

## APPENDIX 3 – COMPARATIVE ALIGNMENT TABLES

### SECTION 0 – ARDMORE TO EDINBANE

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints for Baseline Alignment	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	<p>The Baseline Alignment would pass through the An Cleireach SSSI for approximately 200 m. This SSSI is a nationally important geological designation, featuring Tertiary igneous intrusions, located to the north-east of Balmeanach. The existing OHL also passes through this SSSI. The micro-siting of poles to avoid rocky outcrops within the SSSI would be required to avoid adversely affecting the notified features of the SSSI.</p>	<p>Variant 0-H would pass through a shorter stretch of the SSSI.</p> <p>However, this would bring the OHL closer to properties at Balmeanach and into croft land which could present land use constraints. It would also require to cross over the existing OHL, potentially requiring outages.</p>	<p>Given opportunities to mitigate effects on the SSSI, the Baseline Alignment is preferred as this would lead to reduced effects on properties and croft land, compared to Variant 0-H and 0-I.</p>
			<p>Variant 0-I would avoid the SSSI.</p> <p>Would lead to potential skylining and increased visibility from properties in Balmeanach. It would also require to cross over the existing OHL, potentially requiring outages.</p>	
	Protected Species	<p>Watercourses and water bodies throughout are considered suitable for supporting otters. Protected species surveys in 2020 recorded otter signs on several watercourses around the Baseline Alignment, mainly in the form of spraints; however, only one potential protected feature was recorded (an otter resting up area, known as a couch). Very few Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats were recorded during</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting of poles and appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

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		surveys in 2020, and those that were, are of low to low-moderate suitability.		
	Habitats	<p>The Baseline Alignment generally passes through typical upland mire and heath habitats and patches of rough acid grassland pasture and marshy grassland common on Skye. Habitats mainly comprise areas of acid and improved grasslands, a mix of wet and dry heaths and areas of blanket bog in places. Some of these are high sensitivity habitats (i.e. Annex 1) but opportunities exist to mitigate impacts through micro-siting. Areas where higher sensitive habitats have been recorded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the east of Beinn na Mointich, comprising an area of blanket bog and wet heath;</li> <li>To the east of Bay and south towards Fairy Briidge, comprising patches of blanket bog wet heath, and localised peat around Fairy Bridge;</li> <li>South of Fairy Bride to Lian Airigh nan Geadh comprising an area of blanket bog, and from Lian Airigh nan Geadh to Dunvegan Substation comprising primarily wet heath, with many smaller patches of</li> </ul>	<p>Variant 0-C (Hallin) would provide the opportunity to avoid areas of blanket bog and wet heath to the east of Beinn na Mointich.</p> <p>This would bring the OHL closer to properties at Hallin, bisect croft land and potentially impact on the setting of Dun Hallin Broch SM.</p> <p>Variant 0-G (Glen Heysdal) would provide an opportunity to avoid dry modified bog by re-routing through low conservation value improved and acid grasslands to the west instead.</p> <p>This variant would also reduce potential for skylining in views from properties in Feorlig / Upper Feorlig but would route the OHL through croft land which may result in land use constraints for local crofts. It would also require to cross over the existing OHL, potentially requiring outages.</p> <p>Variant 0-H (Balmeanach) would provide an opportunity to microsite around blanket bog habitat and onto acid grassland.</p> <p>This would bring the OHL closer to properties and onto croft land which may lead to land use constraints. Would also require to cross over the existing OHL, requiring outages.</p>	Given other constraints and opportunities for micro-siting of poles to minimise effects on sensitive habitats, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.

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		<p>blanket bog, wet modified bog, and dry heath; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To the south east of Dunvegan Substation towards Balmeanach, comprising areas of blanket bog, wet heath and dry heath.</li> </ul> <p>In all of these areas it is anticipated that micrositing of poles could minimise potential effects.</p>		
	Ornithology	<p>Hen harriers breed within the wider area and corncrake are visitors to the Waternish peninsula between late April and early August. There are also records of white-tailed eagle within the wider area. Moorland breeding bird surveys carried out between April and July 2021 detected no notable species within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment. Similarly, scarce breeding bird surveys over the same period detected no breeding sites of scarce raptors within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment, although flights by white tailed eagle, peregrine and merlin were recorded. A single male corncrake was also recorded holding territory at Trumpan in May 2021.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>
	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	<p>The Carbon and Peatland Map 2016 identifies areas of Class 1 peatlands from the southern extents of the Waternish peninsula extending</p>	<p>In general, constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, although variants noted for habitats also of relevance to priority peatland.</p>	<p>Given opportunities for micrositing of poles to minimise effects on sensitive habitats,</p>

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		<p>south and covering much of the land between Dunvegan and Edinbane substations.</p> <p>The area is underlain by an impermeable bedrock. Most of the water will be shed as surface water flow, hence a large number of fast flowing streams prevail, particularly on Waternish Peninsula. It is anticipated there will be private water supplies throughout this area, and there are surface water drinking protection zones at Trumpan and Stein, but these are not considered to pose a risk to the development..</p>		<p>the Baseline Alignment is preferred.</p>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	<p>This is an area rich in designated cultural heritage assets, particularly Trumpan Church, Dun Hallin Broch and Annait Scheduled Monuments. A small number of Scheduled Monuments (e.g. Barpannan Chambered Cairns (SM 893), and Dun Feorlig Broch (SM 3494)) and Listed Buildings are located outside the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>A review of the Baseline Alignment in comparison with Variants 0-A (Trumpan), 0-C and 0-D (Hallin) was carried out to determine potential changes to the settings of these Scheduled Monuments. This review, carried out in consultation with HES, concluded that the Baseline Alignment was the preferable</p>	<p>As noted, a review of the Baseline Alignment in comparison with other OHL Variants concluded that the Baseline Alignment was the preferable OHL alignment with respect to setting effects on designated cultural heritage assets.</p>	<p>Following review of potential setting effects on designated assets, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.</p>

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		alignment with respect to setting effects on SMs.		
	Cultural Heritage Assets	<p>This is an area rich in cultural heritage and there are numerous non-designated cultural heritage assets that are recorded on The Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) in the Waternish Peninsula.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment passes through Trumpan Township (MHG 4739) and Lusta Township (MHG 6139) and through a well-preserved field system at Hallistra (MHG5965). Other non-designated assets present within the vicinity include brochs, sheiling huts, field systems, field and township boundaries, and areas of former lazy bed cultivation. These features are a mixture of previously recorded HER entries and sites newly identified during a desktop study of aerial photography and historic mapping</p> <p>Mitigation in the form of micro-siting of poles and adoption of sensitive construction techniques would minimise any likely effects.</p>	Given the extents of the non-designated cultural heritage assets through this area, all options are likely to be similarly constrained and subject to the same approach to mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred, subject to appropriate mitigation.
<b>People</b>	Proximity to Dwellings	Settlement and properties are located within the general vicinity of the Baseline Alignment at Trumpan, Halstra, Hallin, Stein, Lusta and Hornival on the Waternish Peninsula, and also	All OHL Variants avoid close proximity to properties. However, all OHL Variants would converge at a similar point on exit / approach to Ardmore Substation and would share similar constraints	Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.

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		<p>at Upper Feorlig and Balmeanach. The Baseline Alignment has been routed to avoid close proximity to these properties (i.e. beyond 4 times the nominal height of the structure). One exception to this is at Ardmore where at its closest point the Baseline Alignment passes circa 30 m to the rear of a property, set down into the hill side with only its roof visible when viewed from the north east. Another property is circa 50 m distance from the Baseline Alignment in this area. The presence of the existing 132 kV OHL, the 11 kV line and topography on approach to Ardmore Substation all limit viable options for an OHL in this location.</p>	<p>noted for Baseline Alignment in terms of proximity to properties at this location.</p>	
<b>Landscape and Visual</b>	Designations	<p>The Baseline Alignment runs through the North West Skye Special Landscape Area (SLA) through much of the Waternish Peninsula.</p> <p>Special Qualities of the SLA of potential sensitivity to the OHL involve the relationship between land and sea, the traditional patterns of the crofting landscapes and their association with historic land use, and distinctive features of the terrain, including views towards MacLeod's Tables from within and around the SLA.</p>	<p>No OHL Variant offers a particular advantage over the Baseline Alignment in terms of minimising effects on the SLA.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.</p>

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	Landscape Character	The landscape is heavily influenced by the coast with an intricate coastline of bays and rocky promontories backed by croft lands and strung out settlements. Inland areas are characterised by stepped moorland with occasional patches of forest plantation. The southern part of the Baseline Alignment crosses two coastal valleys (Glen Heysdal and Balmeanach glen) where improved croft lands and scattered settlement extend inland slightly. In general, whilst the coastal landscapes have higher sensitivity though this Section, inland landscapes are broadly accommodating of the type of development proposed (wood pole OHL), particularly given that this would be replacing an existing wood pole OHL.	<p>Variant 0-B offers a localised benefit to landscape character in relation to the Baseline Alignment as it would take a more sensitive alignment across the Cnoc a' Catha roadside ridge, where the Baseline Alignment would appear more prominent.</p> <p>Variant 0-G (Glen Heysdal) provides an opportunity to minimise some of the effects of localised skylining in comparison to the Baseline Alignment.</p>	Variants 0-B and 0-G both offer some improved landscape effects to the Baseline Alignment but have not been taken forward as part of the preferred alignment due to other land use constraints.
	Visual	Visual receptors within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment include residential settlements along the Waternish coast including Trumpan, Halistra, Hallin and Stein where there are open, coastal views, and scattered crofting properties at Upper Feorlig in Glen Heysdal and Balmeanach. A viewpoint at Trumpan, Core Paths near Stein, Dunvegan and Ullinish, and the rural roads which serve these properties,	<p>There is some advantage for a small number of receptors at Trumpan with Variant 0-A in comparison to the Baseline Alignment, given it follows the existing 132 kV OHL and would avoid crossing to the front of coastal views from some properties.</p> <p>Variant 0-A would feature within westerly views in the same manner of the existing OHL and would pass closer to a couple of individual properties.</p>	There is little to choose between the Baseline Alignment and Variant 0-A in terms of visual effects. Variants 0-B and 0-H both offer some likely improved visual effects but have not been taken forward as part of the preferred

