



# Summary Report on Consultation

## Kintore to Tealing

November 2023

# Foreword

As well as keeping the lights on for the communities our network region serves, it is also our role to connect and transport large quantities of renewable electricity to where it's needed.

The north of Scotland's abundance of renewable resources means we have a vital part to play in helping deliver energy independence, securing future electricity supplies with homegrown low carbon energy, reducing our dependence on imported power from often volatile global markets.

As well as delivering a more secure and affordable energy system for homes and businesses across the country, our electricity network will play a leading role in harnessing Scotland's clean energy potential and delivering Scotland's and the UK's climate change targets.

To help achieve our energy independence and net zero ambitions, we are taking forward over £20bn of investment in new electricity transmission infrastructure this decade. These investments, which consist of new overhead lines, substations and HVDC subsea links and converter stations, form part of a major upgrade of the electricity transmission system across Great

Britain that is required to meet interim 2030 Government targets. This includes a new 400 kilovolt (kV) overhead line connecting Kintore to Tealing via new substations located along the route.

Earlier this year, we embarked on the first phase of public consultation across our Pathway to 2030 programme of investments and I would like to personally thank every individual and organisation who took the time to respond and engage with us. We have carefully considered all responses which has helped inform our decisions on potential overhead line routes and substation locations.

We acknowledge that the impacts of new infrastructure on some communities are unavoidable and are committed to minimise and mitigate local and environmental impacts wherever possible, looking to avoid population centres, historical landmarks and Scotland's most precious environmental designations and landscapes.

As we build the infrastructure needed to transport our clean, homegrown energy, we are set to deliver one of the biggest investment programmes the north of Scotland has ever seen. We will ensure the benefits of this major investment programme are shared with our host communities by supporting local businesses, employment and delivering a lasting legacy for current and future generations.

We now look forward to continued engagement with our stakeholders on our Pathway to 2030 programme of investments as we start to refine our plans ahead of our next round of public consultation in early 2024.

**Rob McDonald**  
MD, SSEN Transmission



# Introduction

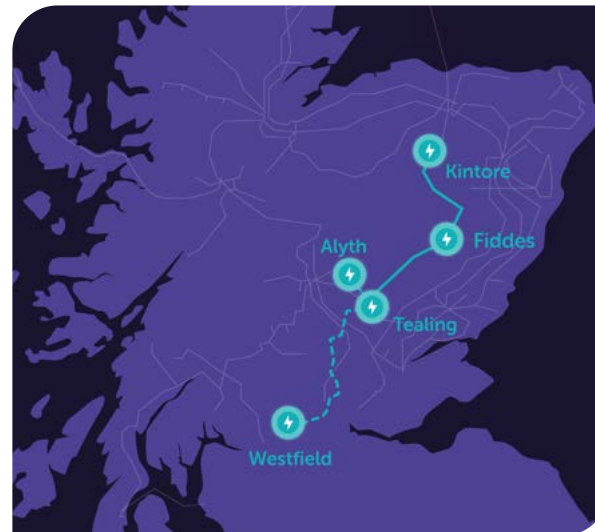
In early 2023, we carried out early consultation on the proposed Kintore to Tealing 400kV overhead line and associated substations, presenting corridor and route options for the overhead line and the results of our site selection process, all of which were based on extensive environmental and technical assessments.

We hosted public consultation events as well as meetings with a wide range of stakeholders and welcomed feedback via a range of methods including online feedback forms, emails and letters. We have now collated this feedback, our responses and the decisions that we have made into specific Reports on Consultation which are available on each project specific webpage:

- [Kintore - Fiddes - Tealing 400kV Connection](#)
- [Tealing 400kV Substation](#)
- [Fiddes 400kV Substation](#)

This Report on Consultation Summary provides a summary of the individual Reports on Consultation relating to the proposed overhead line and associated substations near Tealing and Fiddes. It highlights the feedback we received in response to our consultations, and how this has influenced our actions and decision-making. Across all of our Pathway to 2030 project

consultations, we received feedback covering a number of common themes: project need, technology choice, environmental impacts, socio-economic impacts and on the consultation process. 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 at the end of this Summary Report on Consultation. In addition, we have also developed a set of responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that can be viewed [here](#).



