/ woodland – felling of trees and loss of woodland. • Flooding / water resources – impacts related to the crossing of the relevant tributaries to the River Tay, including the Dean Water and Kerbet Water, which could have consequences for hydrology and flooding and freshwater habitats and species. • Cultural heritage designations and interests – several listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments identified. Glamis Castle was specifically mentioned. • Landscape and visual – impacts on views and the landscape including the Vale of Strathmore.	• Having reviewed consultation feedback for this route section, we will take forward the preferred route option previously identified in the Consultation Document3 (Route Option A1) as the proposed route. • This is because the information and responses provided and our subsequent review has not identified that any of the other route options would be less constrained from an environmental, community or technical perspective. • The alignment within the proposed route to be taken forward will be developed to take account of key environmental sensitivities and issues highlighted from consultation.
Route Section B	• Ecological designations – impacts on River South Esk SAC and the Montrose Basin SPA and Ramsar site and the species they are designated for, notably impacts on the river bank environment and riparian habitats. • Habitat / ornithology / protected species – impacts on Loch of Kinnordy, Loch of Lintrathen and the species and habitat they	• In reviewing consultation feedback for this route section, we are taking forward a change to the preferred route from that previously identified (which was Route Option B1). • The proposed route to be taken forward will now be Route Option B1.1, please see Chapter 4 for further information.

[3] Please refer to the Preferred Route Consultation Document for details of the rationale for route selection prior to the public consultation. It can be accessed on our project website under the 'May 2023 public consultation documents' section at https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/kintore-fiddes-tealing-400kv-ohl-connection/

Route Section	Summary of Key Feedback	Our Response
	support including foraging geese, plus the Lemno Burn. Specific concerns over impacts to red kites, lapwings, red squirrel and badgers. • Forestry/ woodland – felling of trees and loss of woodland. • Flooding / water resources – impacts related to the crossing of the River South Esk, Lemno Burn and Noran Water which could have consequences for hydrology and flooding and freshwater habitats and species. • Cultural heritage designations and interests - several listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments, and Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDL). Specific mention to Battledyke Roman Camp, Finavon Hill and Fort brown and white Caterthun Hillforts. • Landscape and visual – impacts on views and the landscape including the Vale of Strathmore. • Mitigation required and assessments to include all project elements and other projects. • There is a large gas trunk pipeline main between Menmiur and Careston. • Loss of prime agricultural land and biosecurity issues. • Crossing of roads. • Proximity to existing OHL infrastructure and other pipelines. • Impacts to tourism and livelihoods, including holiday lets.	• This change came about following comprehensive review of stakeholder responses and further information from field surveys. • It was considered that Route Option B1.1 had slightly less environmental constraint than Route Option B1 and has greater potential to avoid proximity to the River South Esk SAC and other areas of flood risk associated with watercourses. • Route Option B1.1 was also considered on review to have slightly lower levels of property constraints than those encountered along Route Option B1.
Route Section C	• Ecological designations – impact on Eslie Moss Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the presence of large numbers of protected species in nearby woodlands, and the proximity to the Montrose Basin SPA, Ramsar and SSSI which is designated for its ornithological species. Also effects on the River North Esk and West Water Paleochannels SSSI.	• Having reviewed consultation feedback for this route section, we will take forward the preferred route option previously identified (Route Option C1). • This is because the information and responses provided and our subsequent review has not identified that any of

Route Section	Summary of Key Feedback	Our Response
	• Habitat / ornithology / protected species – impacts on Loch of Kinnordy and species and habitat it supports including foraging geese. • Forestry/ woodland – felling of trees and loss of woodland, and fragmentation of forests and woodlands. • Flooding / water resources – impacts related to the crossing of the River North Esk which could have consequences for hydrology and flooding and freshwater habitats and species. • Cultural heritage designations and interests - several listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments, and GDL. • Landscape and visual – impacts on views and the landscape including the Vale of Strathmore. • Private water supplies – concerns about private water supplies and further investigation required. • Mitigation required and assessments to include all project elements and other projects. • Proximity to houses. • Loss of prime agricultural land and biosecurity issues. • Crossing of other infrastructure – roads and railways. • Impact to airstrips.	the other route options would be less constrained from an environmental, community or technical perspective. • The alignment within the proposed route to be taken forward will be developed to take account of key environmental sensitivities and issues highlighted from consultation.
Route Section D	• Ecological designations – impact on the Fowlsheugh SPA which is designated for its ornithological species. • Habitat / ornithology / protected species – impacts on protected species and habitat. • Forestry / woodland – felling of trees and loss of woodland, and fragmentation of forests and woodlands.	• We are taking forward a change to the preferred route option previously identified (which was Route Option D1), please see Chapter 4 for further information. • This change has been required because of the change of substation site from near Fiddes to Hurlie in Fetteresso Forest.

Route Section	Summary of Key Feedback	Our Response
	• Cultural heritage designations and interests – several listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments, and GDL. Concerns to impacts on the legacy of Lewis Grassic Gibbon. • Landscape and visual – including impacts on the Vale of Strathmore. • Private water supplies – concerns about private water supplies and further investigation required. • Hydrology – impact to biodiversity interest of rivers and associated habitats, specifically Water of Bervie. • Contaminated land – possible radioactive contamination associated with the former airfield at Fordoun. • Mitigation required and assessments to include all project elements and other projects. • Loss of prime agricultural land, loss of food security and biosecurity issues. • Impacts to tourism and livelihoods, including holiday lets and caravan parks.	• Two route options are now being considered in further detail (options D4 and D5) to connect from Route Option C1 to Hurlie Substation. • We will take account of any relevant consultation feedback and further environmental and technical appraisal in determining a preferred option for Section D and this will be presented to the public at the next consultation event in Spring 2024.
Route Section E	• Ecological designations – impact on the Fowlsheugh SPA which is designated for its ornithological species and the River Dee SAC. • Habitat / ornithology / protected species – impacts on protected species and habitat. • Forestry / woodland – felling of trees and loss of woodland, and fragmentation of forests and woodlands. • Flooding / water resources – avoid wetlands and blanket bog. • Peatland – impacts on areas of peat, surveys required.	• We are taking forward a change to the preferred route option previously identified (which was Route Option D1), please see Chapter 4 for further information. • This change has been required because of the change of substation site from near Fiddes to Hurlie in Fetteresso Forest. • Two route options are now being considered in further detail (options E2 and E3) to connect from Hurlie Substation to the northern part of the former Route Option E1 at Rumbleyond (to the north of the B957 Slug Road).

Route Section	Summary of Key Feedback	Our Response
	• Cultural heritage designations and interests – several listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments, and GDL. Concerns to impacts on the legacy of Lewis Grassic Gibbon. • Landscape and visual – impacts on views and the landscape including the Vale of Strathmore. • Private water supplies – concerns about private water supplies and further investigation required. • Core paths – impacts on Core Paths and Rights of Way in Durris Forest. • Mitigation required and assessments to include all project elements and other projects. • Loss of prime agricultural land, loss of food security and biosecurity issues. • Impacts to tourism and livelihoods, including holiday lets and caravan parks.	• We will take account of any relevant consultation feedback and further environmental and technical appraisal in determining a preferred option for Section E and this will be presented to the public at the next consultation event in Spring 2024.
Route Section F	• Ecological designations – impact on the River Dee SAC and its connected floodplain, Loch of Park SSSI and Loch of Skene SSSI, SPA and Ramsar, harm or disturbance to fish and bird species and their habitats from construction notably the river bank environment and riparian habitats. • Habitat / ornithology / protected species – impacts on protected species and habitat including Red Kite population in Deeside and breeding farmland waders within routes. Additionally, red deer, foxes, badgers and otters. • Forestry / woodland – felling of trees and loss of woodland, and fragmentation of forests and woodlands.	• In reviewing consultation feedback for this route section, we are taking forward a change to the preferred route previously identified (which was Route Option F1). • The proposed route option to be taken forward will now be Route Option F1.3. This is a new route which connects elements of the previous routes F1 and F2 (see Chapter 4) to help avoid significant community and environmental receptors and constraints. • This change came about following comprehensive review of stakeholder responses, further information from field surveys and updated technical reviews.

Route Section	Summary of Key Feedback	Our Response
	• Flooding / water resources – flooding along Gormack Burn, avoid wetlands and blanket bog. • Cultural heritage designations and interests – several listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments, and GDL as well as Drum Castle. • Landscape and visual – impacts on views and the landscape, including Royal Deeside. • Private water supplies – concerns about private water supplies and further investigation required. • Peatland – impacts on areas of peat, surveys required. • Green Belt – consideration to Green Belt policies. • Core paths – impacts on Core Paths and Rights of Way in Durris Forest. • Recreation facilities – impacts on riding club and track. • Infrastructure – impacts on registered heliport and major gas and oil pipelines. • Ecology and landscape mitigation required and assessments to include all project elements and other projects. • Loss of prime agricultural land and subsequent impacts to livelihood. • Impacts to tourism and local businesses.	• On balance, we considered that Route Option F1.3 would allow the less environmentally constrained sections of the former route options F1 and F2 to be utilised and to provide greater separation of the OHL from the designated Loch of Skene SPA used by wintering geese. This change would also avoid key constraints close to the River Dee (including areas of national importance designated for natural and cultural heritage at the Loch of Park and Park House areas respectively). • The amended route would also avoid areas of population concentration, amenity areas, and sites allocated within the Local Development Plan (LDP) on the western edges of Peterculter and Westhill.

4. Summary of Key Decisions

This section sets out the key decisions that we have made following analysis and review of consultation feedback. The information presented confirms the corridor and route options being taken forward to the next stage of OHL development, outlines where decisions have been made to the corridor and route options and identifies the reasons. The aim of this section is to provide clarity on the options being taken forward and those no longer being considered.

After the consultation period closed, we have analysed the feedback received as part of a review of each corridor option (in Sections 1 and 2) and route option (in sections A to F). This review was undertaken to check that all relevant consultation feedback and other data and information about the constraints within each route option, including further field surveys, was fully considered.

Corridor options being taken forward to routeing

We have identified and appraised a series of Corridor options for the OHL in two sections between Tealing and Kintore. Following review of feedback from the consultation relevant to these Corridor options, no information was received which it is considered would require amendment to the Corridor options or the appraisal process followed.

The preferred Corridor identified in each section (Corridor 1b and Corridor 2b) will therefore be taken forward as the proposed corridors within which the route options have been considered.

Route option changes

The route review undertaken resulted in changes to the preferred route options previously preferred for Sections B, D, part of E and F.

Alongside this activity, a similar review exercise was completed for the previously preferred Substation Site 5B, for the proposed Fiddes 400kV Substation, resulting in an amendment to a new location at Hurlie, Fetteresso. Please refer to the proposed Fiddes 400kV Substation Report on Consultation for more information on this project, please see link provided in Section 1.2.

The change in the Fiddes 400kV Substation location to Hurlie necessitated a revised OHL routeing exercise to be implemented in Section D and in part of Section E of the preferred corridor to allow the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL to enter and exit the new substation location at Hurlie. These new route options are shown on Figure 4.1 and comprise route options D4, D5, E2 and E3.

A copy of this figure is available to download from the project webpage.

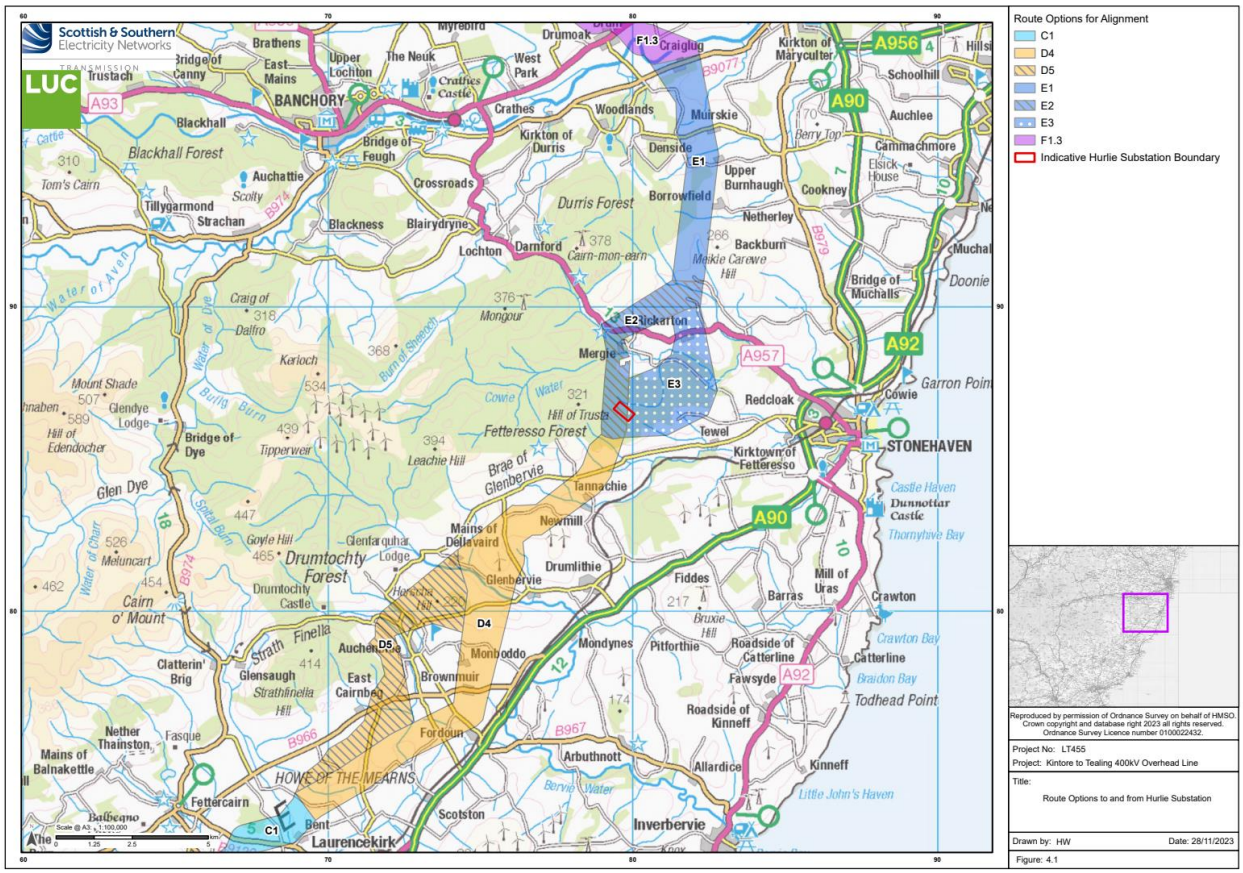


Figure 4.1: New Route Options to enter and exit the proposed Hurlie 400kV Substation.

Two new route options (D4 and D5) have been identified that extend from route option C1 to enter the Hurlie 400kV Substation site (see Figure 4.1) and a further two route options (E3 and E4) exit the Hurlie 400kV Substation site heading north to join and connect into the northern section of the preferred route in Section E (see Figure 4.1).

We will undertake a combined route and alignment consultation in Spring 2024. The consultation will present an update on the development of an indicative alignment in Sections A, B, C, E (northern section) and F and it will set out the preferred route and alignment options in Sections D and E to provide OHL connections with the Hurlie 400kV Substation.

Route options being taken forward to alignment

The route options to be taken forward to the alignment development stage of the project are shown in Figure 4.2.

A copy of this figure is available to download from the project webpage.

