

APPENDIX V1-3.4: PRELIMINARY APPRAISAL OF PUBLIC ROAD IMPROVEMENT WORKS

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1. PRELIMINARY APPRAISAL OF PUBLIC ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Public road improvements would be required in some areas to facilitate construction traffic. These are largely expected to be undertaken under permitted development rights held by The Highland Council. Indicative areas and a preliminary appraisal of the potential environmental constraints of public road improvement works is included within this appendix. These works do not form part of the application for statutory consents and are not assessed in detail in this EIA Report. The purpose of this appendix is to provide information on the likely public road improvement works for the Proposed Development, including a preliminary appraisal of potential environmental constraints.

1.1.2 The main areas where public road improvement works are anticipated to be required are:

- Section 3 (Alternative Alignment) – C1239 road to Kylerhea via Glen Arroch
- Section 4 – C1223 Old Military Road from Shiel Bridge to Glen Elg
- Section 4 and 5 – Minor road to Kinlochhourn

1.1.3 These locations are shown on the accompanying figures.

1.2 Section 3 (Alternative Alignment) – C1239 road to Kylerhea

1.2.1 The Alternative Alignment within Section 3 would comprise a new double circuit steel structure 132 kV OHL from Broadford Substation to the existing crossing towers at Kyle Rhea. The Alternative Alignment would be routed as per the Proposed Alignment until crossing the Allt Mor and minor road to Glen Arroch (see **Figure V6-2.1c: The Alternative Alignment**). To the east of this point, the Alternative Alignment is routed in a south easterly direction through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea Glen (see **Figure V6-2.1d and e: The Alternative Alignment**). Prior to reaching the settlement at Kylerhea, the Alternative Alignment is routed in a northerly direction via the lower slopes of Beinn Bhuidie and through commercial forestry to the existing crossing towers at Kyle Rhea (see **Figure V6-2.1e: The Alternative Alignment**). The total length of the Alternative Alignment would be approximately 20.8 km in length.

1.2.2 To facilitate construction of the Alternative Alignment, public road improvement works would be required along the C1239 road from the junction of the A87 to within the vicinity of Bealach Udal as construction traffic would be required to utilise this part of the road. Given the condition of the road and terrain from the Bealach to Kylerhea, further use of this road by construction traffic would necessitate extensive improvement works to the road, which are not feasible to undertake as part of this project. Instead, a construction haul road would be required to be constructed along the length of the OHL to avoid heavy vehicle use of the road between the Bealach and Kylerhea.

1.2.3 The public road improvement works are likely to require the widening of the C1239 road from the A87 to Bealach Udal by approximately 1 m either side of the existing surfaced carriageway.

Landscape and Visual Considerations

1.2.4 The winding and narrow minor road to Kyle Rhea comprises an important experiential feature of the rural landscape within this area and is frequently used by visitors on the way to and from Kylerhea and the Isle of Skye Ferry. However, whilst this area comprises a valued landscape within the local context, it is not covered by any landscape designations. The sections with greatest sensitivity in this respect principally lie to the east of the Bealach Udal and therefore would not be affected by the proposed PRI works.

- 1.2.5 Construction for PRI works would temporarily form a new focus and distraction within parts of the landscape within Glen Arroch, and may form distractions in localised views. In the longer term, the general widening and straightening of this route has the potential to change experiential qualities in the localised context to some degree through the creation of a more transitional landscape and loosening of the close connection and appreciation of the localised topography that the existing road, which closely responds to the terrain, gives to the traveller. This would result in a relatively limited change through the majority of Glen Arroch where the landscape is less notable, but may lead to a more noticeable change on the more remote parts of the route towards the Bealach Udal. However, there would be no change to the road descending from the Bealach Udal to Kylerhea which comprises the most sensitive and distinctive part of the route.

Natural Heritage Considerations

- 1.2.6 A large proportion of the public road improvement works along the C1239 road would be located within the boundary of the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.2.7 Habitats adjacent to the C1239 road are likely to comprise a variety of habitat types, including SAC qualifying habitats such as wet heathlands with cross-leaved heath, dry heaths, and to a much lesser extent wet modified bog and woodland habitats, as well as and non-SAC qualifying habitats such as bracken and acid grassland.
- 1.2.8 Consideration of public road improvement works along the C1239 road for the Alternative Alignment in the context of the SAC is included within the Shadow HRA for the Proposed Development (see **Appendix V2-4.7** of this EIA Report).
- 1.2.9 It is anticipated that any works would be subject to pre-construction surveys and would be in accordance with standard and best practice construction measures to avoid any potential effects on protected species and the water environment as far as practicable.