## Summary of Public Consultation Engagement



**8** Consultation events



**714** Registered attendees



**3236** Pieces of written feedback

These public engagement events were supplemented by a number of online and in person meetings with a variety of stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, members of the public, Community Councils and elected members.

### Useful links

- [Pathway to 2030 – Projects delivering a Network for Net Zero](#)
- [Why are the Pathway to 2030 Projects needed?](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions on our Pathway to 2030 Projects](#)

# Summary of Project Specific Feedback and Our Decisions

# Fiddes 400kV Substation

## What we proposed at consultation

The location of a new 400kV substation at Site Option 5B, about 5km south of the existing Fiddes substation.

## Feedback received



The feedback received demonstrated clear opposition to our Preferred Site Option from local residents and Community Councils. A number of concerns were raised relating to the Preferred Site Option including the likely impact on residential properties and local businesses, as well as visual impacts relating to the local landscape.

Aberdeenshire Council expressed concern over the loss of prime agricultural land.

We were asked to consider a site at Fetteresso by some members of the local community.

Concerns were also raised regarding potential impacts on the legacy of the author Lewis Grassic Gibbon, including on his childhood home and the operation of the Lewis Grassic Gibbon Centre and its strong association.

## Response to feedback



In response to the feedback we received, we took the decision to revisit site selection, widening the area of search and considered if an alternative new site could be identified which addressed some of the concerns raised.

