

# Skye Reinforcement Project – Section 3

Kylerhea Community Meeting

18 August 2022



**Scottish & Southern**  
Electricity Networks

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# About the project

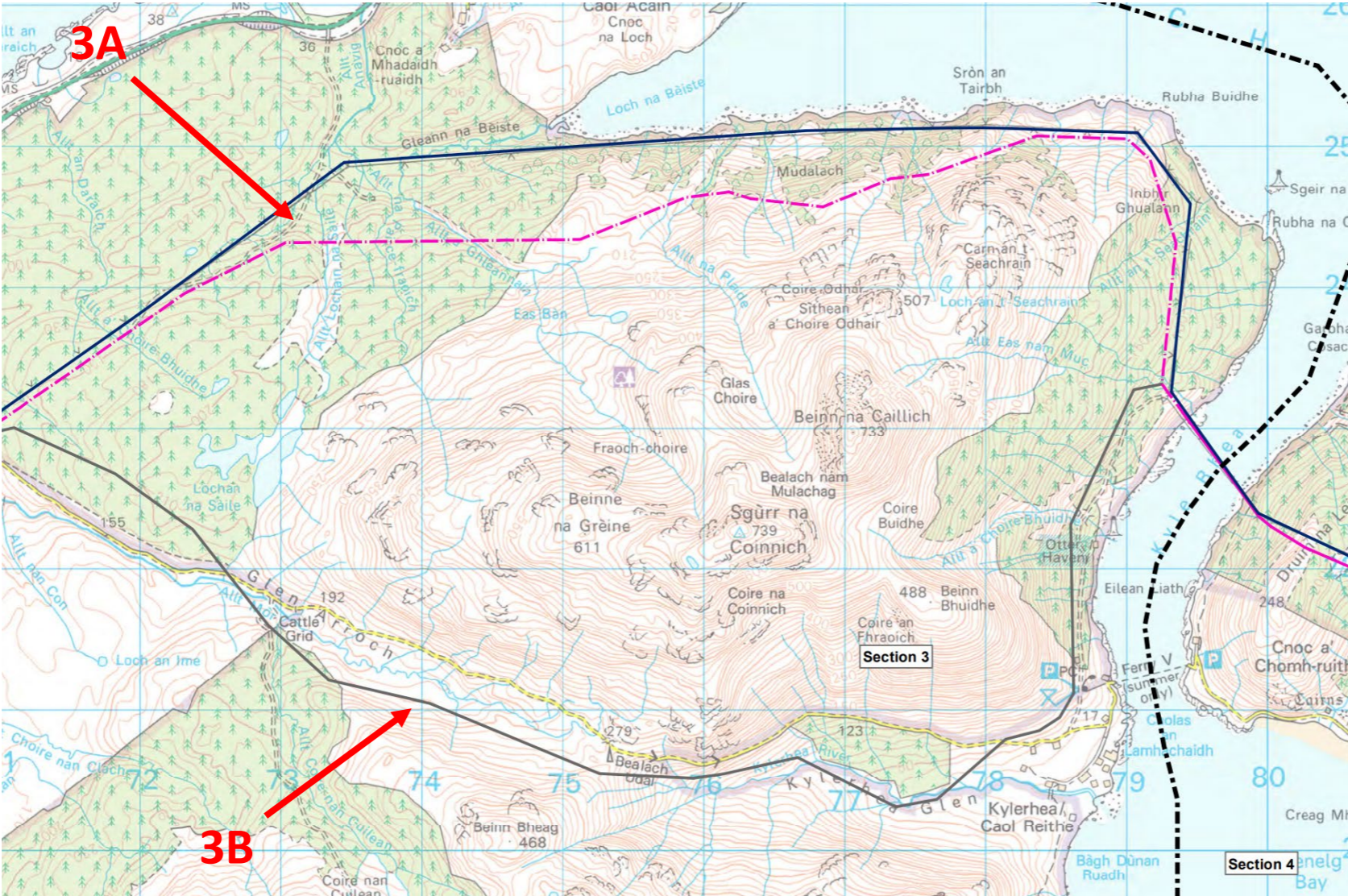
- The existing 132kV overhead line (OHL) from Fort Augustus to Ardmore provides the sole connection from the mainland electricity transmission system to Skye and the Western Isles
- The existing OHL was constructed between 1956 and 1989 and is reaching the end of its operational life.
- To ensure security of supply and connect new renewable energy, we are proposing the construction of a new OHL, comprised of steel lattice towers, wood pole overhead line and sections of underground cable.
- We intend to 'future proof' the replacement line to allow the connection of additional renewables to help meet Government 'net zero' climate change targets.
- We're taking 'a build it once, built it right' approach, helping keep local disruption to a minimum.
- In the coming weeks, we will be submitting a Section 37 application for the Skye Reinforcement Project