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		<p>including the A850 and B886, are also visually sensitive, being used by residents and popular with visitors and tourists.</p> <p>Views from Trumpan, where the Baseline Alignment crosses coastal land to the front of properties on the approach to Ardmore Substation, may give rise to some visual effects and the potential for skylining to poles as they cross over the minor road to the north of Trumpan. Effects are to some degree offset by the removal of the existing OHL for some receptors.</p> <p>Further south-east, the Baseline Alignment to the east of Dun Hallin Broch and Beinn na Mointich moves the new OHL further from properties at Hallin and Lower Hallistra albeit there is the possibility of this appearing on the skyline from some (limited) places. There would also be some visual effects on users of a Core Path in this area.</p> <p>At Glen Heysdal, potential for skylining of some poles in views from properties at Feorlig and Upper Feorlig.</p>	<p>There would therefore be only limited benefit in terms of visual effects from some receptors.</p> <p>Variant 0-B is similar in nature to the Baseline Alignment, but provides an opportunity to reduce the effects of skylining of poles on views obtained by visual receptors to the west, including from residential properties and the minor road in comparison to the Baseline Alignment. .</p> <p>Variant 0-C (Hallin) offers an alternative to the Baseline Alignment with potential to reduce skylining and visual effects on the Stein to Gillen Core Path, instead being routed to the east of the existing OHL. This would however be close to the rear of properties at Hallin and Lower Hallistra (as per the existing OHL). Would also bring the OHL closer to Dun Hallin Broch SM, which is considered less preferable to the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>Variant 0-D (Hallin), located further to the east of Beinn na Mointich than the Baseline Alignment would increase the risk of skylining in views from Gillen. Considered less preferable in comparison to the Baseline Alignment on landscape and visual grounds given potential for increased sky lining from Gillen. Also less preferable in terms of setting effects on Dun Hallin Broch SM.</p>	<p>alignment due to other land use constraints.</p>



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			<p>Variants 0-E and 0-F provide alternative options at Fairy Bridge but would be closer to the public road leading to likely greater visual effects. Likely greater visual effects than the Baseline Alignment due to proximity to the public road. Also would be required to cross over the existing OHL one or more times, potentially requiring outages.</p>	
			<p>Variant 0-G (Glen Heysdal) provides an opportunity to minimise some of the effects of skylining in comparison to the Baseline Alignment. This would appear slightly closer in views from Feorlig / Upper Feorlig but less likely to skyline and therefore preferred, but would route the OHL through croft land which may result in land use constraints for local crofts. It would also require to cross over the existing OHL, potentially requiring outages.</p>	
			<p>Variant 0-H (Balmeanach) would bring the OHL closer to properties and onto croft land which may lead to land use constraints. Would also require to cross over the existing OHL, requiring outages.</p>	
			<p>Variant 0-I would lead to potential skylining and increased visibility from properties in Balmeanach. It would also require to cross over the existing OHL, potentially requiring outages.</p>	

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Land Use	Agriculture	<p>Crofting settlements are present within Section 0 and the Baseline Alignment crosses areas of agricultural land use, including land primarily suited to grassland (4.2), and land capable of use as improved grassland (5.1 and 5.2). No grade 1, 2 or 3 agricultural land is present in the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>At Hallin, the Baseline Alignment offers an opportunity to move the OHL further away from properties and croft land in comparison to the existing OHL.</p>	<p>Whilst constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting of poles and appropriate mitigation, the following variants are anticipated to increase effect on agriculture and croft land in comparison to Baseline Alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variant 0-C (Hallin)</li> <li>• Variant 0-G (Glen Heysdal)</li> <li>• Variant 0-H (Balmeanach)</li> </ul>	<p>The Baseline Alignment is preferred given reduced effects on agriculture in comparison with other Variants.</p>
	Forestry	<p>The Baseline Alignment would require a new or extended wayleave through commercial plantation to the west of Edinbane Substation.</p> <p>To the east of Stein, the Baseline Alignment crosses a corner of plantation forest, part of Waternish Forest. This area is currently clear felled and adjacent to an old borrow pit.</p>	<p>At Hallin, Variant 0-C would avoid any interaction with Waternish Forest.</p> <p>Variant 0-C would be close to the rear of properties at Hallin and Lower Hallistra (as per the existing OHL). Would also bring the OHL closer to Dun Hallin Broch SM, which is considered less preferable to the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>On approach to Edinbane Substation, Variant 0-I would require a similar extent of felling to the Baseline Alignment, and in part where no wayleave is currently present.</p> <p>Variant 0-I would bring the OHL closer to properties and onto croft land which may lead to land use</p>	<p>Given minor effect on forestry, and considering other constraints, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.</p>

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			constraints. Would also require to cross over the existing OHL, requiring outages.	
	Recreation	The Baseline Alignment would run within the vicinity of, or cross the Stein to Gillen, and Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill Core Paths, as well as two other Rights of Way and Wider Path Network paths.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting of poles and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.
Planning	Policy	As a 'National Development' (NPF 3), and considering the alignment selection process undertaken to minimise potential environmental effects, it is considered the Baseline Alignment would be in broad conformity with local and national planning policy.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Proposals	No notable proposals within the planning system identified within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.  Within the vicinity of Variant-1B, an application for planning permission in principle for the development of a house was lodged in 2013. This was approved but has since lapsed.	Given comparable constraints across all options, with the exception of Variant-1B, the Baseline Alignment is preferred.

### Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 0

On balance, it was determined that the Baseline Alignment should be taken forward as the preferred alignment and design solution within this section. This would require the installation of approximately 23 km of wood pole (H pole) OHL. The existing wood pole OHL would be removed upon completion.

## SECTION 1 - EDINBANE TO NORTH OF SLIGACHAN

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	<p>The Baseline Alignment would pass through the Cuillin Hills SPA, classified for 8 pairs of resident breeding golden eagles, for approximately 1 km. A HRA is likely to be required upon submission of a consent application, albeit no adverse effect on site integrity for the SPA is anticipated, assuming appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>Also, the Sligachan Peatlands SAC/SSSI, the qualifying features of which include blanket bog, dystrophic and oligotrophic lochs, vascular plants, transition mires and quaking bogs, is located approximately 500 m to the west of the Baseline Alignment for approximately 4 km. The Baseline Alignment would cross watercourses that are upstream of the SAC/SSSI, and appropriate mitigation to avoid silt and pollution entering these watercourses during construction would be required to avoid indirect effects on the SAC/SSSI.</p>	<p>There are no variants that would avoid passing through the Cuillin Hills SPA between Glen Varragill Forest and Sligachan.</p> <p>All variants would share the same constraints and requirement for mitigation with respect to the Sligachan Peatlands SAC/SSSI.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>
	Protected Species	<p>European Protected Species such as otter and bats could be present along the Baseline Alignment, as well as other protected species, including reptiles.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting of towers and appropriate mitigation during construction.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

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	Habitats	<p>The Baseline Alignment generally passes through open moorland and heathland comprising areas of blanket bog, wet heath, wet modified bog, dry modified bog and small patches of scattered acid grassland habitats.</p> <p>Areas where higher sensitive habitats have been recorded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Edinbane Substation to the B885 where there are areas of blanket bog and deep peat; and</li> <li>• As the Baseline Alignment crosses the moorland at Achaleathan and towards Glenmore, this is an area of blanket bog. Peat probing undertaken by the OHL contractor has identified areas of deep peat.</li> </ul>	<p>Variant 1-A provides an opportunity to minimise effects on blanket bog by routing through plantation forestry, albeit potential for deeper areas of peat remain. This variant would bring the OHL closer to a known white tailed eagle nest, although it is anticipated that suitable buffer distances can be maintained to minimise effects during construction and operation.</p> <p>Peat probing has identified that Variant 1-B crosses shallower peat in comparison to the Baseline Alignment across the moorland at Achaleathan. Habitat walkovers suggest this area to be more of a habitat mosaic with smaller patches of blanket bog intertwined with wet heath, purple moor-grass (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) wet modified bog, and small patches of acid grassland on shallow mineral soils and exposed knolls.</p> <p>Variant 1-C and 1-D provide an alternative alignment to minimise potential effects on blanket bog and deeper areas of peat, being routed across less sensitive habitats. These variants though would result in likely significant landscape and visual effects from receptors at Glenmore and Mugeary.</p>	<p>Given sensitive habitats and deeper areas of peat, Variant 1-A and 1-B are preferred, in combination with the Baseline Alignment in other areas.</p> <p>Further habitat and peat depth surveys required to ensure the preferred alignment, tower locations and construction access are micrositied to minimise effects on sensitive habitats.</p> <p>Whilst Variants 1-C and 1-D offer further opportunities to minimise effects on habitats and peatlands, these have not been taken forward as preferred due to likely significant landscape and visual effects.</p> <p>Further habitat and peat depth surveys required to ensure the preferred alignment, tower</p>

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				locations and construction access are microsited to minimise effects on habitats.
	Ornithology	<p>Moorland breeding bird surveys, flight activity surveys for white-tailed eagle and golden eagle, and searches for nest sites have been undertaken throughout 2021, to supplement existing data and inform alignment selection within Section 1. Known ornithological sensitivities throughout Section 1 include white-tailed eagle, golden eagle, hen harriers, red-throated diver and greenshank, all of which frequent the area.</p> <p>There are no known nest sites for birds of conservation concern within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment, taking into account suitable buffer zones for different species. Historic nest sites close to the Baseline Alignment have been checked and confirmed as no longer viable / in use.</p>	<p>Variant 1-A brings the OHL closer to a known white tailed eagle nest. However, it is anticipated that suitable buffer distances can be maintained to minimise effects during construction and operation.</p> <p>By following the existing OHL, Variant 1-C would avoid felling a new wayleave through a part of Glen Tungadal Forest, near Mugeary (used historically by white tailed eagle), and would keep the OHL at a lower elevation through this part of the route. Similarly, Variant 1-D would also avoid the requirement for felling, although would be located at a higher elevation. Both of these variants would result in likely significant landscape and visual effects from receptors at Glenmore and Mugeary.</p>	Baseline Alignment given reduced requirement for fellings, although with suitable mitigation (i.e. sensitive timing of construction activities) other variants are not anticipated to result in additional constraint.