## Explanation of decision

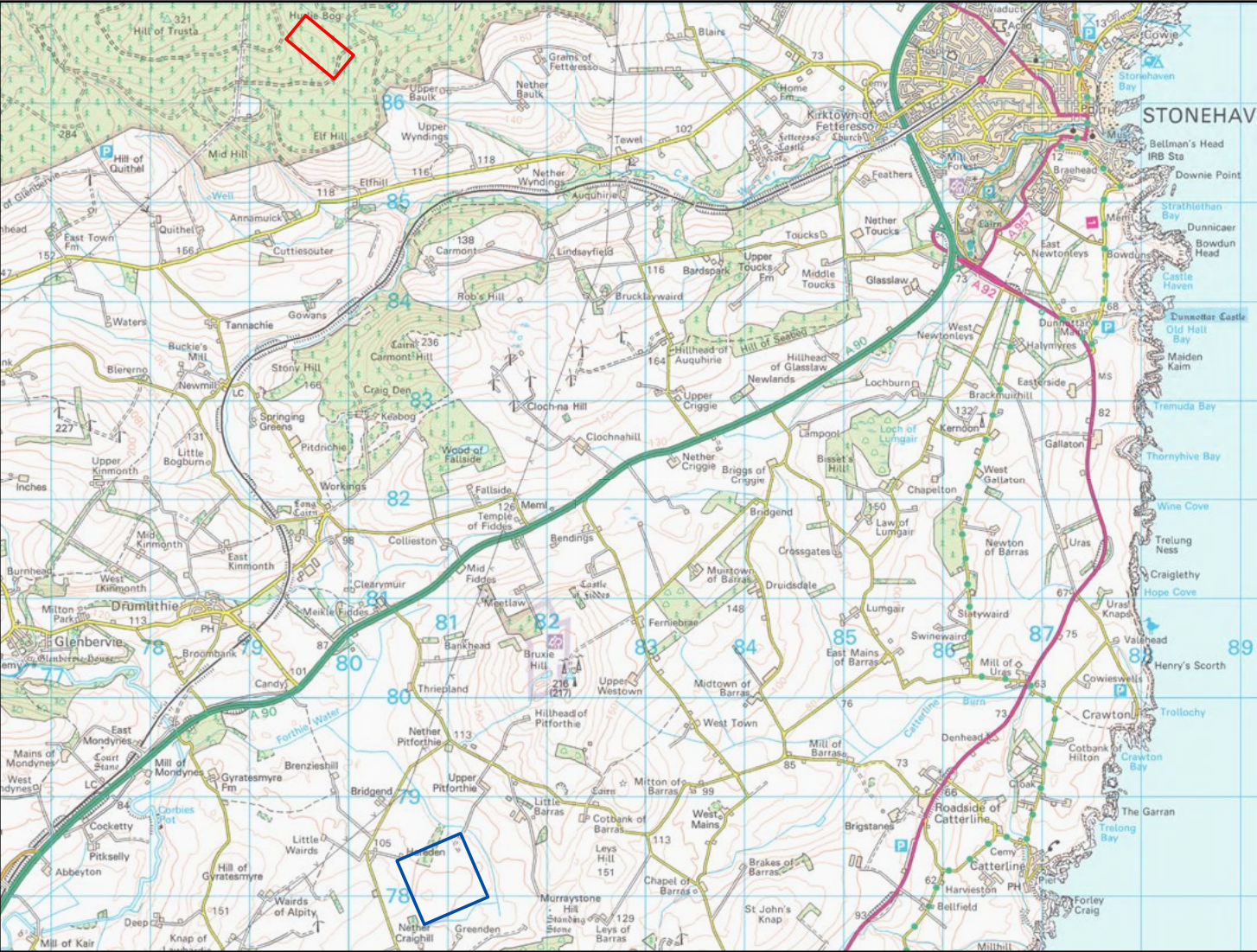


A new Site Option at Hurlie, in Fetteresso Forest and in close proximity to the existing Fetteresso substation, has now been identified as the proposed location for this new substation, subject to feedback during the next round of engagement and consultation.

This proposed change of location mitigates a number of the concerns raised such as loss of prime agricultural land, visual impact and proximity to residential properties.

Changing the proposed substation location to Hurlie means that the associated Preferred overhead line route has been revised to facilitate the connection to the new proposed substation location. Details on this can be found in the Kintore to Tealing overhead line Report on Consultation and in the summary below.

# Proposed Substation near Hurlie



Indicative Substation Boundary

- Fiddes 5B
- Hurlie

This map shows the location of the now proposed Site Option at Hurlie in Fetteresso Forest and the previously Preferred Site Option 5B.

# Tealing 400kV Substation

## What we proposed at consultation

The location of a new 400kV substation at Site Option 4, to the west of Tealing.

## Feedback received



Responses from members of the community and Community Council raised concerns relating to landscape and visual impacts. Angus Council highlighted the potential for cumulative impacts on local residents, particularly in relation to landscape and visual impacts and noise levels when combined with other similar developments in the area.

Historic Environment Scotland advised that Site Option 7 is located slightly further away from cultural heritage assets than Site Option 4, however due to the height of the substation, the level of impact would not be of national interest.

Some stakeholders expressed concerns over the loss of agricultural land.

## Response to feedback



We understand that new transmission infrastructure is likely to have an impact on the landscape. The design of the substation will carefully consider key landscape setting elements and views to ensure its prominence will be minimised.

The need to avoid prime agricultural land was a key consideration during the site selection process. It is acknowledged that both of the shortlisted Site Options are located on agricultural land. Site Option 4 is located entirely on non-prime agricultural land whereas Site Option 7 is predominantly on prime agricultural land.