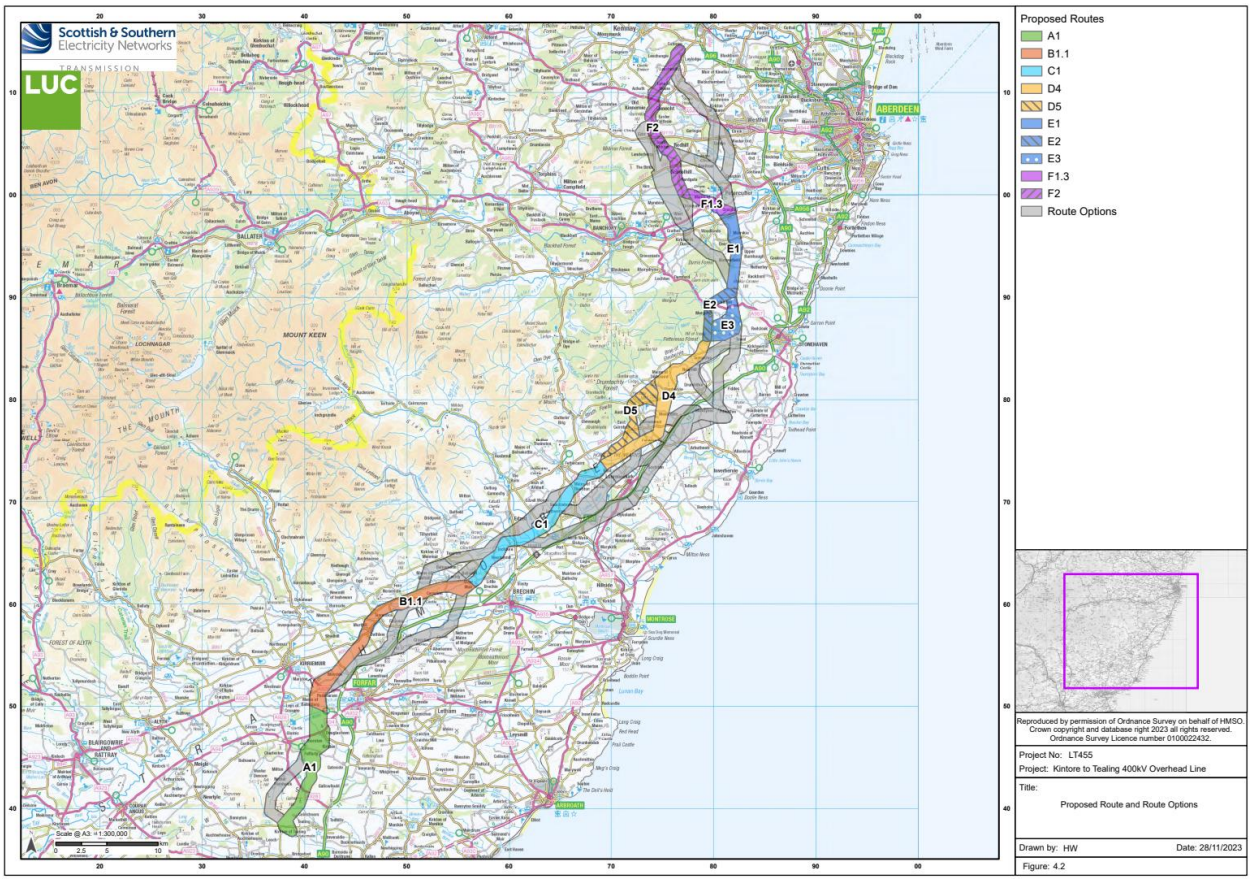


Figure 4.2: Route options being taken forward to alignment

We can confirm the proposed route options to be taken forward to alignment are:

- Route Option A1. This is the previously preferred route option for Section A with no proposed changes. This is because the information and responses provided and our subsequent review has not identified that any of the other route options would be less constrained from an environmental, community or technical perspective.

- Route Option B1.1. This is a new preferred route for Section B which has been confirmed following consultation feedback and route appraisal reviews. Route option B1.1 is an existing route option which was presented at the public consultation. In response to community feedback this route option has been widened at Padanaram, taking the overhead line further away from this village. It was considered that Route option B1.1 had slightly less environmental and property constraint overall than Route Option B1 and has greater potential to avoid proximity to the River South Esk SAC and other areas of flood risk associated with watercourses. On balance across environmental, technical and cost considerations B1.1 represents the preferred option in Section B.

- Route Option C1. This is the previously preferred route option for Section C with no proposed changes. This is because the information and responses provided and our subsequent review has not identified that any of the other route options would be less constrained from an environmental, community or technical perspective.

- Section D. The Hurlie Substation entry (D4 and D5) and exit (E3 and E4) alignment options will be developed for all four of these new routes. We will present the options at a combined route and alignment public consultation in Spring 2024 (see Section 5.2).

- Route Option E1. This is a revised route option for Section E which includes only the northern section of the previously preferred route option E1. The preferred route option now runs from the point where the new Hurlie exit route options E3 and E4 connect to route option E1 at Rumbleyond (to the north of the B957 Slug Road) to the location where E1 connects to route revised route option F1.3 at Craiglug at the River Dee. The northern part of E1 is the previously preferred route with no proposed changes. This is because the information and responses provided and our subsequent review has not identified that any of the other route options would be less constrained from an environmental, community or technical perspective.

- Route Option F1.3. This is a revised route option for Section F which has been confirmed following consultation feedback and route appraisal reviews. This combines elements of the previously preferred route option F1 with parts of route option F2. Route option F1.3 extends between the A93, for 2.5km heading to the north west to Newhall, where it joins route option F2. This route F1.3 combined with F2 will help avoid significant community and environmental receptors and constraints. This change came about following comprehensive review of stakeholder responses, and further information from field surveys and updated technical reviews. On balance, we considered that Route Option F1.3 with F2 would allow the less environmentally constrained sections of the former route options F1 and F2 to be utilised and to provide greater separation of the OHL from the designated Loch of Skene SPA used by wintering geese. This change would also avoid key constraints close to the River Dee (including areas of national importance designated for natural and cultural heritage at the Loch of Park and Park House areas respectively. The amended route would also avoid areas of population concentration, amenity areas, and sites allocated within the Local Development Plan (LDP) on the western edges of Peterculter and Westhill.

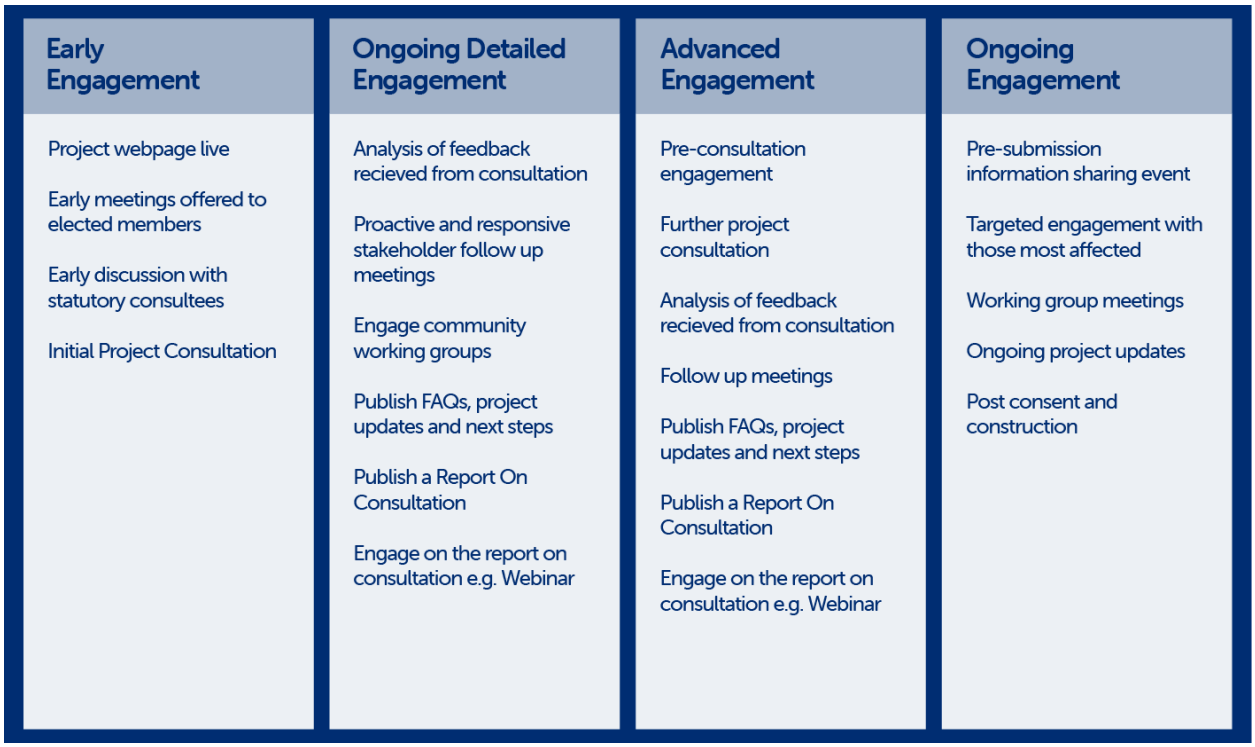
Figure 4.1 shows the full proposed route, subject to feedback received during engagement and consultation on the new routes associated with Hurlie Substation (Section D and E), being taken forward to alignment stage from Section A to F.

The proposed route section figures are provided in Appendix C, Figures A4.1 to A4.6.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Ongoing Engagement

The period of consultation described in this report is part of an ongoing engagement process that spans to full development cycle for the project, where feedback is sought at different stages and engagement with stakeholders is continuous as we refine our proposals.



Following publication of this Report, we, alongside specialist consultants and contractors, will further develop the design of the OHL to find an acceptable alignment through the route sections shown in Figure 4.2. In Spring 2024, we will hold our next public consultation. At this consultation stakeholders will be provided with alignment options for the OHL accompanied by the environmental, technical and cost appraisals. The new route options entering (D4 and D5) and exiting (E3 and E4) the Hurlie Substation site will also be presented at this consultation combining routeing and alignment for Section D with views sought to determine the proposed alignment.

Early in 2024, a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion will be made to The Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit and an EIA Scoping Report will be prepared and submitted to support the request. The request for a Scoping Opinion is made to identify the scope of impacts to be addressed and the method of assessment to be applied in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report which is prepared and submitted with the Section 37 application for consent.

5.2 Feedback

Feedback on this Report or about the project is welcome via our Community Liaison Team who can be contacted using the details below. If you wish to receive project updates and event information, please also contact us using the details below to request to join the mailing list.

Community Liaison Manager

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Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission

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Further information about the project is available on the project website.

6. Glossary

Term	Definition
Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) Substation	An AIS substation is constructed with switchgear which relies on open air components, which can require large clearance areas for operation and safety, which takes up a larger area of land than Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS).
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line OHL, along with location of key angle structures.
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
Ancient Woodland	Defined in National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 as "land that has maintained continuous woodland habitat since at least 1750".
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	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. These include Ancient Woodland, Long-established woodlands of plantation origin (LEPO), and other woodlands.
Area of Search (Study Area)	A broad geographical area within which possible sites might be capable of identification within approximately 5km of the required connectivity point; usually determined by geographical features such as coastlines or hill/mountain ranges, or designation boundaries, such as National Park boundaries.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	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. It focuses on the change in the biodiversity value of a site, comparing the pre and post construction biodiversity values to ensure a positive impact overall.
Conductor	A metallic wire strung from support structure to support 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.

Double circuit	A double circuit transmission line comprises of two independent circuits each made up of three sets of conductors (cables).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
Engagement	The establishment of effective relationships with individuals or groups.
Electricity System Operator (ESO)	National Grid is the Electricity System Operator (ESO) for Great Britain. The ESO balances electricity supply and demand to ensure the electricity supply.
Gardens and Designed Landscapes (GDLs)	The Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes lists those gardens or designed landscapes which are considered by a panel of experts to be of national importance.
Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation	A GIS substation is constructed with switchgear with gaseous reliant components which allows operation and safety clearances to be reduced compared to an AIS substation.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Holford Rules (as modified)	Principles developed by the late Lord Holford in 1959 which continue to be employed as the basis for routeing high voltage overhead lines and include additional notes on the siting of substations.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Landscape Character Type (LCT)	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in a landscape that differentiate the area from another.
Listed Building	Building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and afforded statutory protection under the 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997' and other planning legislation. Classified categories A – C(s).
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.

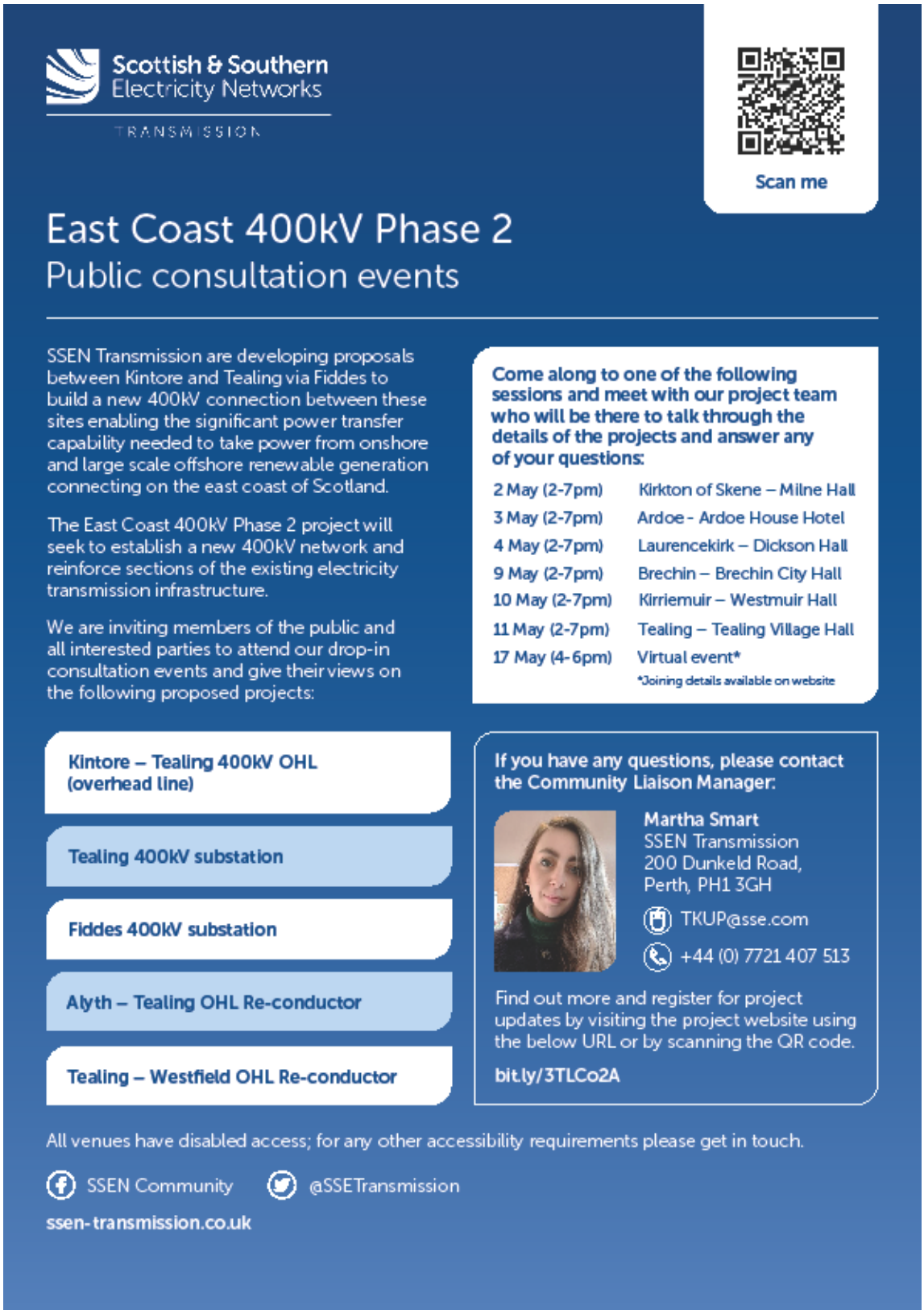
National Scenic Area (NSA)	A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value.
Offshore Integrated Link	Offshore cable connection between the onshore network and offshore network being developed as part of the Coordinated Offshore Network. This is being developed as a result of the Holistic Network Design (HND) publication in summer of 2022 produced by National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) to facilitate greater co- ordination and efficiency for offshore windfarms. In the autumn of 2022 Ofgem published their Asset Classification findings which in turn meant SSENT were tasked with delivering large parts of the Coordinated Offshore Network.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or wooden poles.
Planning Application	Used in this context to describe an application for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from intentional planting.
Preferred Option	The option which SSEN Transmission believes offers the best balance of technical and environmental impact considerations identified through initial assessment. This is then subject to consultation with stakeholders, where local and previously unknown considerations may confirm or alter the initial preference. Once confirmed, this becomes the Proposed Option to take forward to the next stage of project development.
RAG Rating	A Red, Amber, Green rating provided to allow for a comparison between different options being appraised.
Red Line Boundary (RLB)	This area should include all land necessary to carry out the Proposed Development.
Riparian Woodland	Natural home for plants and animals occurring in a thin strip of land bordering a stream or river.
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.
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'.
Section 37 Application	An application for consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to develop an overhead electricity line.
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
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Designated area of national importance for natural heritage. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Span	The section of overhead line between two structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by The Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the Wild Birds Directive (Directive74/409/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 SHE Transmission works.
Study Area	The area within which the corridor, route and alignment study takes place.
Substation	A node on the network to allow safe control of the electricity network. This could include convergence of multiple circuits, transformation of voltage or other functions to maintain and operate the electricity network.
Substation Site Area	Site area identified as necessary to deliver all the substation infrastructure requirements e.g. platform, access tracks, temporary construction area, drainage including SUDS, landscaping.
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)	Drainage solutions that provide an alternative to the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses.
Terminal Structure	A structure (tower or pole) required where the line terminates either at a substation or at the beginning and end of an underground cable section.
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in the Great Britain.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)	The UK BAP was published in 1994 after the Convention on Biological Diversity. It summarised the most threatened species and habitats in the UK and gave detailed plans for their recovery.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between a landowner, upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed, and SHE Transmission
Wild Land Area (WLA)	Those areas comprising the greatest and most extensive areas of wild characteristics within Scotland.
Works	Constructing new transmission infrastructure such as substations, overhead lines, underground cables; major refurbishment of these; the dismantling and removal of any parts of the system; and associated works, which may include formation of access tracks, bridge and road improvements, tree cutting, drainage etc.