1.3 Section 4 – C1223 Old Military Road from Shiel Bridge to Glenelg

- 1.3.1 Within this Section, it is proposed that the existing 132 kV steel lattice OHL would be replaced with a new double circuit steel lattice 132 kV OHL. To facilitate construction access to the west of Section 4, construction vehicles would require access from the A87 via the old military road between Shiel Bridge and Glenelg. Public road improvement works would be required along this road, part of which is currently subject of upgrade proposals by The Highland Council, which the Applicant has agreed to provide contributions with other sources for these works.

Landscape and Visual Considerations

- 1.3.2 The public road improvement works for this area would take place along the main road link to Glenelg. Construction activity would potentially impact the appreciation of landscape character and form an interruption to views in the short term but would be unlikely to result in any notable adverse effects in the longer term.

Natural Heritage Considerations

- 1.3.3 This road does not pass through any designated sites for natural heritage, and improvements works are not likely to pose particular constraints for natural heritage, subject to the adoption of best practice construction measures.
- 1.3.4 It is anticipated that any works would be subject to pre-construction surveys and would be in accordance with standard and best practice construction measures to avoid any potential effects on protected species and the water environment as far as practicable.

1.4 Section 4 – Minor Road to Kinloch Hourn

1.4.1 To access Section 4 (eastern extent) of the project, construction vehicles would be required to use the unclassified minor road to Kinloch Hourn, from the A87 (near Invergarry). Parts of this road, particularly from Glen Quoich to Loch Coire Shubh, would be subject to public road improvement works at pinch points. At Loch Coire Shubh, due to the steepness of the road and the proposals for new construction access tracks, construction traffic would typically avoid use of the public road between Loch Coire Shubh and Kinloch Hourn.

Landscape and Visual Considerations

1.4.2 The minor road to Kinloch Hourn falls within the Knoydart National Scenic (NSA) area between Loch Cuaich and Kinloch Hourn, and the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area (SLA) between Kingie and the edge of the NSA. In general terms, this route passes through some remote and valued landscapes with extensive views featuring lochs and mountains, and is popular with recreational users and tourists. This long, narrow and winding dead-end road to Kinloch Hourn is specifically noted in the citation for the NSA as contributory to the sense of remoteness which comprises one of the Key Qualities of the NSA.