## Explanation of decision



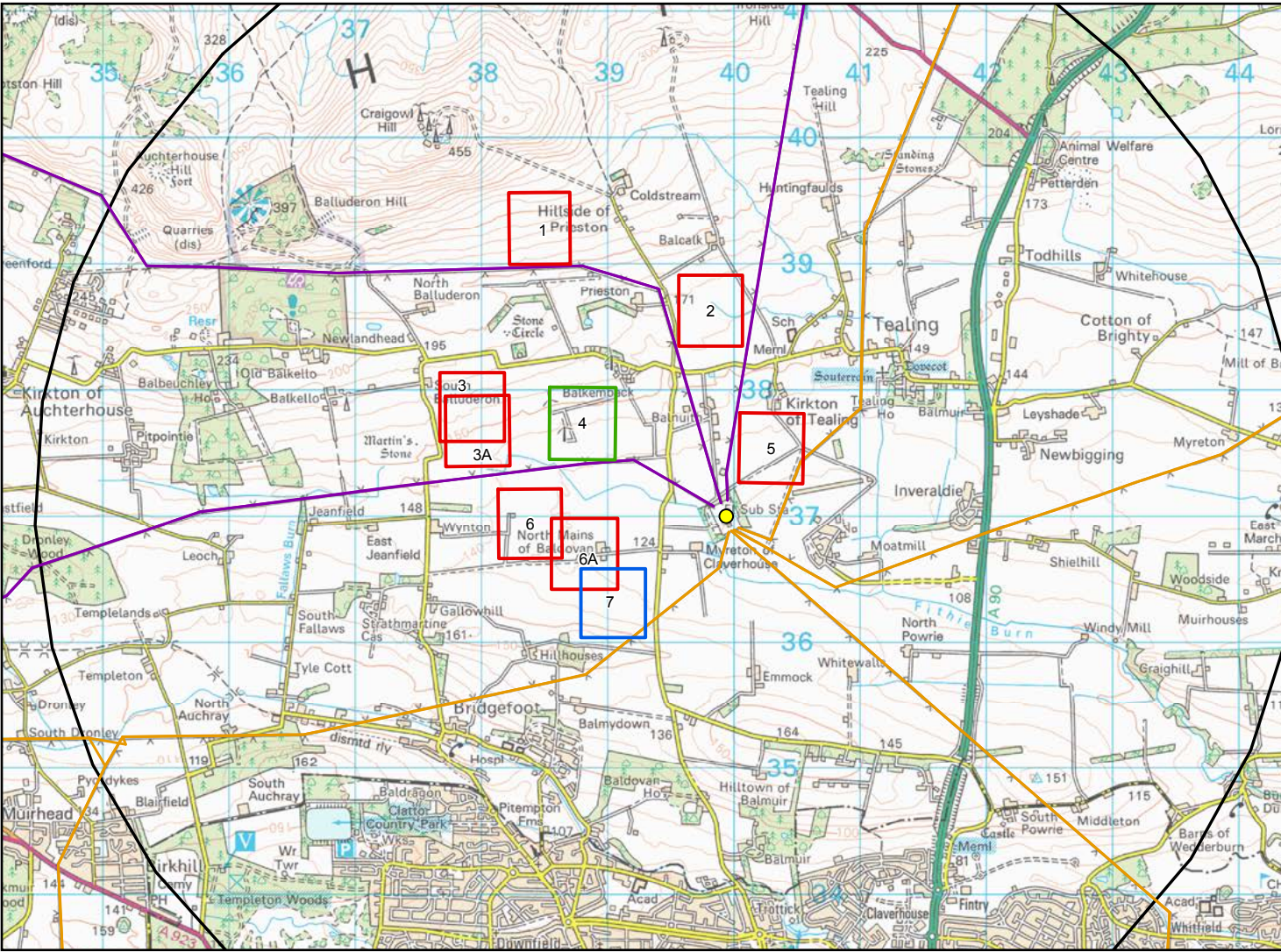
Following a review of the feedback received during the consultation, as well as a review of our site selection assessments, our decision is to progress with Site Option 4 as our Proposed Site Option for the new 400kV substation.

This decision was based on the following reasons:

- Its proximity to existing transmission infrastructure, which will minimise the extent of new infrastructure required in the area.
- Fewer residential properties surround Site Option 4 compared to Site Option 7, reducing the number of local residents who may be impacted by the proposed substation.
- It avoids prime agricultural land.

In developing the design for the site, work will be undertaken to consider how best to avoid and minimise potential impacts to identified concerns such as landscape, cultural heritage, habitats, tourism and agriculture.