7. Appendices

7.1. Appendix A - Example of Advertisement



7.2. Appendix B Statutory and Non-statutory Consultee Responses and SSEN Transmission's Replies

Table 3.1 Statutory Consultee Feedback

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
Statutory Consultees – excluding Community Councils		
Aberdeen City Council	<u>Development Plan Context / Principle</u> 1. The proposals to F1, F1.1 and 1.2 cross Aberdeen City area within the green belt to the west of Peterculter and to the northwest of Peterculter in the area of Anguston. The area is designated Green Belt where Policy NE1 allows for electricity grid connections where these are needed in the location. Oil and gas pipelines cross these areas and these are the INEOS Forties Pipeline, Shell Natural Gas Pipeline and the FM24 Feeder Aberdeen to Lochside, a national grid transmission line. These pipelines also cross the area north west of Culter, together with the FM13 Feeder Aberdeen / Arbroath national grid transmission pipeline. Nether Anguston Farmhouse is Category B listed and located centrally on the F1/F1.1/F1.2 route as has been identified. Upper Anguston House is Cat. C listed on located on the F1.1/F1.2 line within the east edge of the route. Several Scheduled Ancient Monuments are on or close to the route lines. In particular Benthoull Croft Cairn 140m west of Benthoull Croft, Anguston Road and Easterhill Hut Circles 290m east north-east of Milton of Drum Road, Aberdeen appear to be on the F1.1/F1.2 route with other close by as has been identified.	1. Information in relation to policies, gas pipelines and cultural heritage sites has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. 2. The comparative appraisals undertaken for the corridor and route options consider environmental, technical and cost constraints and aim to present a balance between the competing challenges. The options have undergone review following consultation and some routes have changed giving further consideration of environmental constraints. Overall, each option has both environmental and technical challenges and some of those can be avoided in the alignment design or mitigation can be applied to reduce impacts. Further robust environmental, technical and cost appraisals will be undertaken as we move to alignment design. 3. The information provided at consultation is based on the development of an OHL and not an underground cable (UGC) and so no comparative appraisal has been conducted between OHL and UGC. Please refer to

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	The proposed route F1 crosses the River Dee at the south western extremity of Aberdeen City and as identified is a Special Area of Conservation with Local Nature Conservation Site along the corridor. There are several houses dotted across the route areas. 2. All options have significant impact on natural heritage assets. It appears that the routing options have mainly been based on engineering and cost; the options which have scored low for environmental have not been the preferred options, seemingly through the higher scoring for cost and maintenance. whilst we appreciate climate commitments by the government must be met, substantial mitigation and compensation would be required for the currently preferred options. The cost of implementing these may be higher than the cost to choose a less environmentally damaging option. 3. Regardless of which corridor or route is selected, the proposed overhead line (OHL) will have a negative impact on landscape quality and character. The consultation documents do not make any comparative assessment of the financial costs gained in terms of reduced landscape impact if the UGC option were to be taken forward. The use of underground cables has a long term positive visual impact and the decision to use OHL over UGC should not be purely based on the installation and operational costs of OHL versus UGC. With extreme weather events likely to become more common due to climate change, and as the majority of risk lies in the failure of overhead powerlines, taking powerlines underground should be an important consideration. The impact of this was fully realised during the storms of recent years affecting all of the corridors proposed close to Aberdeen City and neighbouring Aberdeenshire. The consultation does not appear take this into account fully.	Common Themes in Section 3.2 for further information on undergrounding. A response on Landscape and Visual concerns is provided in Table 3.3 Community Impact under the heading Landscape and Visual. The OHL routeing considers the preservation of public open space as part of the landscape appraisals and these features are considered in the design process, alongside other constraints. Our approach to Biodiversity is presented in Common Themes, Section 3.2 and in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. 4. Detailed woodland surveys have commenced, and data collected has been fed into the appraisals. Surveys will continue to inform alignment development. Further information on the response to woodland can be found in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under heading, Forestry and Woodland. 5. Cumulative impacts have been considered as part of the initial appraisals and will continue to be assessed at each stage of the routeing process and within the EIAR.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Considering the Consultation Documents, the corridor 2b and route F1 would appear to have the least negative impact on landscape quality and character, should the OHL option be taken forward. Substantial mitigation will be required in relation to all negative impacts on landscape and biodiversity. 4. The level of impact on tree and woodland cover will vary depending on the corridor selected and depending on the actual route within the selected corridor. A more detailed woodland/forestry mapping exercise may be beneficial to identify the more sensitive and important woodland sites and to ensure these are considered as part of the route option appraisal. Further details will be required on specific impacts at detailed stage along with mitigation and compensation proposals to ensure the project aligns with NPF4 Policy 6. All corridors would have impacts on major areas of Open Space and areas of Green Space Network and Blue/Green Infrastructure. Corridor option 1a is a narrow corridor in width so it would likely be difficult to avoid impacts on these areas in this corridor. This corridor includes important major Open Space sites such as Elrick Hill, Brimmond Hill, Clinterty Hill, Kirkhill Forrest and others. There could therefore be significant negative impacts on important areas of Open Space and fragmentation of the wider Green Space Network. The Consultation Document doesn't seem to consider the impacts on Public Open Space and areas of Green Space network in its corridor assessments.	6. Whether an existing circuit can be uprated from 275kV to 400kV is dependent on a number of factors, primarily the size of the existing towers and therefore the safety clearances required for the voltage they need to operate at. For 400kV operation, the clearances are larger than for 275kV. In addition, the towers must be strong enough to manage the additional weights and loads of the heavier and larger 400kV conductors. Only specific towers can take these increased loads and clearances required for 400kV operation and still require strengthening both to the steelwork and the foundations. Many older tower designs are not capable of taking the increased loads and/or are not tall and large to achieve the minimum required safety clearances. When upgrading existing infrastructure, we look to maximise the potential capacity of the line as much as possible without having to rebuild the line. Currently, transmission towers can accommodate two circuits on either side of the tower. These are made up of three conductor sets on either side. The requirement for two circuits is for capacity and resilience. To accommodate additional circuits on an OHL tower would require the tower to be much larger, likely both taller and wider. There are no transmission circuits in the UK that have more than two circuits. Due to the size of the structures required to accommodate 4x circuits, it would potentially be more challenging to route through challenging terrain, achieve suitable distances from

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Mitigation for lost areas of Open Space and Blue/Green Infrastructure should be sought and careful consideration of the impacts on major public areas of Open Space should be considered and minimized when assessing all corridor options and planning routes. 5. The eastern edge of the F1 route appears to closely follow the line of the existing pylons, has there been consideration of the cumulative impact of two sets of different sizes pylons, in particular at the River Dee crossing, close to houses and within open landscapes? 6. It is understood that another line runs to the west and the same applies. More information would be welcomed on why the existing pylon line could not accommodate both sets of lines over relevant stretches of line, it is understood that larger pylons are required for 400kV and that the existing lines would be upgraded to 400kV.	residential properties and very hard to maintain and restore power in an event of a fault.
Aberdeenshire Council	Two responses were provided by Aberdeenshire Council, one on the Corridors and one on the Route Options. These have been combined here as the majority of information was the same. 1. Natural Heritage • Suggest contacting NESBReC for use of [habitat] data and related species data. • The LNCS maps used in the consultation report appear to be out of date. • Consider invasive non-native species early in the route selection process. • Given the high level of constraint for ornithology, a consultation to RSPB should be undertaken. • Consider loss of Forestry. Although ancient woodland is mentioned within the document, forestry features outwith nature woodland is omitted from natural or land use summaries.	1. This information has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development, with the points raised taken on board. Our approach to Designated sites and Biodiversity is presented in Common Themes in Section 3.2 and in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. Detailed woodland surveys have commenced, and data collected has been fed into the appraisals. Surveys will

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	• Compensatory planting would be required as per the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023. • Outdoor access, including rights of way, should be considered in the next stages of route selection as it does not appear to have been mapped. • Consideration of biodiversity enhancement measures should be given as part of post construction restoration, but enhancement measures are also expected to form part of the overall proposal, not just restoration. • Consider impact on protected trees (TPO). It is not clear from the outline route maps but it appears TPO tree may be impacted. • Loch of Skene – Potential for impact on Local of Skene SPA and RAMSAR is significant and early input from NatureScot and RSPB is advised. Dee SAC – Crossing here will also need early NatureScot input. In addition to discussion with Dee District Salmon Fisheries Board. <u>2. Cultural Heritage</u> • Listed buildings, Conservation Areas and Gardens and Designed Landscapes should all be considered as part of the route appraisals and future applications/EIA. • It is important to understand and consider all listed buildings equally and not just Category A listed buildings. Only Cat. A listed buildings are mentioned within the summary of comparative appraisal tables. • Further information will be required to fully assess proposals for impacts on the historic environment and to advise appropriate mitigation. • Public benefit should be considered with any proposed archaeological works. In terms of archaeology, it is confirmed that the assessment and approach to the route selection is appropriate. Archaeological mitigation will be required along various parts of the route, however it is currently too early to go into more detail as to what form the mitigation requirements will take, and to what areas it will be	continue to inform alignment development. Further information on the response to woodland, including compensatory planting can be found in Table 3.4 Environment Impact under heading Forestry and Woodland. We will continue to engage with statutory and non-statutory organisations as the project develops. 2. We are aware of the large number and variety of cultural heritage designations or assets within the proposed route options. Liaison with statutory consultees (including HES and the local planning authorities) will continue through the next stage of project development. Further information is provided in Table 3.4 under the heading Cultural Heritage. 3. A response on Landscape and Visual concerns is provided in Table 3.3 Community Impact under the heading Landscape and Visual. It is acknowledged that the options to cross the River Dee to the west of Peterculter are constrained and the sensitivity of the area within the Dee Valley SLA and the River Dee SAC is understood. Careful, routeing of this section will be undertaken to minimise effects.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	required. You are encouraged to liaise with the Archaeology Service when more detail is known to discuss the requirements directly. <u>3 Landscape and visual</u> • The Consultation Document prepared for the applicant by LUC is comprehensive and clearly sets out the appraisal of site options and reasons for selection of the preferred route options between these points. However, the reporting of considerations given to alternatives to the overhead line are not balanced in that the disadvantages of undergrounding the line are set out in full but not the advantages (both environmental and technical). • It is agreed that Option 1b between Tealing and Fiddes is likely to be less constrained in terms of environmental considerations than Options 1a and 1c. However, the Braes of Mearns SLA is a principal constraint with the integrity of the distinctive pattern of policy woodlands around Fettercairn, the setting of this settlement and nearby designed landscapes key concerns. Views from well-known viewpoints within the SLA and views (both from within and outside the SLA) where the appreciation of the contrast between the Highland Boundary Fault and the Howe of Mearns is strongest are also sensitive to a development of this scale and nature. • Options for crossing the Dee valley on the route section between Fiddes and Kintore are appreciated to be constrained by the proximity of settlements as well as environmental designations associated with the River Dee and Loch Skene. It is accepted that route option 2a is most constrained environmentally, including in terms of potential landscape and visual sensitivities. The preferred route 2b, while avoiding the major settlements of Peterculter and Westhill in route 2c, includes the eastern part of the Dee Valley SLA. Careful routeing of the line will be needed to minimise effects on the special qualities of this designated landscape including the integrity of woodland on valley sides and	Please refer to Common Themes in Section 3.2 for further information on undergrounding. 4. Please refer to our response in Table 3.4 Environment Impact under heading Contaminated Land. 5. A response is provided in Table 3.4 Environment Impact under the heading Flooding and Water Resources. The information required by Aberdeenshire Council is noted and has been passed to our relevant project teams to inform ongoing project development. 7. Noise mitigation is a primary consideration within the OHL development process and noise surveys will be carried out with a noise impact assessment completed and reported in the EIAR. This will consider the existing noise levels, potential noise impacts from the proposed new infrastructure (for its construction and operation); cumulative noise impacts and consideration of any mitigation required. Private Water Supplies have been considered as part of the appraisals and consider to be factored into ongoing project development.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	along the river's banks and views and landscape perception experienced from recreational routes along the Dee. In terms of general mitigation, it is recommended that planting of trees, woodlands and hedgerows should be undertaken in the broad area of both route options 1b and 2b to help screen the proposal from roads and residential properties in advance of construction of the line. These measures would additionally enhance biodiversity and landscape character. There may also be a case for thorough consideration of undergrounding sections of the line to minimise effects on the most sensitive landscape and visual interests. <u>4. Contaminated land</u> • Corridors 1b and 2b, including tie-in areas encompass sites where potentially contaminative use has occurred. Corridor 1b contains three airfields: RAF Fordoun, RAF Edzell (WW1) and RAF Edzell (WW2 and afterwards). Should ground structures be proposed on, or cables be located underground at these locations, SEPA would be consulted. • Without an exact route and locations of transmission towers, and ground works/structures, requirements of investigations are difficult to give. Once a cable route has been decided upon, a Phase 1 site investigation should be carried out to identify those potentially contaminated sites that may impact development. • Discussion directly with Contaminated land to scope assessments required is encouraged. Though Edzell airfield is mentioned, Fordoun airfield is not. Both D1 and D1.1 routes cut through part of Fordoun airfield and therefore carries a risk of encountering contaminated land. This should be explored.	8. A response concerning prime agricultural land is provide in Table 3.5 Economic Impact under heading Agriculture and Farming. We note that with the change to the substation location (please refer to the proposed Fiddes 400kV Substation RoC, a link is set out in Section 1.2), it considers the OHL routeing will avoid interaction with the area around Fiddes which is noted for its association with Lewis Grassic Gibbon.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	5. Flood risk and coast protection • Details of SUDS measures proposed for access tracks, compounds and pylon areas will be required. Note regularly trafficked access tracks formed of gravel/hardcore are classed as impermeable as the surface becomes sealed over time. • Evidence should be provided that post-development run-off rates do not exceed existing run-off rates across any developed sites. • Information relating to the crossing methods of ditches, culverts and watercourses are affected by the construction works. Development and land raising should be avoided in areas of pluvial, fluvial and coastal flood risk, as identified by SEPA's indicative flood maps. Where this is unavoidable, flood levels to 0.5%AEP plus climate change allowance relevant to the area being studied are established by a survey of the site. SEPA's indicative mapped extents may be an over/underestimate due to modelling tolerances and/or changes to landform since survey. Roads Development No comments made.	

