

1. APPENDIX 2 - SUMMARY OF ROUTE OPTIONS STAGE

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Appendix provides a brief summary of the route option stage of the project on a section by section basis, including the responses received from stakeholders and the decisions made with respect to the identification of a proposed route in each section¹.

1.2 Section 0: Ardmore to Edinbane

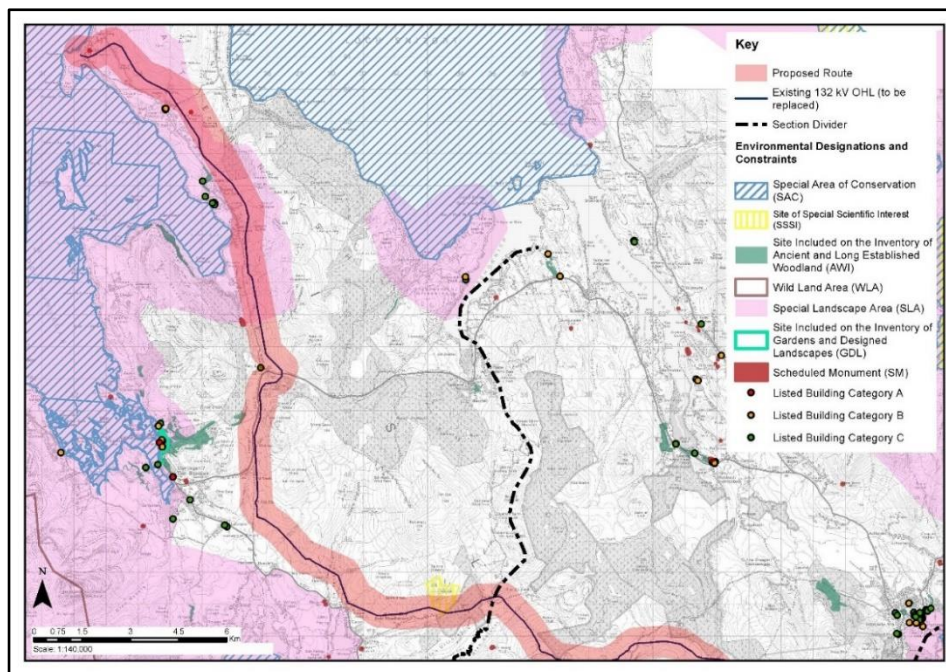
Preferred Route

1.2.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred route identified within this section is a combination of Route 0A (Ardmore to Dunvegan) and Route 0D (Dunvegan to Edinbane).

- Route 0A (Existing Route) - Broadly following the route of the existing trident wood pole OHL, from Ardmore Substation to Dunvegan Substation. The route crosses to the north / eastern side of the B886 road and passes to the rear of crofts and properties on the Waternish peninsula. The route then follows the A850 and a minor road to reach Dunvegan Substation.
- Route 0D (Existing Route) – Following the route of the existing wood pole OHL from Dunvegan Substation in a south easterly direction over open moorland toward St John’s Chapel before heading east across moorland and through woodland towards Edinbane Substation.

1.2.2 Plate A2.1 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route passes through the North West Skye Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the An Cleireach Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a geological SSSI featuring Tertiary igneous intrusions. The route is located within the vicinity of properties, routes and tourist developments, including those on the Waternish peninsula. Designated cultural heritage sites include Trumpan Church, Dun Hallin Broch and Annait Scheduled Monuments.

Plate A2.1: Section 0 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



¹ As noted within the Report on Consultation (November 2020), produced by SSEN Transmission

² Skye Reinforcement Project: Consultation Document: Route Options (March 2020), produced by SSEN Transmission

Consultation Responses

- 1.2.3 During consultations at route option stage, responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees provided general support for the preferred route identified. Environmental sensitivities were highlighted in consultation responses, particularly in relation to designated cultural heritage sites and assets, and ornithological constraints. Comments from the local community ranged from queries on capacity and future generation, the alignment of the OHL and design solution, and community consultation.