# Proposed Substation Near Tealing



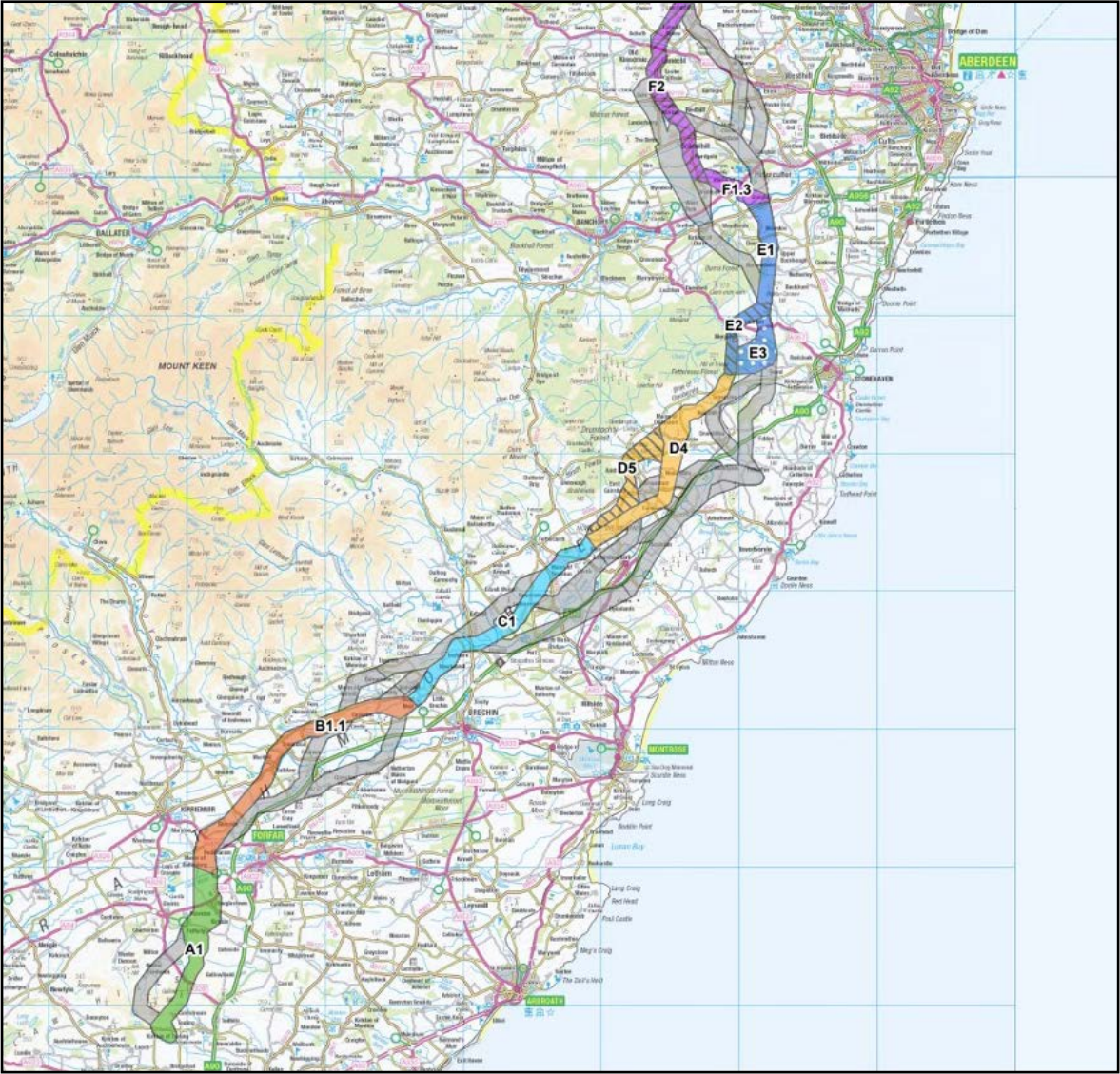
- Area of search (approximately 5km radius from existing substation)
- Substation Sites**
- ▭ Preferred option
- ▭ Sites considered at stage 1
- ▭ Sites considered at stage 2
- Existing OHL**
- 132kV
- 275kV
- Existing Substation