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	7. Environmental Health • The principle of the preferred corridor is agreed, however notes the 'high potential for the development to be constrained' in respect of proximity to dwellinghouses which is of concern in terms of noise impact. More detailed noise assessment will be required. It is not clear whether private water supplies have been considered when determining the preferred corridor. Clarity should be provided. 8. Other issues In terms of land use, the presence of prime agricultural land within routes is noted. Restoration of the land will be required and mitigation measures identified to reduce and avoid impacts. Core paths may require to be re-routed, this should be discussed directly with the Planning Service. It is noted that efforts have been made to avoid settlements, which is welcomed. As with any development, particularly one of this scale, there will be visual impacts from various receptors. Private Water Supplies should be considered within the route selection process and avoided. Where there will be interaction with PWS, mitigation measures will be required. You will be aware that members of the public have raised concerns about the Fiddes substation being located close to the home of Lewis Grassic-Gibbon, with the substation being located within view from the property. Although the OHL	

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	development does not appear to intersect the Grassic-Gibbon Centre, it could be the case that the effects of the development affect the overall setting of the area. The landscape is not designated for its cultural importance, however you are encouraged to bear this in mind and consider this when deciding upon a preferred route option.	
Angus Council	No further comments provided. Satisfied with approach to explain preferred route and corridor. No opinion is offered on the preferred route selected. It is understood that there is no perfect solution and each potential corridor or route will result in environmental impacts. The key issue is ensuring those impacts are minimised as far as is reasonably possible.	Noted.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	<u>Corridor selection</u> We are content that the methodology used so far to appraise the corridors for the OHL is adequately explained, however, as noted in our detailed comments in the annex below, more detailed assessment of impacts on the historic environment will be required to gain a clear understanding of the potential level of those impacts. The annex provided within the letter provides detailed comments about each corridor selection options and the historic environment assets within their remit that could be affected by the proposal and should be considered further in the development of the project.	This information has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development, with the points raised taken on board and further detailed appraisals undertaken to inform HES's understanding of the impacts. Please refer to the response provided in Table 3.4 Environmental Impact under heading Cultural Heritage.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Route selection We are content that the methodology used so far to appraise the corridors for the OHL is adequately explained, however, as noted in our detailed comments in the annex below, more detailed assessment of impacts on the historic environment will be required to gain a clear understanding of the potential level of those impacts. An annex provided: detailed comments about each corridor selection options and the historic environment assets within their remit that could be affected by the proposal and should be considered further in the development of the project.	
NatureScot	1. Protected Areas There are many protected sites that are within or adjacent to route options, including your preferred routes. There are several sites that are further from the proposed routes but due to the nature of their interests (primarily birds) may still be impacted by your proposals. Your mapping has identified all these sites and we would like to offer some comments at this pre-application stage to help ensure that as alignment decisions are made these interests can be fully taken into account and the potential impacts robustly assessed. Where alignment is unable to avoid direct or indirect effects on protected areas we are likely to object if these effects will be adverse and cannot be mitigated satisfactorily. We request that where alignment is unable to avoid protected areas that site specific plans detailing all aspects of construction, operation and maintenance and the mitigation needed to avoid adverse effects are produced.	1. This information has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Our approach to Designated Sites and Biodiversity is presented in Common Themes in Section 3.2 and in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. 2. We will continue to liaise with NS throughout the EIA process and seek to provide the information requested by NS as part of the consultation process on the EIAR. 3. Peat surveys are being undertaken to inform ongoing project development and will include areas within Sections E and F. It is anticipated that in some locations

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Operation and maintenance has potential to impact on protected areas for example ongoing wayleave management can impact habitats, and maintenance activity on towers or conductors could damage habitats and cause disturbance to species. A site specific plan for each protected area affected spanning the lifetime of the infrastructure will ensure that any impact is minimised to help avoid the risk of compromising the integrity of protected sites in the long-term. The table appended to the letter provides advice on individual protected areas. <u>2. Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA)</u> In order to carry out an HRA the competent authority must have sufficient details about all aspects of the proposal and how this will be carried out. Information should be gathered about the European sites that could potentially be impacted, including their qualifying interests and conservation objectives. Information about European sites is available on SiteLink. The definitive source for qualifying interests is: QUIL (Qualifying Interest List) for SACs, and Citation for SPAs (always use the SiteLink version and refer to the covering note where the citations await revision). Conservation objectives can be found on SiteLink either in the Conservation Advice Package (CAP), or as a separate conservation objectives document. CAPs also list the qualifying interests, their most recent assessed condition (and if unfavourable the reasons for this), and any recommended conservation measures. We are happy to continue engagement with SSE on the gathering and production of information to inform the HRA. An HRA proforma is available to help guide	areas of peat can be over-sailed by the OHL and towers and access tracks can be designed to avoid areas of deep peat, as far as possible. 4. We acknowledge NatureScot's Standing Advice and Enhancing Biodiversity guidance. Our approach to Protected Species and Biodiversity is presented in Common Themes, Section 3.2 and in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. 5. Noted.

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	competent authorities through the process and more information is available on our Habitats Regulations Appraisal webpages. 3. Peatland and carbon-rich soils Sections E and F include areas identified on our Carbon and Peatland 2016 mapping as nationally important peatland. Many of these sites are described on maps as 'Moss of…' indicative of their likelihood to contain peat forming vegetation. In addition to surveys helping to identify sensitive areas to avoid there may also be opportunities for peatland restoration as part of the project. A valuable source of information about peatland restoration is the Peatland ACTION project webpage. 4. Ecological and ornithological interests not associated with protected areas To help plan for other protected species and wildlife we have standing advice and guidance on minimising impacts on nature and securing the benefits that nature can provide available online. NPF4 sets out new requirements for development to deliver positive effects, primarily under Policy 3. We have advice and further links to guidance available on the Planning and development: Enhancing biodiversity page of the NatureScot website. 5. Landscape and visual interests All route options identified are likely to avoid impacts on National Scenic Areas and Wild Land Areas. Several Special Landscape Areas will be affected. NatureScot do	

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	not intend to offer advice on the effects on Special Landscape Areas as the respective local authorities are best placed comment on these.	
Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)	<u>Corridor Selection</u> We note the preferred OHL corridors 1b and 2b. In relation to our interests, we have no particular preference to the choice of corridors at this stage. However, in relation to corridors 1b and 2b we highlight the following factors that should be considered and may influence detailed design through them: • Potential radioactive contamination due to presence of former airfields at the following sites which may require additional contaminated land investigations if any excavations are proposed within 1km radius: Balhall – Airfield (NO 52009 62503), Balmain – Airfield (NO 64016 72000), Edzell WW1 – Airfield (NO 63000 70500), Edzell WW2 Airfield (NO 63000 69000), and Fordoun – Airfield (NO 75500 77500). • All routes have a relatively high number of Private Water Supplies along them with a particular concentration in the Howe of the Mearns from the coast to the western extent of Corridor 1a and north to Peterculter with the density similar in all corridors. Within corridor 2a there appear to be slightly fewer north of the Fiddes Tie-in to north over the R Dee at Peterculter. • There appear to be relatively few areas of potential deep peat in the preferred corridors 1b and 2b. We highlight the area of potential wetland northwest of Edzell (NO 64458 70772). • There are wide flood extents associated with several watercourses within the preferred OHL corridors including those associated with the River North Esk and tributaries north of Edzell, River Dee south of Peterculter and Leuchar Burn (SW of Westhill). Going forward no landraising or temporary construction compounds associated with the development should take place within these extents.	The information concerning Corridors and Routes has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. On going engagement with SEPA is welcomed and we acknowledge the offer to provide early advice on a draft layout with habitat survey data overlayed. This is appreciated and it will be provided once available. We can confirm that as part of the review following consultation Future Flood Maps have been used in the appraisals and this mapping along with climate change scenarios will be included in any flood risk assessment required in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22. Please also refer to the response provided in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under the heading Flooding and Water Resources.

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	We welcome reference to SEPA Flood Maps in the site selection process. However, it is unclear if the SEPA Flood Future Maps have been used which now include climate change in the flood extents shown. We will expect our Future Flood Maps to be used and climate change included in any flood risk assessment required in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22. Private Water Supplies (PWS) will need to be considered as the project progresses with the sources for PWS to be confirmed and considered in any future Environmental Assessment before final route selection. Whilst the potential radioactive contamination is unlikely to lead to us objecting in principle to any finalised route going through these areas, the cost and implication/mitigation requirements of any required land contamination assessments should be fully considered before final route selection. We welcome pre-application engagement, but please be aware that our advice at this stage is based on emerging proposals and we cannot rule out potential further information requests as the project develops. We look forward to further early engagement with yourselves as the project develops and when more information is known about the detailed layout. We would especially welcome the opportunity to provide advice on a draft layout once a habitat survey has been carried out. We encourage any regulatory matters to be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity.	

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	Further general scoping comments for linear projects are provided within an Appendix of the letter. <u>Route Selection</u> We note the preferred routes are A1 – F1 and we highlight the following factors that should be considered further and that may influence detailed design through them and or alternative route choices: • Section A – Tealing to Forfar - Preferred Route – A1: The northern part of the preferred (and only) route passes over the wide flood extent of the Dean water and its tributaries. We highly recommend detailed route alignment is directed as far south as possible to minimise works within the future flood extent. No landraising or temporary construction compounds should be undertaken/located within the flood extent. • Section B – Forfar to Brechin - Preferred Route B1: Similarly, the preferred B1 route passes over the wide flood extent of the South Esk for potentially 5 km. In this case we highlight there are fewer flood risk constraints for the alternative routes. Should route B1 be progressed, we highly recommend detailed route alignment is directed as far south as possible to minimise works within the future flood extent. No landraising or temporary construction compounds should be undertaken/located within the flood extent. • Section C – Brechin to Laurencekirk - Preferred Route C1: Route C1 appears to have fewer potential PWS issues. We recommend the ones at Little Thornton (NO73816 76098) and Whins (NO66150 70352), and their sources, are investigated further should this route be progressed. Route C1 appears to go through the wide flood extent of River North Esk – no landraising or temporary construction compounds should be located in this or any other flood risk area. • Section D – Laurencekirk to Fiddes - Preferred Route D1: Preferrable to locate 1km away from the former airfield at Fordoun, which appears possible, due to potential radioactive contamination - may require additional contaminated	

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	land investigations if any excavations are proposed within 1km radius. Route D1 appears to have fewer potential PWS issues. We recommend the one at Auchenzeoch (NO73816 76098), and its source is investigated further should this route be progressed. • Section E – Fiddes to River Dee - Preferred Route E1: We highlight there are many PWS along each route, with several south of River Dee between Muirskie and Denside and north of Rickarton on the Slug Road (A957) in reference to route E1. Avoidance being the first principle for potential areas of peat and wetlands – Avoid the blanket bog and any associated wetland centred around NJ 80979 93280. • Section F – River Dee to Kintore - Preferred Route F1: We highlight there are many PWS along each route, with several of north of the B9126 and many around the Mains of Drum in reference to route F1. With avoidance being the first principle in NPF4 for potential areas of peat and wetlands - Avoid the blanket bog and associated wetlands at NJ76376 11160 associated with Skene Moss, and Finey Moss (NJ 75693 12874) As stated in our previous response in relation to Corridor selection, we welcome reference to SEPA Flood Maps in the site selection process. However, it is unclear if the SEPA Flood Future Maps have been used which now include climate change in the flood extents shown. We will expect our Future Flood Maps to be used and climate change included in any flood risk assessment required in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22. Private Water Supplies (PWS) will need to be considered as the project progresses with the sources for PWS to be confirmed and considered in any future Environmental Assessment before final route/alignment selection in line with SEPA Guidance – please refer to Section 9 of the attached Appendix for further details. Please note the list of PWS identified above is not exhaustive.	

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	We welcome pre-application engagement, but please be aware that our advice at this stage is based on emerging proposals and we cannot rule out potential further information requests as the project develops. We look forward to further early engagement with yourselves as the project develops and when more information is known about the detailed layout. We would especially welcome the opportunity to provide advice on a draft layout once a habitat survey has been carried out. We encourage any regulatory matters to be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity. Further information regarding general scoping guidance is provided within the Appendix of the letter.	
Scottish Forestry	The first consideration for all woodland removal decisions should be whether the underlying purpose of the proposals can reasonably be met without resorting to woodland removal. In line with Scottish Government's wider objective to protect and expand Scotland's woodland cover, applicants are expected to develop their proposal with minimal woodland removal. Woodland removal should be allowed only where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits. Scottish Forestry advise the developer to consider the policies and strategies outlined in this letter when selecting routes and aligning the operating corridors within a preferred route.	This information has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Detailed woodland surveys have commenced, and data collected has been included in the appraisals. Surveys will continue to inform alignment development to avoid woodland removal as far as possible. Further information on the response to woodland, including compensatory planting can be found in Table 3.4 Environment Impact, under heading, Forestry and Woodland.

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	Scottish Forestry advises the developer to include a specific chapter on Forestry in future consultation documents and provide detailed information on the types and areas of forestry to be felled and restocked as a result of the proposed development. Detailed information on any compensatory planting proposals should also be provided. All felling, restocking and compensatory planting proposals must be compliant with the UK Forestry Standard.	
Scottish Water	<u>1. Drinking Water Protected Areas</u> A review of our records indicates that the proposed activity falls partly within two drinking water catchments 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. The River Dee (Inchgarth) supplies Mannofield Water Treatment Works (WTW) and the River Tay supplies Perth Gowans Terrace Water Treatment Works (WTW), therefore it is essential that water quality and water quantity in the area are protected. I can confirm the preferred route is likely to be of low risk to water quality given the location within the catchments, but it should be noted that all route options would encroach in these drinking water catchments and therefore once the route has been agreed, it would be useful to confirm this with us so we can liaise further to ensure water quality mitigations are robust. In particular we would prefer that any refuelling of vehicles and plant takes place out with the catchments and that there are specific mitigations in place to prevent and reduce the risk of hydrocarbon leaks and spills, as well as mitigations to collect any run of from wet weather events which could impact on water quality. An Annex was provided which includes information on precautions to protect drinking water and Scottish Water assets during development activities.	This information has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. We acknowledge the specific mitigation requirements raised to protect water quality. Our project teams will liaise with Scottish Water as the project develops to identify Scottish Water Assets. Plans will be obtained from the Asset Plan Providers and ongoing engagement will be undertaken to ensure Scottish Water Assets are protected.

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	2. Scottish Water Assets A review of our records indicates that there are multiple Scottish Water assets in the areas detailed. The assets and their importance should be confirmed through obtaining plans from our Asset Plan Providers. All Scottish Water assets potentially affected by the activity should be identified, with particular consideration being given to access roads and pipe crossings. If necessary, local Scottish Water personnel may be able to visit the site to offer advice. All of Scottish Water's processes, standards and policies in relation to dealing with asset conflicts must be complied with. An Annex was provided which includes information on precautions to protect Scottish Water assets during development activities.	
Transport Scotland	Transport Scotland would state that any requirement for the OHL to cross the trunk road will require to be discussed and agreed (through a technical process) with the Area Manager of the A90(T). There may be a requirement for public road improvements such as road widening, bridge reinforcements or installations of new junctions (bellmouths) for construction traffic and compounds. As indicated above, any proposed changes to the trunk road network must be discussed and approved (via a technical approval process) by the Area Manager.	Noted.

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Statutory Consultees – Community Councils		
Aberlemno and District Community Council	<u>Residents</u> • "Consultation" – some residents are still unaware of the project that is being proposed close to their homes. Some farmers and landowners have not been approached yet about usage of their land. Meetings were held outside the impacted hamlets with a distance that was untenable. The residents would like to know why alternatives to pylons were not fully addressed. There was not any indications of a "consultation" being carried out on the alternative routes or the siting of pylons. • Communities – resilience and support is given by our community as is security and safety which will be seriously challenged with the increase in movement of vehicles. • Health – not enough comprehensive research has been carried out to assess the dangers of an electromagnetic field on the health of residents. The data on 400kV pylons and OHL's is unavailable which may create issues in the future for families along with their current and future mental health. Diseases such as Asthma and COPD are triggered by stress, road construction, dust and pollution which may be in abundance. • Homes – residents are concerned with the potential drop in resale prices and that house purchasers won't be forthcoming. Pylons bring issues for everyone including some Financial Institutions which will measure the distance from pylons to homes before mortgages and loans can be secured. There is no compensation to address this issue. Residents already have 132kV pylons on one side of their homes and feel they will be surrounded by metal structures. • Views – some residents have chosen to move to the area to enjoy the beauty of the Angus Hills and the Hill of Angus. Tourism will be destroyed as pylons and OHL's are not acceptable to most potential visitors. • Noise, Pollution, Dust and additional Traffic – retirees and families living here can enjoy a slower pace of life with clean air, less pollution and fantastic views	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to the relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 for our responses to the concerns and issues raised: • Residents – Table 3.3 Community Impact. • Designated sites – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact. • Agriculture, farm machinery and biosecurity – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Communication signals – Table 3.3 Community Impact. • Flooding – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact. • Tourism and Local Business – Table 3.5 Economic Impact provides a response to concerns. We would urge those with specific circumstances to contact us to discuss further.