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	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	<p>The Carbon and Peatland Map 2016 identifies areas of Class 1 peatland along the majority of the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>Peat probing has been carried out along the Baseline Alignment throughout Section 1, confirming that generally peat depths are shallow. However, pockets of deeper peat do exist. In particular, where the Baseline Alignment crosses the moorland at Achaleathan and towards Glenmore, this is an area comprising blanket bog and deep peat.</p>	<p>Peat probing has identified that Variant 1-B crosses much shallower peat in comparison to the Baseline Alignment across the moorland at Achaleathan. Habitat walkovers suggest this area to be more of a habitat mosaic with smaller patches of blanket bog intertwined with wet heath, purple moor-grass (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>) wet modified bog, and small patches of acid grassland on shallow mineral soils and exposed knolls.</p>	<p>Given sensitive habitats and deeper areas of peat, Variant 1-A and 1-B are preferred, in combination with the Baseline Alignment in other areas.</p> <p>Further habitat and peat depth surveys required to ensure the preferred alignment, tower locations and construction access are microsited to minimise effects on peatlands.</p>
		<p>A number of watercourse crossings, particularly at Glenmore and Glen Varragill, would need to be considered, predominantly in relation to construction access. Private water supplies anticipated in this area also, although not anticipated to be a development constraint.</p>	<p>Variant 1-C and 1-D provide an alternative alignment to minimise potential effects on blanket bog and deeper areas of peat, being routed across less sensitive habitats. These variants would result in likely significant landscape and visual effects from receptors at Glenmore and Mugeary.</p>	<p>Whilst Variants 1-C and 1-D offer further opportunities to minimise effects on habitats and peatlands, these have not been taken forward as preferred due to likely significant landscape and visual effects.</p> <p>Further habitat and peat depth surveys required to ensure the preferred alignment, tower locations and construction access are microsited to minimise effects on peatlands.</p>

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<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	<p>No cultural heritage designated assets are within the immediate vicinity of the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>Dun Arkaig broch (SM 13662) lies approximately 1.5 km from the Baseline Alignment.</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Cultural Heritage Assets	<p>There are two non-designated cultural heritage assets recorded in The Highland Council HER within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment within Section 1. These comprise sheiling huts (MHG 5156) and a dyke (MHG 55833). Other heritage assets were identified from the desktop study. These mainly comprise post-medieval features such as buildings, field boundaries, and cultivation remains. Mitigation through micro-siting of towers and access routes where necessary should avoid direct effects on these assets.</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
<b>People</b>	Proximity to Dwellings	Settlement and properties are located over 1 km to the east of the Baseline Alignment at Glenmore and Mugeary. There is a property approximately 500 m from the Baseline Alignment at Glen Vic Askill.	Variant 1-A would be located approximately 325 m from the property at Glen Vic Askill, closer than the Baseline Alignment.	The Baseline Alignment is preferable over Variant 1-A given increased distance, albeit Variant 1-A is not considered to be in close proximity to the property at Glen Vic Askill.
			Variant 1-C and 1-D would run closer to the properties at Glenmore and Mugeary than the	The Baseline Alignment is preferable of Variants 1-C and



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			Baseline Alignment. Could result in likely significant landscape and visual effects, and proximity may appear somewhat overbearing in some areas.	1-D given increased distance between it and Glenmore / Mugeary.
Landscape and Visual	Designations	On approach to Sligachan, the Baseline Alignment has potential for indirect effects to the Cuillin Hills NSA due to the appearance of steel structures in the foreground of views towards the mountains.	Variants in Section 1 are broadly similar with respect to indirect effects on the NSA.  Reference should be made to Section 2 (Variant 2-A).	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Character	The Baseline Alignment is mostly within the Upland Sloping Moorland and Stepped Moorland Landscape Character Types and is composed of sweeping open moorland with a broadscale pattern of forestry plantation. These landscapes are considered broadly accommodating of this type of development if well aligned.  To the west of the B885, small flat-topped rocky knolls are a unique feature of the landscape and more locally sensitive to change.	Variant 1-A would provide an opportunity to minimise impacts on the small flat-topped rocky knolls present at Creag Bhreac as it is routed through the forest plantation at Glen Vic Askill, but may be more prominent crossing open slopes near to Glen Vic Askill. It would also require a new wayleave to be created through the plantation.  Variant 1-A also brings the OHL closer to a known white tailed eagle nest, although it is anticipated that suitable buffer distances can be maintained to minimise effects during construction and operation.  Potential for increased visual effect from property at Glen Vic Askill with Variant 1-A.	The Baseline Alignment is considered to have comparable constraints with Variants 1-A and 1-B with no particular preference between these alignments.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		An area of settlement and crofting land at Glenmore has a smaller scale character and greater sensitivity.	Both the Baseline Alignment and Variant 1-B cross the flat open moorland near Achaleathan, with potential for greater landscape effects, but Variants 1-C and 1-B would have greater landscape effects on small scale landscapes around Glenmore.	
	Visual	<p>The Baseline Alignment has been routed through and along the edge of forestry keeping to a distance of at least 840 m from properties at Glenmore and Mugeary and minimising skylining to reduce potential visual effects for receptors in these areas.</p> <p>Other visual receptors are limited to a property at Glen Vic Askill (circa 500 m from the Baseline Alignment) users of a core path and road users.</p>	<p>Variant 1-A would be located approximately 325 m from the property at Glen Vic Askill, leading to potentially increased visual effects.</p> <p>Variant 1-C and 1-D would run closer to properties and visual receptors at Glenmore and Mugeary in comparison with the Baseline Alignment. This could result in significant landscape and visual effects, with proximity of Variant 0-D resulting in towers appearing somewhat imposing in some areas.</p> <p>Variant 1-E at Glen Varragill Forest would take a more direct route through the forest. This is deemed less preferable in landscape and visual terms in comparison to the Baseline Alignment, primarily due to the point of crossing of the A87 and the potential impact in key views, as well as increased felling requirements.</p>	The Baseline Alignment is preferred for visual effects.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Land Use	Agriculture	The Section is predominantly rough grazing, dominated by plant communities of low grazing value. The Baseline Alignment does not interact with any grade 1, 2 or 3 agricultural land.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, although potential for interaction with land use for crofting for Variants 1-B and 1-C.	Given comparable constraints across all options, the Baseline Alignment, in combination with Variant 1-A and / or 1-B as required, is preferred.
	Forestry	Baseline Alignment would require a new wayleave for a short section through forestry at Glen Tungadal and Glen Varagill.	Variant 1-A would require a new wayleave through forestry at Glen Vic Askill. There is also potential for increased visual effect from property at Glen Vic Askill with this variant, and it brings the OHL closer to a known white tailed eagle nest, although it is anticipated that suitable buffer distances can be maintained to minimise effects during construction and operation.	Given relatively minor effect on forestry, and considering other constraints, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Recreation	The Baseline Alignment crosses the Loch Caroy to Glen Vic Askill Core Path.	There are no variants that would avoid this constraint.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Planning	Policy	As a 'National Development' (NPF 3), and considering the alignment selection process undertaken to minimise potential environmental effects, it is considered the Baseline Alignment would be in broad conformity with local and national planning policy. Minimising effects on Class 1 peatland habitats and deeper areas of peat will require careful consideration to maintain this position.	Variant 1-A provides an opportunity to minimise effects on blanket bog by routing through plantation, albeit potential for deeper areas of peat remain. Peat probing has identified that Variant 1-B crosses much shallower peat in comparison to the Baseline Alignment across the moorland at Achaleathan. Habitat walkovers suggest this area to be wet heath and mire (M25).	Given sensitive habitats and deeper areas of peat, Variant 1-A and 1-B are preferred, in combination with the Baseline Alignment in other areas.  Further habitat and peat depth surveys required to ensure the preferred alignment, tower locations and construction access are microsited to minimise effects on peatlands.
	Proposals	The Baseline Alignment is within recommended clearance distance for electrical infrastructure from the consented Glen Ullinish wind farm.	Variant 1-A remains outwith the recommended clearance distance from the consented Glen Ullinish wind farm.  Potential for increased visual effect from property at Glen Vic Askill with Variant 1-A.  Variant 1-A brings the OHL closer to a known white tailed eagle nest, although it is anticipated that suitable buffer distances can be maintained to minimise effects during construction and operation.  Variant 1-A would require a new wayleave through forestry at Glen Vic Askill, although opportunity to minimise effects on sensitive habitats.	Whilst Variant 1-A could result in additional effects in comparison to the Baseline Alignment, the requirement to maintain recommended clearance distance from consented wind farms results in Variant 1-A being preferred in this location.

**Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 1**

On balance, it was determined that Variant's 1-A and 1-B would be taken forward given the requirement to ensure sufficient clearance distances to the consented Glen Ullinish Wind Farm (Variant 1-A) and minimising effects on deeper areas of peat where practicable (Variant 1-B), in combination with the Baseline Alignment in all other areas. The existing wood pole OHL would be removed upon completion.