# Project Elements

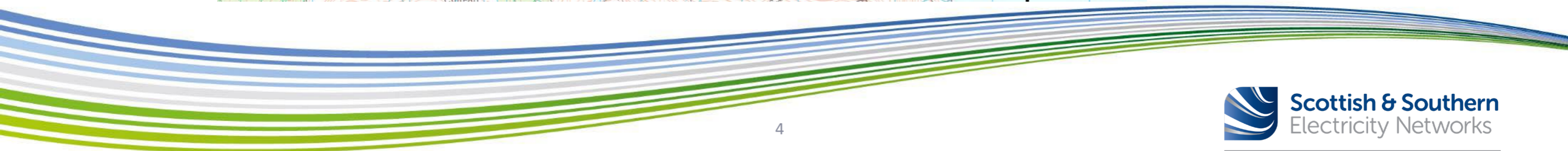
- A new double circuit 132kV steel lattice OHL from Fort Augustus to Broadford.;
- Between Broadford and Edinbane, the existing single circuit wood pole trident 132kV OHL would be replaced with a new 132kV OHL comprising of steel lattice structures.
- Between Edinbane and Ardmore, the existing single circuit wood pole 132kV OHL would be replaced with a new higher capacity 132kV wood pole OHL;
- A new Indoor Gas Insulated Substation adjacent to the existing Broadford Substation and a new indoor Gas Insulated Substation, Grid Supply Point and Wind Farm Connection, adjacent to the existing substation at Edinbane are also required.
- In order to maintain a supply of energy during construction, the existing OHL would remain in place and following completion of the new line, the existing will be dismantled.



# Section 3 - Broadford to Kylerhea



- Key**
- Preferred Alignment (Overhead Line)
  - Alternative Route
  - Existing 132 kV OHL (to be replaced)
  - - - Section Divider



# Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- Where our infrastructure has the potential to impact on a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), under the Habitat Regulations, we are obliged to consider viable options which avoid or minimise the impacts on the qualifying features of the SAC designation.
- For the Skye reinforcement, we have considered two options as our proposed replacement overhead line passes through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC: Option 3A, our preference which has a lesser impact on the local community; or Option 3B.
- Whilst Option 3B has a lesser impact on the qualifying features of the SAC designation, Option 3A, our preferred option, has less landscape and visual impacts, particularly at Kylerhea.

# Community Engagement - Section 3 – Broadford to Kylerhea

## Route Consultation – June 2020

Virtual due to COVID19  
Community stakeholders requested the route of the OHL be reconsidered in Section 3 based on concerns regarding proximity to dwellings, transport impact, noise, and visual impacts

## Elected Members Meetings – Late 2020

Microsoft Teams Calls with local Ward Cllrs, and locally elected MPs and MSPs to discuss feedback from local community and provide updates on project progression

## Kylerhea Community Forum Meeting – Feb 2021

Microsoft Teams Call to provide update on engineering assessment works and to discuss community concerns in more detail ahead of progression to route alignment stage

## Alignment Consultation – Sept/Oct 2022

In-person events. Re **Section 3** there was overwhelming positive response regarding the preferred alignment being Route Option 3A. Several written responses were received from community members, citing their strong support for Route Option 3A over 3B.