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	but these will be spoilt by 57 metre (average) high pylons and four years of construction. • Residents need assurances that access to homes and farms is maintained 24/7 and feel it should not be compromised at all. Narrow single track roads cannot sustain large STGO vehicles and additional concrete mixers. The roads already have potholes and further degradation to them and the verges will create problems for residents and visitors. The community needs assurance that the necessary repairs will be carried out in a timely manner should the project proceed. The residents also need assurance that SSEN will put plans in place to minimise noise pollution eg hours that HGV's are allowed to use the roads and the same with construction work. • Natural Environment – The South Esk river (special area of conservation) and the nature reserve is enjoyed by residents with a number of protected species in their natural habitat. Building work will destroy the habitat of ground nesting birds as will removing dykes, trees and hedges which may/may not be restored to their original state after the completion of works. The flight path of geese towards Montrose Basin comes overhead too which may be affected by the works, pylons and OHL's. <u>Farmers</u> • Land – prime agricultural land (8-9% left in Scotland) will be destroyed and out of use for approximately 4 years. Farmers are concerned that their livelihoods and food production will be eroded with land being taken for pylons. Tractors will no longer be able to be used near or under pylons with GPS signals blocked. New hardcore roads for access to pylons will take years to recover when removed and access will always be required for maintenance. This will limit the amount of farming and crop growing that can be carried out and will seriously affect food security.	Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and our <u>FAQ</u> for further information on: • Consultation • Health • Property Value • Undergrounding and Offshore We will continue to provide project updates and information on upcoming consultation events to Aberlemno and District Community Council.

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	• Diseases – Eelworms and Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN) can devastate potatoes that are grown in our area. These diseases are spread by people and vehicle movements. • Flooding and High Water Table - farmers are aware of the difficulties and challenges with flooding and the high water table in fields along the 'proposed' route of pylons. Flooding happens on a regular basis and any construction will have a further impact on what is already a flood plain. • Other considerations – there is an underground gas pipe which needs to be inspected regularly from the air which will be more difficult under pylons and OHL's. Telephone and Internet signals are already poor in the rural area and any disruption could endanger lives and create issues for homeworkers and businesses. A few properties use a private water source which may be disrupted and polluted during construction work. There is also a transformer and communication mast on one farmers land which must be taken into consideration, with further research carried out before the route is agreed. <u>Businesses</u> • Holiday Leisure Resort – the owner of the resort has built up his business again after it was impacted by COVID 19 and the Angus views are essential for potential and returning customers. During a 4 year construction period the business and number of customers could be decimated creating the loss of the business through no fault of the owner. Employment – a number of local people are employed at the leisure resort which will affect their jobs and with the cost of living increasing, losing jobs is a real problem. The owner of the resort purchases locally sourced items and advertises local businesses to tourists and customers.	

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	Residents believe that SSEN have grossly underestimated the impact of this project on them, their families, farmers, landowners and business owners in the area. The impact will not only be now and during the construction but for many years to come when SSEN have left. The residents would like consideration to be given to underground cables through the area or on the seabed and be kept up to date with progress. This will include the confirmed route in a timely fashion, prior to commencement of any works. Consultation has sadly been lacking with no meaningful dialogue so sending information and progress via Aberlemno and District community council would be welcome, then all residents can be made aware of it. The impression that has been given to residents at this stage is, priority given to reducing costs over communities, heritage, people, wildlife and jobs and the degradation of views, tourism, rural roads and prime agricultural land.	
Arbuthnott Community Council	We are writing to provide our formal objection to the proposed plan for a new electricity substation to be located in the Arbuthnott area (referred to in the literature as the 'Fiddes' substation), the overhead 400kV electricity line which will run through the Arbuthnott area, and all surrounding and related infrastructure which will run through the area of Arbuthnott and the Mearns. We have sought to summarise below the primary reasons for concern. It should also be noted that there have been significant deficiencies in the process for obtaining community feedback which raises concern that there are many people who are likely to be significantly affected by these proposals who still do not understand the full extent of them and have not had the opportunity to raise their concerns.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. We note that with the change to the Fiddes 400kV Substation location (please refer to Fiddes 400kV Substation RoC, a link is provided in Section 1.2), it considers the OHL routeing will avoid interaction with

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	[*The majority of this feedback relates to the Fiddes 400kV Substation and is included within the associated Fiddes 400kV Substation RoC along with SSEN Transmission responses. Please refer Fiddes Substation RoC for further information. The responses provided in this Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL RoC concentrate on concerns directly related to the OHL.*] <u>Tourism and the Grassic Gibbon Centre</u> The destruction of the local area will have an irreversible negative impact on the legacy of Lewis Grassic Gibbon and upon the operation of the Lewis Grassic Gibbon Centre. In addition, we would note that there are thriving holiday home businesses in the Arbuthnott area which also depend upon the touristic and historical interest in Lewis Grassic Gibbon, as well as the history of rural life and farming in the Mearns in particular, which will be severely affected by the proposals. You simply would not see industrialisation of this scale in other sites which are of a similar calibre - the birthplace of Shakespeare and the surrounding area of Straford, Dorset with its connection to Thomas Hardy, nor Wales re Dylan Thomas, nor the moors of Wuthering Heights nor Dartmoor re Hounds of the Baskerville. We could go on, but it is clear to us that this is one of Scotland's great literary and historical landmarks and should be conserved as such. There is no greater proposal for destruction than concreting the entire area and building an industrial substation. Described as a development, the community believe that in future, this development will be viewed as nothing short of vandalism. <u>Industrialisation of virgin land</u>	the area around Fiddes which is noted for its association with Lewis Grassic Gibbon. In recognition of Arbuthnot Community Council's response which objects to the surrounding OHL infrastructure in the wider Mearns area, please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 for our responses: • Agricultural Land – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Technology Choice – Section 3.2 Common Themes. • Construction Impacts – Table 3.3 Community Impacts. • Communication Signals – Table 3.3 Community Impacts. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the <u>FAQ</u> for further information on: • Building Closer to Electricity demand • Property and Land Value • Undergrounding and Offshore • Community Benefit • Consultation

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	The proposals will irreversibly damage our environment. Once the land is taken out of agricultural production and damaged so completely, it will never be possible to restore it. <u>Personal impacts on residents and the community</u> It appears that, on a direct scale, those who are being forced from their homes and businesses will lose out in real terms, as no compensation can be given which would recognise the enduring effect that the loss of the area and homes will have upon them. For those in the immediate vicinity but not directly in line for the construction site, the effect is arguably worse. The value of living in the Arbuthnott community is the rural nature of life – it is in the quiet, the views and the tranquillity. That will no longer be available to the neighbours of this monstrosity, and it is likely that there will be people stuck in unsellable homes as a result, without recourse to compensation. We would note that the windfarms which benefit from the natural capital of the Arbuthnott area are required to feedback to the community by way of grants and financial support. There is no such proposal for this development. <u>Significant impact on farming</u> The amount of prime agricultural land being taken up by the OHL and substation is significant and will have an overall impact on the yield achieved by our farmers. As prime agricultural land, the Mearns and Arbuthnott areas provide the highest of yields in terms of crops and food production in the UK. There is also concern that	

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	the electrical lines will interfere with modern technology such as GPS equipment, which will inhibit the farming sector`s ability to progress with more efficient and modern forms of farming in future.  SSEN`s own grading process marks the impact of the substation and overhead pylons on agriculture as “medium”. It is hard to see how there could be a worse impact than building a 120 acre substation and all associated infrastructure on prime agricultural land. <u>Subsea cables, underground cables and other options</u> Our community's strong view is that this technology should remain where it does not impact on land use and should be taken from the point of generation to the point of use as directly as possible. This means (i) increased use of underground and subsea cabling, (ii) building substations underground/building them into the ground, within existing (plantation) forests, moorlands or other features which naturally shield the infrastructure while having no impact on food security, and (iii) building closer to existing urbanized and industrialised areas where there is a greater need for electricity. Our community's strong view is that the electricity should be diverted South via subsea cables and taken on land at a more appropriate juncture, closer to demand and where a substation and associated infrastructure can be appropriately accommodated. We would note that previous lines and substations running North to South have been built in mountainous and forested areas to the West of Arbuthnott and the Mearns and we fail to understand why it is now necessary to build this infrastructure upon the flat areas both at the foot of, and the top of, the hills and valleys in the Mearns area where they will have greatest impact.	

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	We understand from discussions with SSEN that the technology is available for all of the above options, and we have received no explanation (other than economical factors and technical complications with crossing SSEN's own existing lines) as to why this is not being more widely considered. <u>Outdated technology</u> There are also concerns within the community that the technology being proposed is already out of date and will be significantly out of date by the time it is built. If we are reaching the limit of what can be done on land (installing new substations and OHLs while avoiding all existing infrastructure), then what happens next? Will every corner of our countryside be filled with concrete and metal? There is also a concern that the technology proposed (overhead lines) is proposed simply based on economic grounds – ie the “cheap option”. There are concerns that the economic case is being relied upon heavily by SSEN but the economics behind the decision making is not being shared publicly. <u>Lack of mitigation</u> Unfortunately, we are yet to see any realistic proposal for mitigation in Arbuthnott.	

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	<u>Lack of consultation</u> There has been real concern throughout the community about the consultation process. In addition, there has been a withholding of information about the proposals for connections to offshore windfarms, which has meant that people cannot assess the possible future impact of the development as a whole. There is no information on the impact of noise or of traffic. There are concerns that the electricity lines will interfere with phone signals (in an area which already struggles with connectivity), emergency signals (such as beacons for those on the coast) and air ambulances (which often land in Arbuthnott when attending RTCs on the A90 and A92). None of those concerns are mentioned (or refuted, if SSEN believe them to be unfounded) in the literature. The timescale for consultation has been short and has overlapped with a progression of work on the basis of the proposals. Residents have on the one hand been asked for their views on the undetermined and proposed site, and on the other been told there is a 95% chance their home will be compulsorily acquired. They have been told that the line of the pylons is not yet determined, but at the same time have watched SSEN personnel accessing their land to mark out and survey the route. They have been told to contact an email address which was unmanned. They have been confused by references to the upgrading of the existing infrastructure with this proposal for new infrastructure caused by two separate projects co-existing in the same area. Overall, there is a feeling within our community that the consultation has been a farce, that the chosen routes and sites are incorrect and based upon profit at any cost and that the project will be pushed ahead at speed without any real	

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	consideration for the serious longterm consequences at all levels. The strong feeling is that the development as proposed must be stopped.	
Brechin Community Council	The first notice of this intended work was the event in Brechin City Hall on 9th May. No previous information was given on these proposals which we found disturbing given the large scale works involved over a substantial period of years. We have consulted wherever possible but still have members of the public unaware of the issue. While the period for consultation was extended it is still not an acceptable period to fully canvass for opinions. Your impact ratings for all, or most of the suggested routes, imply that you to not consider that the Power lines will have little or no impact on settlements, and that Visually they will be moderate. You are blatantly ignoring local opinions. Our rural areas are well known for the supply of well known produce not just locally, but national as well as internationally. Most of the ground is Prime agricultural rating and the loss of a substantial part to pylons and other equipment is totally unacceptable. We know that in previous decades major oil/gas and water pipelines have been buried and while there is a temporary inconvenience, restored ground is normally acceptable and workable. You state that a corridor width of up to 50m may be required, but this did not hinder any of the aforementioned pipelines. We understand from online comments that you complain that the cost of undergrounding is a major factor. This appears to ignore the substantial losses to be incurred by our farmers in reduced produce. You state that trees are not	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact • Agricultural Land – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Undergrounding and Offshore • Consultation

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	acceptable against pylons, nor presumably for underground cables, yet our Scottish Government is pushing for more to be planted. Against this is the obvious scenic disturbance when we consider that Tourism is a major draw within our areas which will be turned into Industrial landscape. In addition, once any power source is achieved, we will have a major Cumulative effect of Wind Turbines feeding into the Scheme. None of these bode well for both our Farming and Tourism users. Of course, we do have the added problem of local residents who normally wish to stay away from the masses of the larger cities. Your suggested preferred routes are only acceptable if cables are buried, or even laid using a new route of being buried at sea. We understand from our adjacent Community Council– Inveresk – that certain innovative uses of existing power centres should be considered in this regard. As to the need for all this additional power, the headlong rush into Net Zero, electrification as opposed to the use of our existing infrastructure, is a whole book in the making.	
Catterline, Kinneff and Dunnottar	We would like to note our reservation to the process, the time that has been applied (we were only informed for the first time regarding the proposal on the 10th May), the overall lack of information and if this project would be future proof based on many years to come for increasing electricity demand? Further information regarding the inability to use existing infrastructure or alternative technology is required.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	It is unclear how the potential routes were chosen and the reasons for it.	Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Project Need • Undergrounding and Offshore • Technology Choice • Consultation Regarding the choice of routes and supporting reasons for the choice, the corridors that were identified for the Kintore to Tealing 400kV OHL project were driven by the network need and the other aspects of the East Coast 400kV Phase 2 Upgrade project that together contribute to the full scheme. Documents were published in May 2023 that explained the corridor selection process[4] and the route selection process[5]. The approach to corridor and route selection

[4] Consultation Document Corridor Selection: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/east-coast-phase-2-may-2023-docs/ohl-consultation-doc/consultation-document-corridor-selection---kintore-fiddes-tealing-400kv-ohl-connection-090523.pdf.

[5] Consultation Document Route Selection: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/projects/east-coast-phase-2-may-2023-docs/ohl-consultation-doc/consultation-document---route-selection-may-2023.pdf.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
		was informed by our Procedures for Routeing and Underground Cables[6].
Crathes Drumoak and Durris Community Council	We are objecting to the OHL proposal through any of the communities as we feel there are suitable alternatives available that would have far less impact on people, our wildlife and the countryside and these have to be used instead. The feedback we are receiving favours either transferring the proposal to a subsea cable or indeed going underground, both of which we appreciate will involve significant work and potentially more cost but the additional cost when broken down given the money that the line will return for SSEN and the energy producers is actually very minor. We believe that SSEN have to push back to National Grid on their demands to have this line running on shore in the first instance but also investigate undergrounding further. We want to acknowledge that the installation of such OHL's will have a negative financial impact on property and land within the surrounding area, and it would appear that there would be no compensation for this, clearly, we don't want to see a situation where this happens and therefore a subsea cable or underground line makes even more sense. Surely SSEN can't be in favour of a situation that could create circumstances where home / landowners end up with land or property that is valued at lower value than it is currently and in turn leaves them in negative equity unable to move or sell and left in an undesirable place to live.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Wildlife and biodiversity – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. • Local Business – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on:

[6] SSEN Transmission Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines of 132kV and above (updated in September 2020 to include underground cables of 132kV and above). PR-NET-ENV-501.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Aside from the financial impacts on our community, concerns have also been flagged to us on the impacts that OHL's have visually on our beautiful countryside. An OHL running through the countryside would create various issues that could be avoided if the line was to be put offshore or underground, like many of the oil and gas pipes that run through our community. Whilst we appreciate that some infrastructure will be required at set distances if the line was to be undergrounded, we also acknowledge that the regularity and number of these inspections areas would be far less than the number of pylons and therefore clearly a better option for the area, even better if the line was to be laid as a subsea one, where it would be invisible. As a region which has a significant range of wildlife within it, the impact by installing an OHL is unthinkable. Given that there is evidence of animal avoiding areas where OHL's are introduced, we would be devastated to see our community area divided up even further by another OHL which could result in the loss of more wildlife in the area. We know that an underground line would cause significant disruption during installation but as the ground would be restored post construction, wildlife would return and could carry on as normal, a situation that is unlikely with an OHL, due to noise and vibration etc. Again, a subsea cable could avoid this. We know there are multiple examples of other proposed OHL's now being run underground or going subsea around the country due to consultation responses and pushback from the community and it appears our residents are very much in favour of this happening in this situation too.	• Undergrounding and Offshore • Property and Land Value