## SECTION 2 – NORTH OF SLIGACHAN TO BROADFORD

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	The Baseline Alignment would pass through the Cuillins SPA for much of its length, for which golden eagle is a qualifying feature (supporting 8 pairs). As the Baseline Alignment would generally follow the existing OHL, it is considered that this would present limited risks to golden eagles. A HRA is likely to be required upon submission of a consent application, albeit no adverse effect on site integrity for the SPA is anticipated, assuming appropriate mitigation.	Variant 2-A offers the greatest opportunity to minimise effects to the Cuillins SPA as it would be undergrounded, subject to appropriate mitigation to minimise potential effects on qualifying species. Potential effects of Variant 2-A on habitats, hydrology / hydrogeology would also need to be carefully considered, with appropriate mitigation and restoration measures put in place to minimise effects.	Given opportunity to minimise effects on the Cuillins SPA with Variant 2-A, this is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford.
	Protected Species	European Protected Species such as otter could be present along the Baseline Alignment, as well as other protected species, including reptiles. There is very little woodland present along the Baseline Alignment, as such there is expected to be minimal roosting potential for bats.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all OHL options, subject to careful micro-siting of towers, construction access and appropriate mitigation.  The increased construction corridor and closer interaction with watercourses for Variant 2-A (underground cable) does increase potential direct and indirect effects on protected species during construction, and would require appropriate mitigation to minimise effects.	In terms of potential effects on protected species, the Baseline Alignment would be preferred. However, subject to appropriate mitigation, it is anticipated that other variants (overhead and underground) could be achieved without significant effects on protected species.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Habitats	<p>The predominant habitat recorded along the Baseline Alignment is wet heath, which forms a large expanse of near continuous habitat which at times is only occasionally interspersed with small patches of other upland habitat types.</p> <p>Deeper areas of peat and blanket bog habitats likely to be present south of Am Meall (e.g. large flat peaty area located at the headwaters of the Garbh-allt and close to Loch nam Madach Uisge), and close to Loch Cuil na Creige and at Allt Mhic Leanain associated with flat lying areas.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all OHL options, subject to careful micro-siting of towers and appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>The increased construction corridor and closer interaction with watercourses for Variant 2-A (underground cable) does increase potential effects on habitats during construction, and would require appropriate mitigation to minimise effects on habitats, hydrology / hydrogeology, and ensure effective restoration.</p>	<p>In terms of potential effects on habitats, the Baseline Alignment would be preferred, subject to micro-siting. Other variants (overhead and underground) would require to be subject to micro-siting, appropriate mitigation and restoration measures to minimise effects on habitats.</p>
	Ornithology	<p>The Baseline Alignment travels through the Cuillins SPA, classified for 8 pairs of resident breeding golden eagles. Active white-tailed eagle territories within 6 km, plus information from surveys, sightings and satellite tags suggest use of the surrounding area. Other sensitivities include breeding greenshank, and possible merlin breeding habitat, plus waders, waterfowl and gulls.</p>	<p>Variant 2-A offers the greatest opportunity to minimise effects to the Cuillins SPA as it would be undergrounded.</p> <p>The increased construction corridor and closer interaction with watercourses for Variant 2-A (underground cable) does increase potential effects on habitats during construction, and would require appropriate mitigation to minimise effects on habitats, hydrology / hydrogeology, and ensure effective restoration.</p> <p>Variant 2-F would result in a new OHL crossing higher ground at Druim na Cleochd. Whilst outwith the SPA, this area could be used by SPA qualifying species, albeit flight activity surveys during 2021 did</p>	<p>Given opportunity to minimise effects on the Cuillins SPA with Variant 2-A, this is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
			not record any frequent use of this area by eagles or other birds of conservation concern.	
	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	<p>Priority peatland mapping suggests that in the areas surrounding the Baseline Alignment, to the south of Am Meall and near Strollamus Class 1 and 2 (strong likelihood of deep peat and priority peatland habitats) is present.</p> <p>Also crossed over by the Baseline Alignment is a surface water drinking protection zone near Dunan / An Dùnan. Catchments to any groundwater wells, springs and GWDTE are likely to be similar to surface catchments.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment would cross a number of watercourses, particularly around Loch Sligachan where the steep slopes of the Cuillins generates some fast-flowing watercourses of various sizes, and waterfalls. Pollution risks present.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all OHL options, subject to careful micro-siting of towers, construction access and appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>The increased construction corridor and closer interaction with watercourses for Variant 2-A (underground cable) does increase potential effects on habitats during construction, and would require appropriate mitigation to minimise effects on habitats, hydrology / hydrogeology, and ensure effective restoration.</p>	In terms of potential effects on habitats, the Baseline Alignment would be preferred, subject to micro-siting. Other variants (overhead and underground) would require to be subject to micro-siting, appropriate mitigation and restoration measures to minimise effects on peat and peatland habitats.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	The Baseline Alignment would pass near the listed Sligachan Old Bridge (LB 1783), a cluster of listed buildings at Luib and a Scheduled Monument (Old Corry cairns (SM 13673)) near Broadford (also discussed in relation to Section 3). No adverse effects on setting are anticipated.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all OHL options. The installation of an underground cable (Variant 2-A) present an opportunity to minimise effects on setting.	Variant 2-A in combination with the Baseline Alignment would be preferred given opportunity to minimise effects on setting.



Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Cultural Heritage Assets	The Baseline Alignment would pass near a cluster of non-designated cultural heritage assets around Strollamus, mostly representing post-mediaeval settlement and land use. It is anticipated that direct effects on non-designated cultural heritage assets could largely be avoided.	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all OHL options.</p> <p>The installation of an underground cable (Variant 2-A) would increase potential to disturb known heritage assets and any previously unknown sub-surface buried archaeology, albeit potential effects are anticipated to be limited.</p>	Given comparable constraints across all OHL options, there is no particular preference of alignment. Variant 2-A would increase potential for disturbance to sub-surface buried archaeology.
People	Proximity to Dwellings	The Baseline Alignment is located typically to the south of properties at Sconser, Luib, Dunan and Strollamus, but no properties within close proximity (i.e. within 100 metres).	Variant's 2-B and 2-D would bring the OHL closer to properties and buildings at Sligachan and Sconser respectively.	The Baseline Alignment, or Variants 2-A and 2-C, are not located within close proximity to properties, and would therefore be preferred.
Landscape and Visual	Designations	<p>The Baseline Alignment would result in likely significant landscape and visual effects on the Cuillin Hills NSA, given the prominence of steel structures which would be distracting in valued mountain views and would create a barrier effect around the base of the mountains.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment also skirts the edge of the Cuillins WLA, although other development (e.g. roads, housing and existing wood pole OHLs) is considered likely to reduce the perceived wild land values of the WLA in this area.</p>	<p>Variant 2-A (underground cable) would provide an opportunity to mitigate the likely significant long term effects on landscape and visual receptors within this section, including the Cuillin Hills NSA. Whilst short term effects may still be likely, it is anticipated that with appropriate mitigation and restoration such effects would be limited to the construction phase, or shortly thereafter.</p> <p>Variant 2-F would remove a short section of the Baseline Alignment from the NSA through Gleann Torra-mhichaig but significant effects to the NSA and setting would still be likely.</p>	Given opportunity to mitigate likely significant effects on the Cuillins NSA, and other landscape and visual receptors, Variant 2-A is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Character	<p>Landscape character through this section is highly sensitive, characterised by steep mountain slopes, and inland loch-shore. Key areas of sensitivity are located around the shores and across the heads of Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort, and through the remote valley of Gleann Torra -mhichaig.</p> <p>SNH mapping indicates a relatively low degree of wildness due to the existing road and housing. However, the presence of the Baseline Alignment could lead to increased visibility from other areas within the mountains with potential for wild land impact. The head of Loch Ainort is a particular area where the sense of being on the edge of wild land is experienced.</p>	<p>Variant 2-A would provide an opportunity to mitigate the likely significant long term effects on landscape and visual receptors within this section, including the Cuillin Hills NSA. Whilst short term effects may still be likely, it is anticipated that with appropriate mitigation and restoration such effects would be limited to the construction phase, or shortly thereafter.</p>	<p>Given opportunity to mitigate likely significant effects on the Cuillins NSA, and other landscape and visual receptors, Variant 2-A is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford.</p>
	Visual	<p>The Baseline Alignment has the potential to be prominent and distracting in coastal and mountain views from the A87, including various stopping and viewing locations, valued by tourists and visitors, Particularly sensitive stopping points are located at the head of Loch Ainort where the sense of being on the edge of wild land is strong and views are obtained up between the mountains with limited development present.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment would be visible to the rear of properties at Sconser, Luib and</p>	<p>The Baseline Alignment and all OHL variants are likely to result in significant landscape and visual effects through this section, including the Cuillins NSA.</p> <p>Variant 2-A would provide an opportunity to mitigate the likely significant long term effects on landscape and visual receptors within this section. Whilst short term effects may still be likely, it is anticipated that with appropriate mitigation and restoration such effects would be limited to the construction phase, or shortly thereafter.</p>	<p>Given opportunity to mitigate likely significant effects on the Cuillins NSA, and other landscape and visual receptors, Variant 2-A is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		<p>Strollamus and from properties and recreation areas at Peinachorrain on the opposite shore of Loch Sligachan. .</p> <p>There are notable visual sensitivities around Sligachan relating to hotel, campsite, walkers, sightseers and travellers on the road with potential for the Baseline Alignment to appear within valued mountain and coastal views.</p> <p>Other sensitive receptors include ferry passengers on the Sconser to Raasay Ferry and recreational users of Core Paths and other Routes, heading into the mountains from Sligachan, Kinloch Ainort and Luib and along the northern shore of Loch Sligachan,</p>	<p>Variant 2-B at Sligachan would be routed to the rear of the hotel, crossing the A863 before heading northeast on the south side of the A87 where it would re-join the Baseline Alignment. Whilst this Variant would avoid passing to the front of the hotel, it variant is anticipated to result in likely other significant environmental effects, and would increase the effect on views from Sligachan towards the mountains.</p> <p>Variant 2-C Crosses the tidal area closer to the existing OHL, thereby increasing the distance between a new OHL and Sligachan. This would increase the distance between a new OHL and receptors at Sligachan, which would result in some improvement from a landscape and visual perspective, but unlikely to mitigate the likelihood for significant effect. Also technical challenges with routeing a new OHL through the tidal area.</p> <p>Variant 2-D could result in an improvement in appearance of a new OHL for receptors at Peinnachorran, but would increase proximity and potential for significant effect for receptors at Sconser.</p>	