Proposed Route

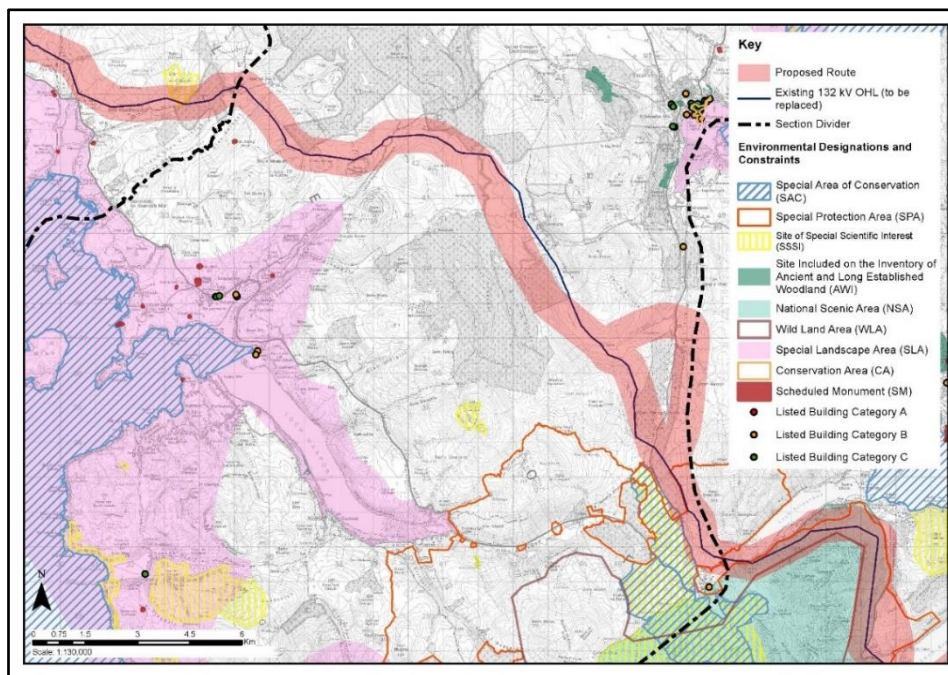
- 1.2.4 The Report on Consultation³ concluded that, subject to further consideration of environmental constraints and sensitivities, the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 0A / 0D) is taken forward as the proposed route.

1.3 Section 1: Edinbane to Sligachan

Preferred Route

- 1.3.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred route for Section 1 is Route Option 1A. This route option broadly follows the route of the existing wood pole OHL from Edinbane Substation to the south-west end of Loch Sligachan, passing Glenmore and then through and to the east of Glen Varragill Forest. The route generally follows lower ground, skirting hills such as Beinn na Cloiche, Stròc-b'heinn and Meall an Fhuarain.
- 1.3.2 Plate A2.2 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route passes through the Cullins Special Protection Area (SPA), and runs adjacent to the Sligachan Peatlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and SSSI. The Cuillin Hills National Scenic Area (NSA) and Wild Land Area (WLA) are visible on approach to Sligachan. The route is located within the vicinity of properties at Glenmore and Mugeary.

Plate A2.2: Section 1 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



³ Report on Consultation (November 2020), produced by SSEN Transmission

Consultation Responses

- 1.3.3 During consultations at route option stage, support for the preferred route was provided by NatureScot and Scottish Forestry. Potential constraints and environmental sensitivities were highlighted by statutory and non-statutory consultees, particularly in relation to designated cultural heritage sites and assets, ornithological constraints, Class 1 peatlands and the potential for landscape and visual effects. Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on capacity and the transition from wood pole to steel structure. No specific comments on route options were received.