# Kintore to Tealing 400kV overhead line

What we proposed at consultation	Feedback received 	Response to feedback 	Explanation of decision 
<p>A new 400kV overhead line, approximately 106km in length, connecting Kintore Substation to Tealing Substation. Due to the length of the line, the project has been divided into the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section A (Tealing to Forfar):</li> <li>• Section B (Forfar to Brechin):</li> <li>• Section C (Brechin to Laurencekirk):</li> <li>• Section D (Laurencekirk to Fiddes):</li> <li>• Section E (Fiddes to River Dee):</li> <li>• Section F (River Dee to Kintore):</li> </ul>	<p>Key concerns from local councils and members of the local community across each section related to the impact on local communities, landscape and environment, local amenities, businesses and tourism. It was noted that the proposed overhead line intersects landscapes of cultural heritage popular with visitors year-round.</p> <p>Loss of prime agricultural land was raised by a number of different stakeholders including Community Councils, landowners and occupiers, members of the local community and The National Farmers Union of Scotland.</p> <p>NatureScot highlighted that protected areas lie within or adjacent to route options, and that several sites located further away from the proposed routes may still be affected, particularly in relation to geese, which feed into the wider landscape.</p> <p>Within Section B, between Forfar and Brechin, specific concerns were raised regarding impacts on the South Esk Special Area of Conservation and the Montrose Basin Special Protected Area. Flooding from the River South Esk was also raised as a concern by SEPA. Members of the local community were concerned about the proximity of the overhead line to the populated areas.</p> <p>For Section F, between the River Dee and Kintore, specific concerns were raised in relation to the impact on residential areas such as Westhill and Peterculter. Concerns were also raised regarding the impact on the River Dee Special Area of Conservation, the Dee Valley Special Landscape Area and cultural heritage sites such as Drum Castle and Dunecht Estate, sites which are designated as a Garden and Designed Landscape.</p>	<p>Feedback received during the consultation has been reviewed and a number of changes to routes have been made as a result.</p> <p>The design of the project will aim to minimise the prominence and visual impact of the overhead line as far 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.</p> <p>The impact of the project on agriculture will be avoided wherever possible through sensitive location of towers and tracks, however it is acknowledged that some sections of the proposed overhead line will unavoidably need to cross sections of prime agricultural land. Liaison with farmers to understand their businesses and how they use their land will continue.</p> <p>We will continue to work with Statutory Stakeholders including NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland as our design develops to ensure that impacts to protected areas are avoided or mitigated.</p>	<p>The Route Options that have been selected to proceed to the next round of consultation are detailed within the <a href="#">full Kintore to Tealing 400kV Overhead Line Report on Consultation</a>.</p> <p>No changes have been proposed to our Preferred Route Option between Tealing and Forfar (Section A) or Brechin and Laurencekirk (Section C), as the feedback received, and our subsequent review within these sections, did not identify any further constraints which would alter the outcome of our assessments.</p> <p>Our Preferred Route Option between Forfar and Brechin (Section B) was amended in response to stakeholder feedback, taking the line further from residential properties, addressing community feedback and reducing environmental constraints raised by SEPA, such as areas of flood risk.</p> <p>Some sections of our Preferred Route Options from Laurencekirk to River Dee via Fiddes (Sections D and E) were amended to incorporate the proposed move of the substation near Fiddes to a new proposed location at Hurlie in Fetteresso Forest. Four new overhead line Route Options are now being considered in detail and will be presented for consultation in early 2024. Further information on the new substation location at Hurlie is included in the full <a href="#">Fiddes Report on Consultation</a>.</p> <p>Our Preferred Route Option between the River Dee and Kintore (Section F) has been amended following a comprehensive review of stakeholder responses, field surveys and updated technical reviews. Our Proposed route will allow the less environmentally constrained sections of the route options to be utilised and will provide greater separation of the overhead line from the designated Loch of Skene.</p> <p>This change also avoids key areas of national importance designated for natural and cultural heritage at the Loch of Park and Park House. The amended route also avoids areas of population concentration, amenity areas, and sites allocated within the Local Development Plan (LDP).</p>

# Proposed Overhead Line from Kintore to Tealing



- Proposed Routes
- A1
  - B1.1
  - C1
  - D4
  - D5
  - E1
  - E2
  - E3
  - F1.3
  - F2
  - Route Options

# Next Steps

Engagement with communities and other stakeholders is essential in planning the delivery of this critical national infrastructure. We will now work with stakeholders to refine the plans for these projects ahead of our next round of consultation in early 2024. This engagement will be undertaken through in person and virtual meetings as well as an online webinar.

The webinar is open for all to join and will be held on **Wednesday 13 December between 2pm-3.15pm**, where SSEN Transmission colleagues will describe some of the primary changes to Pathway to 2030 projects that are being proposed following consultation. This webinar will be recorded and made available on our website.

We will be consulting further with local communities and stakeholders early in the new year, where we will seek feedback on specific alignments within the route corridor and all associated proposed substations. Further to this, there will be another opportunity for communities and stakeholders to engage with us on the projects as we host our final round of public events before the end of 2024.



# Common Themes

## 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 that these projects will transport will play a key role in meeting UK and Scottish Government renewable energy and climate change targets. It 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](#).