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
			<p>Variant 2-E could result in a slight improvement to views from the A87 through Gleann Torra-mhichaig by moving the OHL slightly further from the road. Significant landscape and visual effects still likely and would require two crossings of the existing OHL.</p>	
			<p>Variant 2-F could remove the OHL from views towards the mountains within much of Gleann Torra-mhichaig though would still be prominent in views from the road. Micrositing this variant could further improve these views but significant visual effects for road users around Loch Sligachan and Loch Ainort would remain.</p>	
<b>Land Use</b>	Agriculture	Baseline Alignment travels over predominantly rough grazing, dominated by plant communities of low grazing value, but minor interaction with section of improved grassland (5.3) at Sconser.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Forestry	A new wayleave would be required as the Baseline Alignment connects into Broadford substation.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Recreation	The Baseline Alignment travels by Sligachan which is an important tourist hub with a hotel, campsite and the start of a large number of hill walking routes. The Baseline Alignment in this section would also run parallel to a core path between Luib and Dunan.	<p>Variant 2-A would provide an opportunity to mitigate the likely significant long term effects on landscape and visual receptors within this section.</p> <p>Variant 2-C crosses the tidal area near Sligachan closer to the existing OHL, thereby increasing the distance between a new OHL and Sligachan, thus increasing its distance from these tourist spots.</p>	Given opportunity to mitigate likely significant effects on the Cuillins NSA, and other landscape and visual receptors, Variant 2-A is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford.
Planning	Policy	Given likely significant landscape and visual effects on The Cuillins NSA, the Baseline Alignment does present a potential conflict with planning policy through this section. Minimising such effects, as well as other effects on Natural Heritage Designations (i.e. the Cuillins SPA), Class 1 peatland habitats and deeper areas of peat will require careful consideration to ensure conformity with planning policy.	Variant 2-A would provide an opportunity to mitigate the likely significant long term effects on landscape and visual receptors within this section. Whilst short term effects may still be likely, it is anticipated that with appropriate mitigation and restoration such effects would be limited to the construction phase, or shortly thereafter.	Given opportunity to mitigate likely significant effects on the Cuillins NSA, and other landscape and visual receptors, Variant 2-A is preferred in combination with the Baseline Alignment from Luib to Broadford.
	Proposals	In the area around the Baseline Alignment, planning permission granted for the partial change of use of an agricultural shed to the creation of four holiday letting units at the head of Loch Ainort off the Moll Road (19/02676/Ful). Other planning applications, typically housing related, within this Section, but unlikely to be within vicinity of the Baseline Alignment.	Variant 2-F would be in closer proximity to the proposal off the Moll Road at Loch Ainort, in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, although the proximity of Variant 2-F to the proposals off the Moll Road would require consideration of micro-siting towers.

### **Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 2**

In selecting the preferred alignment and design solution, consideration has been given to a variety of environmental, technical and cost considerations relevant to this section, as detailed above, as well as the preliminary consultation responses received from statutory consultees.

The preferred alignment and design solution comprises an underground cable solution (Variant 2-A) from Sligachan to Luib. At Luib, the design solution reverts to OHL and continues along the Baseline Alignment to Broadford Substation.

## SECTION 3 - BROADFORD TO KYLE RHEA

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	<p>The Baseline Alignment would skirt the very edge of the Cullins SPA, adjacent to the existing OHL. Further to the east, the Baseline Alignment would span the northern tip of the Mointeach nan Lochain Dubha SAC / SSSI, whereby it is anticipated that new towers would be located outwith the SAC boundary. For both of these European designated sites, a HRA is likely to be required upon submission of a consent application, albeit no adverse effect on site integrity for either site is anticipated, assuming appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>The eastern extent of the Baseline Alignment would also pass through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC and SSSI. The habitats along, or within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment within the SAC are dominated by broadleaved woodlands, dry heaths, wet heaths, blanket bogs, and bracken (or various mosaics thereof, particularly mosaics of blanket bog and wet heath). The majority of habitats along and surrounding the Baseline Alignment are qualifying features of the SAC. Otter is also a qualifying feature of the SAC.</p> <p>Minimising adverse effects on qualifying features of the SAC, in particular Annex 1</p>	<p>The eastern extent of Route Option 3-A through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC and SSSI has been subject to a number of iterations during the alignment selection process. Given the technical challenges of constructing an OHL in this environment, these were generally minor, albeit important changes made to minimise effects on the qualifying features of the SAC where possible. As such, no other variants in relation to Designations were considered.</p>	<p>The Baseline Alignment is preferred given the changes that have been made to it during the alignment selection process.</p> <p>Further work is required to establish a construction and operational access strategy that seeks to minimise adverse effects on the site and respective qualifying features, in particular Annex 1 Priority Habitats.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		<p>Priority Habitats, will require a site specific, sensitive and robust access strategy, and associated mitigation, reinstatement and restoration plans.</p>		
	Protected Species	<p>The Baseline Alignment passes through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC and SSSI, for which otter is a qualifying feature.</p> <p>Otter survey data collected here over several years has shown that otter is commonplace within the area with a high volume of otter field signs recorded, along with numerous protected features such as holts and resting up areas (couches). However, the majority of otter signs and all protected features for otter are generally restricted to the coastline, or within 50 m of it. However, the Baseline Alignment is generally well set-back from the coastline, and with much naturally screening woodland and vegetation in-between, and a lack of suitable foraging habitat inland at this location, interfaces with otter are expected to be minimal.</p> <p>Other European Protected Species such as bats could be present along the Baseline Alignment, in the areas of more mature broadleaved woodland.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>



Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		Probable evidence of pine marten has also been recorded in the conifer woodland plantation to the west of Kyle Rhea.		
	Habitats	<p>The length of the Baseline Alignment through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC and SSSI is characterised by wet heath, dry heath, blanket bog, broadleaved woodlands and associated sensitive bryophyte and lichen assemblages. These habitats are present as qualifying features of the SAC and SSSI.</p> <p>Elsewhere, and outwith the SAC/SSSI area, habitats are predominantly wet heath, with smaller areas of blanket bog. There is the potential for areas of deep peat. Coniferous forestry plantation is located to the western and eastern extents of the Baseline Alignment.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>The eastern extent of Route Option 3A through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC and SSSI has been subject to a number of iterations during the alignment selection process. Given the technical challenges of constructing an OHL in this environment, these were generally minor, albeit important changes made to minimise effects on the qualifying features of the SAC where possible. As such, no other variants in relation to Habitats were considered.</p>	<p>The Baseline Alignment is preferred given the changes that have been made to it during the alignment selection process.</p> <p>Further work is required to establish a construction and operational access strategy that seeks to minimise adverse effects on the site and respective qualifying features, in particular Annex 1 Priority Habitats.</p>
	Ornithology	<p>As noted in Designations (above), the Baseline Alignment includes a short section through the Cuillins SPA. One active white-tailed eagle territory and an active golden eagle territory are located within 6 km of the Baseline Alignment. Also, white-tailed eagle and golden eagle, and other birds of conservation concern, use the areas around the narrows at Kyle Rhea.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	<p>Priority peatland mapping suggests the Baseline Alignment would pass through areas of Class 1 (strong likelihood of deep peat and priority peatland habitats) between Harapool and the minor road to Glen Arroch, as well as within parts of the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC. There are a number of water course crossings to consider, some of which comprise steep ravines (eastern extent of the Baseline Alignment).</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment crosses over a surface water drinking protection zone near Harrapool. For the western extent of the Baseline Alignment, properties could be served by private water supplies from watercourses crossed by or within the vicinity. Catchments to any groundwater wells, springs and GWDTE are likely to be similar to surface catchments.</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	A Scheduled Monument (Old Corry cairns, SM 13673) lies immediately adjacent to the Baseline Alignment near Broadford / Ath Leathann. Whilst the existing OHL is also located within the vicinity of this Scheduled Monument, the Baseline Alignment would bring the OHL closer to the Scheduled Monument and could have an adverse effect on its setting. Other Scheduled Monuments include Broadford Bay, chambered cairn (SM 13724), Ashaig	Variant 3-A, located on the northern side of the existing OHL, would increase the distance between the OHL and the Scheduled Monument (Old Corry cairns, SM 13673) near Broadford. As it would be further away than the existing OHL, likely effects on its setting are anticipated to be no worse than at present.	As Variant 3-A would increase the distance between the new OHL and the Scheduled Monument, in comparison to the Baseline Alignment, this variant is preferred, in combination with the Baseline Alignment for the rest of the alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		church (remains) and burial ground (SM 13720) and Ashaig burnt mound (SM 13721), and listed buildings in the harbour area at Broadford, but no adverse effects on these sites or their settings are anticipated.		
	Cultural Heritage Assets	There are a small number of non-designated cultural heritage assets recorded in the Highland Council HER (as well as features newly identified during the desktop study of historic mapping and aerial photography) within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment, although it is anticipated that direct impacts could generally be avoided through appropriate mitigation.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
<b>People</b>	Proximity to Dwellings	The Baseline Alignment is not located within close proximity to dwellings. At its closest point, the Baseline Alignment is approximately 250 m from the edge of settlement at Harrapool, but at a greater distance than the existing OHL as it is located on its southern side.	Variant 3-A brings the OHL slightly closer to dwellings on the outskirts of Broadford, but is still approximately 400 m away.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
<b>Landscape and Visual</b>	Designations	The initial part of the Baseline Alignment, commencing at Broadford Substation is on the boundary of The Cuillin Hills NSA. However, the existing forestry plantations around the substation create a clear transition between the designated and non-designated landscape.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Character	<p>The Baseline Alignment would be adjacent to and replace an existing steel lattice OHL to the south of Broadford and surrounding communities, routed along the transition of the Low Smooth Moorland and Upland Sloping Moorland LCTs. An effective like-for-like replacement thought this section would lead to minimal landscape effects.</p> <p>To the east Section 3 the Baseline Alignment passes through areas characterised by rough, rocky hills with limited access and a steep and complex rocky shoreline to Loch Alsh and Kyle Rhea. Forestry plantation occupies areas of more accessible lower slopes whilst the remote, rugged coastal slopes along the south of Loch Alsh are colonised by native woodlands. This section of coastline is sensitive to development. Although the existing OHL is already present close to the coast, the Baseline Alignment would be at higher elevation, and potentially more prominent across a wider area.</p> <p>The use of temporary access measures would reduce potential landscape effects.</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
	Visual	<p>The Baseline Alignment would be adjacent to and replace an existing steel lattice OHL to the south of Broadford and surrounding communities, resulting in an effective like-for-like replacement with little to distinguish it from</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		<p>the existing OHL in views from residential properties and routes in this area.</p> <p>The existing steel lattice alignment following the remote coastal edge of Loch Alsh into the crossing location at Kyle Rhea can be seen from the northern shore of Loch Alsh from the A87. However, these comprise relatively distant views and towers are not prominent. The Baseline Alignment would be set higher on the hill, above the existing woodland and would therefore be likely to appear more visible, although seen by a similar range of receptors. However, the towers would be similarly distant in views and likely to have a comparable range of perceptibility. As the alignment would be sited entirely above the exiting native woodland, there would be no visible wayleave.</p> <p>Access and construction works though this area would be likely to appear more visible than towers and have a greater landscape impact, but these features would be temporary and subject to restoration.</p>		<p>alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>
<b>Land Use</b>	Agriculture	<p>The Baseline Alignment passes over predominantly rough grazing, dominated by plant communities of low grazing value. Minor interaction with sections of improved grassland (5.1 and 5.3) around Broadford.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Forestry	<p>Some removal of forestry likely to be required to accommodate a new wayleave for the Baseline Alignment through commercial plantations at Broadford, to the south of Kyleakin and approaching the crossing towers at Kyle Rhea.</p> <p>The existing wayleave would no longer be required once the existing OHL had been dismantled.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>
	Recreation	<p>The Baseline Alignment crosses the start of a core path at Broadford (SL03.04), in a similar manner to the existing OHL.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment would avoid close interaction with tourist activity at Kyle Rhea.</p>	<p>Variant 3-A, located to the north of the existing OHL, would avoid crossing the core path at Broadford (SL03.04).</p>	<p>As Variant 3-A would avoid crossing the core path at Broadford, this is slightly preferred over the Baseline Alignment in this location.</p>
<b>Planning</b>	Policy	<p>The likely adverse effects on the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC and respective qualifying features are to be confirmed following further work in relation to the construction and operational access strategy.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment has sought to minimise effects on sensitive habitats and peatlands, cultural heritage, landscape and visual receptors.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting of towers and appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Proposals	<p>There are no planning proposals that have direct conflict with the Baseline Alignment. At Broadford, there is a planning application for Construction of 24 affordable housing units, but this is over 450 m from the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>There are also other housing related applications within the vicinity of Broadford, Harrapool and Breakish.</p>	<p>Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>

### Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 3

The preferred alignment and design solution comprises an OHL connection, utilising a combination of Variant 3A and the Baseline Alignment. It is acknowledged that careful attention will need to be given to this section of the OHL, particularly through the SAC to ensure potential effects are minimised as far as practicable.

## SECTION 4 - KYLE RHEA TO LOCH CUAICH

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	<p>The Baseline Alignment would be routed through the Druim losal SSSI and GCR, noted for its geological importance. The route through Druim losal is a particular pinch point with the best constructable option being to utilise the path of the existing OHL alignment, requiring a small number of towers to be built adjacent to existing tower positions, requiring outages. Two of these towers are located within the eastern extent of the SSSI and GCR boundary.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment also runs within the vicinity of the Quoich Spillway SSSI (Geological) and the Kinloch Hourn GCR. Direct effects on these sites are not anticipated.</p>	<p>Whilst options to avoid this particular pinch point were considered by the OHL contractor, none were deemed viable.</p>	<p>The Baseline Alignment is the only viable option with respect to the Druim losal SSSI and GCR.</p>
	Protected Species	<p>Throughout the Baseline Alignment within this section there is potential for European Protected Species including otter and bats, as well as other protected species including pine marten, red squirrel, water voles, badgers and reptiles.</p>	<p>Subject to appropriate mitigation, constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options. Minimising felling of native woodland habitats will be important to reduce potential effects on protected species.</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.</p>
	Habitats	<p>Habitats within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment comprise predominantly wet heath, with patches of dry heath and blanket bog, and mosaics thereof. Grassland and stands of</p>	<p>Subject to appropriate mitigation and micro-siting of towers to avoid areas of sensitive habitat or minimise</p>	<p>Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of</p>



Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		bracken can be found in some areas, and there are isolated areas of mixed and broadleaved woodland. Some areas are noted on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI), and the Baseline Alignment does pass close to or through some areas of native woodland, whereby felling would be kept to a minimum, as far as practicable.	felling of native woodland, constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
	Ornithology	<p>There are two to three active golden eagle territories between Kinloch Hourn and Glenelg within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment, albeit flight activity is typically focussed on the higher ground, and there are no known nest sites close by.</p> <p>Potential for black-throated diver, red-throated diver and common scoter flight activity, as well as greenshank.</p>	Subject to appropriate mitigation, including the sensitive timing of works and pre-construction checks, constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	<p>The Baseline Alignment passes over a surface water drinking protection zone associated with Loch Beinn a' Chaoinich and Loch a' Mhuilinn. Private water supply infrastructure present in surrounding area of Baseline Alignment (e.g. at Glenmore and Kinloch Hourn). Catchments to any groundwater wells, springs and GWDTE are likely to be similar to surface catchments.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment would cross a number of watercourse crossings.</p>	Subject to appropriate mitigation and micro-siting of towers to avoid areas of sensitive habitat and areas of deeper peat, as well as maintaining sufficient buffer distances to watercourses, constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		<p>Potential effects in relation to geological SSSI's are noted above under Designations.</p> <p>Priority peatland mapping suggests that there are sections of Class 2 (strong likelihood of deep peat and priority peatland habitats) at intervals throughout the Baseline Alignment.</p>		
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	<p>There are two Scheduled Monuments near Balvraid in Gleann Beag; Dun Grugaig (SM 914), a stone-walled dun or fort, approximately 840 m south-west of the Baseline Alignment on a steep knoll alongside the Abhainn a'Ghlinne Bhig; and approximately 2 km north-west along Gleann Beag, two neighbouring brochs together comprise SM 90152. Dun Telve stands near the river, around 1.7 km south-west of the Baseline Alignment, and Dun Troddan is set on a terrace in the hillside, a little further east and 1.3 km south-west of the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>A full setting assessment for these Scheduled Monuments will be required. However, initial appraisal suggests that no significant effects upon their setting are anticipated.</p> <p>One other designated heritage asset is located within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment: Quoich Dam and Intake Gatehouse Towers</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		(LB51704), a Category B Listed Building of Medium sensitivity.		
	Cultural Heritage Assets	There are 49 non-designated cultural heritage assets recorded on The Highland Council HER within 500 m either side of the Baseline Alignment, and a further 19 features were identified during a desktop study of historic mapping and aerial photography. Assets are mostly of medieval-post-medieval date and include farmsteads and shielings.	Subject to appropriate mitigation and micro-siting of towers to avoid direct effects, constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment, subject to appropriate mitigation.
<b>People</b>	Proximity to Dwellings	<p>There are few dwellings within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment in this Section, restricted to properties at Glen More and Kinloch Hourn.</p> <p>At Glen More, the Baseline Alignment is routed to the north and east of the existing OHL, bringing the crossing at Glen More closer to properties near Scallisaig, albeit maintaining over 100 m distance from properties.</p>	<p>Variant 4-C more closely follows the existing OHL in comparison to the Baseline Alignment, and therefore the crossing point at Glen More is at a similar location to the existing OHL and to the west of properties at Scallisaig. An OHL in this location would be approximately 50 m from a static caravan.</p> <p>This variant would also require some felling of native woodland as it passes over the hill to the south of Glen More. The existing wayleave would be utilised as far as practicable.</p>	At Glen More, Variant 4-C is preferred given it follows the existing OHL and provides opportunity to minimise effects on properties near Scallisaig. Elsewhere, given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
<b>Landscape and Visual</b>	Designations	The Baseline Alignment would pass through a very remote, rugged landscape with steep complex topography and high scenic qualities. This is reflected in large parts of this area being designated for landscape, namely Knoydart NSA, Kinloch Hourn, Knoydart and Morar WLA,	<p>The following variants were considered to minimise landscape and visual effects on landscape designations.</p> <p>Variant 4-F was proposed on landscape and visual grounds between Bealach Aoidhdailean and Gleandubhlochain as it was felt that an alignment to</p>	All variants (4-F, 4-G and 4-H) considered to minimise potential landscape effects on the Knoydart NSA, Kinloch Hourn, Knoydart and Morar WLA, and Moidart, Morar and