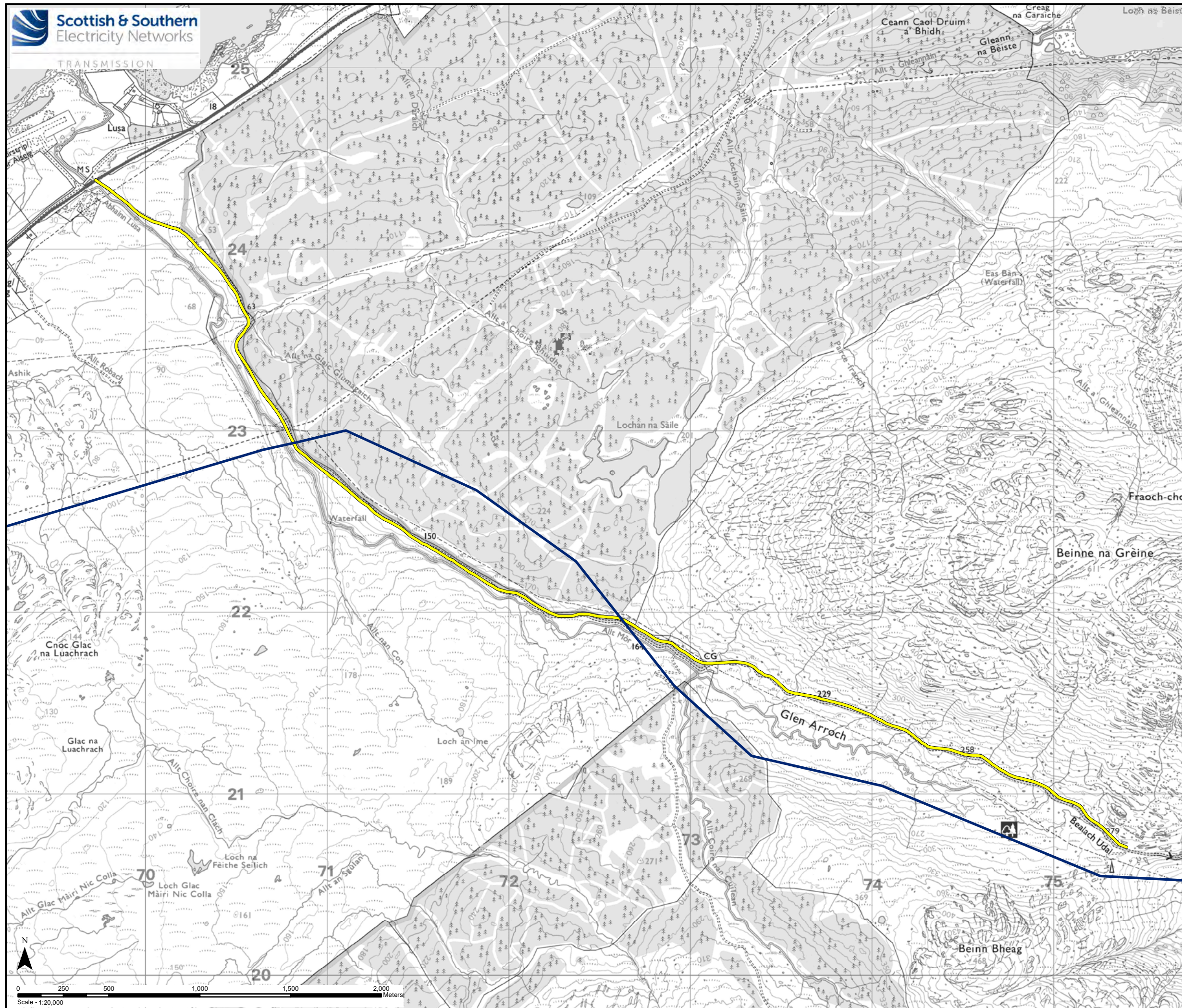
1.4.3 Construction of public road improvement works along this route would temporarily form a new focus and distraction within parts of the landscape, potentially altering the experience of the rugged landform, disrupting some valued scenic vistas. In the longer term, improvements to this road may lead to an increased sense of development and connectivity, thereby locally diminishing the sense of remoteness and wildness. The current, narrow and winding alignment responds closely to the landform and terrain, and whilst small upgrades to corners may not in themselves lead to significant effects on the NSA, the cumulative effect of many upgrades and general widening and straightening of the road would change the experience of travelling and therefore the experience of the NSA.

1.4.4 In some locations, there are particular features which contribute directly to the value of the NSA which could be lost or altered as a result of road widening. These include various rock formations which contribute to a hide-and-reveal experience of particularly attractive features along the route, usually the small lochs which are set within pockets amongst the rocky knolls. A location specific design would be employed for these locations to ensure that the elements which contribute to the scenic value are retained as far as possible.

Natural Heritage

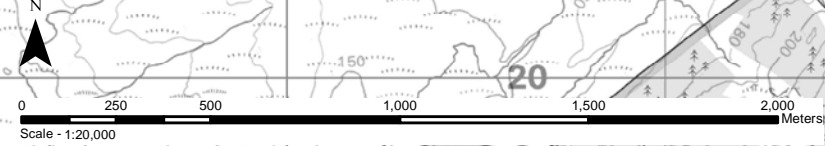
1.4.5 A variety of habitat types are present within the vicinity of the minor road to Kinloch Hourn. NVC data collected for the Proposed Development identified areas of wet heath, dry heath, blanket bog, flush, acid grasslands and bracken, as well as woodland areas. Given the likely scale and nature of the improvement works, they are not anticipated to pose particular constraints for natural heritage, subject to the adoption of best practice construction measures.

1.4.6 It is anticipated that any works would be subject to pre-construction surveys and would be in accordance with standard and best practice construction measures to avoid any potential effects on protected species and the water environment as far as practicable.