Proposed Route

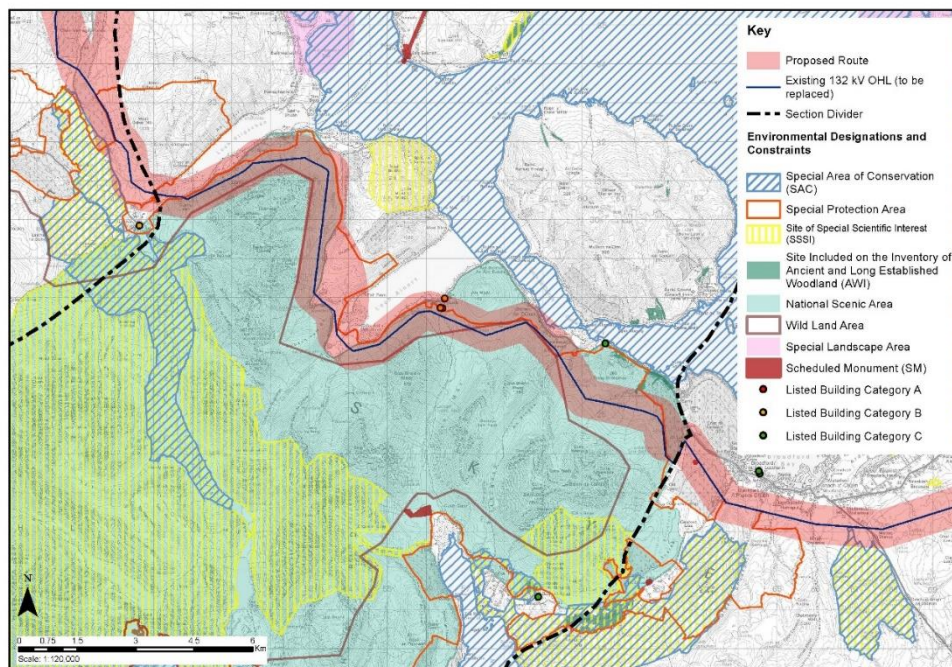
- 1.3.4 The Report on Consultation³ concluded that, subject to further consideration of environmental constraints and sensitivities, the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 1A) is taken forward as the proposed route.

1.4 Section 2: Sligachan to Broadford Substation

Preferred Route

- 1.4.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred OHL route for Section 2 is Route Option 2A. This route option broadly follows the route of the existing wood pole OHL, skirting the edge of the Cuillins. Crossing the head of Loch Sligachan, to the east of Sligachan, the route generally follows the A87 towards Sconser. Here, the route heads in a southerly direction following the A87 through Gleann Torramhichaig toward Loch Ainort. From Loch Ainort, the route follows the A87 toward Luib, before heading to the south of Am Muall and Creag Strollemus before following a south easterly direction toward Broadford.
- 1.4.2 Plate A2.3 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route passes through the Cullins SPA. The Cuillin Hills NSA and WLA are present, as well as other sensitive visual receptors e.g. at Sligachan, Peinachorrain, Sconser and users of the A87.

Plate A2.3: Section 2 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



Consultation Responses

- 1.4.3 Comments received from statutory and non-statutory consultees during route option consultations highlighted some of the sensitivities of this section. Qualified support for the preferred route was provided by Scottish Forestry, John Muir Trust and RSPB, albeit the landscape, visual and ornithological sensitivities and potential for significant effects is noted in this support. In contrast, NatureScot cautioned that they may object to Route Option 2A and that further consideration to Route Option 2B should be given.
- 1.4.4 The comments received from local residents and a community trust in this section focussed on the landscape and visual sensitivities of this section, and capacity for local generation.