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	A local business operating in our area, is actually doing trenching work for SSEN north of Aberdeenshire and has indicated they'd be delighted to work with you on doing the same for this line. The same organisation actually has an abundance of product sat within our community that is used within the trenches to support the cables, and what a great news story it would be to see a local contractor awarded with the work and the product used rather than ending up as one big pile of landfill which it may become.	
Culter Community Council	Our community recognises that further infrastructure to support green energy is needed. People in this area would love to see a thorough and robust assessment of: the likely range of total power needing to be transferred; the technical options available to do that– e.g. OHL, subsea, buried cables – and the possible routes to be followed by each option, the assessment placing appropriate weighting on environmental impacts, on community impacts, on technical aspects, and of course on overall costs (not just those borne by SSEN). We regret that we have not seen anything like this to date. <u>Consultation process</u> We are not aware of any attempt to contact Culter Community Council prior to 23 July, even though SSEN's own maps clearly indicate the City-Shire boundary, and SSEN have previously consulted Aberdeen City Council Planning. In the area we represent, SSEN failed to make any reasonable attempt to publicise the consultation in a timely manner. Even into July, after both the initial closing date and then the first extension of time had lapsed, many in our area had only heard of the proposed power line in the previous week or so, and not from SSEN but usually through community social media.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Wildlife and biodiversity – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. • Flooding – Table 3.4, under heading Flooding and Water resources. • Local Business – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	The presentation SSEN brought along was limited to the specific proposed routes for a 400kV overhead power line (OHL), and the SSEN team were very reluctant to address questions about anything other than the route selection for an OHL. SSEN gave a very clear impression that the time had passed for considering the method of transmission (OHL, buried, and subsea were raised by attendees), repeatedly saying that they had done all the required work on holistic network design. This shows that the 2023 consultation is being held too late (probably by a year) and is raising the wrong question (where should an OHL run, rather than selection of the method of transmission). SSEN were asked what they would do if the feedback were indeed entirely negative; SSEN's response seemed to be that they would just press on with the current proposals. It was no surprise to us that a number of attendees asked whether SSEN were in fact serious about consulting those affected by their proposals. <u>Assessment of transmission options</u>	• Socio-economic Impact – Table 3.3 Community Impact and Table 3.5 Economic Impact. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the <u>FAQ</u> for further information on: • Undergrounding and Offshore • Technology Choice • Consultation In addition to the information contained above, we note the Community Council considers the transmission selection method should have been consulted on prior to the OHL technology choice being taken forward. The energy regulator, Ofgem (see Section 3.2 Common Themes), undertook consultation[7] and approved the need for the proposed project as part of the Pathway to 2030[8]. As the overarching driver for the Pathway to 2030 projects and the assessment of its need from both an

[7] Ofgem Consultation on accelerating onshore electricity transmission investment: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/consultation-accelerating-onshore-electricity-transmission-investment.

[8] ESO The Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design: https://www.nationalgrideso.com/future-energy/pathway-2030-holistic-network-design.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	The assertion SSEN have made that subsea cable would be too expensive therefore looks very odd in light of the Peterhead-Drax announcement. The impression created is that for speed, SSEN has worked up a quick-fix adjustment of the Holistic Network Design, rather than a thorough bottoms-up review of the entire network looking at total capacity needed across the entire system through time. In the case of buried lines, SSEN declared that operating and maintenance (O&M) costs would be far higher, and quoted various examples of why this would be. Attendees challenged this, pointing out that for instance, subsea power-line monitoring technology has improved immeasurably over the past 50 years. SSEN were requested at the meeting to confirm that the decision to commit to an OHL, and through a generally rural area which is actually fairly-densely populated with businesses and commuter homes because of proximity to Aberdeen, and increasingly looking to encourage tourism, was indeed tested with senior SSEN management (probably Director level) and not left just to the project team. SSEN representatives at the meeting confirmed they would do this. Further, SSEN were asked to provide the SSEN technology study that reviewed the technology selection resulting in OHLs, and their review of how other developed countries are dealing with similar developments. SSEN were also requested to provide the SSEN and SSE economic model, and what input costs were being used to represent the socio-economic and environmental impact that residents and the countryside will have to bear should this scheme proceed. <u>Assessment of OHL route options</u>	electricity system and regulatory perspective are not within our control, we were unable to consult on the need for the 2030 network development plans.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	There are a number of features in the area within the City boundary where the primarily desktop and digital assessment does not appear to have been 'supported by initial site visits', as a number of the Red-Amber-Green (RAG) allocations look very odd in the light of local knowledge. The following features have been explained in detail in comments sent in by local residents and occupiers, and in the case of bird populations, by RSPB; the list below is a summary: • bird populations including greylag geese, red kites, pink-footed geese, goldeneye, goosander and others, many of which fly north-south – along the preferred F routings - between Loch of Skene and the Anguston area (the RAG assessments include a false assumption that the birds travel eastwest) • populations of deer, badger and smaller wildlife populations do not appear to have been included in the assessments • the RAG assessments do not appear to have taken any account of the three Local Nature Conservation Sites on the preferred route • all F1 routings would pass above Aberdeen Riding Club (ARC), which is a sensitive site both for the horses they hold and particularly a proportion of their clientele, with threats both during construction and in operation. In addition use of a publicly-accessed track around ARC would be affected • frequent flooding near the Gormack Burn • there are listed buildings under all F1 routings • there are two major gas pipelines and probably also an oil pipeline in the areas covered by the proposed routes. SSEN appear to have minimal information on these lines • there is a National Rendezvous Point located at a site which is a registered heliport. The assessments appear to be silent on these points.	

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	There are understandable suspicions being voiced that the RAG assessments were instead compiled, probably in some haste, to support SSEN's corporately-preferred solution.	
Echt and Skene Community Council	On behalf of our communities we object to the proposal for installation of a new 400kV OHL from Kintore to Tealing. Phase 1 of the East Coast 400 kV Upgrade project is underway at the moment with the upgrade of the western OHL south of Kintore from 275kV to 400kV, and we haven't seen anything from SSEN that demonstrates that an equivalent upgrade of the eastern OHL is not equally feasible. An upgrade of the second existing 275kV OHL would certainly be preferable to the proposed installation of an additional OHL with monster pylons. We understand that SSEN believes there is a need for greater capacity than that which could be delivered by an upgrade of the existing OHL, but we consider any shortfall could and should be made up by increasing the capacity of the proposed offshore HV link from Peterhead to Northern England. Alternatively, if there is no alternative to a new 400kV onshore link, then it should be put underground. Undergrounding of transmission lines is common practice in other countries such as Germany, for example, and this would avoid the adverse environmental impacts that an OHL inevitably entails such as ecological, landscape, noise and electromagnetism. A number of high pressure gas pipelines already cross our community council area underground and cause no material issues for the farmers whose land they lie under, or for the general public, who are largely unaware of their presence. There is every reason to believe that underground electricity cables would be equally unnoticeable once laid.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report on Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Wildlife and biodiversity – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. • Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact. • Upgrade of Existing Eastern 275kV OHL – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Undergrounding and Offshore • Health

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	We don't believe SSEN has adequately accounted for the adverse impacts of its current proposal and a major re-think is required to find a less intrusive solution that can win acceptance from North East communities.	In addition to the information contained above, we note the Community Council's point on upgrading the existing 275kV rather than installing new 400kV infrastructure. The existing 275kV network is still needed to connect large quantities of smaller scale renewable generation (such as onshore windfarms, hydro schemes, and battery/solar PV energy parks) and to also transfer power to local demand centres within our license area. The new 400kV infrastructure is needed to enable significant power transfer capability to take power from large scale offshore renewable generation (connecting under ScotWind off the coast of Aberdeen) and transport this power to demand centres in England.
Errol Community Council	The proposed OHL has no impact on the Errol Community Council area. Thus, ECC has no comment to make.	Noted.
Feughside Community Council	We wish to object for the following reasons: <u>Land use</u> The Kintore - Tealing pylon line is proposed to be built on land capable of supporting arable agriculture and mixed agriculture as defined by the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute. We feel that local food production and food security	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	is an important aspect of the climate change discussion and that productive arable land should not become industrialised. Infrastructure We are concerned about reports that the steel for the pylons will be manufactured in China using coal fired technologies. Aligned with this are concerns regarding the amount of trees and ancient peat lands that have been/ will be destroyed to make way for the infrastructure. Economic effect of industrialisation of the landscape The area is rich in wildlife, heritage and wild landscape. Industrialisation will negatively impact all those who live and work in the area. We would like to see newer and less intrusive technologies explored. Whilst we understand that underground and an offshore grid will be more expensive to achieve, we don't feel that the present climate crisis should be an opportunity for companies to make large profits to the detriment of the local communities who will bear the brunt of the negative impact. Health and welfare We have concerns regarding noise and vibrations associated with such large scale projects. The health of residents who live near to the 40 acre Wester Balbair electricity substation is well documented. The 500 acre substation site near to Peterhead and the 120 acre site proposed for The Mearns will no doubt greatly impact the health and well-being of all those living nearby.	Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Agricultural Land – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Woodland – Table 3.4 Environment Impact. • Construction Impacts and Noise – Table 3.3 Community Impacts. • Contaminated Land and Soils (Peat) – Table 3.4 Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Undergrounding and Offshore • Property and Land Value • Technology Choice • Sustainability • Health

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
Glamis and Area Community Council	There is a general appreciation of the need to reconfigure the UK's power grid. However, it is noted that the Corridor selection appears to have already taken place thereby compromising the use of the term consultation in its case. This has been unfortunate as having been begun from a position of general understanding, this seems to have needlessly alienated residents. The Net Zero timetable is one that has been artificially created, and so should extra resource be required further into the project in order to be completed on time then this would seem appropriate, instead of the iniquitous situation where shortcuts in consultation provision are taken with those who are going to be most affected. The answer to this question [provision of sufficient information] has largely depended on whether a resident has had sight of the information. It is a pity to report that thus far this has been a failing in the project. As an example, while most residents in Kirkton of Kinnettles initially received no communications, one elderly resident felt her singling out for a specific named communication regarding access to their garden for survey and possible infrastructure work caused real alarm and distress. Haphazard and inconsistent communication has been a characteristic of residents' experience with the project. Thus far there appears to be next to no information on how the project will assess health concerns. The CC understands the Seagreen project was specifically rerouted away from a school due to health factors. This would suggest there are reasonable concerns to be addressed and yet documentation around this appears lacking. It has proved a source of irritation to be handing out project brochures and informing residents when this should have been adequately undertaken by SSEN. As previously referred, the approach to not consult on the Corridor selection, but instead combine it with the Route consultation phase has not gone down well with residents. This feeling of alienation further exacerbated by physical survey works being observed already underway on the ground.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact. • Wildlife and biodiversity – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. • Tourism and Local Business – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Agricultural Land and Biosecurity – Table 3.5 Economic Impact. • Socio-economic Impact – Table 3.3 Community Impact and Table 3.5 Economic Impact. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Consultation

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	There is a strong argument to suggest that pylons against an elevated background are less visually intrusive to more people than those in a more open area where the pylons are viewed in silhouette against the sky. Due to the shortened nature of this combined consultation, there has been no explanation as to methodologies around judgements portrayed in the charts. The inconsistent way in which it seems communications have thus far been undertaken to potentially affected residents does suggest that things are being missed. Up to 31st May a Community Council representative personally visited 16 Douglastown houses NOT ONE of which had heard of the project. Similar results were experienced in Kirkton of Kinnettles. It also seems appropriate to report that confusion and distress was caused by it being a CC representative providing this notification and not SSE itself. The proposed Corridor and various Route options pass through an area of Prime Agricultural land where Corridor and Route selections could have used land of lower classifications. There is always a trade off, but a decision to degrade a resource which in total occupies somewhere less than 8% of the total land mass of Scotland should not be taken lightly. A saving in one budget today can end up being a net loss to the Country in the future. In contrast to other route selections which occupy scenic areas, while Scotland is blessed with large areas of glen, heather, and mountain, there is only one Howe of the Mearns and one Vale of Strathmore. These are iconic parts of Scotland lived in and travelled through by significant numbers of residents and visitors year round. The Vale of Strathmore also provides the context within which Glamis Castle and the village is seen by the large numbers of visiting tourists. While we believe this	In addition to the information contained above, we note the Community Council's point on the combined corridor and routeing consultation approach. We confirmed in the Consultation Documents (see links provided in Section 1.4 of this Report) that it was undertaking a combined Corridor and Route Consultation for the Kintore-Fiddes-Tealing 400kV OHL Connection project, due to the accelerated delivery programme that is required to achieve the UK and Scottish Government 2030 targets. It was also confirmed that the feedback on the preferred corridor consultation exercise will be assessed independently of the fact that the project has progressed to the routeing stage. If the corridor is changed because of the corridor consultation exercise, the route selection process may have to be revisited. In this instance, there was no feedback or further information obtained from the consultation process that would necessitate a change from the preferred corridor.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	may be the third most visited tourist area in Scotland, it is certainly the largest attraction within Angus. Within the tourism sector what is known as 'bed nights' are a critical component and so of specific concern are holiday cottages in Kirkton of Kinnettles which currently host visitors to the area. There is also the view that the listings designations within Kirkton of Kinnettles are not complete, and those that are shown are believed to be inaccurate. Whist these have been specifically highlighted; it must leave the obvious concern about similar omissions elsewhere within the CC area. The areas of Prime Agricultural land covered by the selected Corridor and proposed Route options are largely underpinned by potato production. PCN, more commonly known as 'Eelworm', is transmitted by persons and vehicles/machinery crossing contaminated ground and poses a serious threat to this industry. Devastating is a strong word, but in a sector for whom cereals are in most cases simply a break crop between potatoes which are the only crop providing a meaningful return, this is an appropriate term for the likely effects should poor biosecurity cause this pathogen to spread down the Howe. Sub-contractors tend to be awarded work because they submit the cheapest quote and unfortunately experience has shown that in order for margins to be made that corners are often cut. The actions of sub contractors around communications and bird surveys suggest this is already taking place in this project. This can be remedied but will require action by SSEN. There is a strong case to suggest that public goods should be at public and not private expense.	
Mearns Community Council	We are writing to state our formal objection to the proposed plan for a new electricity substation to be sited in the Mearns area and to the overhead 400kV electricity line which will run through the Mearns area, and all surrounding and related infrastructure which will run through the wider area of the Mearns.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	It is thought that your consultation has been rushed and many people have not yet had the opportunity to voice their concerns. This especially true for those people who do not have access to computers. Many, many people in this area are extremely concerned about this proposal which will have a detrimental effect on quality of life. • Visual Impact – these pylons will alter the natural beauty and landscape aesthetics of the area. This will affect tourism causing loss of income to local businesses. • Environment – The construction and installation of these pylons will require clearing of vegetation causing disruption to natural habitats and ecosystems. • Noise and Electromagnetic Fields – Pylons can generate electromagnetic fields and produce humming sounds. This will have ongoing impact on native wildlife. There is also concern that the compensation offered will not address the true cost of loss of property rights and any associated damages. The biggest issue we have is that there are alternatives to these pylons. They could be underground, or they could be subsea. We need an explanation as to what benefit the substation and pylons will bring to this area. Given that this proposal will carry power down south, the substation and pylons should be sited down south.	The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact. • Construction Impact and Noise – Table 3.3 Community Impact. • Wildlife and biodiversity – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Consultation • Health • Undergrounding and Offshore • Property and Land Value • Community Benefit
St Cyrus Community Council	I want to formally register objection on behalf of the residents of St Cyrus to the proposed overhead line from Kintore to Tealing and the associated substations. The main concerns raised are in relation to the environment and road traffic impact during development and a suggestion that subsea cabling is already in place and it is not clear why that is not in scope for this project.	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
		The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to the following parts of this Report and Section 3.2 Common Themes for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Wildlife and biodiversity – Table 3.4 Environmental Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. • Road Traffic – Table 3.3 Community Impact. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ for further information on: • Undergrounding and Offshore
Strathmartine Community Council	I am writing to formally register our objections to the proposed overhead line from Kintore to Tealing and the associated substations. Please consider this letter as an official record of the Strathmartine Community Council members we have over 100 residents so far signed up to this objection.	Confirmation of the numbers of objectors to the proposed OHL project has been noted.
Westhill and Elrick Community Council	The pink zone for the preferred corridor on the Route Options - Section F Plan impacts on a residential area and important woodland within the WECC boundaries. Many residents within our area will be directly impacted by visual impact from their homes. All residents will be affected by visual impact when out and about. It is therefore extremely disappointing that WECC received no communication of any form from you. We have become aware of the project through other avenues such as local residents getting in touch to express concern that it hadn't been on our agenda. It would appear that even householders who	Feedback from communities is carefully considered at every stage of the project development process and, where possible, acted upon. The concerns raised and information provided have been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	live near the proposal did not receive notification of the information session in Kirkton of Skene. Given that WECC has not been properly notified, we are concerned that other residents might be unaware and therefore suggest that you extend the 23rd June deadline. WECC is very concerned about the visual impact of the proposal from our community and within the surrounding countryside which is enjoyed by all. In particular the visual impact of the pylons against the backdrop of the Dee Valley and the hills surrounding it, will be detrimental to everyone, both residents and visitors to the area. WECC believes that the line will have an adverse effect on saleability and value of residential properties at the western edge of our community. WECC feels that the transmission lines should be underground for reasons of both visual impact and resilience. WECC is very conscious that recent weather events in the northeast of Scotland have led to widespread and very prolonged power cuts due to lines coming down. The impact of similar, or potentially worse, weather events in the future causing damage to this line will be far more serious and widespread given the strategic nature of the proposal. Communities and businesses well beyond the area would be affected. We question whether you and any operators that this line will supply would have the resources on the ground in so many places simultaneously to be able to support customers who have lost their supply whilst at the same time repairing the damage. A true cost benefit analysis should be done to assess this.	Please refer to the following parts of this Report for our responses to the concerns and issues you have raised: • Landscape and Visual Landscape and Visual – Table 3.3 Community Impact. Please also refer to the Common Themes in Section 3.2 and the FAQ further information on: • Consultation • Undergrounding and Offshore • Property and Land Value In addition to the information contained above, we note the Community Council's points on resources to address future power cuts from storm events. Most of the damage in storm events and particularly those affecting the Northeast of Scotland in recent years, has occurred to low voltage distribution OHLs and not the larger high voltage OHLs, such as those being proposed. However, maintenance and our response to storm events and infrastructure repair is a key consideration as part of the project development and operation.