# Common Themes

## Technology Choice

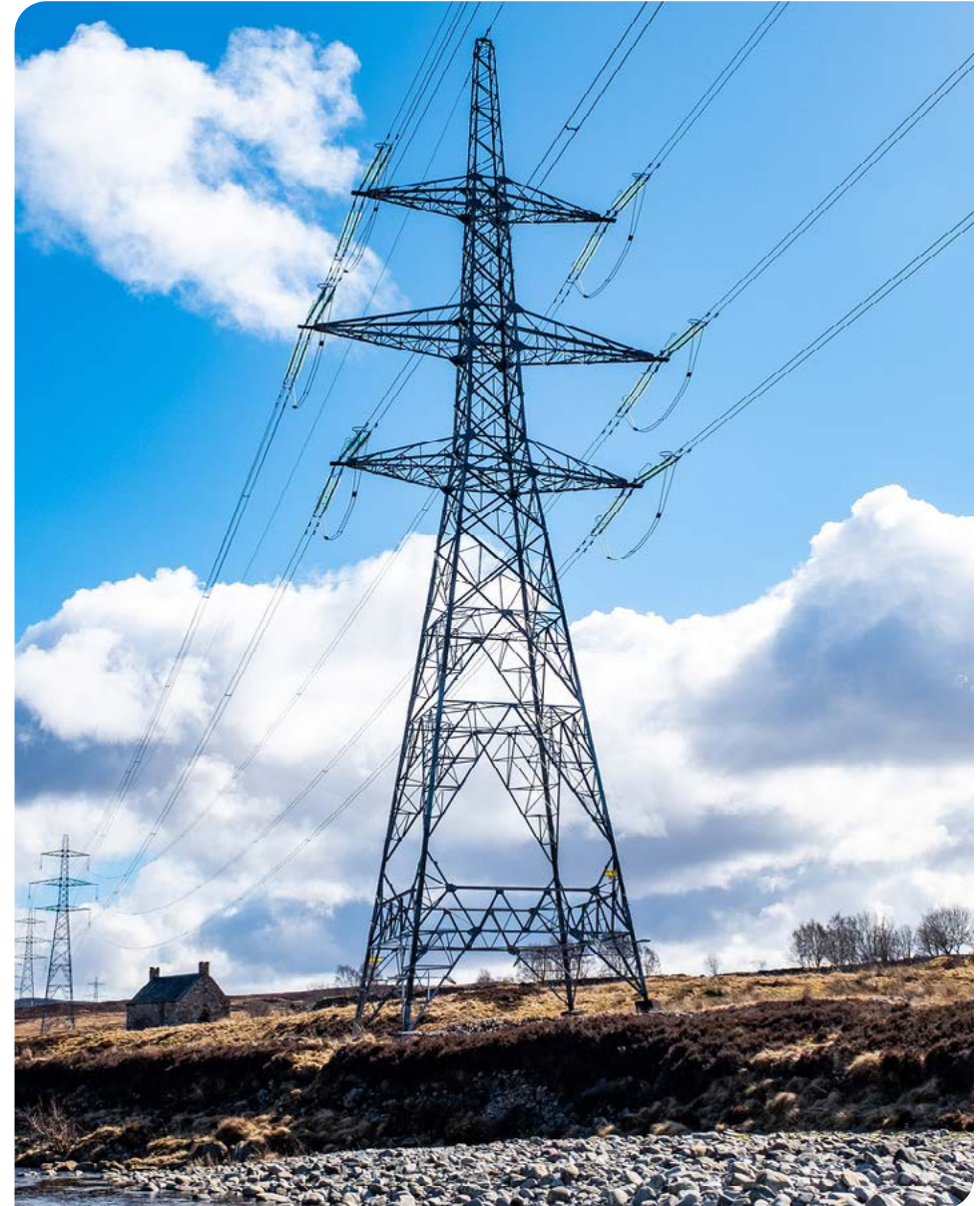
Several respondents have questioned the technology choice, particularly why the infrastructure cannot all be installed subsea or underground, instead of overhead line steel lattice towers.

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 that 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 that we are allowed to recover for these projects.