Proposed Route

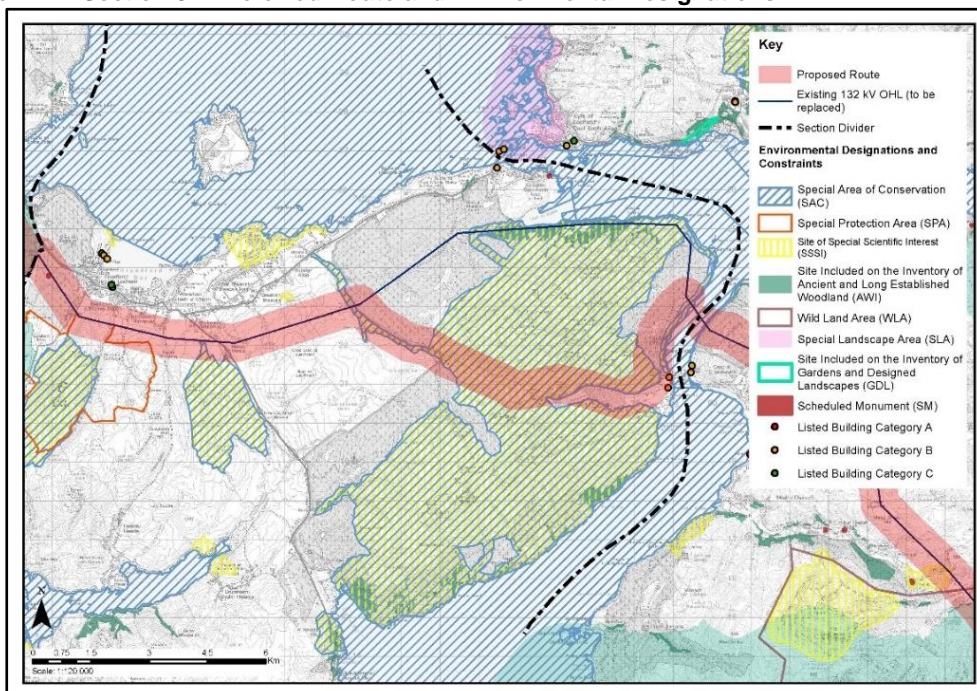
- 1.4.5 It is as a result of the sensitive nature of this section that the Consultation Document² at route options stage noted that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work has been undertaken and is reported in Chapter 7 of this Consultation Document, together with confirmation of the proposed route and design solution.

1.5 Section 3

Preferred Route

- 1.5.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred OHL route for Section 3 is Route Option 3B. This route initially follows the existing steel lattice overhead line before then following the minor road through Glen Arroch to Kyle Rhea, where it would meet the existing OHL crossing of the narrows.
- 1.5.2 Plate A2.4 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route passes through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC / SSSI, and is routed within the vicinity of the Mointeach nan Lochain Dubha SAC / SSSI and Lochs Duich, Long and Alsh reefs SAC. The route would pass through Glen Arroch and near the village of Kyclerhea, an area popular with tourists and wildlife enthusiasts.

Plate A2.4: Section 3 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



Consultation Responses

1.5.3 During consultations at route option stage, there were contrasting views expressed by statutory and non-statutory consultees in this section. NatureScot and Scottish Forestry stated a preference for the preferred route, whilst RSPB stated a strong preference for Route Option 3A following the existing OHL. This section generated a considerable number of responses from the local community and community representatives. The vast majority of views expressed were of concern for the preferred route put forward in the Consultation Document (Route Option 3A / 3B through Glen Arroch and Kyclerhea), with many requesting this is reviewed and the existing OHL route (Route Option 3A) considered again.

Proposed Route

1.5.4 It is as a result of the sensitive nature of this section that the Consultation Document² at route options stage noted that further environmental and engineering survey work would be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work has been undertaken and is reported in Chapter 8 of this report, together with an update of the preferred route and design solution.