Organisation	Statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	We note from paragraph 2.3 of the Consultation Document that an Onshore Underground Cable appears to have been dismissed at desktop stage without a proper technical, environment, whole cost/benefit assessment. The issue of resilience mentioned above is not mentioned at all in this superficial assessment and dismissal of the option. This is a major flaw in the project proposals and should be addressed.	

Table 3.2 Non-statutory Consultee Feedback

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
Dee District Salmon Fishery Board (DDSFB) - Aberdeenshire	The Dee has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation under the EC Habitats Directive 92/43 EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna for Atlantic salmon (the principal species for which it receives this designation). The Dee District also supports populations of trout, eels and brook, river, and sea lampreys. Sea trout, common to all the rivers within the Dee District, are a priority species under the United Kingdom's Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). All lamprey species are protected under the EC Habitats Directive whilst river and sea lampreys are additionally protected under the UKBAP priority list. Eels are a UKBAP priority species, critically endangered under the IUCN red list and protected under CITES. One of the key pressures identified in the strategy [Scottish Government's Wild Salmon Strategy] is instream and riparian habitat, with the loss of natural riparian woodland having the potential to impact salmon through increase temperatures and have other detrimental impacts.	The information provided has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. We acknowledge the sensitivity of the River Dee SAC and particularly where the OHL crosses the River Dee at Sections E and F. Careful, routeing of this section will be undertaken to minimise effects. Our approach to Designated Sites and Biodiversity is presented in Common Themes, Section 3.2 and in Table 3.4 – Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites.

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Assessment of the juvenile salmon stocks in the Dee through the National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) has evaluated juvenile stocks in the Dee as Grade 2, suggesting that there are significant issues with recruitment and survival within the catchment (Malcolm et al 2020). The Dee DSFB welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation and does neither support nor object. However, we request that the route selection doesn't impact the Dee SAC, its habitats and its connected floodplain. In particular the riparian habitats and woodland associated with the River Dee SAC and its tributaries at Sections E and F. Where there is any impact to the riparian habitats and woodland associated with the River Dee SAC and its tributaries we would expect there to be an appropriate offset mitigation proposed and would be pleased to discuss this further with SSEN.	We welcome the opportunity to discuss offset mitigation and would be keen to engage with the DDSFB as we move forward to alignment development.
JRC Windfarm - Joint Venture between Energy Networks Association and National Grid	Unfortunately, the JRC have been unable to assess the impact of the project on local link infrastructure. On these grounds JRC objects to the proposed development.	The information provided has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. We will consult JRC Windfarm at the next stage and provide further details to enable you to undertake an assessment on the impact of the project on local link infrastructure.

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
National Grid - Electricity	No detailed feedback provided. There are no National Grid Electricity Transmission assets that would be affected in the area.	Noted.
National Gas	The consultation was forwarded by the National Grid Electricity Transmission team to National Gas Transmission team (who are no longer part of National Grid Group).	Noted.
National Trust for Scotland (NTS)	We have a specific concern about the potential impact on Drum Castle, its Garden and Designed Landscape, and on the wider woodland, the Old Wood of Drum. This woodland is a rare survival of medieval oak pasture but urgently needs to be regenerated. We are in the process of considering land acquisition in this area which would help ensure the future of this asset. In particular we have grave concerns regarding the proposed corridor options, F1, F1.1 and F1.2, where proximity to the overhead line would be unacceptable to Drum Castle and the wider woodland. We have less concerns about F2, though proximity to Crathes Castle and its Garden and Designed Landscape is also noted. Your main consultation document only refers to Drum as an issue in relation to the F2 route, which we don't understand. For the avoidance of doubt, F1, F1.1 and F1.2 is certainly an issue to Drum Castle and the wider woodland. We would welcome a meeting to discuss the routing as it approaches Drum Castle in particular to better understand the proposals and explain our own ambitions.	The information provided has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. We completed Cultural Heritage appraisals to inform the consultation. Following consultation, the feedback received, including that provided by NTS, has been used to undertake further appraisal work to further understand the concerns around Drum Castle Garden and Designed Landscape. Please refer to the response provided in Table 3.4 – Environmental Impact, under heading, Cultural Heritage. We met with NTS at Drum Castle on 5 September 2023 and committed to future ongoing meetings.
NATS Safeguarding	The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS (En	Noted.

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
(National Air Traffic Services)	Route) Public Limited Company ("NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal.	
National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS)	<u>NFU Scotland</u> • Where possible, prime agricultural land to be avoided. Using lower value land would reduce the impact of taking prime, high value agricultural land out of production. • Consider using field margins or boundaries for any infrastructure. This would minimise the agricultural impact. Avoid, where possible, separating farms into small parcels of land, ultimately making them unviable.	The information provided has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. Please refer to Table 3.5 – Economic Impact. The responses provided in Table 3.5 provide information in response to NFUS's concerns in this consultation feedback.
	<u>NFUS North East Scotland (Regional Manager)</u> We have never received any information to inform us about any of these consultation events. No adequate explanation for choosing a route which affects prime agricultural land as opposed to alternative routes has been given. We require provision of the full reasoning why alternative routes with less visual impact on the landscape and less negative effect upon agriculture have been ruled out? Also, as said earlier, there is a real requirement for provision of photo montages (strangely missing from the consultations). Our members consider that insufficient information has been provided by SSEN in their decision to deliberately choose route options which significantly affect	The Consultation Documents (see links provided in Section 1.4 of this Report) contain information on the landscape and visual impacts of the route options and further information on the response to landscape concerns can be found in Table 3.3 – Community Impact. At future consultation events additional visual material will be provided to assist stakeholders in understanding the proposed development.

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	prime agricultural land. The huge economic implications for the rural economy appear to have been entirely overlooked or ignored. Biosecurity risks appear to threaten several areas, especially where there is a huge risk to particular agricultural crops- eg seed potatoes and the potential spread of Potato Cyst Nematode (PCN). Daffodil crops are also threatened too. Historically, SSEN contractors' breach their own set down protocols, as evidenced by many growers. Members are questioning the assurance from SSEN that they will ensure full and effective behaviours with regard to adequate biosecurity? Any community investment proposed should go to those directly affected. It would be helpful if SSEN could implement woodland creation in awkward corners of fields left by the scheme. Also, creation of irrigation lagoons/wildlife ponds. Thirdly, creation or upgrade and management of access paths for walking. The response also included a number of comments or quotes from members of the NFU querying the benefits to the local community, particularly in relation to lower costs of electricity prices for locals and enabling farmers to contribute to the energy grid. Other comments related to biosecurity, SSEN contractor practices, negative impacts on tourism and landscape visuals, use of prime agricultural land and food security issues, future agricultural development and sterilisation of land, and why alternatives haven't been proposed.	
Radio Network Protection (BT)	The conclusion is that this could possibly interfere with BT's current and presently planned radio network. When the co-ordinates of the structures at height are available, please send these over and then we can carry out an assessment accurately.	Noted.

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland (RSPB Scotland)	1. Specific concerns • Section A - Tealing to Fiddes. Both the preferred route (A1) and alternative route (A1.1) intersect the River Tay SAC at Douglastown. The Tay SAC is designated for Atlantic salmon, 3 species of lamprey and Otter. This crossing should be carefully considered, now and at EIA stage to protect the integrity of the SAC. • Section B - Forfar to Brechin. Section B intersects the River South Esk SAC at multiple points between Oathwood and Brechin. The River South Esk SAC is designated for Atlantic salmon and Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The impact on the integrity of the SAC should be carefully considered, now and at EIA stage. In particular, the preferred route (B1) where it runs along a stretch of the Lemno burn just north of Forfar along the A90 as far as Finavon should be carefully considered. • Section C - Brechin to Laurencekirk. The C1 (Brechin to Laurencekirk) route runs close to Eslie Moss SSSI, and the final route alignment should be sited as far from this feature as possible. The woodlands to the northwest of this section are also known to support large numbers of roosting Red Kite, a specially protected Schedule 1 species. Section C would place the overhead cables approximately 7km northwest of the Montrose Basin SPA/Ramsar/SSSI. Montrose Basin SPA is designated for a range of wildfowl and waders. In particular, we would be concerned about the potential impact on migratory wildfowl including Pink-footed Geese (9% of the UK wintering population) and Greylag Geese (1% of the UK wintering population), both during migration and daily commuting to foraging sites from the roost at Montrose Basin. Vantage point surveys should be carried out to inform the EIA process and predict collision risk with the overhead lines. • Section D - Laurencekirk to Fiddes. We are not aware of any specially protected habitats or species along the D1 route. • Section E - Fiddes to Kintore section. It is our view that for the Fiddes to Kintore section, corridor 2c would be preferable on environmental grounds.	1. The information provided has been passed to our relevant project teams and will be used to inform ongoing project development. The specific concern around the designated sites is acknowledged, please refer to our approach to Designated Sites in Table 3.4 – Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. 2. We have engaged with NatureScot to develop and agree bird survey methods. Responses to RSPB's feedback are provided in our Common Themes in Section 3.2 and within Table 3.4 – Environment Impact, under heading, Biodiversity, Habitats, Protected Species and Designated Sites. Cumulative and in-combination impacts are considered as part of the routeing process and will be included in the EIAR.

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	We hold concerns about the proximity of the preferred corridor (2b) and route to Loch of Skene. Preferred route E1 contains at least two known Red Kite nest sites. We hold no records of specially protected species within the two alternative routes in this section (E1.1 and E1.2). • Section F (River Dee to Kintore). For the northernmost section we would suggest that starting in the preferred route (F1) and heading west on route F1.2 and north to Kintore via F2 would be preferable, should corridor 2b still be optimal following this consultation. Amongst the species outwith the SPA designation are internationally important numbers of Pink-footed Geese; approximately 20,000 individuals, 5% of the UK wintering population. The five-year average of total number of non-breeding water birds is approximately 30,000, putting the site in the top 40 UK principal sites (WeBS data). As Deeside is the core of the expanding Aberdeen Red Kite population, they are found throughout this area and locations of nests and roosts will need to be established through surveys, immediately before construction work begins. Other ornithological features present in the suggested alternative corridor are breeding farmland waders around Cullerlie (F1.2) and Dunecht (F2). <u>2. Survey and assessment requirements</u> Two years of field surveys (vantage point, breeding bird and wintering bird) should be undertaken, especially in any sensitive locations, to provide up-to-date information on bird distribution and activity to assess the risk to birds and to inform any required mitigation. RSPB Scotland, the Tayside Raptor Study Group, and the Northeast Scotland Raptor Study Group should be contacted for relevant bird records. NatureScot guidance should be followed as overhead wires associated with power lines present risks of collision, electrocution, and displacement to birds.	

Organisation	Non-statutory Consultee Feedback	Our Response
	Construction and maintenance also present disturbance risks and these should be discussed in any assessment. Peat depth and habitat surveys should also be undertaken along the preferred route to inform the final alignment deviation choices. HDD and undergrounding should not be ruled out in some areas if field surveys reveal a high or moderate potential bird collision risk or presence of sensitive bog habitats. Line markers may also be required in some areas. The cumulative and in-combination impacts of existing overhead lines, including any overhead lines to be decommissioned should also be included in any assessment, in addition to operational and in-planning wind farms and other projects. The proposal therefore needs to offer 'significant biodiversity enhancements' that can be 'secured within a reasonable timescale and with reasonable certainty' as required by policy 3iv) of NPF4. Any plans need to clearly set out what elements are proposed as mitigation, compensation and what is considered enhancement.	