# Common Themes

## Environmental impacts

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

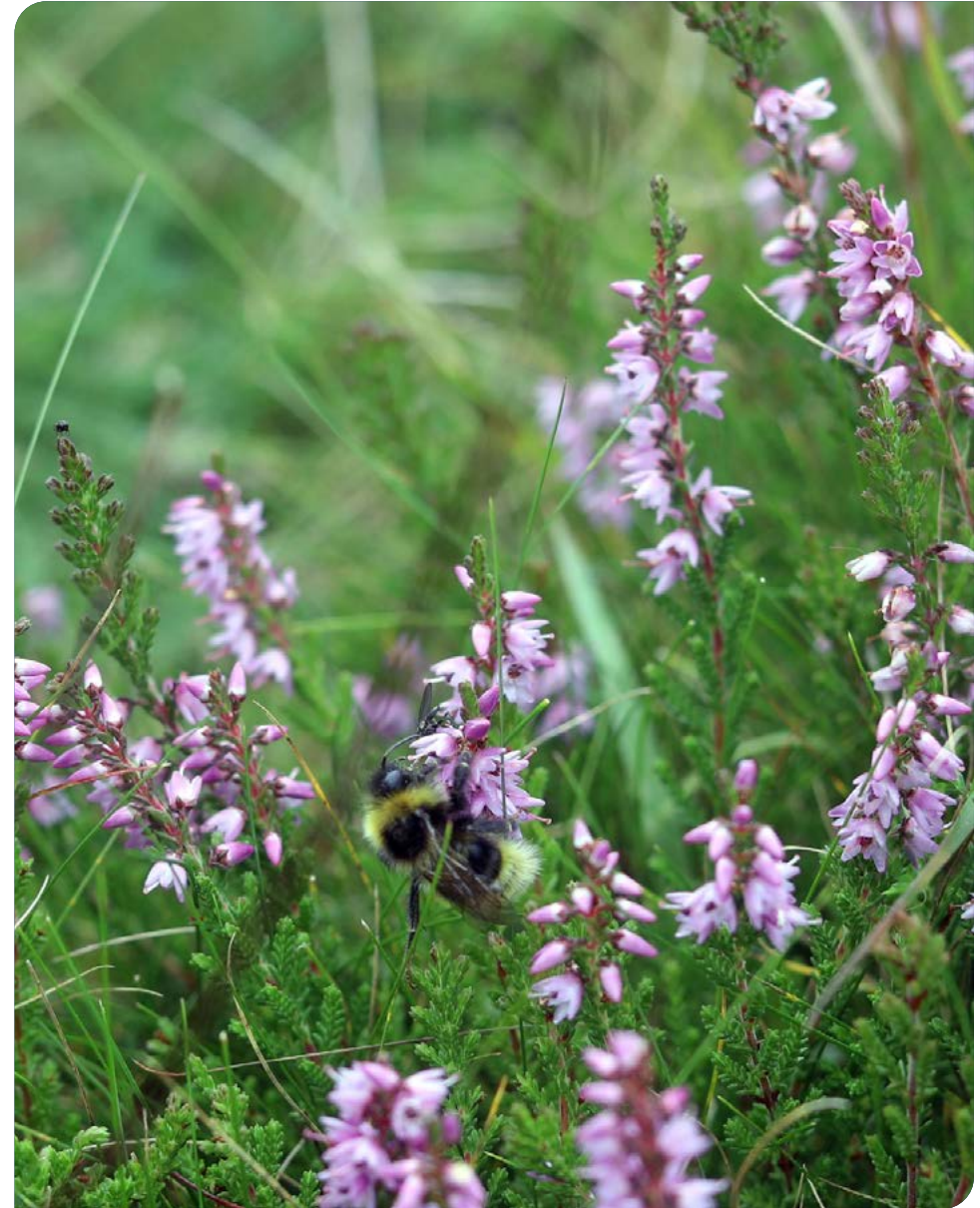
As one of the greatest risks to our natural environment and biodiversity is climate change, these projects are part of the solution if we are to tackle the climate emergency and deliver net zero emissions in Scotland and across the United Kingdom.

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

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 that 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.

You can find out more about how we are delivering a positive environmental legacy by [clicking here](#).



# Common Themes

## 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 are committed to do all that we can to minimise and mitigate the visual impact on local communities as part of the ongoing development of the 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 that host communities will play in delivering the infrastructure required to meet 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.



# Common Themes

## 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 recognise that there is always room for improvement and as we look forward to the next round of public consultations, we are committed to applying 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.