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area (SLA). Whilst the existing OHL runs through this area and has an influence in reducing landscape sensitivity of this route, the narrow valleys, steep slopes and complex topography, particularly around Kinloch Hourn and Loch Coire Shubh, present difficulties and challenges in achieving a new alignment for a replacement OHL (including earthworks and construction access) which would not have greater impacts. There is also the potential for loss of native woodland through these areas which contributes to the appreciation and value of these landscapes.	<p>the north of the existing OHL would be better back clothed and close to ground already disturbed by the existing rough argo track, in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.</p> <p>Variant 4-G removes some towers from more prominent positions on higher ground on the approach to Kinloch Hourn, compared to the Baseline Alignment. The position to the south of the existing OHL would be further from the more remote and unaffected areas of wild land which would be less likely to increase the effect on the WLA although there would be increased visual effects for users of the Scottish Hill Track routes 251 and 252 between Glen Arnisdale / Glenelg and Kinloch Hourn.</p> <p>Variant 4-H has been put forward to minimise landscape and visual effects within this area as far as practicable. It aims to do this by taking an alignment that crosses, and is then routed to the west of the minor road for approximately 2 km, prior to crossing the road again to re-join the Baseline Alignment, removing the most prominent towers from views between the road and the loch..</p>	Glen Shiel SLA are preferred in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.
	Character	<p>The Baseline Alignment would pass through a very remote, rugged landscape with steep complex topography and high scenic qualities.</p> <p>The Baseline Alignment would pass through the Rugged Massif – Skye and Lochalsh and</p>	In addition to the variants considered with respect to Landscape Designations noted above, which are also of relevance to landscape character, the following variants were considered to minimise effects on landscape character.	All variants considered to minimise potential effects on landscape character are preferred in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		<p>Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Skye and Lochalsh LCTs with upland, and wild land characteristics which are very sensitive to development. Although the existing OHL is already present, the complex topography presents difficulties in achieving an alignment which does not lead to prominence of towers and increased landscape effects.</p> <p>Settled or small-scale coastal, loch-side and glen areas including Glen More, Kinloch Hourn and Loch Coire Shubh form small contrasting landscapes where the small scale composition of the landscape is highly sensitive.</p>	<p>Variant 4-A was proposed to minimise skylining of one prominent tower. This variant offered advantages over the Baseline Alignment, but was superseded by Variant 4-C.</p>	
			<p>Variant 4-B would bring the OHL lower down the hill and minimise landscape and visual effects from Glen Bernera in comparison with the Baseline Alignment. This variant offered advantages over the Baseline Alignment, but was superseded by Variant 4-C.</p>	
			<p>Variant 4-C has been proposed to more closely follow the existing OHL from the Kyle Rhea crossing point to Glen More and avoid potential land use constraints associated with the Baseline Alignment at Scallisaig. This variant offers some advantages over the Baseline Alignment in that the landscape and visual effects would be similar to that of the existing OHL. There is potential for some removal of native woodland, albeit the existing OHL wayleave corridor through the same woodland would be reinstated.</p>	
			<p>Variant 4-D is a short deviation from the Baseline Alignment to follow flatter ground through Coire a' Bheoil-airigh to reduce skylining from Glen More, before re-joining the Baseline Alignment near Loch a' Mhuilinn. This was proposed to minimise landscape effects, but was superseded by Variant 4-C.</p>	

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
			<p>Variant 4-E: This variant at to the south of Druim losal was proposed to minimise the likely prominence of one tower. However, this is a particular pinch point and it was considered by the OHL contractor that the only viable solution is to build on the current alignment of the existing OHL, with new towers built adjacent to existing towers.</p>	
	Visual	<p>Sensitive visual receptors through this section including the following:</p> <p>Residents and visitors at properties at Glen More, Kinloch Hourn and potentially around Glen Bernera.</p> <p>Travellers including tourists and recreational travellers on public roads, chiefly through Glen More and Loch Cuaich and Kinloch Hourn, but</p>	<p>All variants considered with respect to Landscape Designations and Landscape Character noted above are also of relevance to Visual Effects and should be referred to. There may be increased visual effects for Variant 4-G for recreational users of the Scottish Hill Track routes 251 and 252 between Glen Arnisdale / Glen Beag and Kinloch Hourn but this could be improved through micro-siting of towers and could be offset by improvements to landscape effects.</p>	<p>All variants considered to minimise potential visual effects are preferred in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		<p>also potentially around Glen Elg and Glen Bernera.</p> <p>Recreational users of paths and other routes including Core Paths at Kyle Rhea, Glen Bernera, Druim Iosal and Arnisdale; Scottish Hill Track routes between Glenelg, Arnisdale and Kinloch Hourn; and various ascent routes up surrounding mountains .</p> <p>Complexity of landform curtailing alignment options and accessibility has the potential to increase visual effects.</p>	<p>Variant 4-I (Loch Cuaich) was considered to improve the visual effects from the minor road and Glen Quoich bridge compared the Baseline Alignment by removing towers from popular views across the open water of the loch. Whilst the Baseline Alignment is technically easier to build in this location, it was considered the adverse effects on views of Loch Cuaich from the minor road and bridge warranted a change to the Baseline Alignment in this location.</p>	

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Land Use	Agriculture	The Baseline Alignment covers predominantly rough grazing, dominated by plant communities of low grazing value. The Baseline Alignment would have minor interaction with small areas of land capable of supporting mixed agriculture at Glen More.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Forestry	The Baseline Alignment would require a new wayleave to be felled through conifer plantation at Druim na Leitre, to the south of the existing OHL. The Baseline Alignment also passes through an area identified for pinewood regeneration by Scottish Forestry.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.



Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Recreation	<p>Passing through the mountain interior the Baseline Alignment would be regularly visible from recreational and walking routes up through Gleann Beag, and from Kinloch Hourn and Arnisdale. These comprise Core Paths, Scottish Hill Tracks and longer distance hill tracks. Further views would be obtained by travellers and recreational users on the minor road to Kinloch Hourn which is a popular route for tourists seeking a remote experience. Additional route and landform complexity between Kinloch Hourn and Loch Cuaich has the potential to increase the level of visual impact from this new OHL. There could also be potential for increased visual impact in views from properties, a car park and popular viewpoints at Kinloch Hourn.</p>	<p>All variants considered with respect to Landscape Designations, Landscape Character and Visual Effects are of relevance to recreation throughout this section, and should be referred to.</p>	<p>All variants considered to minimise potential landscape and visual effects (of relevance to recreation in this section) are preferred in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.</p>
Planning	Policy	<p>Minimise effects on national landscape designations and other protected landscapes has, and will continue to be, an important consideration in developing an OHL that conforms to planning policy. Modifications to the Baseline Alignment, as set out under landscape and visual considerations above, will be important factors to achieve this.</p>	<p>All variants considered with respect to Landscape Designations, Landscape Character and Visual Effects are of relevance to planning policy throughout this section, and should be referred to.</p>	<p>All variants considered to minimise potential landscape and visual effects (of relevance to planning policy in this section) are preferred in comparison with the Baseline Alignment.</p>

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Proposals	No notable planning proposals identified near the Baseline Alignment.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.

#### Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 4

As a result of the technical challenges and environmental sensitivities of this section, alignment selection has been through numerous iterations to achieve the right balance between technical viability and due consideration to the sensitive environment. A focus during the alignment selection process has been to minimise potential landscape and visual effects through the Knoydart NSA, Kinloch Hourn, Knoydart and Morar WLA, and Moidart, Morar and Glen SLA. As such, the preferred alignment comprises the Baseline Alignment, with Variants 4-C, 4-F, 4-G, 4-H and 4-I.

## SECTION 5 - LOCH CUAICH TO INVERGARRY

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	The Baseline Alignment runs within close proximity of the West Inverness-shire lochs Special Protection Area (SPA), which is classified for 6.6 pairs (on average) of black-throated divers and 7.8 pairs (on average) of common scoter. Black-throated divers and common scoters may fly between the composite lochs of the SPA and could be vulnerable to collision from overhead lines between the lochs. There is some potential collision risk for birds flying between these lochs, although as the new OHL would be predominantly through forestry and follows the existing OHL, the risk will be lower. A HRA is likely to be required upon submission of a consent application, albeit no adverse effect on site integrity for the SPA is anticipated, assuming appropriate mitigation.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Protected Species	Throughout the Baseline Alignment within this section there is potential for European Protected Species including otter and bats, as well as other protected species including pine marten, red squirrel, water voles, badgers and reptiles.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Habitats	Habitats along the Baseline Alignment are predominantly wet heath, with patches of dry heath and blanket bog, and mosaics thereof	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		(with potential for deep peat in some areas). Isolated patches of grassland can be found on the lower areas, as well as forestry plantations. Native woodland is also present, some of which is noted on the ancient woodland inventory, particularly to the north of Loch Garry. Micro-siting of towers would be required to minimise felling of native woodland.		
	Ornithology	See Designations. Other ornithological sensitivities include black grouse and an active golden eagle territory within the vicinity of the route, greenshank and osprey also nest along the route and potential disturbance due to construction activities may occur and will require mitigation if nests are located within possible disturbance distances.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	The Quoich Spillway Geological SSSI and GCR is located to the south of the minor road at Quoich dam, but is not anticipated to be impacted by the new OHL.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	There is one designated cultural heritage asset within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment within Section 5; Quoich Dam and Intake Gatehouse Towers (LB51704), a Category B Listed Building of Medium sensitivity.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Cultural Heritage Assets	<p>There are 26 non-designated cultural heritage assets recorded on The Highland Council HER within 500 m either side of the Baseline Alignment, and a further eight features were identified during the desktop study of historic mapping and aerial photography.</p> <p>The majority of the cultural heritage features along Section 5 most likely date to the late-medieval and post-medieval periods, although some evidence of prehistoric settlement and activity may be present (e.g. the HER records the chance find of a Bronze Age pot near Ardoch in the 1900s).</p>	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
People	Proximity to Dwellings	Properties along Glen Garry, at Tomdoun and Poulary and at Munerigie and Achadh Luachrach are within the vicinity of the Baseline Alignment in this section.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
Landscape and Visual	Designations	To the west falls the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA. It is not anticipated that the Baseline Alignment would lead to an increased level of impact of the Special Qualities of the SLA, particularly considering the presence of other OHLs in the landscape. Other protected / designated landscapes in the area include the Kinlochourn-Moidart-Morar WLA to the west and south of the Baseline Alignment, and the Loch Lochy and Loch Oich SLA to the south	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		and south-east. Adverse effects to these areas are not expected as a result of the Baseline Alignment which would largely form a virtual like-for-like replacement to the existing OHL.		
	Character	The landscape of Section 5 is characterised by areas of open moorland and forestry within Glen Garry, which contains Loch Garry, Loch Poulary, River Garry, Gearr Garry and Kingie Pool. The landscape is relatively enclosed, contained by landform and / or vegetation with some longer-range scenic views channelled along Glen Garry.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Visual	Visual receptors within Section 5 include residents of Invergarry and dispersed dwellings along the lower slopes of Glen Garry, including at Tomdoun, Poulary, Inchlaggan and Garrygualach. Many views from properties in Glen Garry are oriented to look across or along the valley, over the loch or river. Receptors would also include those on Core Paths and popular walking routes, the minor road in Glen Garry, and the A87. There is also a natural stopping point at Loch Quoich Dam, where visual receptors have views along Glen Garry.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
<b>Land Use</b>	Agriculture	The agriculture areas within the section are predominantly rough grazing, dominated by plant communities of low grazing value. There could be some minor interaction with sections of improved grassland (5.3) to the north of Loch Garry.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Forestry	A new or extended wayleave would be required as the Baseline Alignment is routed through forestry to the north of Loch Garry.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
	Recreation	The Baseline Alignment does not closely interact with recreational interests (e.g. core paths).	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.
<b>Planning</b>	Policy	Assuming negative adverse effects on site integrity of European Designated Sites can be avoided, the Baseline Alignment has sought to minimise effects on cultural heritage, landscape and visual receptors and peatlands (through micro-siting). As such, and as a 'National Development' (NPF 3), it is anticipated that it could accord with both local and national planning policy.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Proposals	There are no current planning applications or areas allocated for future development in direct conflict with the Baseline Alignment within this section.	Given the new OHL closely follows the existing OHL through this section, no variants were considered.	The Baseline Alignment is preferred.

### Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 5

Given that the Baseline Alignment closely follows the route of the existing OHL, this is generally deemed to be the most appropriate alignment and is therefore put forward as the preferred alignment.



## SECTION 6 - INVERGARRY TO FORT AUGUSTUS

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
Natural Heritage	Designations	The Baseline Alignment would border the West Inverness-shire lochs SPA at Loch Lundie. Black-throated divers and common scoters may fly between the composite lochs of the SPA (SSSIs) and so may be vulnerable to collision from OHLs between the lochs. The Baseline Alignment is not between the main SPA lochs, and survey work associated with the Fort Augustus to Skye T OHL did not identify a potentially significant risk with diver species flying to the east from Loch Lundie, although potential disturbance issues would remain. A HRA is likely to be required upon submission of a consent application, albeit no adverse effect on site integrity for the SPA is anticipated, assuming appropriate mitigation.	Variant 6-A would increase the distance between the new OHL and the SPA, bring the new OHL closer to the alignment of the existing OHL. This could minimise potential effects on the qualifying species of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA present at Loch Lundie.	Given the increase in distance between the new OHL, and the potential to minimise effects on the qualifying species of the SPA, Variant 6-A is preferred over the Baseline Alignment in this location.
	Protected Species	European Protected Species such as otter and bats could be present within the surrounding area of the Baseline Alignment, along with other protected species such as badger, pine marten, red squirrel and reptiles.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting of and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Habitats	Habitats along the Baseline Alignment are predominantly heather moorland, peatlands and areas of native woodland / commercial forestry	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		with areas of bracken in woodland openings and existing wayleaves.		
	Ornithology	<p>The Baseline Alignment runs to the east of Loch Lundie at the eastern edge of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA then through forestry to Fort Augustus Substation at Auchterawe.</p> <p>Black grouse are present with a known lek near Loch Lundie</p>	Variant 6-A would increase the distance between the new OHL and the SPA, bring the new OHL closer to the alignment of the existing OHL. This could minimise potential effects on the qualifying species of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA present at Loch Lundie.	Given the increase in distance between the new OHL, and the potential to minimise effects on the qualifying species of the SPA, Variant 6-A is preferred over the Baseline Alignment in this location.
	Hydrology Hydrogeology and Geology	<p>The Baseline Alignment in the Section crosses over a surface water drinking protection zone to the north-west of Invergarry. Properties at Auchterawe likely to be served by private water supplies. Catchment area to springs, wells and GWDTE likely to be similar to surface water catchment area.</p> <p>Priority peatland mapping suggests that there is Class 2 (strong likelihood of deep peat and priority peatland habitats) located on moorland near Loch Lundie.</p>	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Designations	Torr Dhuin Scheduled Monument (SM 794), a stone-walled dun, or fort is located approximately 1.3 km south-east of the Baseline Alignment near Auchteraw. The monument is located on a steep, forested knoll overlooking the River Oich, in its valley to the east, and is	As Variant 6-B would be an underground cable, this would remove any potential long-term effect of an OHL on the setting of this Scheduled Monument.	Variant 6-B would be preferred given it is an underground cable and would remove setting effects from the Tor Dhuin Scheduled Monument. Elsewhere,

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
		visible from the valley floor. Initial appraisal suggests that any potential effects on its setting as a result of the Baseline Alignment are not likely to be significant.		alignment options are comparable.
	Cultural Heritage Assets	There are five non-designated cultural heritage assets recorded on The Highland Council HER within 500 m either side of the Baseline Alignment, and another two features were identified during the desktop study of historic mapping and aerial photography.	Constraints are considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.  Variant 6-B does increase the potential to interact with buried archaeological remains given it is an underground cable with an approximately 30 m wide construction corridor, but opportunities to mitigate effects anticipated.	With appropriate mitigation, constraints across all options could be managed.
<b>People</b>	Proximity to Dwellings	The Baseline Alignment is not within the immediate vicinity of any dwellings, but does pass to the north of Auchterawe, which currently comprises other electricity infrastructure in the area.	Variant 6-B provides an opportunity to underground the line within the vicinity of Auchterawe. Whilst not in close interaction with properties, undergrounding would help to minimise effects on residents at Auchterawe by rationalising some OHL infrastructure.	Given opportunity to rationalise OHL infrastructure at Auchterawe, Variant 6-B is preferred in this area. Elsewhere, there is no preference in terms of proximity to dwellings.
<b>Landscape and Visual</b>	Designations	The Baseline Alignment is not anticipated to adversely affect designated or protected landscapes.	No adverse effect on designated landscapes anticipated with any option, albeit Variant 6-B offers the opportunity to underground the line and rationalise OHL infrastructure within the Auchterawe area.	Given opportunity to rationalise OHL infrastructure at Auchterawe, Variant 6-B is preferred in this area. Elsewhere, there is no preference in terms of landscape designations.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Character	The landscape of Section 6 is characterised by areas of open moorland near Loch Lundie, contrasting with dense coniferous forestry of Inchnacardoch Forest. The landscape of moorland and forest is considered to have reasonable opportunity to accommodate the Baseline Alignment.	Variant 6-B offers the opportunity to underground the line and rationalise OHL infrastructure within the Auchterawe area reducing potential cumulative landscape effects on this sensitive, small scale landscape	Given opportunity to rationalise OHL infrastructure at Auchterawe, Variant 6-B is preferred in this area. Elsewhere, there is no preference in terms of landscape character.
	Visual	Visual receptors within Section 6 include those on core paths near Loch Lundie and within Inchnacardoch Foresty, as well as those in the bothy at Achadh-nan-darach and settlement of Auchterawe. The cumulative effect of an additional steel lattice OHL within the Auchterawe area could result in likely significant cumulative landscape and visual effects.	Variant 6-B provides an opportunity to underground the line within the vicinity of Auchterawe, which would rationalise some OHL infrastructure in the area and help to reduce potential cumulative visual effects.	Given opportunity to rationalise OHL infrastructure at Auchterawe, Variant 6-B is preferred in this area. Elsewhere, there is no preference in terms of visual effects.
Land Use	Agriculture	Agriculture in the section consists predominantly of rough grazing, dominated by plant communities of low grazing value.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options, subject to careful micro-siting and appropriate mitigation.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
	Forestry	Land use along the Baseline Alignment is dominated by commercial forestry plantations at Auchterawe and east of Loch Lundie. In terms of forestry considerations, an extension to the existing wayleave would be required through Inchnacardoch Forest.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.

Category	Sub-Topic	Summary of Constraints	Opportunities and Constraints for Variants	Alignment Preference
	Recreation	There may be some impact for the Baseline Alignment on core paths round Loch Lundie (three routes) and Inchnacardoch Forest, given its close proximity.	Constraints considered to be broadly equivalent for all options.	Given comparable constraints across all options, there is no particular preference of alignment.
<b>Planning</b>	Policy	Assuming negative adverse effects on site integrity of European Designated Sites can be avoided, other considerations will relate to minimising effects on cultural heritage, landscape and visual receptors and peatlands (through micro-siting). As such, and as a 'National Development' (NPF 3), it is anticipated that it could accord with both local and national planning policy.	<p>Variant 6-A would increase the distance between the new OHL and the SPA, bring the new OHL closer to the alignment of the existing OHL. This could minimise potential effects on the qualifying species of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA present at Loch Lundie.</p> <p>Variant 6-B provides an opportunity to underground the line within the vicinity of Auchterawe, which would rationalise some OHL infrastructure in the area and help to reduce potential cumulative effects.</p>	Given opportunity to minimise effects on the SPA with Variant 6-A, and the opportunity to rationalise OHL infrastructure at Auchterawe with Variant 6-B, these variants are preferred, in combination with the Baseline Alignment elsewhere.
	Proposals	No notable developments identified near the Baseline Alignment.	Variant 6-B has been put forward to facilitate rationalisation of existing OHL infrastructure within the area, and in light of likely future connection requirements. This variant is preferred.	The Baseline Alignment in combination with Variant 6-B is preferred.

### Summary of Alignment Selection and Design Solution within Section 6

It is proposed that the Baseline Alignment with Variant 6-A and 6-B is taken forward as the preferred alignment and design solution in Section 6.