7.3. Appendix C Figures - Route Options being taken forward to Alignment

Figure A4.1 Section A

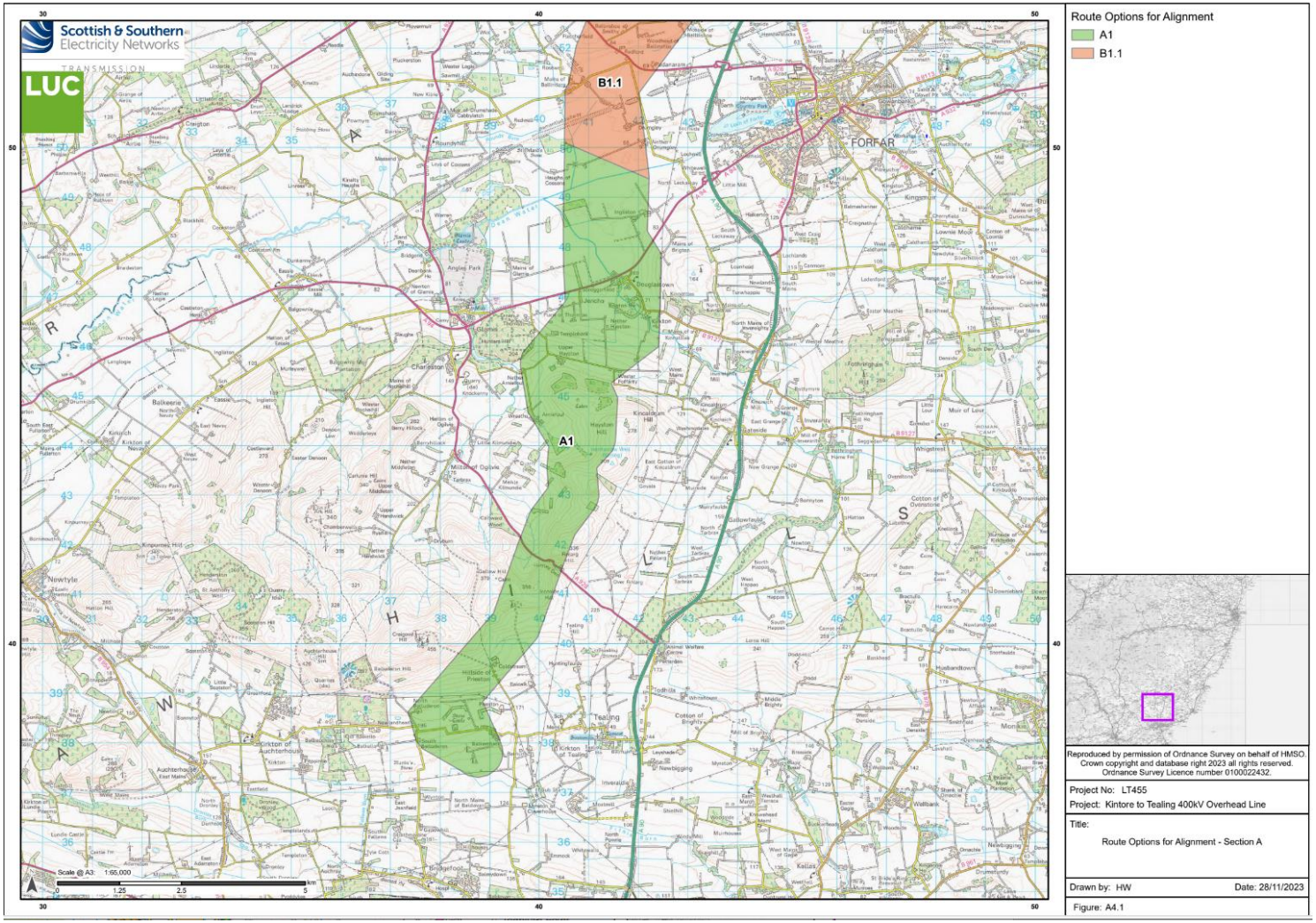


Figure A4.2 Section B1.1

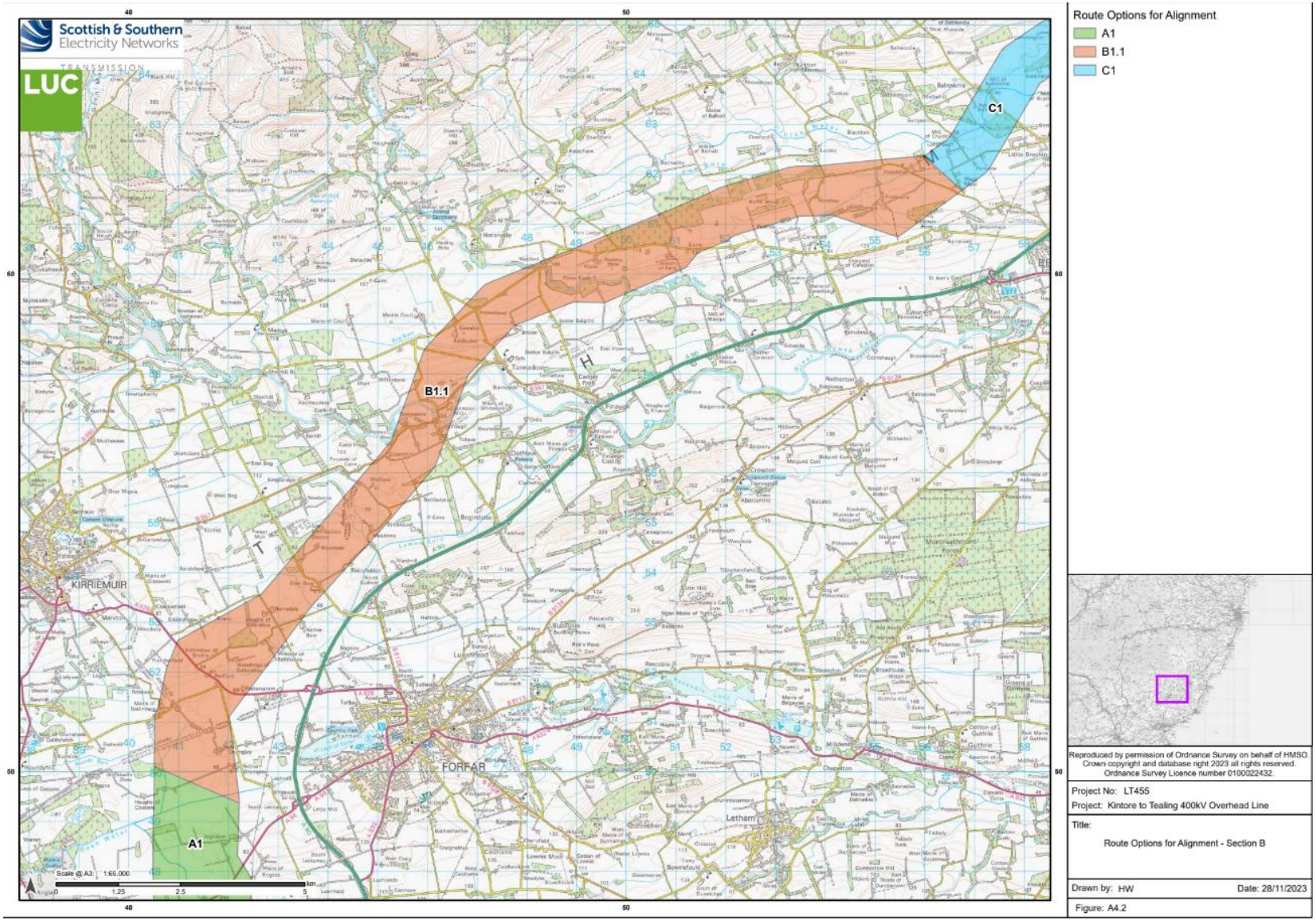
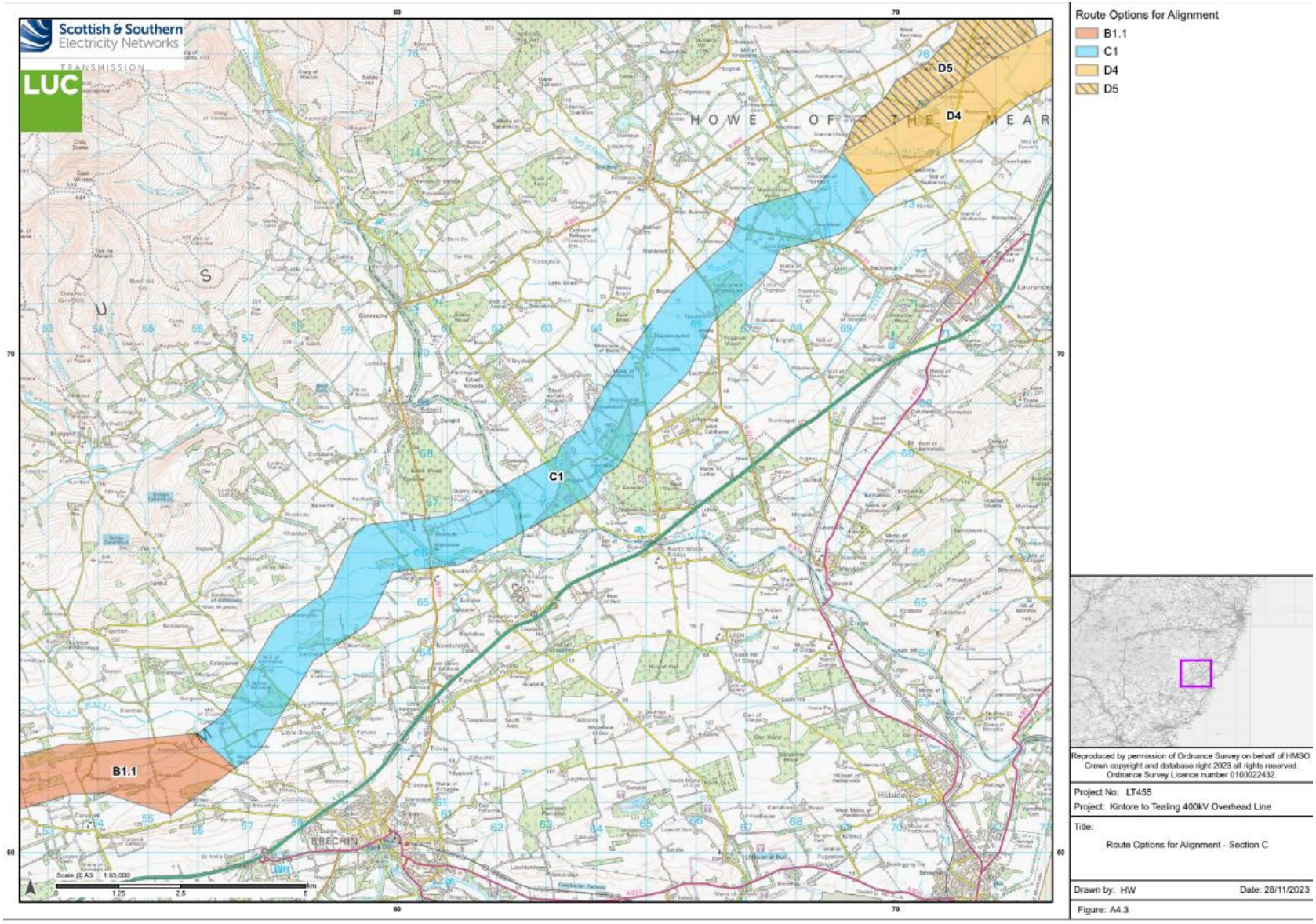
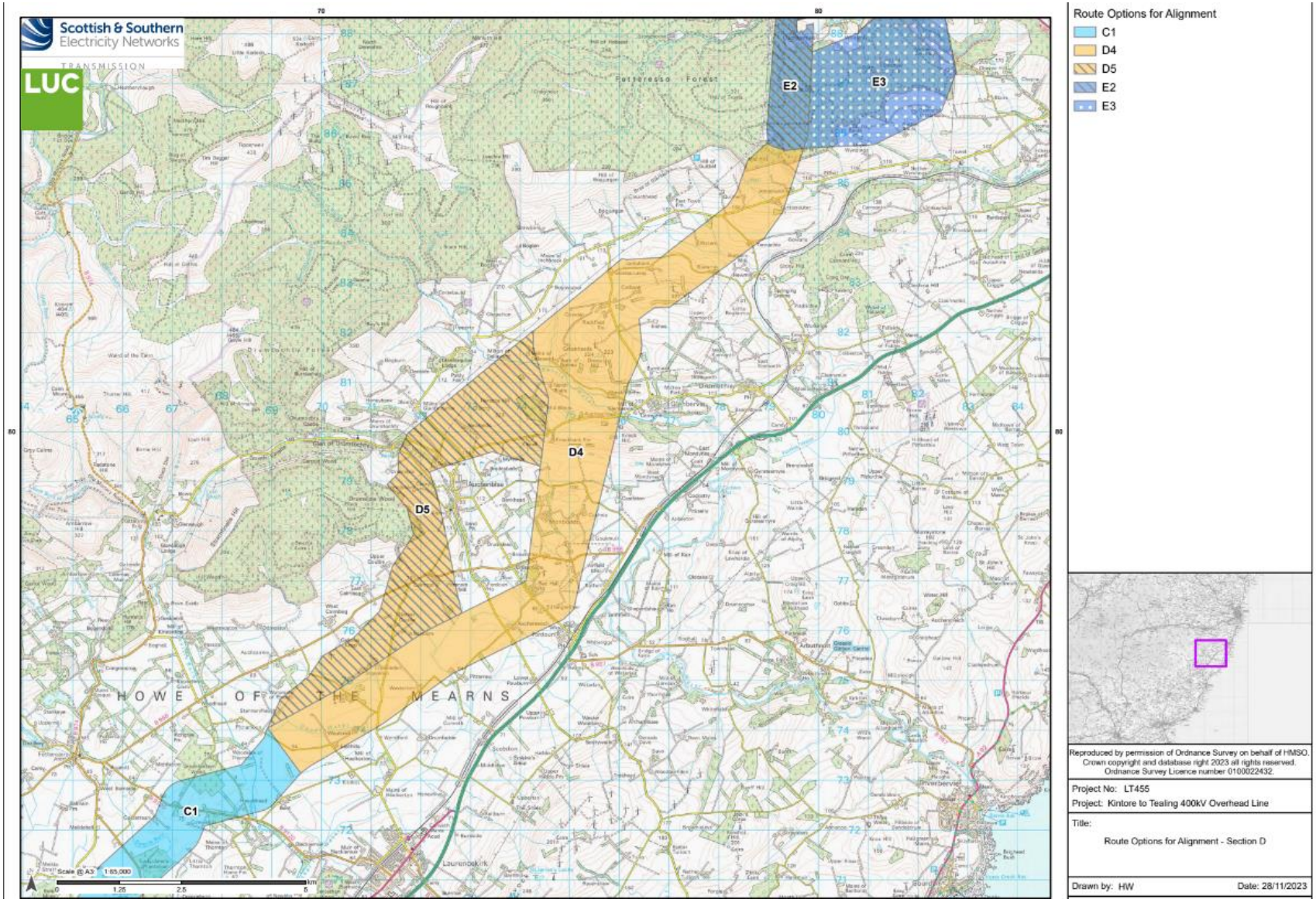


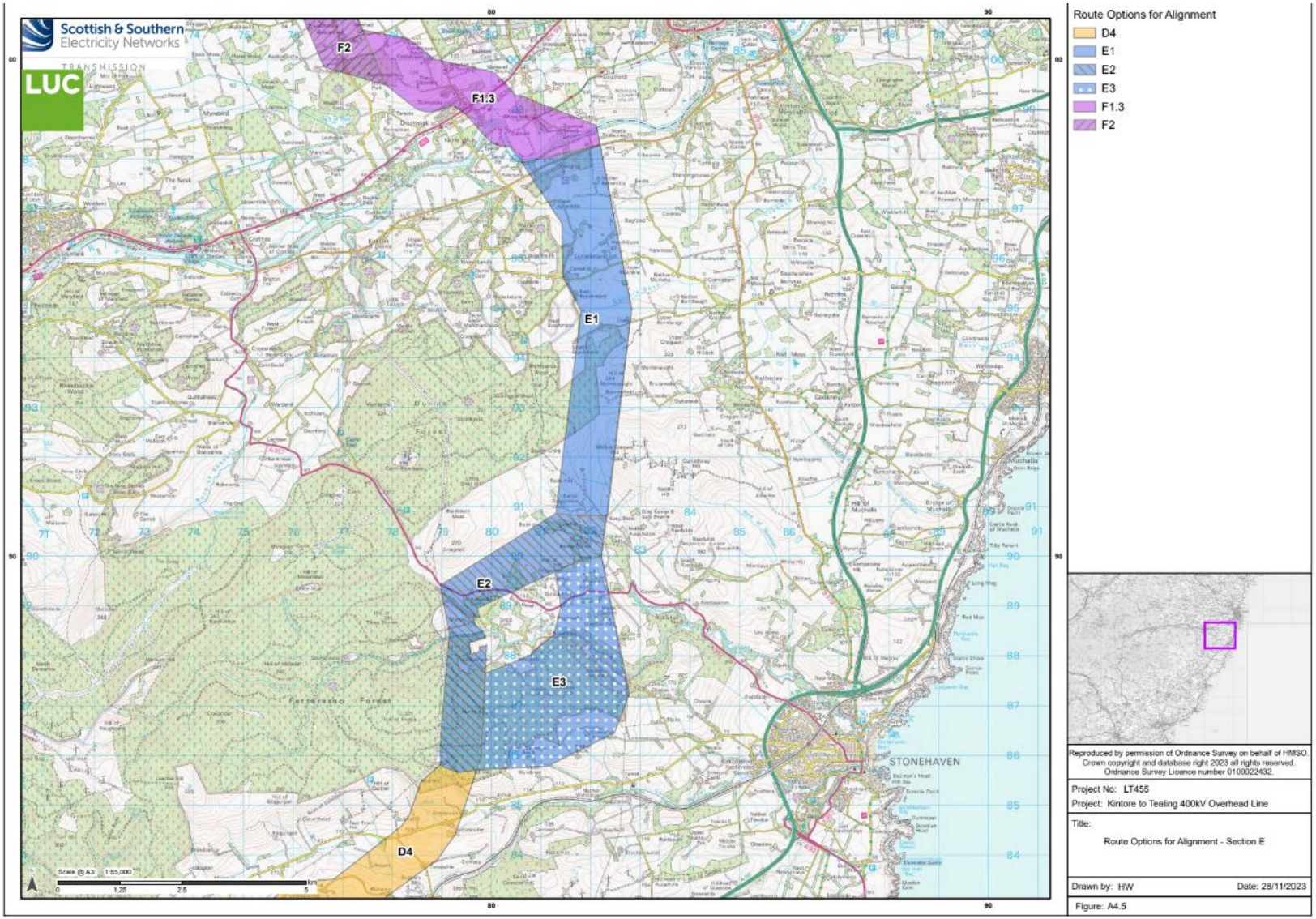
Figure A4.3 Section C



A4.5 Section D



A4.6 Section E



A4.7 Section F