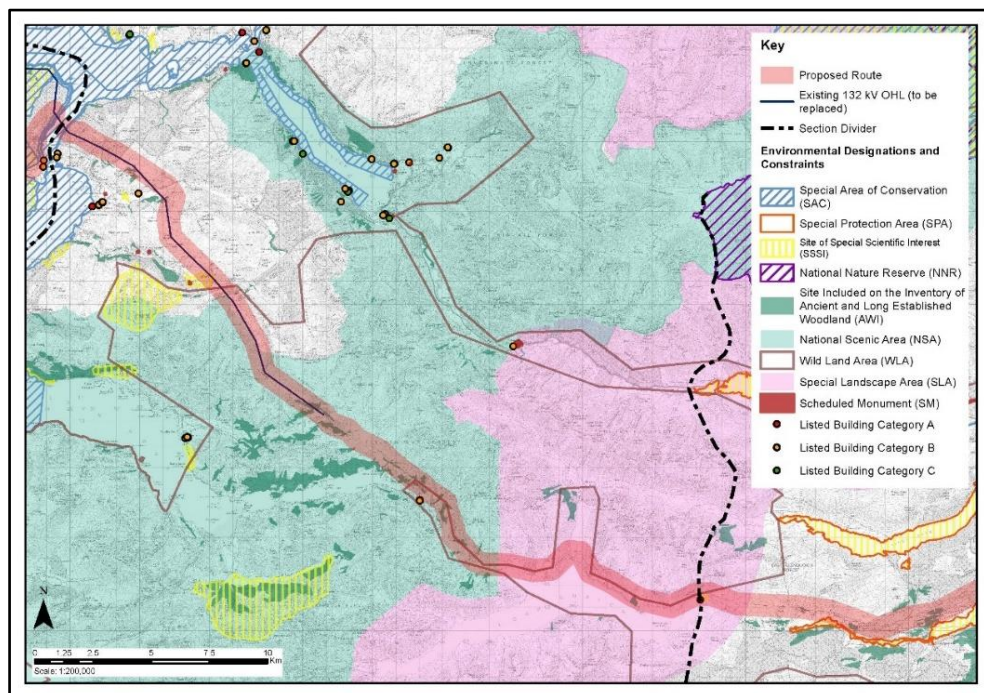
1.6 Section 4: Kyle Rhea to Loch Cuaich

Preferred Route

1.6.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred route for Section 4 is Route Option 4A. This route option follows the route of the existing steel lattice OHL (which would be removed) from Kyle Rhea to Quoich Dam, via Kinloch Hourn. The route passes through a very remote, rugged landscape with steep complex topography and high scenic qualities.

1.6.2 Plate A2.5 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route passes through the Knoydart NSA, Kinlochhourn, Knoydart and Morar WLA, Central Highlands WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA. It also passes with the vicinity of the Druum loasal SSSI (geological) and GCR, Kinloch Hourn GCR and Quoich spillway SSSI (geological).

Plate A2.5: Section 4 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



Consultation Responses

- 1.6.3 During consultations at route option stage there was general support for the preferred route put forward by statutory and non-statutory consultees, albeit consultees advise caution given the sensitive landscape the OHL would be routed through, and NatureScot advised they may object once a fuller understanding of impacts is known. Comments received from the local community in relation to this section focused on consultation, landslip risk, alignment and design solutions, and construction related queries.