## Report on Consultation – March 2022

We report that within **Section 3** through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC / SSSI, further review of both options is required before a final decision is made prior to the section 37 submission.

# Feedback from Consultation

## 2020

### Statutory and Non-Statutory Responses

- It is recognised that this is an environmentally sensitive Section
- Contrasting views expressed by consultees on the preferred route
- NatureScot and Scottish Forestry state a preference for Route Option 3B, but this is not shared by RSPB who state a strong preference for Route Option 3A following the existing OHL

### Community Responses

- In 2020, the vast majority of views expressed were of concern for Route 3B
- Many requesting this is reviewed and the existing OHL route (Route Option 3A) considered again



## 2021

### Statutory and Non-Statutory Responses

- Contrasting views once again expressed by consultees on the preferred route
- NatureScot reiterate previous advice on the sensitivity of a route through the SAC and the difficulty in demonstrating no adverse effect on site integrity.
- NatureScot believe that Route Option 3B would cause less damage in the SAC (blanket bog and broadleaved woodlands)

### Community Response

- A letter prepared on behalf of the local community at Kylerhea was provided to the Energy Consents Unit of the Scottish Government, copied to SSEN Transmission, stating unanimous support for Route Option 3A, thereby avoiding the requirement for a new powerline through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea (Route Option 3B).
- The community gathered a 3000-signature petition against Route Option 3B.



# Section 3 – Our final routing decision

For “Section 3” of the route, which is that part of the route between Broadford and Kyle Rhea, we are including **two route options** within our consent application; **one being our preference of Route Option 3A** which follows the northern coast of the Kyle Rhea peninsula, and **the other being Route Option 3B through Glen Arroch as an alternative**.

This decision has been made due to the following factors:

- We have carried out assessments which are required under the relevant legislation. These have concluded that both options are likely to have an adverse effect on the SAC, however option 3B will likely have less adverse effect on the SAC than 3A.
- As the proposal is likely to have an adverse effect, we are required to demonstrate consideration of alternatives.
- Whilst we have presented our preference as Route 3A based on our wider obligations as a Transmission Operator, we feel that given the difference in prominent stakeholder’s views on the alternatives, it is important to provide sufficient opportunity for the determining authority to explore the merits and challenges of both options, as part of the determination process.

**It will now be down to the Scottish Ministers to determine our application including the balance between the two options proposed.**



# Why Route 3A remains our preference

- Route 3A meets our routeing objectives which have been the subject of public consultation
- It reflects the views of a wide range of consultees.
- It complies with our duties under the Electricity Act 1989 - *to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty and to do what it reasonably can to mitigate the effects of the project on natural beauty in the interests of preserving amenity*
- It has been subject to a detailed alignment selection process which established a viable OHL alignment could be constructed within Route 3A, that would keep felling of ancient woodland within the SAC **to a minimum**

# What could happen if we don't include 3B?

- We have a regulated licence for the transmission of electricity in the north of Scotland
- Our licence stipulates that we must develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission
- The existing OHL is coming to the end of its operational life
- We need to remove any risk of not meeting our license obligations re contracted development and securing electricity supply to Skye and Western Isles
- Therefore, we need to ensure it can be considered and consented at one time – to avoid any associated delays with having to reapply for consent

# What's Next - Sharing your views

- Transmission overhead lines are subject to a Section 37 application, made to the Scottish Government Energy Consent's Unit (ECU).
- This will be submitted in the near future
- As with all our Section 37 applications, we will notify all interested parties once our application has been submitted and provide details on how representations can be made during the ECU's consultation period
- We will also continue to engage closely with local community members during the project planning application process





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