Key

- Alternative Alignment
- Indicative Public Road Improvement Works



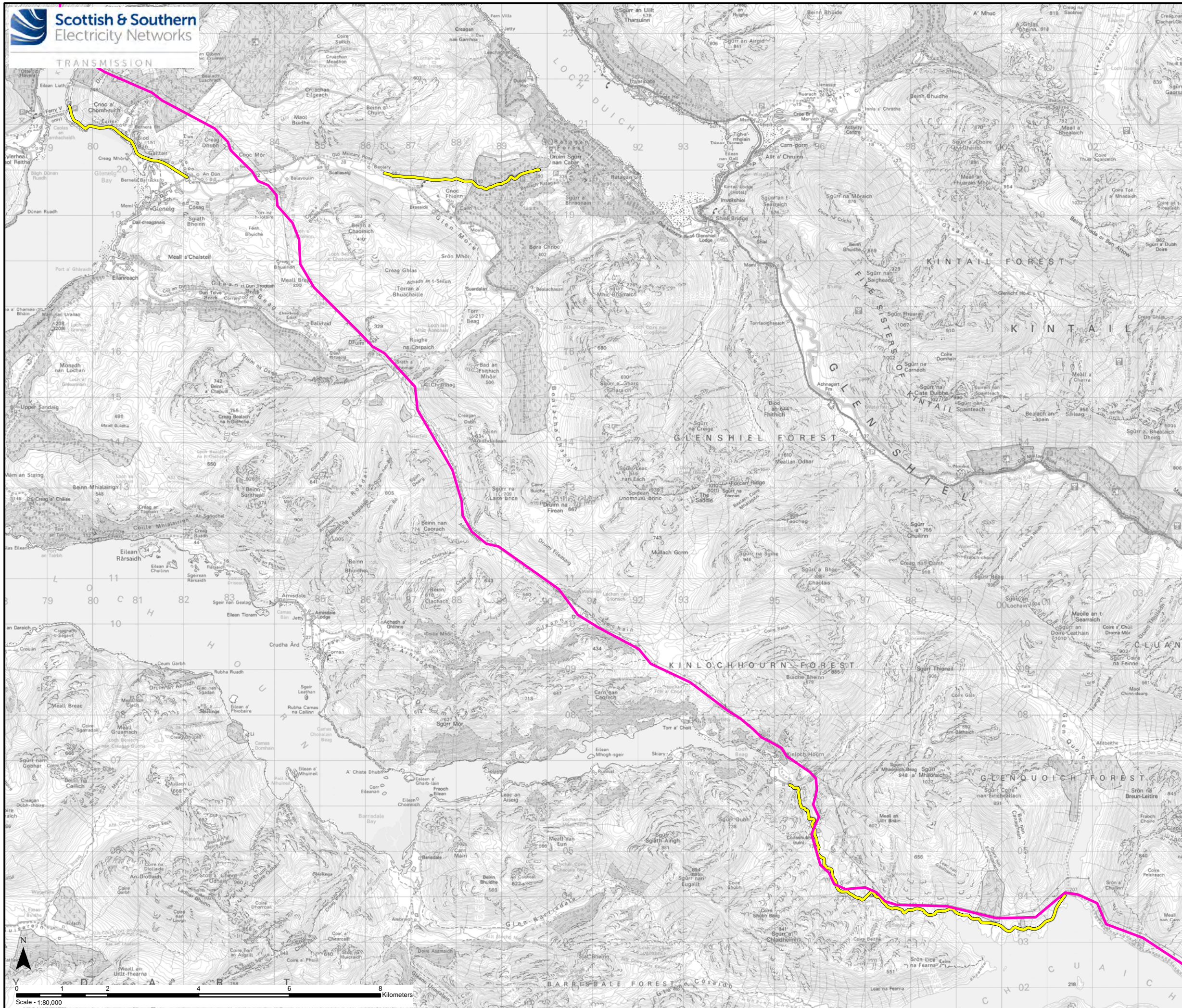
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Project No: LT91
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Title: Appendix V1-3.4 - Figure 1
The Alternative Alignment -
Public Road Improvement Works

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Drawing: 119026-D-A-V1-3.4-1 - 0.1.0



Key

- Proposed OHL Alignment
- Indicative public road improvement works

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Title: Appendix V1-3.4 - Figure 2
Section 4 -
Public Road Improvement Works

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Drawing: 119026-D-A-V1-3.4-2 - 0.1.0