Proposed Route

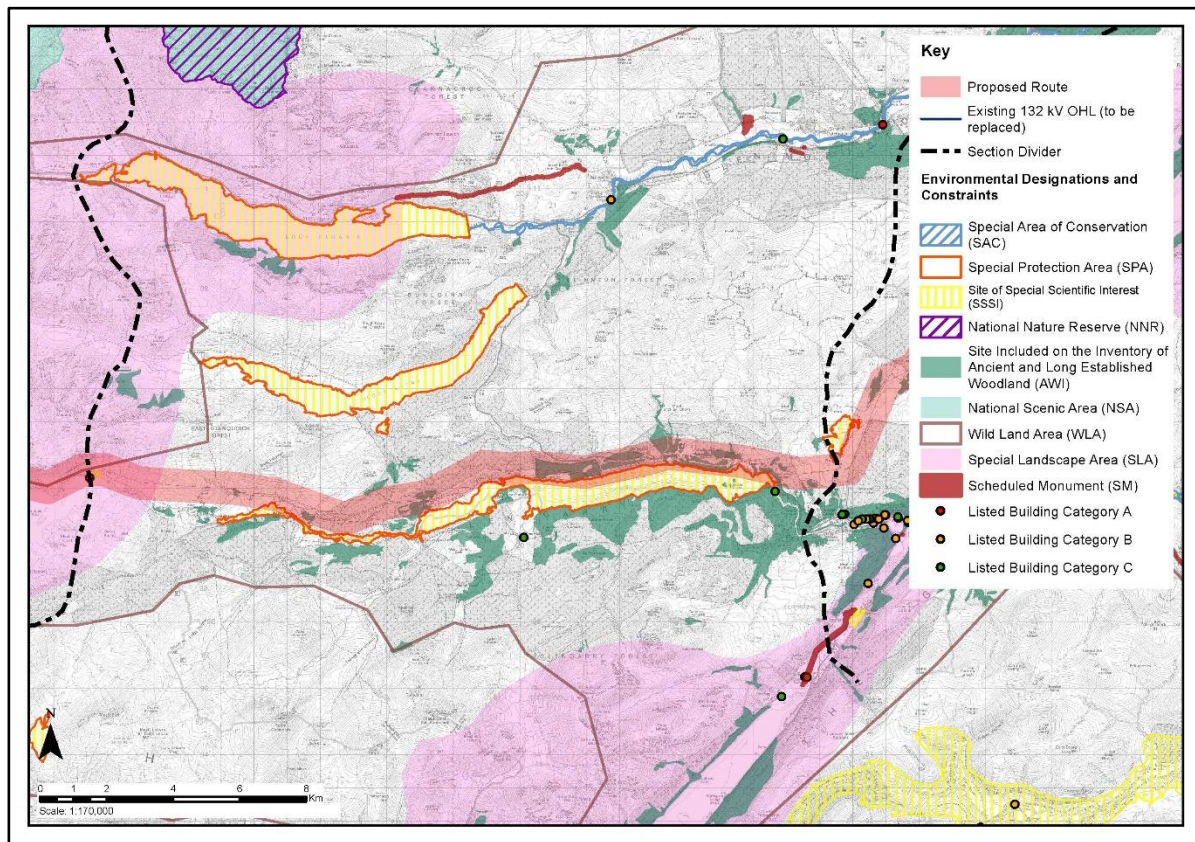
- 1.6.4 The Report on Consultation³ concluded that, subject to further consideration of environmental constraints and sensitivities, the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 4A) is taken forward as the proposed route.

1.7 Section 5: Loch Cuaich to Invergarry

Preferred Route

- 1.7.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred OHL route for Section 5 is Route Option 5A. This route option follows the route of the existing OHL from Quoich dam to Invergarry.
- 1.7.2 Plate A2.6 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route is located within the vicinity of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA / SSSI and the Quoich Spillway SSSI (Geological).

Plate A2.6: Section 5 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



Consultation Responses

1.7.3 Responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees during the routeing stage of the project in relation to this section provided general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation to ornithological designations and constraints. Comments received from the local community focused on consultation, landslip risk, alignment and design solutions (in particular proximity to dwellings), and construction related queries. No specific comments on route options were received.

Proposed Route

1.7.4 The Report on Consultation³ concluded that, subject to further consideration of environmental constraints and sensitivities, the preferred route in this section (Route Option 5A) is taken forward as the proposed route.

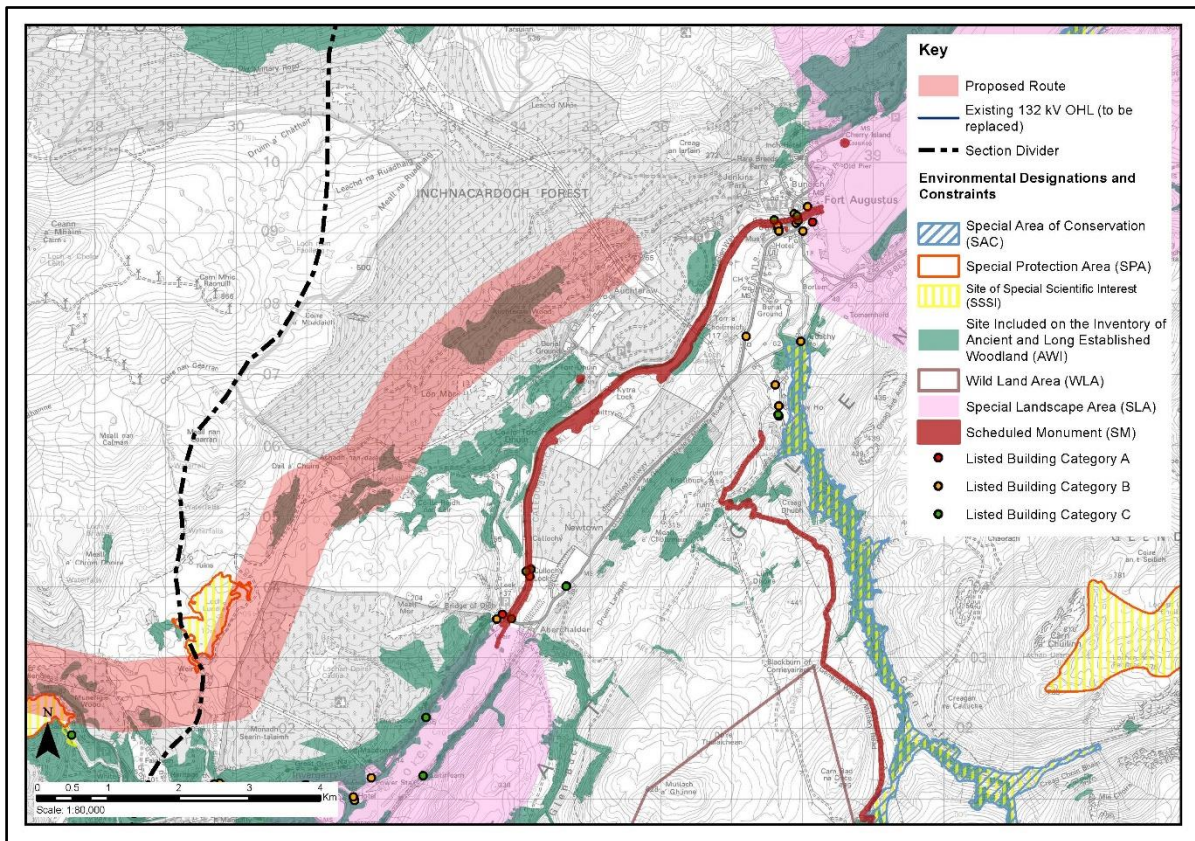
1.8 Section 6: Invergarry to Fort Augustus

Preferred Route

1.8.1 As identified in the Consultation Document² at route options stage, the preferred OHL route for Section 6 is Route Option 6A, following existing electrical infrastructure from the tee point north of Invergarry, in a north easterly direction towards Fort Augustus Substation.

1.8.2 Plate A2.7 illustrates the preferred route in relation to environmental designations and areas of protection. The preferred route runs within the vicinity of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA. It is also routed within the vicinity of the Caledonian Canal and Torr Dhuinn Fort Scheduled Monuments, and properties at Auchterawe.

Plate A2.7: Section 6 – Preferred Route and Environmental Designations



Consultation Responses

- 1.8.3 During consultations at route option stage, responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this section provided general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation to wirescape impacts at Auchterawe, ornithological designations and constraints, cultural heritage sites and forestry. The preferred route was also supported in this section by the local community, albeit comments received from local residents focussed on the connection into Fort Augustus Substation, with a preference for this to be undergrounded.

Proposed Route

- 1.8.4 The Report on Consultation³ concluded that, subject to further consideration of environmental constraints and sensitivities, the preferred route in this section (Route Option 6A / 6C) is taken forward as the proposed route.